

UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Paper No ASQEC/18/38c)

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT COMMITTEE

30 November 2018

Agenda Item 8.2

CODE OF PRACTICE ON TUTORING AND DEMONSTRATING BY POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS.

COVER SHEET

Action is required of the Committee as indicated below.

To consider the proposed revised Code of Practice.

## Postgraduate Teaching Assistants (PgTAs)

### Code of Practice on Tutoring and Demonstrating by Postgraduate Researchers

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**Code of Practice on Tutoring and Demonstrating by Postgraduate Researchers**

**CONTEXT:** *The invaluable contribution made by postgraduate researchers working as teaching assistants and demonstrators is recognised in Schools and Faculties of the University. This contribution is valued by undergraduate students and academic staff, for its contribution to the quality of learning and teaching, and by the teaching assistants and demonstrators themselves in terms both of experience and of income.*

**PURPOSE:** *The purpose of this Code of Practice is to ensure a broad common understanding across the University of the roles and responsibilities of postgraduate teaching assistants and demonstrators (PgTAs), and of the academic staff with and for whom they work.*

*It is offered as guidance to Faculties and Schools in establishing good practice, recognising that the exact nature of the roles and responsibilities assigned to postgraduate teaching assistants and demonstrators will vary from School to School and from one course to another.*

**1. Terms and Conditions**

- 1.1. Explicit information should be provided regarding the nature of the work and the number of hours, which should not normally exceed six per week. All postgraduate researchers **MUST** obtain permission from their supervisors before agreeing to carry out any teaching or demonstrating duties. (NB some funding bodies do not allow postgraduate researchers to be in paid employment, and in other cases there are limits on the number of hours worked or total amount of income earned.)
- 1.2. PgTAs should be provided with the name and contact details of the relevant Module Co-ordinator(s), in advance of the commencement of their duties.
- 1.3. The review of PgTA remuneration rates carried out in 2018 stipulates the following three categories of payment, for which, in some of the categories, a multiplier will be applied to compensate for preparation time. Table 1 overleaf includes details of the three categories, the rate of pay and the multiplier that will be applied. PgTAs will be required to undertake mandatory training and development corresponding to the role in which they are employed, outlined in **Section 2** below.

Table 1

<b>PgTA payment schedule 2018-19</b>			
	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Multiplier</b>
<b>Category 1</b>	To facilitate student learning, typically in a seminar or tutorial setting, under the supervision of a member of academic staff ( <b>includes the development of teaching materials</b> ).	£12.57	2
<b>Category 2</b>	To facilitate student learning, typically in a seminar or tutorial setting, under the supervision of a member of academic staff <b>using existing teaching materials</b> .	£12.57	1.5
<b>Category 3</b>	<b>A:</b> To facilitate laboratory, workshop or fieldwork setting, under the supervision of a senior academic colleague. <b>and/or</b> <b>B:</b> To mark and assess scripts.	£12.57	No Multiplier

- 1.4. PgTAs should be informed in advance of the applicable hourly rate of pay, and arrangements for claiming this.
- 1.5. Any additional duties which PgTAs are asked to undertake at a later date will be subject to further payment at the relevant rate.

## **2 Development and Support**

- 2.1 Prior to undertaking any teaching or demonstration duties, all potential PgTAs are required to attend the one-day course: *Introduction to Teaching and Learning for Post-Graduate Teaching Assistants* or its equivalent. This course is provided annually by the Centre for Higher Education Research and Practice (CHERP). Records of completion will be maintained by the Doctoral College.
- 2.2 If a Faculty wishes PgTAs to carry out summative assessment of student work (Category 3B), then those identified are required to enrol on and complete the First Steps programme to ensure that they receive appropriate training and development. The programme includes two opportunities for observation of practice, one relating to teaching and the other related to assessment and feedback: both observations should be successfully completed and submitted to the FST programme team within the first semester of the PgTA undertaking any teaching duties. The remainder of the assessment requirements for the programme will

be submitted at one of the three submission points over the year, but final submission should not exceed 18 months from enrolment on the programme itself.

This non-credit bearing course is accredited by Advance HE as leading to HEA Associate Fellowship (Descriptor 1) aligned to the following Areas of Activity as defined by the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)<sup>1</sup>:

- A2: Teach and/or support learning
- A3: Assess and give feedback to learners

2.3 For Category 3B PgTAs who already hold AFHEA , their need to complete FST will depend on the Areas of Activity they have already evidenced for D1.

- Where neither A2 nor A3 have been previously evidenced, FST would have to complete the full FST;
- Where only one of the prescribed Areas of Activity has previously been evidenced, they would have to:
  - provide recent evidence for APEL of this Area of Activity;
  - complete the FST assessment requirements pertaining to the other Area of Activity.

A summary of PgTA learning and teaching training and development requirements is outlined in the Appendix 2.

2.4 All PgTAs must also undertake such health and safety training as is required in relation to the laboratories or teaching rooms in which they will be working, and should be familiar with the responsibilities of employees under current legislation and policy, especially in the areas of Health and Safety at Work and Equality and Diversity.

2.5 It is the responsibility of the **Module Co-ordinator** (or other nominated member of academic staff) to:

- 2.5.1 provide PgTAs with an overview of the Course and the Module outline (usually in Course/Module Handbook);
- 2.5.2 explain the purpose of the practicals or teaching within the framework of the overall teaching of the Module, including Lecture programme;
- 2.5.3 explain how the students are expected to be taught, and the role of the PgTA in this;
- 2.5.4 explain how the Module is administered and how PgTAs should interact with the Module co-ordinator;

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/uk\\_professional\\_standards\\_framework.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/system/files/downloads/uk_professional_standards_framework.pdf)

- 2.5.5 discuss how assessment (if undertaken) should be carried out, provide copies of assessment tasks, marking criteria and guidance, and explain arrangements for moderation of any marking;
- 2.5.6 provide information about the provision of feedback to students about their work;
- 2.5.7 inform PgTAs about any feedback they will be expected to provide to the Module co-ordinator about the teaching of the Module (for Module evaluation purposes);
- 2.5.8 inform PgTAs which member of staff is the Course Director and advise them of the dates when course committee meetings are planned.

### **3 Resources and materials**

- 3.1 The Module co-ordinator (or other nominated academic member of staff) will provide copies of appropriate course handouts and reading lists.
- 3.2 PgTAs should be provided with a means of communicating with students in their teaching groups, and, where appropriate, provided with access to the module Blackboard Learn area
- 3.3 PgTAs should be provided with a list of students in their teaching groups, together with information about the timing and location of the session. A record of attendance should be kept at each session, and passed on to the Module Co-ordinator.

### **4 Assessment of student work**

- 4.1 If PgTAs are carrying out formal assessment of students' work, they must be given explicit assessment criteria together with guidance on how these criteria are to be applied in marking and grading the work.
- 4.2 No PgTA should summatively assess the work of students in modules which contribute to a final award and related classification, unless they are employed as a Category 3B PgTA and fulfil the mandatory training and development requirements.
- 4.3 Information should be provided regarding the deadlines for completion of assessment and the procedures for providing assessment information to the Module Co-ordinator (or other nominated person).
- 4.4 All assessment carried out by PgTAs will be subject to moderation by the Module Co-ordinator (or another nominated member of academic staff), who will be responsible for the recording and issuing of marks or grades.

## **5 Recruitment and selection**

- 5.1 Tutoring and demonstrating can provide valuable experience for postgraduate researchers, and opportunities to undertake such duties should be widely publicised within the University.
- 5.2 Faculties and Schools should have clearly defined procedures for the recruitment of PgTAs, which ensure that selection is fair and non-discriminatory in accordance with current University Policy.
- 5.3 Each Faculty (or School) should appoint a named person, or persons, who will take overall responsibility for the employment, development and support of PgTAs. Where a Faculty of School has a base on more than one campus, there should be a named individual holding this responsibility on each campus.
- 5.4 The nominated member(s) of staff in the Faculty should ensure that all teaching assistants and demonstrators appointed are appropriately qualified and trained for the teaching which they are about to undertake. (Information should be held about each applicant's higher education qualifications, current research and name of supervisor, and a record kept of attendance at required central and local development and training.)

## **6 Quality assurance and monitoring**

- 6.1 The quality of learner support provided by PgTAs will be assured through careful recruitment and selection and adequate preparation, development and support of each individual for the role undertaken.
- 6.2 PgTAs will take part in appropriate aspects of University of Ulster quality assurance and enhancement procedures.

## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

	<b>Role &amp; responsibilities</b>
<b>Category 1</b>	To facilitate student learning, typically in a seminar or tutorial setting, under the supervision of a member of academic staff <b>(includes the development of teaching materials)</b> .
<b>Category 2</b>	To facilitate student learning, typically in a seminar or tutorial setting, under the supervision of a member of academic staff <b>using existing teaching materials</b> .
<b>Category 3</b>	A: To facilitate laboratory, workshop or fieldwork setting, under the supervision of a senior academic colleague. and/or B: To mark and assess scripts.

Demonstration and teaching duties may include:

- Demonstration and assistance with practical classes
- Delivery and co-ordination of small group activities, e.g. tutorials
- Participation in student-led activities
- Participation in student-led seminars
- Assessment of coursework

Responsibilities of the Module Co-ordinator (or other nominated member of academic staff)

*Before any teaching session the Module Co-ordinator will:*

- Explain the aims and learning outcomes of each teaching session to the assistant and how these are to be achieved
- Identify how the aims and learning outcomes of the teaching session facilitate the achievement of the overall module aims and learning outcomes
- Provide assistants with all the relevant documentation and safety information
- Ensure that each assistant has the necessary skills for the teaching session
- Brief the assistant on current state of knowledge and progress of the student group and highlight areas of possible learning difficulties
- Explain to the PgTA how they are intended to facilitate the learning and teaching of students during the teaching session
- Ensure that the relevant Course Director(s) are informed of the PgTA's contact details so that he or she can be invited to meetings of the course committee(s)

*During the teaching session, the Module Co-ordinator will:*

- Introduce the PgTA(s) to the students and explain their role
- Monitor the effectiveness of the PgTA(s) and provide constructive feedback.

*At the end of the module, the Module Co-ordinator will:*

- Complete a brief report on the PgTA(s) performance.

### **Responsibilities of the PgTA**

*Before the teaching session, the PgTA(s) will:*

- Have attended relevant training courses
- Be familiar with the aims and learning outcomes of the teaching session and how they are to be achieved
- Be familiar with the overall aims and learning outcomes of the module
- Be familiar with and understand all documentation associated with the teaching session
- Have working knowledge of hardware, software and/or other equipment to be employed during the teaching session (where applicable)

*During the teaching session, the PgTA(s) will:*

- Arrive before the students
- Attend all sessions, or exceptionally, and with sufficient notice, advise academic staff of any need to arrange a suitable replacement
- Identify students in need of assistance and assist as appropriate
- Modify own performance in response to helpful, constructive feedback from academic staff.

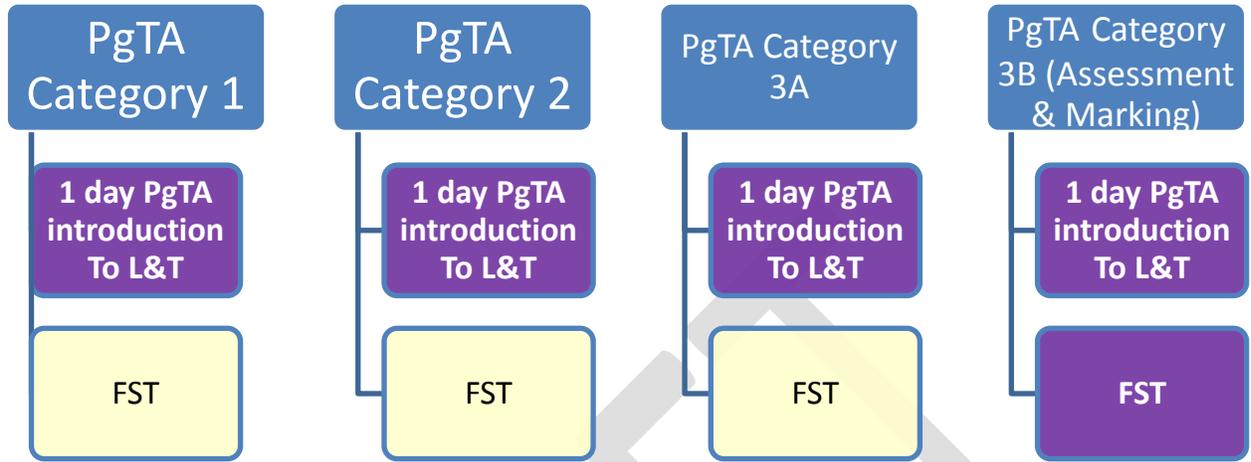
*When assessing student work, the PgTA(s) will:*

- Have attended relevant training course(s)
- Adhere to the marking criteria supplied by the academic member of staff
- Adhere to the Faculty's Code of Practice on Assessment
- Declare any professional conflict of interests, e.g. a student is a relative, and refer that work to the academic member of staff for assessment.

*At the end of the Module, the PgTA(s) will:*

- Complete a brief report on demonstrations / teachings and how they might be improved, which will form part of the module evaluation data.

**APPENDIX 2: PgTA TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**



KEY  
Mandatory  
Optional

DRAFT