

School Guidance for Postgraduate Research Students Who Teach

Guiding Principles

- Postgraduate Research students (PGR)s who teach should be primarily regarded as students and teaching should not come at the expense of successful completion. Adherence to the limitations and measures under the policy for PGRs who teach and in this guidance ensure that employment responsibilities can be carried out in conjunction with full-time research.
- Employment as a teacher must be tied to successful progress in the research degree.
- PGRs are recognised as an important and valuable addition to the teaching community.

Selection

- Schools/Departments are responsible for hiring and should ensure that fair interview and selection processes are carried out in accordance with the University's HR Ordinances.
- Roles must be advertised and must not be earmarked or ring fenced (e.g. for individuals, lab groups, year cohorts).
- Prospective students must not be given a guarantee of paid teaching unless they are specifically applying under a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) scheme. They may be informed of the opportunity for paid teaching. Only a GTAship can be used as a financial guarantee for the purposes of applying for a visa.
- Ad hoc and supplementary teaching roles must only be advertised to current students and must never be advertised to prospective students (with the exception of GTAships).
- GTAships should be available to current Research students as well as prospective students (with a reduction in contract length to meet the maximum registration date).

Good practice – maximise the number of roles rather than the FTE of a single role to provide more opportunities for gaining teaching experience. Advertise roles to all research students and make sure to specify the duties and responsibilities of the job along with estimated workloads in advertising graduate teaching and demonstrating roles.

Training and Support

- It is good practice to identify a mentor to support PGRs in reflecting on their practice and understanding pedagogy. Mentors, should normally be identified outside of the line manager and supervisory team.
- All Schools/Departments should identify the duties of the PGR teachers early and ensure appropriate training and introduction is available to support the duties.
- All PGRs who teach should take the 'Preparing to Teach' virtual training on Blackboard.
- PGRs may also wish to consider Associate Fellowship recognition through HEA. Introduction and guidance, including guidance video recordings, are available. Mentors are helpful in supporting students to reflect on their process, which is essential for HEA fellowship.
- Where possible, PGRs should be observed during teaching to enable the observer and PGR to discuss teaching in practice and to identify any skills gap which can be addressed through training and further experience.

Best practice – Identify potential mentors once positions have been filled. Mentors should complement the needs of the graduate teacher and should not be a member of the supervisory

team or line manager. Where several PGRs are engaged in teaching, a buddy/mentor system or network can be created.

Duties

- Duties and responsibilities of PGRs who teach must be clearly defined before a post is advertised.
- Duties and responsibilities of PGRs who teach should be commensurate with the grade.
- It is good practice to include PGRs who teach in general staff meetings. Where appropriate, PGRs may be invited to staff meetings and excused where matters of business are of a reserved nature.
- PGRs should never be responsible for convening or delivering a full module.

Hours

- Full-time students must not be employed for more than 8 hours per week, inclusive of preparation and student-facing activities.
- Where hours can fluctuate, the average must not exceed 8 hours per week over the course of the contract length.
- An exception to the above can be made if the activity is for supporting a fieldtrip/fieldwork, but students should not be employed for extensive lengths of time to support fieldtrips/fieldwork, particularly if they are also employed for regular teaching or research activities in the weeks following the fieldtrip/fieldwork assignment.
- Students should not normally suspend their studies to enable them to work full-time.
- Weekly hours should be calculated prior to advertising the role.
- Paid hours must include any preparation time. Sufficient preparation must be allowed for any student-facing activity. Where a student is given material for delivery this can reasonably be set at a 1:1 ratio but where a student is responsible for preparing the teaching material, they must be allocated sufficient time to do so.
- Tier 4 sponsored students have a restriction on total hours per week which includes any paid and voluntary work. PGR students do not have term times and so must never exceed their total hours (including supporting fieldtrips/fieldwork) per week. It is important to note that UKVI calculate a 'week' as any 7 day period and not as a calendar week.

Ending Employment

- Students can end their employment without ending their research degree. Where a GTA wishes to enter writing-up, under current fee arrangements, this constitutes less than part-time study and therefore their employment contract must end.
- Employment of a PGR to teach shall normally end once they submit their thesis.
- Part-time students who switch to full-time study must reduce their hours to less than 8 hours per week.