

PGR TUTORS/ DEMONSTRATORS: (CODE OF PRACTICE (CHECKLIST) → ← IN BRIEF

Cardiff University Students' Union
Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd





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ARE YOU RECEIVING YOUR EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS?

Postgraduate Research students make a significant contribution to the delivery of teaching at Cardiff University through working as Graduate Tutors or Demonstrators. The University-wide **Code of Practice for PGR Teaching** is the principal document that underpins the current PGR teaching arrangements. It sets out the rights and responsibilities of PGRs who teach, and the support they can expect from the University.

Below we have compiled a list of the key rights and support provisions which PGRs who teach are entitled to through the Code. Please treat this as a checklist and see whether it matches your own experience. As a minimum, PGRs deserve the support to which they are entitled. If you have not been provided with all of the provisions outlined below, I hope this checklist will enable you to **request that you are provided with all of the support which are entitled to from your school.**



DUTIES AND HOURS

Clarity regarding the placement of restrictions on years available to be taught:

"Some Schools restrict the engagement of PGRs to particular years of study so as not to disrupt the settling in of the PGR or their completion. Any such **restrictions should be made clear to PGRs when advertising the roles.**" P3, point 14.

Limits on the amount of teaching you can ask to undertake:

"...**full-time PGRs** should not spend more than an **average of six hours** per week engaged in teaching activities, and no more than 180 hours in one academic year." P4, point 19.

Please note: externally funded students should check if their funder places additional restrictions.

Furthermore, [the FAQs for PGRs who Teach](#) confirms **you are entitled to be paid for all hours worked, even if that exceeds the six hours stated in the Code**: "In the very rare instances where 6 hours per week is exceeded, **payment will be made for all hours undertaken.**" P2, FAQs for PGRs who teach document (available on the intranet).

Flexibility regarding work hours for part-time students.

"There is **flexibility on the number of permitted hours for part-time PGRs and for all PGRs post-submission**, up to a maximum of 35 hours per week, so long as this does not impact on the timely completion of amendments." P4, point 23.

You cannot be asked to lead a module.

"PGRs **cannot be required to take responsibility for the overall content of a module**, its co-ordination, or the setting of assessments, but may prepare and deliver teaching within a framework of an agreed programme of contributions directed by the Module Leader." P4, point 24.

No requirement to respond to general questions from UGs.

"The PGR may be required to respond to student queries relating to the content of the teaching, but is **not responsible for addressing general queries about the module or providing additional support to students**, unless specified as part of the role." P4, point 25.

RECRUITMENT

To be offered advice if no teaching opportunities are offered:

"Where there are limitations on the opportunities that a School can offer, the **reasons should be made clear to PGRs**, and the School is encouraged to **offer advice on seeking opportunities elsewhere in the University**." P3, point 12.

Establishment and clear communication of a formal recruitment process by the school:

"Each School is required to establish a process, criteria, and timeline for selecting PGRs for teaching duties, for allocating activities in accordance with this Code of Practice, and for **communicating this information to PGRs** and relevant staff members." P4, point 28.

Information to which you are entitled during recruitment:

"When advertising the opportunities available, **Schools should provide the following information**; the nature of the duties that are available; the hourly pay rate for the role; where known, class contact hours and the number of hours that will be allocated for preparation and marking, in accordance with the University's PGR Teaching Tariff; training requirements, including the date by which mandatory training must be completed;

eligibility criteria (e.g. subject-specific knowledge, professional registration, English language proficiency), including any restrictions to PGRs in particular years of study; details on the process of submitting application or expression of interest." P4, point 29

Right to feedback if unsuccessful.

"Since a PGR's involvement in teaching may form part of their academic or professional development, **unsuccessful candidates should be given the opportunity to request feedback on their application**." Page 6, point 34.

Explicit agreement to teach.

"The PGR must confirm **whether they agree to undertake the duties** they have been allocated." Page 6, point 39.





DO(CU)MENTATION

Right to be given essential documentation before commencement of teaching:

"PGRs who are selected for teaching should be informed of their duties in writing prior to the date of commencement of those duties. PGRs should receive a **Letter of Engagement** from the School, accompanied by the **appropriate Task List**, the **Allocation of Hours Form** and the **Engagement Form for Graduate Tutors/ Graduate Demonstrators**." Page 6, point 36.

Right for clarity regarding duties, pay and teaching schedule:

"The **Letter of Engagement** and **Allocation of Hours Form** together specify:

- a description of the role, indicating the required duties
- dates and times of class contact
- a schedule and deadlines for any assessment and/or feedback duties
- the hourly rate of pay for teaching time and the allowance for preparation, assessment and other activities, in accordance with the University's PGR Teaching Tariff
- details of any duties which will be unpaid
- details of training requirements and how training is to be accessed
- a named contact for the module(s) on which they are teaching
- name and contact details for their Mentor (where applicable, cf. 50) and the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator
- monitoring arrangements." Page 6, point 37.



INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



Information you should receive through induction:

"PGRs appointed to PGR Teaching duties in the School should be provided with information necessary for their role, through an induction session and/or written guidance, including.

- arrangements for payment
- reporting sickness/absence
- access to facilities and resources
- monitoring arrangements
- School contact points and route to raise concerns
- links to key Codes of Practice: Close Personal Relationships; PGR Teaching
- further professional development, where applicable." Page 7, point 41.

Resources you should receive:

"PGRs should have access to all the necessary resources to undertake their tasks effectively. This may include, as appropriate:

- access to and an allowance for photocopying and printing facilities
- timely access to relevant required readings (hard copy and/or electronic)
- timely access to relevant Learning Central modules
- stationery for teaching
- a suitable room in which to conduct their teaching
- a suitable space in which to meet students to provide feedback." Page 7, point 42.





TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Entitlement to training.

"Required **training and briefing** includes:

- generic training relevant to the type of activity to be undertaken (e.g. small group teaching, laboratory demonstrating)
- Equality and Diversity training (available as a series of PowerPoint slides)
- Specific information about the modules(s) to which they will be contributing (see below).

It is the responsibility of the Module Leader to ensure that PGRs contributing to the teaching and learning support of that module receive relevant information in advance of the teaching activity.

This will include, as relevant: learning outcomes; assessment strategy; marking criteria; resources available to support student learning; guidance on feedback to students; health and safety. **Schools should specify the required training as part of the recruitment process and in the appointment information".** Page 7 and 8, points 44, 45 and 46.

Right to Mentoring, observation and feedback (for Tutors).

"The University requires **all PGRs engaged as a Graduate Tutor to be appointed a Mentor**: a suitably qualified member of staff with personal experience of teaching and an understanding of pedagogy... The Mentor is responsible for:

- observation of the PGR's teaching
- providing **guidance and feedback** to the PGR on their teaching (including preparation and assessment)
- providing a written report on the observation of the PGR's teaching to the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator and a copy to the PGR." Page 8, point 50.

For Demonstrators; "The University requires PGRs engaged in demonstrating duties to be **observed, monitored and provided with written feedback**, but this should be proportionate to the role and is undertaken typically by the Module or Laboratory Leader." Page 9, point 52.

TASK LIST AND PAY

If undertaking enhanced duties, you are entitled to a pay uplift.

"The generic Task Lists cover the majority of tutoring and demonstrating roles in the University. The titles given to these roles reflect the activities most commonly undertaken by someone appointed to that role, and remuneration is commensurate with the level of responsibility involved. Hence, **a PGR engaged as a laboratory demonstrator but with a higher level of responsibility than is usual for the Graduate Demonstrator role**, which might include the co-ordination and supervision of other demonstrators and/or require a higher level of academic or professional judgement in supporting students and assessing their work, **will be appointed as a Graduate Tutor**. Any PGR Teaching role which is substantially different from the generic Task Lists should be addressed separately through College HR teams and graded appropriately." Page 9, point 53.

Shouldn't be paid less than Pay Tariff rates.

"No **PGR can be paid at a rate that is lower** than the University's standard hourly pay rate for the role, or in a manner inconsistent with the PGR Teaching Tariff. In exceptional circumstances and **where clearly justified, a higher pay rate might be paid** by the School" Page 10, point 56.

Unpaid teaching is the exception, and must be clearly justified to you.

"...volunteer in an unpaid capacity to assist with teaching duties where this would further their own development. These **duties should be limited**, and the PGR should not substantially contribute towards teaching, or be involved in assessment and feedback..." Page 9, point 57.

"These opportunities are likely to be organised on a case-by-case basis and initiated by the PGR... There **must be a clear justification as to why** this is a development opportunity and unpaid." Page 10, point 58.

Please note: The presumption is that all PGR teaching (encompassing many different duties) should be paid according to the pay tariff. If you are being asked to teach students, supervise students' projects or provide any other form of instruction/feedback without pay, we would urge you to raise the matter with your School Director of Learning and Teaching or PGR Teaching Co-ordinator and seek a full justification.





RAISING CONCERNS

Your school should clearly communicate mechanisms to raise concerns.

"The University requires Schools to establish and clearly communicate mechanisms by which both PGRs and the students they support in their learning can raise concerns about any aspect of PGR Teaching." Page 11, point 66.

CONCERNS, ADVICE AND REPRESENTATION

Your School PGR Student Reps are there to support you and can raise your issues with staff in School meetings and College Forums. You can contact your PGR Teaching Co-ordinator and your Head of School directly as they have oversight of PGR Teaching in their School. You can also contact HR staff in your School, College, or centrally in the University, as well as the Postgraduate Dean of your College.

The Students' Union provides an independent, confidential advice service called Student Advice. Our team of expert advisors can advise you on any employment, financial or academic issues you are facing. www.cardiffstudents.com/advice and Advice@cardiff.ac.uk.

The annually elected Vice President Postgraduate Students' of the Students' Union can advocate on your behalf at every level of the University, and frequently meets with University HR, University Library, University IT and the senior College and University-level staff to raise teaching concerns. VPPostgraduate@cardiff.ac.uk.

PGRs are able to join the [Universities and College Union \(UCU\)](#), who can also provide expert advice to their members. Please note however that as PGRs are not currently considered employees the University does not recognise UCU as representing PGRs.



This checklist has been produced by Cardiff University Students' Union and updated by Jane Chukwu (VP Postgraduates) based upon our evidenced interpretation of the Cardiff University PGR Teaching Code of Practice. We have identified those areas of the Code that are most frequently not implemented, and which some PGR Reps have raised as concerns. Please use this checklist, along with the Code itself, to ensure that you and your colleagues are receiving all of the rights, training and support which you entitled to.

The Students' Union has been working for the last few years to improve the collective position of PGRs who teach, and there are many improvements that still need to happen. If you would like support from your Union with PGR Teaching issues in your School, or would like to discuss this checklist, please contact Jane Harding (Student Advice Team) at Jane-Advice@cardiff.ac.uk or Jane Chukwu (Vice President for Postgraduates) at vppostgraduates@cardiff.ac.uk

1. [Code of Practice for PGR Teaching \(Full Document Link\)](#)
2. [Contacts for PGRs who Teach \(School, College and University level contacts to discuss PGR teaching issues\)](#)
3. [Official Task List for Graduate Tutors \(reasonably expected tasks for each role\)](#)
4. [Official Task List for Graduate Demonstrators \(reasonably expected tasks for each role\)](#)
5. [PGR Pay Tariff \(you can check if you are being paid the correct rate for each task\)](#)
6. [FAQs for PGRs who Teach \(Frequently asked questions about Pay Tariff\)](#)
7. [Graduate Tutor & Demonstrator Engagement form \(Terms and conditions, entitlements, etc\)](#)
8. [Postgraduate Employment Charter \(created by UCU and NUS\)](#)
9. [PGR Teaching Support page in details \(contains downloadable versions of all the above University documents as well as further useful information\)](#)

