GUIDANCE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS WHO SUPPORT TEACHING AND TEACHING-RELATED ACTIVITIES

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Guidance for Postgraduate Research Students who support teaching and teaching-related activities.

Contents

Introduction

1. The University of Strathclyde (University) recognises that the participation of Postgraduate Research (PGR) students in teaching and teaching-related activities brings a range of benefits to PGRs, the students they teach and support, and the wider University. The University values the role PGRs play in the delivery of high-quality teaching and teaching-related activities. The University also understands that employment in a teaching or teaching-related capacity can provide an excellent opportunity for PGRs to develop a range of personal and professional skills. The University, therefore, encourages PGRs to consider teaching and teaching-related opportunities whenever they arise.

2. This guidance provides PGRs and Departments/Schools with information about PGR employment and development in a teaching or teaching-related role in the University. Specifically, this guidance details the University's approach to recruitment and terms of employment, such as rates of pay, and outlines how the University seeks to support and facilitate professional development for PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles.

3. This guidance supplements the University's Policy and Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Study, and should be read in conjunction with the University's Engagement of Workers Guidance which details in full the process for employing PGRs.

4. This guidance applies to all PGRs (and any Postgraduate Taught Students) employed by the University to undertake teaching or teaching-related activities at the University, but does not apply to current full or part-time members of staff of the University who are concurrently registered on a postgraduate research degree programme at the University.

5. This guidance has been developed to meet the requirements and expectations set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and QAA Scotland's Statement of Expectations for the Support of Postgraduates Who Teach.

Key principles

7. This guidance is underpinned by the following key principles, which ensure that the expectations set by best practice across the higher education sector can be met by the University. The University expects that:

   a. PGR students will be paid appropriately for all teaching and teaching-related duties, and associated mandatory training (as stipulated by their Department/School), they undertake (see Para 5.9.1 of University's Policy and Code of Practice for Research Study);

   b. PGRs who are appointed to teach and support teaching will be provided with appropriate and adequate training prior to taking on any duties, and will be supported and mentored in order to carry out these duties effectively;

c. PGRs may be involved in teaching and teaching-related activities with undergraduate and postgraduate-taught students. Faculties and Departments/Schools may, however, chose to impose particular restrictions and/or conditions on PGR involvement in particular teaching and teaching-related activities;

d. PGRs employed in teaching and teaching-related roles on a given module or programme are considered a part of that module and/or programme team;

e. PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles should be given an appropriate job title (for example, Graduate Teaching Assistant, Graduate Tutor, Graduate Demonstrator) which accurately reflects the nature of their duties;

f. PGRs' teaching and teaching-related workloads will be monitored by Departments/Schools to ensure that they do not unduly distract any PGR from their primary focus which is completing their postgraduate research degree;

g. PGRs may provide support for formative and summative assessment and in doing so must adhere to the University's *Assessment and Feedback Policy*;

h. teaching and teaching-related opportunities made available to PGRs are optional (unless otherwise stated or agreed in an individual's specific funding arrangements or similar contracts);

i. the availability of teaching and teaching-related opportunities for PGRs will vary over time and between Departments/Schools, and decisions on the allocation of available opportunities will be made based on an assessment of the qualifications, experience, aptitude, and skills of each individual; and,

j. Departments/Schools will take all reasonable steps to ensure that PGRs involved in teaching and teaching-related activities remain able to successfully complete their research degree programme within the expected maximum period and that the expected quality of teaching and learning is always safeguarded.

Teaching and teaching-related opportunities

8. Where teaching and teaching-related activities are offered to PGRs, they may include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

    a. Tutoring (e.g. teaching tutorials, seminars, workshops, and other small group teaching sessions)
    b. Lecturing (e.g. teaching for extended periods to large groups either individually, or as part of a team-teaching approach)
    c. Laboratory and practical class demonstrating
    d. Project supervision with and mentoring of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students
    e. Fieldwork and fieldtrip assistance with undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules and programmes
    f. Pastoral support
    g. Marking and providing feedback on summative assessments
    h. Providing feedback on formative assessments (e.g. written or verbal feedback on class presentations)
    i. Invigilation
    j. Scribing and notetaking
    k. Transcribing
    l. Online teaching support (e.g. monitoring student forums)

    While PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles are responsible for undertaking the specific duties allocated to them, the Module Leader and/or Programme Director will retain overall responsibility for teaching and assessment for the module and/or programme.

9. The criteria for undertaking teaching and teaching-related roles as a PGR should include, but not necessarily be limited to, one or more of the following:

    a) subject-specific knowledge, skills, and/or expertise;

    b) demonstrated competence in skills and capabilities associated with effective teaching and/or student engagement;

    c) level of study (see also point 7.c above);

    d) confidence, based on consultation with the PGRs supervisors where necessary, that the proposed activities are unlikely to have a negative impact on the individual's progress with their postgraduate research degree; and,

    e) equality of opportunity.

10. Where it is determined that a PGR should not undertake new teaching or teaching-related duties due to concerns relating to the criteria set out in point 9 above, they are entitled to ask the selector(s) for a justification, and may appeal this decision in writing to the Programme Director and/or the Department/School's Director or Head of Learning and Teaching (or equivalent). The Programme Director and/or Director or Head of Learning and Teaching will consider this appeal, liaising with the PGR's Supervisor as appropriate, and respond to the PGR in writing.

Fair recruitment and employment

Appointment

11. As a people-oriented institution and socially progressive employer, the University values the contribution PGR's make to learning and teaching activities. The University recognises that in order to ensure equal opportunity for all, teaching vacancies that exceed 100 hours duration will be advertised in accordance with the University's policies for equality and diversity.

12. Teaching and teaching-related roles and opportunities should be openly advertised via email and by announcement by Module Leaders and/or Programme Directors and/or on Engage ATS as they arise.

13. The statement of particulars for each role should set out essential and desirable criteria for the role. Suitable candidates will be invited to apply electronically.

14. Module Leaders and/or Programme Directors (or nominees) are responsible for managing the selection process (normally one or more interviews for shortlisted candidates) within the advertised timeframe and ensuring the most appropriate candidate is selected for the role. Unsuccessful candidates will be encouraged to seek feedback on their application.

Hours of Work and Payment

15. In line with the *University's Policy and Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Study*, PGRs appointed to teaching and teaching-related roles will be paid in line with University pay and grading arrangements (para 5.9.5). Furthermore, it is important that paid work, including any time spent on preparation, marking, and other activities directly supporting students, should be limited to a maximum of 7 hours per week averaged across a calendar year (para 5.9.3). This limit also applies to students with a student visa who have an additional restriction of only being allowed to work 20 hours in any one week, (it is important that students with a student visa take advice on any work restrictions at the point of undertaking contracts to work). This is a strict visa requirement and cannot be exceed by averaging working hours over a number of weeks. Students who have asylum seeker status would have to have their right to work checked on an individual case-by-case basis.

16. A *right to work in the UK check* must be completed for each PGR employed by Departments/Schools before they begin work. Details of this check should be recorded in the Department/School PGR teaching and teaching-related training register (**Appendix A: Department/School PGR teaching and teaching-related training register**).

17. Any PGR who undertakes teaching (in any capacity) will receive a contract, with a guaranteed minimum number of hours, and this should be issued and signed before any work takes place. The University does not use zero-hours contracts under any circumstances.

18. Information on how claims for payment can be made and who can authorise these payments should be made available by Departments/Schools to PGRs in teaching or teaching-related roles during their induction and at appropriate times throughout the academic year.

19. Payment to PGRs in teaching or teaching-related roles is issued using one of two methods:

   a. If a PGR is contracted for less than 100 hours per year, they will be paid through the Supplementary Payment System.

   b. If a PGR is contracted for more than 100 hours per year, they will be paid through Hourly Paid Employee Contracts.

   Regardless of the method for payment, the monthly deadline date for the submission of claims is the 5th to ensure payment is made within the next calendar month. Departments/Schools must ensure all payments are approved and processed in a timely manner.

20. Further guidance and information on rates of pay for PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles is available on the Human Resources pages of the University's website. The payment of hourly rates for tutoring and demonstrating is based on grades 6 and 5 respectively of the University's salary scale.

21. PGRs are entitled to holiday payments equivalent to the rate of holidays that apply to staff. Holidays are paid at the appropriate rate and commensurate with time worked in any given pay period.

22. Payment to PGRs should take account of the time required to prepare for and support teaching and teaching-related activities, such as but not limited to, grading work submitted for assessment and providing feedback, active preparation for teaching, time spent supporting students outside of teaching contact time. Time spent by PGRs engaged in mandatory training for teaching should also be paid. Each activity attracting payment should be clearly demarcated in claims and payments (i.e. multipliers should not be used).

23. The amount of time for preparation, marking and providing feedback will vary depending on the activity type and discipline but should be realistic, clear, justifiable, and communicated clearly to PGRs through the Department/School induction process. In order to enable consistency in the time allocated to marking, a baseline framework is provided below.

Word length of assessment	Marking time per item of assessment
100 – 1000 words	2 minutes per 100 words
1001 – 1500 words	20 minutes
1501 – 2000 words	30 minutes
2001 – 3000 words	45 minutes

   Departments/Schools will be able to assess and prescribe the necessary time required to undertake any duties associated with teaching and teaching-related activities in their Department/School and should communicate this clearly to PGRs to ensure claims for payment are fair and accurate.

24. The Head of Department/School should nominate a member of staff to act as a point of contact for PGRs who have concerns regarding contracts, payments, or time and support assigned to teaching or teaching-related activities (e.g. if a PGR believes that the time assigned to complete an activity is insufficient then the Department/School should review this and/or provide additional training or support to ensure the work can be completed within the allotted time). The nominated member of staff should ensure the

timely reporting to the appropriate Vice-Dean Academic of issues raised in their Department/School.

25. Details of concerns about teaching and teaching-related matters PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles have reported to a Vice-Dean Academic (directly and indirectly) will be included in the Faculty Annual Review submitted to the Quality Assurance Committee with onward reporting to Senate.

Grievance, Performance and Disciplinary Procedures

26. PGR's who undertake paid employment are subject to the University's policies and procedures in relation to *grievance*, *performance and conduct*. Grievance and Disciplinary policies may apply to activities outside of the working environment even if they do not take place during working hours. PGRs should read these policies carefully prior to commencing the undertaking of duties.

Ensuring Equality and Diversity

27. The University is committed to encouraging equality, diversity and inclusion among its workforce, and eliminating unlawful discrimination. The aim is for staff and students to be truly representative of all sections of society, and for each person to feel respected and able to give their best to their work. It is the University's expectation that all staff, students and visitors participate in the life of the University in a manner which ensures that everyone they encounter as a member of this community is treated with dignity and respect. In accordance with the stated value of being people-oriented the University expects members of the University community to uphold the core values of respect for others and equality of opportunity, openness, integrity, and honesty.

28. More information about the University's *Equality and Diversity Policy* is available online.

Responsibilities

PGRs undertaking teaching and teaching-related duties

29. In order to effectively perform their teaching and teaching-related duties at the University, PGRs should:

    a. take the necessary steps to ensure that they are fully competent in the disciplinary knowledge and skills required by their allocated teaching or teaching-related duties, including, as a minimum, completing whatever training their Department/School considers mandatory;

    b. be committed to their own professional development, actively seeking out opportunities for development and support within their Department/School and the wider University;

    c. ensure they are punctual and well prepared for their specific duties;

    d. understand and adhere to the University's expectations around equality and diversity;

e. constructively engage with and act upon feedback received from students they teach and support, their PGR peers in similar roles, and academic and professional services staff involved in the module and/or programme their teaching and teaching-related duties contributes to; and,

f. ensure that they communicate to Module Leaders and/or Programme Directors any concerns they hold or which have been expressed to them by students relating to or arising from their teaching and teaching-related activities.

University

30. Departments/Schools will have a member of staff, nominated by the Head of Department/School, who is responsible for the coordination of teaching and teaching-related activities undertaken in that Department/School by PGRs.

31. Overall responsibility for the teaching and assessment of modules and/or programmes supported by PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles remains with the relevant Module Leader and/or Programme Director.

32. Module Leaders and/or Programme Directors will provide PGRs undertaking teaching and teaching-related duties with clear and comprehensive information and appropriate support and resources to enable them to carry out their duties effectively.

33. Departments/Schools must ensure that adequate training and opportunities for developing disciplinary knowledge and skills and competence in teaching, assessment, and support are provided to PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles, prior to the PGR undertaking those duties with students.

34. The completion of mandatory training must be recorded in the *Department/School PGR teaching and teaching-related training register* (Appendix A). These registers must be submitted annually by Faculties to the University's Quality Assurance Committee's second meeting of the academic year.

35. Departments/Schools should implement a monitoring and review process for PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles with the aim of maintaining standards for students and providing clear and constructive feedback to PGRs.

36. Directors or Heads of Learning and Teaching are responsible for ensuring that the contributions of PGRs to teaching and teaching-related activities in their Department/School adhere to expected standards for quality assurance set out in all Faculty and University policies, processes, and procedures.

37. Departments/Schools must ensure that payment claims submitted by PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles are processed promptly and efficiently.

38. Departments/Schools will ensure that the necessary identification checks, record keeping, and payment processes are carried out effectively for PGRs engaged in teaching and teaching-related duties in their Department/School.

Training, development, and support

39. In order to maintain the highest standards in the teaching, assessment, and support of students, and to facilitate career development and progression for PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles, the University is committed to providing PGRs with opportunities and resources to develop their knowledge, skills, and experience in learning and teaching and the support of students.

Induction and Training

40. The University requires that all PGRs with teaching and teaching-related responsibilities receive appropriate training and guidance for their intended role. The nature, scope, and extent of training considered essential may vary across Departments/Schools, but the University requires all PGRs intending to support teaching to complete the core mandatory training delivered by the Researcher Development Team before undertaking any teaching or teaching-related duties.

41. Core mandatory training for PGRs entering teaching or teaching-related roles is provided by the Researcher Development Team. More information about the training offered by the Researcher Development Team will be provided upon appointment. Bookings for training can be made through the University's *Development and Training Gateway* via Pegasus.

42. It is the responsibility of the employing Department/School to ensure that PGRs participate in any additional training for teaching and teaching-related roles considered mandatory in that Department/School, and that PGRs are made fully aware of these and other training and development opportunities.

43. PGRs in teaching or teaching-related roles should expect to receive an appropriate formal induction within their Department/School, which is distinct from their general induction as a student to the University, that:

    a. helps to develop an understanding of their role, and the aims and objectives to which they will be working;

    b. details what knowledge, skills, and standards are required to perform their specified duties;

    c. provides guidance as to how they can continue their personal development whilst carrying out their role;

    d. provides essential training which meets legal obligations (e.g. Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity);

    e. provides reference to key Human Resources policies and resources;

    f. meets requirements of professional, statutory or regulatory bodies, where relevant; and,

    g. provides discipline-specific training on teaching, learning, assessment, and feedback, including assessment criteria and effective use of MyPlace.

44. The details of PGRs in teaching or teaching-related roles who have successfully completed mandatory training and induction will be logged and maintained in a

Department/School register. The register will be accessible to Module Leaders and Programme Directors and must be checked to verify that PGRs teaching on modules have completed the requisite training. A template for a Departmental/School register for PGR mandatory training is included as Appendix A of this document.

45. PGRs with concerns about the nature, scope, or quality of the training and/or support they have received within their Department/School should speak with their supervisor in the first instance, and if the matter remains unresolved should raise their concern with the Director or Head of Learning and Teaching (or equivalent).

Professional development

Feedback and review

46. Module Leaders and/or Programme Directors should ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide PGRs with useful feedback on their teaching and teaching-related activities. Where issues are identified these will be managed by the Module Leader, with support from the relevant Programme Director where necessary. Such matters can also be referred on to the Director or Head of Learning and Teaching where this is deemed necessary by the Programme Director.

47. The outcome of any monitoring and review exercise will be promptly communicated to relevant PGRs with guidance on steps that can be taken to enhance performance and competence in areas identified as requiring development. Departments/Schools are required to provide reasonable support to PGRs undertaking steps to enhance their performance in teaching or teaching-related duties on the basis on monitoring and review activities.

Strathclyde's Teaching Excellence Programme

48. PGRs employed in teaching and teaching-related roles are encouraged to attend relevant *Strathclyde's Teaching Excellence Programme* (STEP) sessions and other training and development opportunities via the University's *Development and Training Gateway*. Please note that not all STEP sessions will be open to PGRs.

Opportunities for External Professional Accreditation

49. PGRs in teaching and teaching-related roles should be encouraged and supported to pursue relevant external professional accreditation in recognition of their experience and expertise in teaching and teaching-related activities.

50. All PGRs in teaching roles can apply for professional recognition from Advance HE through the University's accredited pathway. PGR support follows an experiential pathway to Associate Fellow of the HEA. Support is provided by the Researcher Development Team and there is no fee to apply. PGRs can access support in the application process through the University's *Development and Training Gateway*.

Appendix A: Department/School PGR teaching and teaching-related training register

Department/School		Director of PG studies (or nominee)		PGR Administrator	

PGR name [and email]	First Supervisor name [and email]	Mandatory Researcher Developer training		Mandatory Department training (e.g. Induction; Health and Safety, etc.)		Right to work in the UK check			Notes
		Complete Y/N	Date	Complete Y/N	Date	Complete Y/N	Date	Checked by	