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| Employment of Postgraduate Research Students who Teach | |
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# Introduction

* 1. The University recognises that teaching experience is extremely important for Postgraduate Research Students’ (PGRS) professional development, provided that it is subject to reasonable limits on workload. Teaching can provide valuable experience and skills development- whether or not an academic career is being considered- in addition to financial benefits.
  2. PGRS are also a valuable asset to University teaching, to which they can bring their specialist knowledge, research training and recent experience of learning. They can therefore make a significant contribution to the University’s ambitions- as set out in the Education Strategy- to strengthen and improve its research-led teaching provision.
  3. This Policy applies to all PGRS who are formally engaged by the University in the support, facilitation and assessment of student learning at the University. Such formal (paid) opportunities may include:

1. laboratory demonstrating;
2. facilitating small group learning activities (e.g. tutorials, seminars, fieldwork group activities);
3. 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. In exceptional circumstances, experienced PGRS may be employed to deliver some lectures or other larger scale learning activities. This will be agreed on a case by case basis with Programme Directors, PGRS and their supervisors.
   2. The Policy does not apply to existing full or part-time members of academic staff who are also registered as PGRS.

# Opportunities to teach

* 1. It must be emphasised that the scope for teaching provision varies between different Academic Units and Faculties
  2. Directors of Learning and Teaching and Programme Directors must ensure that the extent of the involvement of Postgraduate Research Students who Teach (PGWT) in the delivery of taught programmes is managed and reviewed with the overall learning experience of undergraduate (or if permitted, postgraduate) students in mind. The quality of this experience will be essential to decisions on the format and amount of teaching undertaken by both individual PGWT and the use of multiple PGWT across programmes / modules. Faculty Education and Student Experience Committees should maintain a register of PGWT (and their qualification and training status- see 3.3 and 4.2) by Academic Unit and Faculty.
  3. All PGRS should be made aware of any opportunities to teach available to them and the process for application. However, PGRS should not assume teaching opportunities will always be available.
  4. Formal teaching activities are to be undertaken voluntarily by PGRS unless there is a contractual agreement and individuals must not be pressured into taking on unwelcome teaching commitments. However, the University strongly encourages PGRS to take opportunities to teach in order to benefit from the skills development such opportunities afford.
  5. PGRS cannot undertake formal teaching activities on any module that formally contributes to a programme of study on which they are registered.
  6. Based on current RCUK advice, full-time PGRS are normally subject to a limit of 180 hours of paid teaching activities per academic year (equivalent to 6 hours per week). The limit of 180 hours includes preparation, marking, and other paid activities directly related to their training or related professional activity. Further commitments are judged likely to interfere negatively with an individual’s studies. All PGRS funded by external bodies are required to observe any limits on teaching that these bodies impose.
  7. It is noted that overseas PGRS who are subject to Tier 4 immigration controls are limited to a maximum of 20 hours work per week. Prior to any discussion of employment within the University checks must take place with the PGRS and HR to ensure this limit is not breached.
  8. Supervisors of PGWT must be consulted about the amount of time that can be devoted by an individual to formal teaching activities in any given trimester. Any disagreements should be taken to the Faculty Associate Dean (Research) in the first instance for discussion and resolution. Teaching activities must not inhibit the successful completion of the PGWT own research degree and must not contravene any relevant funding conditions.
  9. PGWT are required to operate in accordance with all relevant University policies and procedures and all necessary standard employment checks (e.g. UKBA and Occupational Health) must be completed prior to the commencement of teaching.
  10. PGWT must demonstrate a good standard of English, normally equivalent to a minimum of IELTS 7 and where required by the Academic Unit or Faculty, at a higher level.

# Recruitment, selection and pay

* 1. The process of offering formal teaching opportunities to PGRS, and the process of selection of PGRS to undertake these duties, will be transparent and fair and in line with the recruitment policies and practices of the University.
  2. Payment for formal teaching activities is determined by Human Resources and the demand (and therefore opportunities) for teaching is determined by each Academic Unit or Faculty on an annual basis.
  3. Any student engaged in formal teaching activities must have already obtained a qualification at the level at which they are teaching (if not, an exemption can be requested from the Director of Teaching and Learning who will make a recommendation to the Faculty Associate Dean (Education) for approval. This will then be received and recorded by the Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee).
  4. An offer of a teaching position must include written confirmation of the duties that the PGWT is being employed to undertake and the rate of pay they will receive (Band 6). A formal contract of employment will be issued.

# Training and development

* 1. Every PGRS, regardless of whether or not they are offered or able to take up formal teaching opportunities, should have access to training in learning and teaching as part of their professional development.
  2. All PGRS who undertake formal teaching activities must satisfactorily complete the *University’s Passport to University Teaching* before they begin to teach. *Passport* runs at multiple times throughout the year. Directors of Learning and Teaching are responsible for granting and keeping a record of any individual exemptions from University training (for example, where PGWT are there for health and safety reasons only, and are there to assist a tutor who is present at all times and leading the session, for example, laboratories, field work etc. N.B. there is an expectation that in such circumstances, Academic Units or Faculties must provide the appropriate Health and Safety training.) Exemption from *Passport to University Teaching* will normally only be considered if within the last 24 months:

1. the PGWT has gained a tertiary level teaching qualification,
2. the PGWT can provide proof of undertaking equivalent formal training at another UK university.
   1. It is considered good practice for PGWT to begin their teaching experience by first observing teaching, and then taking part in co-taught or team-taught sessions.
   2. The selection process should be used as an opportunity to identify any development needs of PGWT. Academic Units are encouraged to explore opportunities (for example shadowing and observation) which support the development of PGWT.
   3. PGWT should have their initial teaching observed by the Module Leader and thereafter be included in annual peer observation arrangements (Code of Practice on Peer Support for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching). When being observed, PGWT should always request constructive written or verbal feedback using the University’s standard Peer Observation forms to support their professional development. PGWT are also encouraged to observe the teaching of their academic colleagues and work with other PGWT to observe each other’s’ teaching.
   4. In addition to the mandatory Passport to University Teaching, the University also encourages PGWT to attend, where possible and relevant, the open teaching development sessions provided by the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Directorate and the Doctoral College’s Postgraduate Training Scheme (PGTS).Faculties may also, due to the particular nature of teaching within their disciplines, provide additional training and development sessions (for example, in supporting learning through fieldwork, teaching in laboratories, or facilitating small group learning activities).
   5. Together these development opportunities, alongside the teaching experiences that PGWT gain, may provide the knowledge and evidence to make a claim through the University’s Disciplinary Approaches to Research and Teaching Excellence (DARTE) scheme for the award of Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (AFHEA).

# Roles and responsibilities

* 1. It is recognised that PGWT may have no prior teaching experience, and international students may have had limited experience of teaching and learning in the UK, so Academic Units should provide PGWT with appropriate planning and preparation time as part of the teaching time allowance (outlined in 2.6).
  2. PGWT should have access to and information about any Subject Group, Academic Unit, Faculty or University facilities and support (including the VLE) that will enable them to fulfil their teaching duties. It is also the responsibility of the relevant Academic Unit or Faculty, as appropriate, to ensure that all PGWT:

1. receive an Academic Unit-based induction into teaching,
2. access the University’s mandatory diversity training,
3. receive training in Health and Safety procedures,
4. are fully informed of all risks and controls required as an outcome of any risk assessments,
5. receive training in the use of any special equipment required for demonstrating or other techniques specific to the disciplinary area in which they will be teaching,
6. receive all information for the module(s) on which they are teaching – including module materials, handouts, access to the VLE, and all information on any students in their groups who have declared a disability and for whom reasonable adjustments should be made,
7. be assigned a mentor with whom they should meet regularly to discuss their specific teaching duties and responsibilities, the modules within which their teaching takes place and the marking conventions within the Academic Unit,
8. be encouraged to meet together formally to share ideas, resources and concerns and to report any concerns as appropriate to the Academic Unit Learning and Teaching Committee,
9. 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,
10. receive appropriate assessment and feedback training in advance if involved in assessment (including formative assessment activities),
11. attend any staff meetings as specified (e.g. teaching or team away days relevant to teaching).
    1. Module Leaders hold responsibility for the quality of teaching by PGWT on their module. PGWT should be involved in module review and should be invited to report back to the Module Leader on the structure, level and content of the modules on which they teach.
    2. PGWT can mark summative assessments provided that they have received training and guidance in this area, including clear marking criteria, and that second marking processes are fully in place for all assessments they mark (*Code of Practice on Assessment Procedures*). All formative assessments (i.e. those that do not directly contribute to the end of module summative mark) can be marked by PGWT. Assessment design remains the responsibility of the Module Leader at all times.
    3. PGWT have the right to belong to a Trades’ Union of their choice.

# Evaluation and review

* 1. There should be clear and regular procedures for the evaluation and review of the performance and role of PGWT. The University will continue to employ individual PGWT only if their performance is judged to be satisfactory.
  2. Feedback from the results of evaluation and review and from student feedback (includingMEQs) should, as far as possible, be made available to PGWT sufficiently promptly to be of value to them in their teaching within the module concerned.
  3. The experience of the PGWT and any related skills development should be discussed as part of the formal review of development and progress i.e. review meetings with the Supervisor or a PDR (for those on staff contracts).
  4. Should the review process highlight a potential issue, appropriate action should be taken as soon as possible (i.e. training and development, co-facilitation of teaching, further mentoring or, if necessary, the suspension of duties).

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