

Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) Teaching Framework

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is common practice for PGRs to teach, mostly at undergraduate level, and it is seen as an important part of their development, particularly with respect to those PGRs who consider the process of undertaking a research degree as partial preparation for a role as an academic.
- 1.2 There are two sets of students whose success and well-being needs to be considered when determining how teaching by PGRs should be regulated – the students who are being taught and the PGRs themselves. Good training and management of PGR teaching will benefit both groups.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this framework, the term “PGR teaching” covers any involvement by PGRs in teaching-related activities. This includes direct contact with students (UG or PGT) in classroom, laboratory or similar environments (including online learning environments), marking and preparation for teaching.

2. Basic principles

- 2.1 The University will strive wherever possible to enable PGRs to gain teaching or teaching-related experience during the course of their research degree.
- 2.2 The University will ensure that PGRs involved in teaching are properly supported and trained, such that they and those they teach have a positive experience and outcomes.

3. Balancing obligations to PGRs and taught students

- 3.1 Schools are expected where possible to arrange some form of teaching experience for PGRs. However, the needs of the Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) cohorts for teaching which is both pedagogically and academically of high quality takes precedence. Where PGRs do not have relevant subject specialist knowledge, or are unable to demonstrate, with

support, good levels of teaching ability, they may not be allocated teaching hours. In such cases, Schools should strive to provide other opportunities for PGRs to gain classroom experience, for example by shadowing an experienced lecturer.

- 3.2 Subject leads/ course leaders will liaise with appropriate personnel in Schools (Director of Graduate Education (DGE), PGR supervisory teams) to ensure that when PGRs are allocated to teaching duties they can be confident that this is manageable for the duration of the allocated period (semester, academic year etc.). They must ensure as far as possible that there is no disruption to UG or PGT teaching as a result of the shifting demands on PGR time.

4. Equity in teaching-related work for PGRs

- 4.1 There are two main equity issues which Schools need to address in relation to PGR teaching work. Firstly, they need to ensure that systems of allocating teaching (or teaching-related) opportunities are equitable, and do not embed any systematic discriminatory practices. As Schools differ in the number and types of teaching opportunities available, a universal mechanism for ensuring fair allocation is not possible; the University therefore requires Schools (via DGEs) to develop their own policies to operationalise the principle in their particular teaching context. Secondly, Schools need to ensure that workload is distributed in a fair and equitable manner amongst those PGRs involved in teaching. To monitor this, Schools must ensure that DGEs have access to an overview of PGR teaching allocation on a termly basis.

5. Teaching Hours

- 5.1 Full-time PGRs who are in receipt of a University fee waiver, bursary or other scholarship, can be expected to undertake duties in addition to their research for up to six hours per week averaged over a 45 week period. This expectation is reduced pro rata for part-time PGRs (i.e. up to three hours per week averaged). This may include teaching activities (as defined above). If, by mutual agreement, they undertake more than this, the additional hours will normally be paid at the appropriate PTHP rate for the job. Self-funded or externally-funded PGRs may choose to offer such a contribution to the University on the same basis. Total hours employed by the University (paid or unpaid) must not exceed 15 hours in any one week. This includes time allocated for marking.
- 5.2 Schools and courses should take care to provide a reasonable balance of commitments over the academic year, potentially including activities such as research assistance, help with Open Days and other University events. It would not normally be seen as acceptable for a PGR's fee waiver commitment to the University to be filled entirely through teaching-related activity.
- 5.3 Supervisors and the DGE should be informed of the teaching and other commitments allocated to PGRs.

- 5.4 PGRs should approach their supervisor if they are concerned that they have been allocated excessive duties and should appeal to the Director of Graduate Education if this is not resolved to their satisfaction by the supervisor. PGRs have access to the student complaints procedure should they need to take this further.

6. Training and support for PGRs

- 6.1 All PGRs who teach must first enrol on an approved teacher training programme¹, and either complete this before they begin their teaching or be able to demonstrate that they are participating fully in the programme whilst their teaching is underway. Those who already have a relevant teaching qualification may be exempted at the discretion of their School's Director of Graduate Education.
- 6.2 An appropriate induction covering course or module-specific information above and beyond the general induction provided by an approved training programme should be arranged for all PGRs who teach in a School.
- 6.3 PGRs should not normally be expected to engage in teaching-related activity in the first term of their registration with the University. Exceptions to this expectation include members of University staff who are enrolled as PGRs, and in some circumstances PGRs with existing teaching experience and relevant professional experience, where the PGR and the supervisory team agree that teaching in the first term will not detrimentally affect their progress. Where teaching activity is restricted solely to the demonstration of equipment and procedures, PGRs may be allowed to begin in their first term, provided that they have completed an approved induction programme and are provided with mentorship during this period.
- 6.4 PGRs may teach at Undergraduate or Masters levels. They may not, however, mark student work at honours (UG) or Masters level unless a specified and documented procedure to ensure appropriate moderation is in place, and has been approved by the Dean of the Graduate School.
- 6.5 All PGRs who teach must be allocated to a member of the course team from the course on which they will be teaching. If they are teaching wholly or predominantly on a single module, this would normally be the module leader. If

¹ Currently the approved programme is the Teaching Assistant Preparation Programme (TAPP). Schools may choose to develop alternative programmes where they feel the TAPP is not appropriate to the needs of specific groups of PGRs who teach; details of such alternative programmes must be submitted to the Graduate School for approval, via the Dean of the Graduate School. Teaching programmes must include GDPR training, as appropriate to the kind of teaching-related activity in which PGRs will be engaging. Where a School is able to make a very strong case for not requiring an approved programme (if for example, a PGR is just giving one guest lecture) they should ask for the Dean of Graduate Education's approval to waive this requirement, by sending an email with relevant details.

they are making contributions across a range of modules, the course leader may be the most appropriate person. This person will be responsible for:

- 6.5.1 ensuring that the overall hours of teaching undertaken by the PGR do not exceed the stated maximum;
- 6.5.2 ensuring that the PGR is enrolled on and participating fully in a suitable programme of teacher training (unless they are already a fully teacher trained);
- 6.5.3 ensuring that the PGR is invited to course and module team meetings and is included in team meeting mailings and briefings;
- 6.5.4 acting as mentor to the PGR with respect to their teaching and their training programme. This will involve:
 - advising the PGR on the preparation of teaching sessions;
 - ensuring that the PGR is familiar with all processes relating to assessment and moderation;
 - undertaking teaching observations to ensure that the students being taught are receiving high quality teaching and support.

7. Dealing with problems

- 7.1 PGRs who teach are members of the teaching team for the module(s) to which they are attached. If taught students have complaints about their performance or behaviour they should raise these through the usual channels, as they would do in relation to any member of the team.
- 7.2 If PGRs have problems with individual students whom they teach, they should raise these in the first instance with their module leader. Should the module leader identify disciplinary or academic misconduct issues, they may invoke the normal procedures for addressing these.
- 7.3 Where a module or course leader has significant concerns about a PGR's ability to deliver teaching activities to an appropriate standard, they should normally in the first instance offer additional training and support to the PGR in question. If this does not lead to the required improvements, within a timeframe that will ensure high quality teaching for students, or if the initial issues are of a very serious nature, the PGR may be removed from the teaching team.
- 7.4 PGRs who have been removed from teaching may raise this issue in writing to their Director of Graduate Education. The DGE will liaise with the relevant course and/or module leaders to ascertain whether the action was undertaken fairly on the basis of evidence (such as student complaints or observation of PGR performance). If the DGE feels the PGR has been treated unfairly they may

request that they be reinstated on the module. Final decisions on the staffing of teaching programmes lie with Deans of Schools, who may delegate authority to Heads of Department and Subject Teams.