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| Policy on Postgraduate Research Graduate Teaching Assistants | |
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| Policy on Postgraduate Research Graduate Teaching Assistants |

# Introduction

* 1. This Policy sets out the principles, expectations and requirements of Postgraduate Research Graduate Teaching Assistants (PGR GTAs), who are registered Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) at the University of Hull (UoH) and also undertake demonstrating or teaching support related activity as part of their scholarship.
  2. This Policy aligns with the University Regulations, Procedures and Codes of Practice as contained in the University Quality Handbook.
  3. This Policy has been developed with reference to the *Quality Assurance Agency UK’s Quality Code for Higher Education, 2018,* with particular reference to *Guiding Principle 4, Research students are afforded opportunities for professional development:*

‘….. Providing research students with an opportunity to support learning and teaching, develops a range of skills and reinforces their own knowledge of the subject. Providers may offer research students non-compulsory teaching opportunities; these may be limited and not necessarily available to all research students. For their own benefit and to safeguard the experience of the taught students, research students receive appropriate training, support and mentoring if they are teaching. Mentoring can be provided by membership of larger teaching teams, and support should ensure that teaching duties are not so intensive or time consuming as to affect completion.’

* 1. UoH staff are expected to follow the guidance provided in this Policy to ensure that wherever PGR GTAs are involved in teaching support activities, we are safeguarding the quality of both their experience and that of students whom they teach.
  2. The contribution of PGR GTAs is not intended to be a replacement for the normal teaching undertaken by academic staff, but as a positive addition benefitting all parties.

## Scope

* 1. This Policy **applies** to the academic and teaching support activities of PGR GTAs.
  2. The Policy **does not apply** to:
* Existing full-time or part-time members of academic staff who are also registered as PGRs.
* Those registered on taught or research Master’s degrees.
* Postgraduate Researchers Who Teach (PGWT).
* Graduate Teaching Assistants (employed by the University).
* Postdoctoral Researchers.
  1. PGR GTAs will not be involved in any teaching support activity where this is prohibited by a Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body.
  2. PGR GTAs must not undertake teaching support activity on any module which contributes to the Post Graduate Training Scheme, to a programme on which they are registered, or to any other level 8 programme at the University of Hull.
  3. PGR GTAs should not undertake teaching support activity on Postgraduate Taught PGT (Master’s) programmes or at Level 7 of an integrated undergraduate Master’s programme. Exceptionally, PGR GTAs may act as demonstrators and facilitate student support and learning on PGT/Level 7 programmes, if they have a Master’s degree or have successfully completed the first year of their PhD programme.
  4. PGR GTAs are typically expected to have a qualification at or above the level they are teaching. Where they do not, an exceptional case can be made to the Associate Dean for Education (ADE) whowill record the information and submit a copy to the Doctoral College. The ADE will be mindful of inclusivity issues in their decision-making.

# Purpose

* 1. The purpose of a PGR GTA scholarship is to invest in PhD research whilst also providing structured opportunities for development and experience in learning, teaching support and assessment.
  2. Scholarship holders will be registered for a PhD and their status will be as a student at the UoH. They will in no way be considered a member of staff.
  3. The programme of registration will be a non-standard PhD, which for full-time candidates comprises four years of research, funded through the scholarship, and no writing-up period.
  4. Alongside their PhD, they will carry out a maximum number of hours of demonstrating or teaching support related activity (which includes associated preparatory work) per academic year, which includes:
* laboratory demonstrating (e.g. demonstrating the use of practical equipment, software, experiments, processes within a laboratory or workshop settings to groups of students, and typically under close supervision and presence of a member of staff. This could also be in other contexts such as classes, computers labs, field trips and in the virtual environment);
* facilitating small group learning activities (e.g. tutorials, seminars, fieldwork group activities);
* marking of formative or summative assessment (under the conditions specified in this document).
  1. These three types of opportunity are referred to hereafter in this document as teaching support activity. In exceptional circumstances, experienced PGR GTAs may be asked to deliver some lectures or other larger scale learning activities.
  2. Demonstrating or teaching support activity commitments would average out as a maximum of six hours per week over 43 weeks (258 hours per academic year). The PGR GTA scholarship would also include a requirement to complete the Postgraduate Training Scheme, which equates to 60 credits. Any optional meetings, skills enhancement, personal development or Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities will not fall within the maximum hours.
  3. A PGR GTA scholarship will comprise a tuition fee waiver and maintenance grant (stipend) for the research period of their PhD, which will be full-time and four years in length. The teaching support activity will form part of the scholarship award.
  4. GTA activities should not compromise a PGR’s ability to complete their PhD within the timescales set out in the University's PhD Regulations, and PGRs will be expected to meet the standard milestones and timescales in the Regulations.
  5. This Policy is underpinned by a number of key principles, expectations and requirements which are summarised below in Sections 4 - 17 below.
  6. For the purpose of this Policy, ‘Academic Unit’ refers to department, school, faculty or institute.

# Faculty leadership responsibilities – making the policy work

* 1. Ultimately, the senior academic leadership team within each faculty/institute is responsible for ensuring that a fair and equitable system of providing opportunities for PGR GTAs is supported, recognised, embedded, and managed across their faculty/institute. Associate Deans for both Education and Research (and their Institute equivalents) will work closely to support Heads of Academic Units and Graduate Research Directors/PGR Directors/PGR Tutors/Graduate Research Officers to make the scheme successful.
  2. Graduate Research Directors/PGR Directors/PGR Tutors/Graduate Research Officers with their existing responsibility for PGRs within Academic Units will play a crucial role as the lead for this area. They will have day-to-day oversight of the role that PGR GTAs play in the delivery of teaching support activity across the programmes in their Academic Unit. They will work closely with their Head of Academic Unit, Module Leaders, PGR Supervisors and other members of staff to ensure that opportunities for PGR GTAs are identified, advertised, recruited to and managed effectively and in accordance with this Policy.
  3. PGR Supervisors already play a key role in discussing career development with the PGRs they supervise. This should include career development in relation to opportunities for PGRs to support learning and teaching. Their responsibility extends to ensuring that PGR GTAs are signposted to the relevant training, development and procedures for participating in the scheme.

# Role and status of a PGR GTA

* 1. PGR GTAs are registered students at the UoH. Their status is therefore that of a student and not a member of staff.
  2. PGR GTAs can be involved in a range of teaching support activities subject to them completing the relevant training and meeting the relevant conditions specified in this Policy.
  3. A PGR GTA is a developmental post for recent graduates who are undertaking a PhD. This post is suitable for those planning to train and develop their teaching and research skills so that they may take on more senior teaching and research posts in the future.
  4. The PGR GTA at this level assists other academic staff members in the University by performing teaching support activity. They will receive close supervision and direction from more senior colleagues and will receive academic and pastoral support and guidance which may include specific training, career counselling and mentoring.
  5. The main tasks and duties associated with a PGR GTA role include:
* Undertaking the requisite amount of research and study to achieve the PhD award.
* Completion of the Postgraduate Training Scheme.
* Undertaking regular demonstrating and teaching support activities to small groups of undergraduate or postgraduate students under the direction of senior members of staff.
* Develop teaching materials as required.
* Reflect on practice and the development of own teaching and learning skills.
* Where appropriate, and with guidance from more senior colleagues provide feedback to students on their progress.
* Attend regular supervisory and monitoring and progression meetings and document progress with the agreed programme of research study, as per the Code of Practice Postgraduate Research Students and the PhD programme regulations.
* Propose, plan and conduct postgraduate research studies in a safe and ethically appropriate manner.
* Work towards presentation of research work at relevant national and international forums.
* Liaise with colleagues and students.
* Join appropriate internal networks, including subject-specific research groups and contribute to the University’s research community.
* Plan own day-to-day work within the framework of the agreed programme.
* Marking and assessment (referred to below).
  1. PGR GTAs should not normally be expected to deliver lectures, or to facilitate large group teaching in place of an academic member of staff. A PGR GTA with specialist knowledge of particular relevance may, however, be invited to give one or more ‘guest lectures’ within a module. This can add vibrancy to a module and be hugely beneficial to a PGR GTA’s professional development. A module leader wishing to engage a PGR GTA in delivering a lecture on this basis should seek approval from the PGR GTA Teaching Lead and ensure that the PGR GTA is given the necessary support.
  2. Additionally, PGR GTAs will be required to:
* Fulfil the students’ duties described in the University’s health and safety policies and co-operate with the health and safety arrangements in place within the department.

Undertake specific health and safety roles on request (where relevant) e.g. display screen equipment assessor, departmental safety officer, fire warden.

* Work to assist with student engagement and research / enterprise activities.
* Show a commitment to diversity, equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices. This includes undertaking mandatory equality and diversity training.
* Comply with University regulations, policies and procedures.
* Adhere to the Student Contract.

# Marking and assessment

* 1. PGR GTAs can be involved in marking and assessment processes in order to provide them with the full range of teaching experience. The involvement of PGR GTAs in marking and assessment is, however, a key issue for quality assurance.
  2. PGR GTAs can mark summative assessments provided that they have received training and guidance in this area, including clear marking criteria, training in the marking conventions in use within their Academic Unit, and importantly, that second marking and/or moderation processes are fully in place for all assessments they mark (see: *Code of Practice on Assessment Procedures*).
  3. Module design and assessment design remains the responsibility of the Module Leader at all times.
  4. The Academic Unit will ensure that PGR GTAs’ access to student information is in line with university policies on data protection. PGR GTAs should not have access to the University’s student records system.

# Creating and identifying opportunities for PGR GTAs

* 1. Associate Deans for Research, PGR Teaching Leads (Graduate Research Directors/PGR Directors/PGR Tutors/Graduate Research Officers) and PGR supervisors will work with Heads of Department, Programme Directors, Module Leaders and other relevant staff in Academic Units to identify the opportunities for PGR GTAs. It will be the responsibility of the “PGR Teaching Lead” to ensure that this happens.

# Advertising, recruitment and selection

* 1. The advertisement of PGR GTA positions will be undertaken through the Doctoral College to ensure they are advertised in a fair and consistent manner across the University. It is the responsibility of the Academic Units to liaise with the Doctoral College, who will organise the advertisement and arrange for the recruitment process to be set up through the normal scholarship application process, in consultation with other relevant departments within the University.
  2. All Academic Units will operate a fair, transparent and equitable approach to the recruitment and selection of PGR GTAs.

# Equality, diversity and inclusion

* 1. This Policy fully embraces the University’s commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as outlined in the Education Strategy 2020-2025, the University’s Inclusive Education Framework and the range of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), and Access and Widening Participation policies currently in force.
  2. All PGR GTAs will be given an equal opportunity to participate in all aspects of the scheme, independent of their background or demographic characteristics.
  3. The processes outlined in this Policy will ensure that EDI principles are implicitly embedded across the whole of the scheme, particularly (but not exclusively) in relation to the types of opportunities offered, the advertising of opportunities, the recruitment and selection of PGR GTAs and access to teacher training.

# Tuition fee waiver and stipend

* 1. The PGR GTAs will receive a tuition fee waiver to cover the cost of the fees for the research period of the PhD programme, which for full-time, is four years in duration. There is no writing-up period associated with the GTA PhD.
  2. The PGR GTAs will also receive a maintenance (stipend) payment for the research period of their PhD, which is four years in duration for full-time candidates. The exact maintenance grant sum will be determined each year when the Research Councils have made their recommendation. The stipends will usually be aligned to the stipend amount recommended by the UKRI. The maintenance (stipend) payment will cover the demonstrating and teaching support element of the role. An additional payment will not be made to reflect the demonstrating and teaching support activity commitment.
  3. PGR GTAs withdrawing prior to the completion of their programme of study will receive only the appropriate portion of the scholarship and will forfeit their right to the remainder. The University reserves the right to recover any overpayments, should they occur, if PGR GTAs withdraw from their programme of study or transfer to another university. PGR GTAs submitting earlier than three months from the end of their research period will receive only the portion of the scholarship up to the point of submission.
  4. PGR GTAs transferring to a standard PhD within the UoH during their programme of study will only receive the appropriate portion of the scholarship and tuition fee waiver up to the date of transfer and will forfeit their right to the reminder. The University reserves the right to recover any overpayments, should they occur.
  5. Scholarship funding is also subject to the PGR GTA making satisfactory progress throughout their PhD research programme and also in respect of the teaching support requirements, as this is an integral aspect of the scholarship and degree programme. Failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress in both or either of these elements may result in the suspension or termination of their scholarship funding and either transfer to a Master’s programme or termination of candidature. The process for the suspension or termination of a scholarship due to unsatisfactory progress is detailed in the Code of Practice for Research Degrees: Termination of Candidature.

# Monitoring of performance and quality assurance

* 1. Heads of Academic Units and PGR Teaching Leads (Graduate Research Directors/PGR Directors/PGR Tutors/Graduate Research Officers) will ensure that the performance of PGR GTAs on their programmes is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.
  2. Module Leaders are responsible for reviewing the quality of teaching by PGR GTAs on their modules and will involve PGR GTAs in the module review process. Any concerns regarding the quality of teaching support activity should be raised with and addressed by the PGR Teaching Lead.
  3. Progress is formally monitored twice a year in Mid-Year Monitoring (MYM) and Annual Monitoring and Progress (AMP) meetings in addition to monthly supervisory progress meetings (or equivalent for part-time). This includes progress of both the research degree and teaching support activity. It is the responsibility of the PGR GTA to familiarise themselves with and abide by the UoH Student Contract, as well as the regulations applicable to their programme of study, and the Code of Practice Postgraduate Research Students.
  4. In cases where PGR GTAs are making satisfactory progress on their PhD but are not fulfilling teaching support commitments to a satisfactory standard, the University reserves the right to transfer the candidate onto the standard PhD, and stipend and tuition fee waiver funding amended accordingly.
  5. In cases where PGR GTAs are fulfilling the teaching support activity commitments to a satisfactory standard but not making satisfactory progress on their PhD, this needs to be formally recorded and appropriate steps taken by the supervisory team as per the Code of Practice for Research Degrees: Termination of Candidature.
  6. For clarity, candidates who fail to make progress on their PhD and are withdrawn from their programme of study cannot continue with GTA teaching support activity commitments and receive scholarship funding.

# Regulatory requirements

* 1. The University requires that the PGR GTA, their supervisor and Academic Unit must ensure that all funding body, legal, statutory limits on teaching/working hours and other regulatory requirements are adhered to before teaching commences.
  2. All Student Visa (formerly Tier 4) immigration requirements (where they apply) and standard employment checks are met and completed before the commencement of any teaching duties by PGR GTAs.
  3. International students are eligible to be appointed as PGR GTAs. Although PGR GTAs are limited to six hours of demonstrating or teaching support activity per week on average over the academic year, this may rise during periods of peak workload. However, during these peak workload periods, international student on a Student Visa (formerly Tier 4) can usually only work for a maximum of 20 hours per week (this includes paid, unpaid and voluntary work). More information regarding this is available on the University’s website (Visa and Immigration section).
  4. PGR GTAs cannot undertake formal teaching support activities on any module that formally contributes to a programme of study on which they are a registered student.

# Managing the teaching workload

* 1. Any teaching undertaken by PGR GTAs must not impede the successful completion of their research degree programme. PGR GTAs and their supervisors are jointly responsible for ensuring that progress is not negatively affected by teaching support responsibilities.
  2. Involvement in teaching support activity is however a compulsory part of the PGR GTA role, up to the maximum number of hours per academic year.
  3. Demonstrating and teaching support commitments (including associated preparatory work) would average out as a maximum of six hours per week over 43 weeks, which is within the maximum teaching workload stated in the [Code of Practice Postgraduate Research Students](https://www.hull.ac.uk/choose-hull/university-and-region/key-documents/docs/quality/research-degree-provision/ucop-postgraduate-research-students.docx): 6.1 d) *University PhD Scholarship students are expected to undertake no more than 12 hrs a week of paid teaching/demonstrating. The peak workload of waged labour should not exceed 40hrs a week for a maximum of 4 weeks.*
  4. PGR Teaching Leads (Graduate Research Directors/PGR Directors/PGR Tutors/Graduate Research Officers) will act as a point of contact should any PGR GTAs feel uncomfortable about the responsibilities they are being asked to take on.

# Training, development and quality assurance

* 1. Training and development opportunities and quality assurance are key in ensuring both the quality of the taught student experience (and in addressing any concerns about value for money amongst an UG population) and that of PGR GTAs involved in the scheme.
  2. Before commencing teaching, all PGR GTAs must undertake the Passport to University Teaching (PUT) run by the Teaching Excellence Academy (TEA). Depending on their previous teaching qualifications and experience, PGR GTAs may need to undertake the PGTS Teaching Module.
  3. All PGR GTAs will be given an Academic Unit induction into teaching which includes appropriate teaching, assessment/feedback techniques, specialist equipment and software specific to the disciplinary area in which they will be providing teaching support. The ADE will ensure that this happens. Completion of the Academic induction training will form part of the GTA role and will be included as part of the demonstrating and teaching support activity hours.
  4. All PGR GTAs involved will be given access to a peer observation scheme. They will also be supported to gain Higher Education Academy (HEA) associate fellowship/fellowship during their programme of study (usually submitted during the third/fourth year of study), using their demonstrating and teaching support related experiences.
  5. An individual teaching mentor will be assigned to each PGR GTA in order ensure they can carry out their teaching duties effectively to ensure excellent teaching quality across the University. This will also support the PGR GTA to gain recognised academic teaching skills and accreditation. This will normally be the Module Leader but academic units may wish to assign the activity to another role within the unit.
  6. It is anticipated that PGR GTAs work alongside academic staff to deliver modules by demonstrating or undertaking teaching support activities. It would not be considered appropriate for the teaching on any modules or programme to be delivered independently by PGR GTAs.

# English language requirements

* 1. All PGR GTAs involved in delivering teaching must demonstrate a good standard of written and spoken English language, so as to demonstrate the ability to be able to communicate clearly in an academic class setting. This is assessed as part of the University entry requirements.
  2. Further skills development may be necessary in some cases to reach a satisfactory level and PGR GTAs, whose native language is not English, are encouraged to access support and courses available through the University’s Global Engagement Team.

# Roles and responsibilities of the academic unit

* 1. All Academic Units must ensure that PGR GTAs have access to the relevant training including local inductions. The ADE will ensure that this happens. PGR GTAs will also be required to attend an induction from the Doctoral College and relevant Faculty as required.
  2. All Academic Units must ensure that PGR GTAs are provided with information on and access to the centrally offered staff training opportunities to enable them to carry out their teaching support activity in line with best practice and without risk to themselves and the students (e.g. Health and Safety, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion).
  3. PGR GTAs will be provided with access to the essential course information including on the University’s Virtual Learning Platform and all the relevant teaching materials relating to the aspect of the module they will be demonstrating and undertaking teaching support activity on.
  4. PGR GTAs will receive constructive feedback (through the use of the University’s Peer Support for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching Scheme) on their performance from the Module Leader.
  5. An individual teaching mentor will be assigned to each PGR GTA to ensure they can carry out their teaching duties effectively to maintain excellent teaching quality across the University. This will normally be the Module Leader but Academic Units may wish to assign the activity to another role within the unit.
  6. Module Leaders should provide opportunities for PGR GTAs to discuss their teaching experiences and to provide feedback via Module Leaders to their teaching teams and relevant committees.
  7. Module Leaders must ensure that PGR GTAs are viewed as an integral part of their teaching team and may be invited to relevant staff meetings and activities depending on custom and practice within the Academic Unit and to accommodate PGR GTA needs and interests.
  8. Programme Directors should work with the relevant Module Leaders to ensure that, where possible, there is a consistent, programme level approach to the use of PGR GTAs.

# The role of a supervisor

* 1. Supervisors provide the first line of academic support for PGR GTAs and will have responsibility for monitoring progress of the demonstrating and teaching support activity undertaken by the PGR GTA. Supervisors will need to seek advice from the relevant faculty member (e.g. Teaching Lead/Mentor) regarding the PGR GTAs performance in relation to this element and progress will be documented as part of the regular supervisory meetings. It is imperative that the GTA element does not hinder the progress of the student’s research degree.
  2. Supervisors should also seek advice from the relevant faculty member if they have concerns regarding the PGR GTAs demonstrating/teaching support activity or if the PGR GTA has concerns regarding this element.
  3. Supervisors should also signpost PGR GTAs to the teacher training modules offered by the Teaching Excellence Academy and the Doctoral College.

# Pastoral support

* 1. The provision of pastoral support is not the responsibility of PGR GTA.
  2. Any pastoral advice and guidance provided by PGRs to UG and PGT students will be minimal and will normally involve signposting to relevant services and support or referring to Personal Supervisors.
  3. The main responsibility for pastoral support for UG and PGT remains with their personal supervisors. PGR GTAs must, however, be briefed in this area as part of their training and induction to teaching support activity.

**List of Abbreviations**

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| **Abbreviation** | **Definition** |
| AMP | Annual Monitoring and Progress |
| ADE | Associate Director of Education |
| ADR | Associate Director of Research |
| CPD | Continuous Professional Development |
| HEA | Higher Education Academy |
| MYM | Mid-Year Monitoring |
| PG | Postgraduate |
| PGR GTA | Postgraduate Research Graduate Teaching Assistant |
| PGRs | Postgraduate Researchers |
| PGT | Postgraduate Taught |
| PGTS | Postgraduate Training Scheme |
| PGWT | Postgraduate Researchers Who Teach |
| PUT | Passport to University Teaching |
| TEA | Teaching Excellence Academy |
| UG | Undergraduate |
| UoH | University of Hull |

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