

Code of Practice for the Use of Postgraduate Researchers in Teaching

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UNIVERSITY

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Doctoral School.	Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee.	3 November 2023.	Every three years.

Note: In exceptional circumstances, and subject to approval by the Chair of the Senate Regulations and Special Cases Committee, responsibilities assigned to Schools, Heads, of School, School Officers or School Committees in these Regulations may be assumed by the College, Head of College, College Officers or College Committees respectively, as appropriate.

Code of Practice for the Use of Postgraduate Researchers in Teaching



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This Code outlines the roles and responsibilities of both postgraduate researchers and the University regarding postgraduate teachers.

Introduction

1. In this Code of Practice, the terms Teaching Assistant and Demonstrator are used to describe postgraduate researchers who undertake teaching duties. Other terms may be used by schools if they are a better description of the specific activities. For example, the terms may include tutors or postgraduate tutors. However, any school-specific terms must correspond, in relation to expected responsibilities and payment rates, to Teaching Assistant or Demonstrator as described in this Code of Practice.
2. Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators should be issued a contract of employment if their duties are aligned to the job descriptions in Appendix 1A and 1B and if the appointment is for a guaranteed minimum number of hours; otherwise, they should complete teaching activities under the Procedures for Employing Casual Staff (Casual Worker System'). Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators can also complete teaching activities as part of training modules (See paragraph 7).
3. This Code does not apply to Graduate Teaching Assistants. Graduate Teaching Assistants are members of staff, appointed under the terms of a contract of employment, and enrol on a postgraduate programme as permitted by the contract. The teaching commitments, and training requirements, for Graduate Teaching Assistants are defined by their terms of employment.
4. The University has a responsibility to:
 - Ensure that postgraduate researchers have sufficient time to complete their studies within the prescribed time limits.
 - Assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment delivered/provided by postgraduate researchers.
 - Ensure that postgraduate researchers have sufficient opportunity to develop their teaching experience portfolio.
5. The contribution of postgraduate research candidates to teaching, as Teaching Assistants or Demonstrators, must be voluntary. The only exception is where the terms of a scholarship (or equivalent – see paragraph 7) requires postgraduate research candidates to teach or stipulates that they are not permitted to teach.

Training and instruction

6. Postgraduate research candidates must receive appropriate training (see paragraph 8) before they undertake duties as Teaching Assistants or Demonstrators. With the agreement of the supervisor, whose role is described in the Regulations for Postgraduate Research Programmes, postgraduate research candidates can enrol on modules delivered by the University, college or school that are part of accredited teaching awards.

7. Under the terms of a scholarship or under the conditions imposed by a school when a postgraduate research candidate is offered a place to study, Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators may be required to complete training modules whose learning outcomes require a contribution to teaching. It is not expected that postgraduate researchers will be paid for any teaching that forms part of these pre-agreed training modules.
8. The member of academic staff organising a teaching activity must ensure that Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators are properly equipped to fulfil their role. For each teaching activity, Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators must be given in advance:
 - The aims and objectives of the activity, and, if defined, the learning outcomes.
 - Any relevant background material that the students are expected to have read, including resources available electronically.
 - Schedules and risk assessments for laboratory classes or fieldwork.
 - Details of the staff members who can provide support and guidance relating to the teaching activity.
 - Details of the payment rate for the teaching activity.
9. If Demonstrators or Teaching Assistants provide feedback on assessed work they must be adequately briefed. As a minimum, the organiser must provide a clear explanation of the task, marking criteria and a marking scheme. The assessed work must be verified as required by the Regulations for Taught Programmes.

Payment

10. Postgraduate researchers must be paid for undertaking teaching activities. Unpaid teaching is permitted if postgraduate research candidates are teaching as part of training modules (see paragraph 7).
11. Some scholarships include payment for teaching, and researchers must only be paid for work that is additional to the teaching defined by the scholarship.
12. The payment rates for Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators are available from the Finance Office's website. Teaching Assistants must be paid at the Tutorial Teaching rate (aligned to Grade 6 on the University's Pay Scale) and Demonstrators must be paid at the Demonstrating Duties rate (aligned to Grade 5 on the University's Pay Scale).
13. Alternative payment rates may only be used if explicitly defined by a contractual arrangement between the postgraduate research candidate and the University and/or Sponsor.

Types of teaching activities

14. The types of teaching activities that can be completed by Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators are in Appendix 1A and 1B. Demonstrators must not exceed the limits imposed by Appendix 1. For example, they may contribute to modules but may not deliver a whole module.

Appointment of Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators

15. Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators must be selected and appointed in accordance with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy. There must be a fair and transparent procedure for appointing individuals and allocating duties. The specific requirements of the role in terms of knowledge, skills and training must be

stated and schools must ensure that Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators have the necessary pre-requisites for the role.

16. Schools must have their own arrangements to ensure that duties are planned and agreed with the postgraduate research candidate's supervisor well in advance and that any costs associated with the activity can be met from the school budget. Retrospective applications to pay Teaching Assistants or Demonstrators must not be accepted (e.g. an application to pay for teaching that was not approved in advance).

Teaching commitments

17. Supervisors must ensure that an individual postgraduate researcher's teaching commitments are not so excessive as to threaten completion of their studies. It is recommended that teaching activities should not exceed 250 hours per year and should not normally exceed 6 hours in any single week during the year. This includes any time associated with preparation and marking.
18. The limits defined in paragraph 17 may only be exceeded if higher limits are defined by a contractual arrangement between the postgraduate researcher and the University and/or Sponsor and where the extra commitment has been taken into account by applying for an extended registration period.
19. Postgraduate researchers who are studying in the UK under an immigration visa must not exceed the working hours stipulated for their type of visa or on their visa.

Monitoring and feedback

20. The module organiser or activity organiser must provide constructive support and feedback to Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators so that they benefit from the experience and can take this forward to subsequent activities. This may be facilitated by including Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators in a school's scheme for peer observation and review of teaching.
21. Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators must be part of the school's processes for reviewing teaching and modules including the opinions of students who have been taught.
22. Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators who have concerns about any aspect of the teaching duties that have been assigned must, in the first instance, try to discuss and resolve these with their supervisor. College and schools may designate persons to act as mentors for Teaching Assistants and Demonstrators. The mentor can be a single academic point of contact with whom the postgraduate researcher can raise issues and from whom they can seek advice, who is qualified to supervise postgraduate teaching and is in a position to potentially provide an academic reference in the future. Where issues cannot be resolved, concerns must be pursued using the appropriate procedure and postgraduate researchers may be supported by the Students' Union and/or the relevant campus union. Advice about procedures can be obtained from the Director of the Doctoral School.
23. Supervisors who have concerns about any aspect of the teaching duties undertaken by a postgraduate research candidate must, in the first instance, try to discuss and resolve these with the postgraduate researcher. Where they cannot be resolved, concerns can be pursued under the appropriate procedures depending on the issues involved.

Appendix 1 – Role Profiles

<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/humanresources/systems/JobDescriptions.php.en>

A. Demonstrator (aligned to Grade 5 on the University's Pay Scale).

Purpose of the job

Demonstrators are engaged to carry out activities which are closely supervised by academic staff and the duties relate to activities defined by specific guidelines or protocols.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Supporting academic staff in a practical/laboratory class.
- Contributing short presentations as part of a lecture given by academic staff.
- Taking part in seminars/tutorials led by academic staff.
- Giving guidance to students or others on the use of specialist equipment and/or techniques.
- Completing a supervised research project (outside the scope of the PhD study topic) following protocols provided by academic staff.
- Assigning marks based on pre-defined answers prepared by academic staff.
- Conducting an administrative task in the school where the task is defined by criteria/protocols.

B. Teaching Assistant (aligned to Grade 6 on the University's Pay Scale)

Purpose of the job

Teaching Assistants conduct teaching activities defined by academic staff. The duties relate to activities that are defined in broad terms and the postgraduate researcher has the autonomy to develop and prepare teaching materials.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Conducting a practical/laboratory class with a group of students without the direct involvement of academic staff.
- Leading seminars/tutorials without the direct involvement of academic staff.
- Completing a supervised research project (outside the scope of the PhD study topic) where the aims are defined but working methods have to be developed, tested and applied.
- Giving guidance to students or others on the use of specialist equipment and/or techniques and helping students to formulate research questions and data capture/analysis.
- Delivering a series of lectures prepared by an academic member of staff, as part of a module or short course organised by the academic member of staff.
- Delivering a single or a small number of lectures as part of a module or short course.
- Conducting a teaching and learning related administrative task in the school, where the aims of the task are defined but ways of completing the task have to be developed. Tasks undertaken should be commensurate with pay grade.