

Policy on Postgraduate Research Students who undertake Teaching and related activities

Document control table

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2. Approved by	Education Committee

Policy development steps

3. Legal implications of this policy area.	Compliance with appropriate employment law
4. Consultation for this policy	Departments and Schools, HR, Student representatives, Doctoral College, PGR Directors
5. Related procedures/guidance	N/A
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Purpose

1. This policy articulates the University's requirements with respect to the paid employment of postgraduate research students to support learning and teaching activity. It applies to all postgraduate researchers who undertake such roles and aims to ensure that measures are in place to support their experience and ensure the quality of the learning opportunities offered to the students who they teach.
2. This policy has been developed with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the relevant Senate Regulations, in particular Senate Regulations 7 and 9.

Introduction

3. The University recognises the value of the contribution made by postgraduate research students to the learning opportunities offered to its undergraduate students. Undertaking teaching and related activities also provides valuable opportunities to postgraduate research students. The University encourages postgraduate research students with the requisite skills to consider undertaking teaching activities when such opportunities are available.

4. The involvement of postgraduate research students in learning and teaching activities has mutual benefits for students and staff and offers the opportunity for postgraduate research students to gain valuable transferable skills and for staff to be supported in research-led teaching.

Responsibilities

5. The Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee has responsibility for the development and review of the operation of this policy. The Education Committee has responsibility for approving this policy on behalf of Senate, and receiving periodic reports upon its operation.
6. Heads of Department or School are responsible for nominating a member of staff, normally the Postgraduate Tutor, who will be responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented at departmental level and that all students have undertaken appropriate training, normally **before** undertaking any teaching. Where a PGR student from one Department/School delivers teaching in another department/school, the school in which teaching is delivered is responsible for ensuring that students are appropriately trained.
7. Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that students have completed appropriate teaching and or demonstrator training offered internally or externally, and such other training required by the School/Department before assigning teaching duties to postgraduate research students, and for ensuring that their performance is monitored and reviewed.

Definitions

8. Postgraduate Research students may be employed on either short term or long time contracts with the following definitions:
 - a) Short Term Contracts are where a PGR student is employed for work of a temporary nature, such as a specified individual activity, or ad hoc teaching events, and the contract lasts no longer than 12 successive weeks.
 - b) Long term Contracts are where a student is engaged for an appointment of longer than 12 weeks to undertake work that is substantive and continuous in nature, and are contracted to work a set number of hours that can accurately be described as a Full time Equivalent (FTE). Such appointments will often be for Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) roles.

Opportunities to undertake teaching and related activities

9. The opportunities for teaching and related activities will vary across departments depending on the subject, preferred models of delivery and departmental resources. Consequently, it will not be possible for teaching opportunities to be offered to all postgraduate research students who may wish to undertake them.
10. All opportunities must be advertised to all research students within the department/school at least and there should be a clear recruitment process to ensure equitable appointment of postgraduate research students to undertake teaching and related activities. Advice on recruitment processes for such roles can be sought from recruitment@le.ac.uk
 - i) Where PGR students are employed on a short term contract under 8a) above this will be managed via CDS Unitemps requisition, with the request submitted via the [Eploy](#) system as a 'Unitemps – Temporary Booking'. The opportunity may then be advertised through internal departmental and college channels.

- ii) Where PGR students are employed on a full time contract under 8b) above this process should be managed via the standard University [Eploy](#) recruitment process. GTA roles are advertised through the University central vacancy listings.
11. Where employed under 8a above postgraduate research students should be employed for periods of no more than 12 weeks at a time.
 12. Where employed under 8b above postgraduate research students on a Graduate Teaching Assistant contract may be employed for up to four years and should not exceed a student's maximum registration period.
 13. When opportunities are advertised there should be a clear statement of the duties required and any skills and experience necessary to undertake the role. Relevant job summary forms will be required as part of the approval process for raising a role via either Unitemps requisition or as a GTA.
 14. Postgraduate research students employed to undertake teaching and related duties should be paid in accordance with the rate of pay as per the University grading structure.
 15. Departments and Schools must ensure that postgraduate research students are appropriately qualified and have the necessary skills, including proficiency in English Language, to assure the quality of the learning opportunities and experience of the undergraduate students who they teach. This should be assessed through the recruitment process with reference to the job summary form for the post.
 16. Students cannot be required to undertake teaching related duties unless there is a contractual agreement in place, for example where a postgraduate research student is also employed as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.
 17. Teaching activities must not impede a research student's ability to submit their thesis within the specified maximum period of registration for their degree course.
 18. Research students must not undertake teaching duties without prior approval from their supervisory team.

Teaching Activities and Responsibilities

19. A postgraduate research student may contribute to the following learning and teaching activities:
 - Seminars, tutorials and workshops
 - Laboratory and other practical classes
 - Field trips
 - Assessment and marking, subject to the requirements of Senate Regulation 7 see 'Assessment and Quality Assurance' below
 - Feedback sessions
 - Examination invigilation.
20. In accordance with Senate Regulation 9.168 teaching activities undertaken by full-time postgraduate research students should not exceed eight hours a week, although this can be

managed flexibly within this overall limit over the course of the employment. This should include preparation, teaching and any associated marking. All students undertaking work will be required to undergo standard right to work check for employment in the UK. In addition, it should be noted that international students on a student visa must not exceed the maximum number of hours for paid employment stated on their visa.

21. Postgraduate research students are not expected to routinely deliver lectures, although they may be invited to provide an occasional lecture, if the research they are undertaking directly relates to a particular module and would enhance student learning opportunities.
22. Normally postgraduate research students will not contribute to master's level teaching, except in circumstances where they have specialist knowledge which will add specific value to a particular module or programme.
23. PGR students undertaking teaching or related duties must familiarise themselves with the wider expectations of engaging with students including institutional policies such as Safeguarding and local school policy.

Training and Support

24. Postgraduate research students who undertake teaching or related activities, for example, laboratory demonstrating, must undertake appropriate teaching and or demonstrator training offered internally or externally, and such other training required by the Department or School **before** undertaking these activities. The University offers a wide range of resources on enhancing learning and teaching which may be accessed by postgraduate research students involved in teaching. For further resources, visit the [SharePoint pages](#). As a minimum students should complete the [Preparing to Teach in Higher Education](#) Blackboard course.
25. A postgraduate research student's teaching should be mentored and monitored by a member of academic staff who will provide feedback on their teaching. Research students undertaking teaching should be encouraged to contribute to the [Peer Enhancement for Teaching Excellence](#) process as members of a teaching team.
26. A postgraduate research student's supervisor should monitor any impact of teaching and other activities on their progress and a student's experience of teaching and related activities. The contribution of this to skills development should be discussed as part of annual progress review.
27. Where undertaking a teaching role results in potential neglect of academic obligations with respect to a student's doctoral studies, this may result in the implementation of processes set out under Senate Regulation 9.152 to 9.154. These may result in referral to student conduct processes set out under Senate Regulation 11.
28. In line with para 26 the teaching and, where appropriate, marking by PGR students should be monitored within the relevant school. Where a PGR student's teaching or marking is found to fall below the standards expected for the role support should be provided to the student and appropriate steps taken to address the matter. This may include:
 - a. Additional mentoring activities
 - b. Specific support provided through relevant academic development services
 - c. Peer observation of teaching or marking

29. Where a student's marking is found to fall below the standards expected for the role this should be identified through the moderation and Panel of Examiners process, and action taken to ensure that student outcomes are not negatively affected. Following this, the PGR student in question should receive appropriate support and additional further training before undertaking further marking.

Assessment and Quality Assurance

30. Postgraduate research students may assist with assessment on programmes, but in accordance with Senate Regulation 7.13, they may not serve as members of Panels or Boards of Examiners and they may not act as sole markers of any piece of work which contributes to a final degree classification. Any marking undertaken by a PGR student should be subject to a system of moderation by the module convenor.
31. In line with good practice, postgraduate research students are expected to undertake their teaching as part of a teaching team for a particular module, but they may not be appointed as a module convenor, have primary responsibility for the creation of new modules nor be assigned responsibility for the management of a programme.
32. Departments must ensure that the level of involvement of postgraduate research students in the delivery of a programme is carefully managed and reviewed to ensure the overall quality of the learning opportunities offered to their undergraduate students. Careful consideration should be given to the nature and amount of teaching undertaken by postgraduate research students on particular modules and programmes to assure the quality of the undergraduate student experience.
33. As part of standard quality assurance, feedback should be sought from students on the contribution of postgraduate research students as part of the department's standard processes of module evaluation, at the end of each teaching period.

Conduct in Teaching Roles

34. Where a PGR Student is found to have committed any form of misconduct in relation to their teaching role they may be subject to disciplinary procedures. Where a student is engaged in a role under para 8b) above the University staff ordinances apply. Where a student is engaged in a temporary role under para 8a), a student may be subject to informal processes, may have their employment terminated without liability (as set out in the Unitemps Contract) and may, in cases of severe misconduct, be referred for consideration under Senate Regulation 11.
35. Where a PGR student engaged to undertake teaching under the above definitions commits academic or non-academic misconduct unrelated to their teaching role during the period of their employment they may be subject to the processes set out under Senate Regulation 11. Where a student is found to be in breach of regulations they may be subject to the sanctions set out in Senate Regulation 11. Depending on the nature and severity of the breach, PGR students may also be subject to staff disciplinary procedures in relation to their employment at the University. Where students are employed via Unitemps (para 7) they may have their employment terminated without liability.