

# Code of Practice for Postgraduate Researchers Engaged in Teaching

## 1. **Background**

This Code of Practice applies to Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) registered at the University of Leeds who are engaged in teaching at the University and paid on an hourly rate<sup>1</sup>.

The University recognises that postgraduates are a valuable asset to University teaching, to which they can bring their specialist knowledge, research training and recent experience of undergraduate learning. Research Councils and the National Postgraduate Committee recommend teaching experience for postgraduates provided that it is subject to reasonable limits on workload. For PGRs themselves teaching can provide valuable experience and career development in addition to financial benefits. It can also enhance the experience of the undergraduate students being taught, helping to build a vibrant shared learning community.

It must be emphasised, however, that the scope for such teaching provision varies between different Faculties/Schools and PGRs should not assume teaching opportunities will always be available. Decisions on the allocation of available teaching duties will be made based on the qualifications, experience, aptitude and skills of each individual and will not be influenced by race, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and age.

The University recognises its responsibility for the welfare and personal development of PGRs engaged in teaching activities, and in order to fully meet their needs in terms of general conditions, training and payment systems this Code of Practice has been introduced to which Faculties/Schools are required to adhere. It outlines the minimum required standards across the University and arrangements for the consistent implementation of those standards.

## 2. **Status**

The University is under no obligation to engage PGRs in teaching. Equally, PGRs are under no obligation to take on teaching, except where it is a condition of their studentship.

Example generic role descriptors and criteria for teaching roles provided by PGRs engaged in teaching can be found at [http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG\\_teaching\\_assistance](http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG_teaching_assistance)

## 3. **Responsibilities**

PGRs engaged in teaching are required to operate in accordance with relevant University policies and procedures. Particular attention is drawn to the University's Equality and Inclusion Policy <http://www.equality.leeds.ac.uk/> and Student Mental Health Policy <http://www.equality.leeds.ac.uk/> and the University's Health and Safety Policy <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/safety/> and the University's values and standards <http://strategy.leeds.ac.uk/>.

Curriculum design should remain the responsibility of academic staff. With the sole exception of modules delivered as part of the Leeds International Summer School (LISS), PGRs must not be responsible for curriculum design but may be involved in the design of teaching activities. In addition, PGRs must not be solely responsible for the delivery of any module or designated as module leader <sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Again this does not apply to those modules delivered as part of the LISS exception arrangement.

#### **4. Payment**

Payment is calculated on the agreed hours of each engagement (e.g. for training, preparation, contact, assessment, participation in the design of teaching activities and module review etc). The University has standard hourly rate(s) of pay for PGRs engaged in teaching. The rates of pay can be found on the HR website at [http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG\\_teaching\\_assistance](http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG_teaching_assistance). Information about the arrangements for payment can be found in the Teaching Engagement Framework available at [http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG\\_teaching\\_assistance](http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG_teaching_assistance).

While one-off teaching requirements for developmental purposes may be agreed, requirements for systematic teaching engagements outside of the agreed teaching activity schedule should either be avoided or added to the teaching activity schedule and paid accordingly.

#### **5. Hours of work**

In order to ensure that PGRs take maximum advantage of their research degree studies the University has some restrictions on the number of hours that may be spent upon teaching activities.

All full-time PGRs at the University covered by the Code of Practice are normally subject to a limit of 250 hours of paid activities per session associated with teaching or the equivalent in professional practice. A session is a period of 12 months from 01 September – 31 August. The limit of 250 hours includes preparation, marking, and other paid activity directly related to their training or related professional activity. It is felt that further commitments would interfere with an individual's studies.

- (i) It is recognised that some full-time students may need to work in order to survive financially and a more flexible approach may be considered in these cases.
- (ii) Full-time students who wish to undertake paid activities beyond 250 hours should discuss with their supervisor whether any teaching or other work undertaken will adversely affect the time available for the conduct of the research. The Dean of the Faculty/Head of School<sup>ii</sup> is responsible for considering and granting approval for such cases. He or she must also ensure that the decision is recorded and that the situation is closely monitored to ensure that there is no adverse academic impact on the progress of the student's research degree studies.

The exception is the overtime period<sup>iii</sup>, when it may be permissible for PGRs to work beyond 250 hours, subject to any visa restrictions.

PGRs should note, however, that some sponsoring bodies (including Research Councils, Charities and other Sponsors, including Faculties/Schools) may impose a lower limit for paid activities per session. All PGRs funded by such bodies are required to observe the limits imposed.

Those who are studying at UK institutions with Tier 4/Student visas allowing them to work in the UK are usually permitted to work up to twenty hours per week during term-time (and more during vacations or work placements that are part of their studies). All student visa holders must observe these limits.

#### **6. Registration, Advertising, Selection and Allocation of Teaching**

The process adopted by the Faculty/School should be transparent and ensure equality of access and opportunity. Reasonable adjustments should be made for disabled PGRs<sup>iv</sup>.

All PGRs must be given the opportunity to register an interest in being involved in teaching activities. It is at the discretion of the Faculty Dean/Head of School (or formal nominee) to offer applications of interest to teach to PGRs studying in other faculties/schools.

PGRs who register an interest in teaching will be placed on the 'Student Teaching Register' held in Faculties/Schools. The purpose of the Student Teaching Register is to build up a 'pool' of PGRs who have shown an interest in teaching. PGRs may remain on the Student Teaching Register for the period they are registered as a PGR at the University. PGRs on the Student Teaching Register will receive written confirmation of their registration (Registration to Teach Form).

Opportunities to teach for the academic session (01 September – 31 August) should be based on the example generic role descriptors and criteria. They must be displayed locally in advance, for example, on local websites and sent to PGRs on the Student Teaching Register. Advertised teaching opportunities should clearly indicate the hours involved in terms of preparation, delivery, assessment, training etc required for the teaching role. Example generic role descriptors and criteria can be found at [http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG\\_teaching\\_assistance](http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG_teaching_assistance).

To ensure that teaching standards are maintained, the selection process carried out in Faculties/Schools will include an assessment against the role criteria to ensure that PGRs have the necessary qualifications, skills and experience for the teaching activities allocated.

The PGR's supervisor will be given the opportunity to comment on the appropriate stage for a candidate to undertake teaching duties and on the potential impact on the progress of their research degree studies.

Faculties/Schools will draw up a rota of teaching activities and allocate these to PGRs who have been selected. Selected PGRs will be provided in writing with a Teaching Activity Schedule which confirms details of the teaching activities allocated and a breakdown of the agreed hours of engagement. Responsibility for the decision on allocating teaching duties rests with the Dean of the Faculty/Head of School.

Further information about the registration, advertising, selection, allocation of teaching and the terms and conditions of engagement can be found in the Teaching Engagement Framework available on the HR website at [http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG\\_teaching\\_assistance](http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG_teaching_assistance) and from the Faculty/Service HR Manager <http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/contact>

## **7. Training**

The University requires that all postgraduates with teaching responsibilities receive training and guidance. It is the responsibility of the relevant Faculties/Schools to ensure that training is provided. Some Faculties/Schools provide appropriate training and Organisational Development and Professional Learning also runs a central programme of workshops for postgraduates who teach. Participation in OD&PL training for teaching is strongly recommended for postgraduates with limited teaching experience. Equally significant is the training and on-going guidance received in the Faculty/School.

PGRs must:

- receive an induction into teaching in their Faculty/School;
- receive training in Health and Safety procedures;
- be fully informed of all risks and controls required as an outcome of any risk assessments;
- receive training in the use of any special equipment required for demonstrating or other techniques specific to the Faculty/School;
- receive all information for the module(s) on which they are teaching – module materials, handouts, etc.

- be assigned a mentor with whom they should meet regularly to discuss their specific teaching duties and responsibilities, the modules within which their teaching takes place, their progress and any problems and marking conventions within the Faculty/School;
- be encouraged to meet together in the Faculty/School to share ideas, resources and concerns. Appropriate issues arising should be considered by the Faculty/School Taught Student Education Committee;
- be kept informed about relevant administrative procedures, e.g. plagiarism and cheating, late or non-submission of work, attendance at classes;
- be advised of any reasonable adjustments identified as part of an assessment of need for a disabled student that they will be engaged in teaching;
- receive constructive feedback on their performance from the module leader or another member of the academic staff<sup>v</sup>;
- receive appropriate assessment training where PGRs are involved in assessment.

In addition any teaching undertaken by postgraduates should be included in module/programme review.

## 8. **Module Design**

Module design should remain the responsibility of academic staff<sup>2</sup>. With the exception of modules delivered as part of the Leeds International Summer School (LISS), it is not expected that PGRs paid on an hourly basis will be involved in module design<sup>vi</sup>. However, PGRs who teach should be involved in programme and module review by being invited to report back on the structure, level and content of modules on which they teach.

## 9. **Marking**

Schools/Faculties are required to give careful consideration as to whether or not PGRs should be involved in marking and assessment. Adequate guidance, including clear criteria and marking schemes where appropriate, should be made available to the PGR, and their marking must be comprehensively monitored and moderated.

Assessment design must remain the responsibility of the Module Leader<sup>3</sup>. PGRs engaged in teaching may be involved in assisting academic staff in the design of assessments; such duties should be carried out under close supervision and guidance from the member of staff involved.

## 10. **Accommodation and Resources**

Faculties/Schools must make available to PGRs the teaching materials and facilities necessary to support them in the delivery of their teaching. This will be paid for by the School and not from the student's own budget allocation. Where PGRs are required to carry out individual tuition/feedback to students, suitable accommodation must be made available for this purpose.

## 11. **Faculty/School Support**

Schools/Faculties are required to organise support for PGRs with teaching responsibilities by the following means:

- the nomination of a member of staff who will co-ordinate postgraduate teaching within the Faculty/School
- assignment of a mentor to each PGR involved in teaching, demonstrating and module work and assessment

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<sup>2</sup> This does not apply to those modules delivered as part of the LISS exception arrangement.

<sup>3</sup> Noted exception for modules delivered as part of the Leeds International Summer School (LISS).

- peer support mechanisms such as regular meetings of PGRs to pool ideas, discuss teaching methods, problems and solutions. (A member of staff could be present at such meetings to offer advice and facilitate feedback.)

## 12. **Procedures for Evaluation and Review**

A review of PGR teaching activities will take place through the Faculty Review Group (FRG). The purpose of the review is to provide an opportunity for PGRs to raise general issues of concern in connection with teaching activities and for faculties/schools to raise issues concerning the operational aspects of the PGR engagement in teaching activities. Further information about the membership and terms of reference of the FRG can be found at [http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG\\_teaching\\_assistance](http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG_teaching_assistance).

## 13. **Terminating Engagements**

The engagement will automatically terminate when the individual is no longer registered as a PGR at the University<sup>vii</sup> or whenever the teaching activities have been completed.

The University may withdraw its offer to engage PGRs in teaching or discontinue the engagement without prior notice in the following circumstances:

- where it is identified that teaching is interfering with the studies of a PGR;
- if the PGR regularly fails to carry out teaching that they have accepted without providing prior notice;
- if the standard of performance/conduct is deemed to be unsatisfactory by the Dean of the Faculty/Head of School (or formal nominee).

In these circumstances the PGR will be notified in writing giving the reasons for ending the engagement and informed that, if he or she remains dissatisfied, they may appeal against the decision through the Complaints Procedure. Further information about ending the engagement including, the process and appeals procedure can be found in the Complaints Procedure for PGRs Engaged in Teaching at [http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG\\_teaching\\_assistance](http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG_teaching_assistance) and from the Faculty/Service HR Manager.

## 14. **Review of the Code of Practice for PGRs Engaged in Teaching**

The University in Partnership with Leeds University Union will review this Code of Practice.

## 15. **Further Information**

Further information about the engagement of PGRs engaged in teaching can be found in the Teaching Engagement Framework available on the Human Resources website at <http://hr.leeds.ac.uk/PG-teaching-assistance>, the Faculty/Service HR Manager and from Postgraduate Research and Operations.

If you require this document in an alternative format (for example braille, large print or electronic format), please contact the Doctoral College .

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### **Policy Version:**

version 1: approved: 16/09/2014

version 2 (minor amendments to nomenclature and updated Visa advice ) December 2020

version 3 (amendment to include the exceptional arrangements for LISS modules) April 2021

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<sup>i</sup> In exceptional circumstances, approved by the relevant Faculty Pro-Dean for Student Education, students studying for taught Masters' degrees (with appropriate relevant experience) may be

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recommended to provide teaching. For those taught postgraduate students engaged in teaching the principles and arrangements set out in this Code will apply.

<sup>ii</sup> Or individual to whom responsibility has been delegated

<sup>iii</sup> The “overtime period” applies to doctoral or Master of Philosophy PGRs only. Such PGRs may be permitted to register on a reduced fee following completion of the standard period of study but within the maximum period of study for the programme. During this time the PGR should be completing the writing of the thesis and not undertaking further research.

<sup>iv</sup> The Equality Service provides guidance and advice to staff and PGRs ([www.equality.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.equality.leeds.ac.uk))

<sup>v</sup> The feedback provided should be recorded.

<sup>vi</sup> “Module design” is defined as prescribing the indicative content, objectives, learning outcomes, delivery modes and assessment strategies of a module, as detailed in the catalogue module specification and approved via the University’s formal student education committees.

<sup>vii</sup> Teaching registration will end on the award of the research degree or at the end of the teaching semester.