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## **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR PGR TEACHING**

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## **Code of Practice for PGR Teaching**

### **Introduction**

1. The University recognises that supporting the learning of others provides a valuable opportunity for research students to develop their professional skills, and encourages their involvement in supporting the delivery of teaching: for example, to act as tutors or demonstrators and to assess students' work.
2. Through this Code of Practice, the University seeks to ensure that research students are engaged in teaching in accordance with the following principles:
  - that research students engaged in teaching are treated fairly and consistently in respect of recruitment, selection, training, monitoring, remuneration and support
  - that the quality of teaching and assessment is safeguarded
  - that teaching activities undertaken by research students are not to the detriment of their research progress.
3. The Code applies only to individuals whose primary relationship with the University is as a postgraduate research student. The Code does not apply to those individuals who are primarily employees of the University and who are permitted to register as a staff candidate for a research degree. University employees are governed by different arrangements.
4. This Code does not cover work in which PGRs might be engaged by a School, other than the support of learning and teaching (e.g. UCAS visits and invigilation of class tests), but key principles of fairness and transparency should also apply when making such appointments.
5. For the sake of clarity and succinctness, the following shorthand terms are used in this Code:
  - PGR: postgraduate research student who is engaged in teaching/assessment activities
  - students: those taught students whose learning is being supported by a PGR
  - PGR Teaching: teaching and learning support activities undertaken by the PGR.

### **Responsibilities**

6. Each Head of School should nominate a member of their staff as a PGR Teaching Co-ordinator. This person is responsible for the co-ordination of teaching undertaken in that School by PGRs, both from within and beyond that School, and for adherence to this Code of Practice. The PGR Teaching Co-ordinator should be identified in the School Handbook or relevant web information.

7. The School Manager or their nominee is responsible for ensuring that the necessary identification checks, record keeping and payment processes are carried out effectively for PGRs engaged in teaching in their School.
8. In recruiting and engaging PGRs in teaching activities, Schools should be mindful of the University's Strategic Equality Plan and give due regard to the impact of their processes and decisions on the 'protected characteristics' (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) identified under the Equality Act 2010.
9. Responsibility for the delivery and assessment of modules supported by PGRs remains with the relevant Module Leader. The Module Leader is responsible for providing the PGR with instruction specific to the module.
10. Graduate Tutors and Graduate Demonstrators are responsible to the relevant Head of School for the delivery of teaching duties they agree to undertake.
11. The Pro Vice-Chancellor for Student Experience and Academic Standards is responsible for maintaining an institution-wide overview of PGR Teaching, including through the University's quality assurance mechanisms.

### **Opportunities and Eligibility**

12. Teaching opportunities may not be available in all Schools and there may be a limited number of opportunities in other Schools. Further, the hours of teaching available will vary depending on the operational requirements of the School engaging the PGR. 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.
13. Teaching duties which may be undertaken by PGRs include: delivering seminars/small group teaching; providing studio/software/technical/statistical advice and support; project/clinic supervision; lecturing (expected to be on an occasional basis only); laboratory demonstrating; fieldwork/fieldtrip assistance; acting as a MOOC mentor; marking formative/summative assessments and providing feedback.
14. 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.
15. The roles of Graduate Tutor and Graduate Demonstrator can only be undertaken while the PGR has a current status on a research degree programme of Cardiff University, and where there are no concerns over the PGR's academic progress.

16. The School engaging PGRs for teaching is required to carry out a Right to Work in the UK check prior to the commencement of the engagement and every 12 months thereafter.
17. Unless there are contractual commitments (e.g. as part of a Graduate Teaching Assistantship scheme), PGRs cannot be obliged to carry out teaching duties. Similarly, access to funds for research training support cannot be dependent upon a PGR's willingness to undertake teaching.

### **Limits on Hours and Responsibility**

18. A PGR's engagement in teaching should always be secondary to their primary purpose of completing their research programme, and the hours allocated are limited so as not to impede academic progress.
19. In line with Research Council UK recommendations, 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. These figures include class contact, preparation, marking, feedback, and administration, but not training.
20. The PGR is responsible for keeping a record of their teaching hours and for informing their PGR Teaching Co-ordinator(s) if there is the likelihood that the limit will be exceeded, and for ensuring that the amount of work they undertake is not in breach of any separate conditions of their sponsorship.
21. A PGR holding a Tier 4 visa must ensure that they work no more than 20 hours per week in any paid or unpaid employment, either within or outside of the University. This is an absolute maximum number, not an average figure, and includes all teaching and related activities, including training.
22. The School engaging the PGR is responsible for not knowingly exceeding the limit on the number of hours permitted.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. Note on assessing the work of others: It is expected that assessments marked by PGRs will be subject to some form of moderation, and that

second marking of all assignments within an individual assessment task will take place where the risk of variability in marking (or perceived risk) is high, and when the assessment could have a significant impact on a student's progression and/or final award.

### **Recruitment of PGRs for Teaching Roles**

27. The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in respect of employment. In selecting PGRs for teaching opportunities, Schools should ensure that the University's equal opportunities standards are applied. This will normally involve advertising the opportunities available to all eligible PGRs and allowing them to put themselves forward for consideration.
28. 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.
29. 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 an application or expression of interest.
30. Schools should use the generic Task Lists when describing teaching opportunities.
31. Where it is appropriate for them to do so, Schools are strongly encouraged to promote PGR Teaching opportunities beyond their own School, typically by asking the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator(s) in cognate Schools to notify their PGRs.
32. The requirements for an application or expression of interest should be proportionate to the level of responsibility for the role. As a minimum, PGRs should be required to:
  - state how their skills and experience meet the requirements for the role
  - provide confirmation from their supervisor of satisfactory research progress.

33. All PGRs engaged in teaching should be assessed for their suitability prior to appointment. The University expects that the selection of PGRs for teaching and the allocation of teaching duties shall be made on the basis of:
- their knowledge of the subject area
  - their enthusiasm and ability to engage with students
  - organisational and communication abilities
  - the availability of the PGR.
34. 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.
35. There may be occasional and unexpected circumstances where opportunities for teaching are genuinely ad hoc and it is not possible to advertise that opportunity in the usual manner, and a PGR may be invited to cover teaching duties at short notice. It is still important that the PGR is clear about what is expected of them and whether they require training.
36. 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.
37. 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.
38. Wherever possible, PGRs should be notified of their teaching duties well in advance of their scheduled contact time so that they can sufficiently prepare and manage their teaching workload to minimise the impact upon their research degree studies and other commitments.
39. The PGR must confirm whether they agree to undertake the duties they have been allocated.

## **Information and Resources**



40. It is the responsibility of the School to provide clear and comprehensive information to enable the PGRs they engage to carry out their duties effectively.
41. 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.
42. 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.

### **Training**

43. It is the responsibility of the Head of School or their nominee (e.g. PGR Teaching Co-ordinator) to ensure that all PGRs who are allocated teaching duties in his/her School are fully supported in that activity.
44. The University requires that all PGRs receive training and briefing appropriate to the teaching activity prior to commencing that teaching, or as soon thereafter as is practicable. 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 and Inclusion online training (available within the series of HR Mandatory modules on Learning Central)
  - specific information about the modules(s) to which they will be contributing (see below).
45. 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.

46. Schools should specify the required training as part of the recruitment process and in the appointment information. PGR students who have prior teaching experience may, at the discretion of the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator, be exempt from certain training requirements.
47. PGRs should be required to provide evidence to the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator that they have completed the required training within the timescale stipulated by the School. PGRs who do not undertake the required training should not be permitted to undertake teaching.
48. A distinction is made between the training that is required for PGRs to undertake teaching and assessment tasks and those additional opportunities which support PGRs in developing their teaching skills for career development. In some Schools, where training and support systems for PGR Teaching are well-developed, opportunities for professional development may be integrated with the training requirements. Further, PGRs may seek recognition for their teaching through an individual application for Associate Fellow Status of the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Schools are not obliged to provide or monitor wider professional development when engaging PGRs in teaching.
49. Note on assessing the work of others: The skills required to assess students' work cannot be acquired solely by having a deep understanding of the subject matter. Developing a shared understanding of the academic standards within a programme requires experience, an appreciation of marking culture, and a wider understanding of pedagogy and the principles that support assessment. Heads of School need to ensure that PGRs involved in assessment are properly prepared and supported when undertaking assessment duties.

### **Mentors**

50. 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. Schools should provide Mentors with details of their responsibilities and PGRs should be made aware of their Mentor's role in supporting their teaching. 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.

*Example of School practice:*

*“Each student engaged in teaching is assigned an independent mentor who is a staff member that is not either the student’s supervisor or the module leader. The mentor conducts compulsory observation of the student’s teaching. The impartiality of the mentor’s role helps to avoid conflict of interests that might otherwise arise and allows the mentor objectively to assess the student’s teaching, provide feedback to the student and to provide an important quality assurance mechanism within the School. If there are concerns over the quality of the student’s teaching then the mentor will work with the student to address the issues. The mentor also serves as the first point of contact for the student to raise any concerns relating to PGR teaching which may be difficult to raise with the module leader.”*

51. Schools may, in addition and if they so wish, put in place peer-observation systems, peer-support networks and/or discussion groups for PGRs involved in teaching.
52. Schools are not required to appoint Mentors to Graduate Demonstrators, though may do if they so wish. 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.

### **Task Lists and Pay**

53. 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.
54. To promote consistency in levels of pay for PGR Teaching across the University, a standard hourly rate of pay is assigned to each role. PGRs should be paid for the number of class contact hours to which they are appointed, in addition to the number of hours required for preparation, feedback, and assessment, in accordance with the University’s PGR Teaching Tariff.
55. Schools are expected periodically to monitor the actual number of hours worked by PGRs for preparation, assessment, and feedback (e.g. via timesheets) so that any necessary adjustments can be reported to the University and reviewed as necessary.

56. 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 (e.g. to appoint a PGR who has extensive teaching experience and teaching qualifications; to cover unexpected staff absence) but the rate must usually be within the pay grade for the role.

### **Unpaid Teaching**

57. PGRs may wish to 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 without being in receipt of a Letter of Engagement and payment in accordance with the PGR Teaching Tariff.
58. These opportunities are likely to be organised on a case-by-case basis and initiated by the PGR. The relevant Module Leader should consult with the School Director of Learning and Teaching and the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator and seek their approval before delegating their teaching in this way. There must be a clear justification as to why this is a development opportunity and unpaid.
59. The member of staff with responsibility for the delivery of these duties should support the PGR in preparing for the teaching, observing the teaching, and providing detailed feedback and guidance to the PGR, in the same manner as PGRs undertaking a paid role. The limitations on hours and responsibilities specified above shall apply equally to those undertaking unpaid teaching.
60. Where a PGR has a funded scholarship which is based on their commitment to teaching duties, they would not normally receive additional payments for PGR Teaching.

### **Monitoring Performance**

61. Schools are required to monitor PGR Teaching in order to provide constructive feedback to Graduate Tutors and Demonstrators and to assure the quality of the teaching and learning support they provide to students. Arrangements for monitoring performance are overseen by the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator.
62. Graduate Tutors should be observed in each semester they are allocated teaching activities, by their Mentor (ordinarily), the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator, or the Module Leader, and written feedback should be provided on the teaching activity and its preparation. This also forms a record for the School.

63. Second markers of students' work assessed by PGRs should notify the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator if there are any concerns over the quality or standard of the marking and feedback provided by the PGR.
64. Graduate Demonstrators should be observed routinely by the Module or Laboratory Leader. The feedback to the PGR and the School record is expected to be proportionate to the activity, but should be sufficient to document whether the teaching is of an adequate standard.
65. Should the performance of a Graduate Tutor or a Graduate Demonstrator be considered less than satisfactory, the PGR Teaching Co-ordinator should meet them, their Mentor, and/or staff member who carried out the class observation. Depending on the severity of the concerns, the PGR may be: provided with additional advice and guidance; required to undertake further training; assigned no further allocation of teaching hours; relieved of their teaching duties with immediate effect. The reasons for the action taken should be provided in writing.

*Example of School practice:*

*"Observation is conducted by the Graduate Teaching Coordinator who provides verbal feedback to the student immediately after the session and then writes a 500 word report on their teaching, of which students receive a copy. If there are any issues the student is asked to attend a meeting to discuss how to address their weaknesses and any further training requirements. Students are asked to reflect on their own teaching in light of the observation report and consider how they can improve and develop their teaching skills. The written report and self-reflection serves as a useful evidence base for students who go on to apply for HEA Associate Fellow status."*

### **Concerns About PGR Teaching**

66. 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. Issues which cannot be resolved at School-level should be reported to the appropriate College Dean of Postgraduate Research Studies or raised through College Forum channels by Student Representatives.

*Example of School practice:*

*"The School has a designated Graduate Tutor Representative that sits on the Board of Studies and the Teaching & Learning Committee to represent PGR students who are involved in teaching".*