

Good practice guide for the employment of postgraduate students to teach

Employing departments and institutions should show due regard to the graduate student teacher's personal research and course work. Departments should monitor teaching workloads to ensure that they do not present an obstacle to fulfilling academic course requirements in a timely way.

Each employing department should appoint a senior member of staff as a mentor responsible for coordinating postgraduate teaching and overseeing the training, development, support and assessment of postgraduate teaching staff.

Employing institutions should have a code of practice on the employment of postgraduate student teaching staff including a statement of rights and responsibilities and a recommendation that postgraduate teaching staff join the recognised union.

Employers have a duty to provide insurance cover to indemnify postgraduate teachers against legal liability arising from actions in the course of their employment.

Postgraduate students employed to teach or demonstrate are entitled to expect:

- **The opportunity to state teaching preferences in the application process.** Teaching preferences of applicants should be taken into account in the appointment process.
- **A written statement of their duties.** This should include the number of hours required in preparation, marking, required hours of attendance including lectures and meetings, contact hours, office hours, invigilation, communication with students, administration, and compulsory training, etc.
- **Appropriate and adequate training to prepare them for their work** (see below).
- **Supervision or mentoring by a senior member of staff.**
- **Information about what resources and support for teaching are available within the university.**
- **Course materials:** a copy of all books and instructional materials required for students taking the class at no cost. In no circumstances should postgraduate student teaching staff be required to pay for materials that they need in order to fulfill their employment responsibilities.
- **Secure storage** for personal belongings and student assignments and appropriate means for communication with students and for the collection of student work.
- **Pay based on the actual number of hours required to complete all employment responsibilities.** This should include preparation, required training, office hours, required meetings or hours of attendance, communication with students, invigilation, fieldwork, and assessment or grading activities.
- **Evaluation and assessment** from a senior member of staff and feedback from student evaluation and assessment forms.

- **An opportunity to give feedback** on the course, teaching methods, and the support available for teaching work.
- **Formal representation on the departmental teaching committee.**
- **The right to participate in course development.**
- **Teaching practice accredited on the same basis as other staff.**

Training

Postgraduate students employed to teach are entitled to expect appropriate and adequate training to prepare them for their work. This will vary depending on the nature of the course to be taught, the teaching role and responsibilities and the previous experience of the postgraduate employee. However, postgraduate students employed to teach or demonstrate are entitled to expect:

- Peer participation in the development and delivery of training.
- Training prior to the beginning of the course.
- Induction and orientation to teaching in the department.
- A briefing on the course to be taught including the role and professional responsibilities of the teacher and, as appropriate, an overview of the course, objectives of the course, the syllabus and reading list, course requirements, teaching methods, the administration of the course, and guidelines on the late submission of coursework and on extensions.
- Training in the skills which will be needed to teach the course which is specific to the course to be taught and the teaching role, e.g. laboratory demonstrating, class facilitation, small group work, lesson planning, presentation and communication.
- Training on relevant university policies including fire and safety regulations, equal opportunities and disability policies, sexual harassment policies, policies governing consensual relationships with students, guidelines on cheating and plagiarism, confidentiality guidelines and information about referring pastoral concerns to specialist offices or agencies and about student support services.
- Appropriate training on pedagogical theory.
- Ongoing support and development during the course (e.g. regular course briefing meetings, observation of teaching, meeting with a mentor, regular teaching workshops, teaching-practice diary, participant-led peer support meetings).
- Ongoing peer support.
- For any postgraduate student undertaking marking, training on assessment, grading and feedback, and guidance in the form of marking scales and assessment criteria.
- For demonstrators, lab safety training and hands-on experience with any equipment used in demonstrating work and guidance as to the expected results and common problems of an experiment in advance of the demonstration work.
- Training on teaching students with special needs.
- The opportunity to have their own class observed and to observe a peer teaching.