

Code of Practice on the Employment of Postgraduate Students

This code of practice applies to all postgraduate students who undertake temporary paid teaching. They are referred to throughout as 'postgraduate tutors'. In general such students will be registered for research degrees, since other postgraduate students would not normally undertake teaching. The term 'permanent members of staff' means full members of the academic staff.

1. Statement of Duties and Pay

- 1.1 All postgraduate tutors who are not employed on a contract negotiated through Human Resources should be given a letter or memorandum by their Head of Department clearly setting out their duties and their pay. This should also cover matters such as expected attendance at preparation and teaching hours, course meetings, pastoral duties, marking, training, etc. A copy of this letter should be sent to Human Resources.
- 1.2 Where postgraduate tutors are paid on an hourly basis, hours should be based on a realistic assessment of classroom time and preparation, essay marking, office hours, and attendance at course team or other meetings. The basis of the assessment should be agreed in writing in advance, and payment should normally follow University guidelines.
- 1.3 For postgraduate tutors registered as full-time students teaching time should normally be restricted to a maximum of 6 hours a week or 180 hours a year.

2. Selection of Research Students

- 2.1 Departments should publicise their policy on the recruitment and selection of postgraduate tutors. All research students may be considered as prospective tutors, but it may not be possible to allocate teaching to those who wish it, nor should any student be put under pressure to undertake teaching. The final decision for such matters rests with the Head of Department. Allocation of teaching should be planned as far as possible in advance and students should be given as much notice as possible of the start of their teaching.
- 2.2 Research students without previous experience should be employed in Part II teaching only in areas related to their research, and under the supervision of a permanent member of staff. Please refer to the Undergraduate [Academic Contact Policy](#) for advice on types of work which may be marked by postgraduate tutors and further details of associated moderation and other support requirements.
- 2.3 Tutors should have an appropriate command of spoken English.

3. Training and Support

- 3.1 Unless they already have relevant teaching experience, postgraduate tutors should be required to undertake appropriate training, preferably before they begin teaching. If this is not possible, any necessary training should take place within a reasonable period of the start of teaching. Departments are responsible for deciding what training is required and for ensuring its delivery through a combination of informal guidance in the department and more formal courses provided by the department, faculty or Organisation and Educational Development office.

- 3.2 All postgraduate tutors involved in demonstrating should be given hands-on experience with the equipment concerned and written guidance as to the expected results and common problems of an experiment. They should receive this training a suitable period in advance of the demonstration work concerned.
- 3.3 All postgraduate tutors should have a mentor or equivalent - a permanent member of staff with general responsibility for providing guidance and advice, answering queries and helping to deal with problems. There should be regular meetings between the mentor and the postgraduate tutor, and feedback from the mentor should be an integral part of training.
- 3.4 Postgraduate tutors should attend meetings of any teaching team of which they form a part.
- 3.5 Departments should make available model scripts and/or mark schemes to research students involved in marking. Marking and project supervision should be monitored and students should then receive appropriate feedback. Further details on support for marking are available in the University's [Academic Contact Policy](#).
- 3.6 Departments should ensure that postgraduate tutors should not be expected to undertake undue pastoral responsibilities. The level of any responsibility expected and the support given by the department should be detailed in the memorandum of appointment.
- 3.7 Suitable accommodation, equipment and facilities should be provided for postgraduate tutors. Where postgraduate tutors are required to carry out individual tuition suitable accommodation should be provided for this purpose.
- 3.8 Departments should ensure that postgraduate tutors are on all relevant memo networks; that they are briefed on aspects of course structures, procedures for late submission and other relevant administrative procedures. They should also ensure that postgraduate tutors are briefed on necessary housekeeping aspects (keys, filing, visual aids, etc.).

4. Quality Assurance

- 4.1 Postgraduate tutors should be integrated into quality assurance procedures, for example by representation in course reviews, student evaluation, etc. The department is responsible for monitoring all marking which counts towards degree classification.
- 4.2 The procedure in sections 2 and 3 on selection, training and support of students above should be followed.
- 4.3 Course design and delivery must be the primary responsibility of a member of staff.
- 4.4 There should be some mechanism for the comments of postgraduate tutors on individual undergraduate students results/performance to be communicated to staff meetings and to Boards of Examiners.