Policy on Postgraduates Who Teach

Introduction

1. This policy covers teaching and learning practices for postgraduates teaching or demonstrating on modules. Appointment practices, employment terms and conditions are covered in more detail by separate Human Resources policies. This policy does not cover arrangements for hourly paid bought in teaching.

2. The University recognises the value to postgraduates of the teaching experience it provides, and is committed to providing such opportunities consistent with its desire to deliver teaching of the highest quality on its programmes.

3. Postgraduates may support teaching by:
   a. Taking small groups such as seminars, tutorials or workshops
   b. Helping with fieldwork
   c. Demonstrating in laboratories
   d. Providing occasional lectures on their own specialism
   e. Assessment under the conditions indicated in this document.

General

4. Payment for teaching and demonstrating is determined by Human Resources annually and the demand for such teaching is governed by the teaching needs of the School responsible for the programme.

5. All recruitment of postgraduate students to teaching and demonstrating posts will be fair and transparent, and made on the basis of their academic ability or relevant experience, regardless of age, religion or belief, ethnicity, gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation or disability.

6. Only registered postgraduate students are eligible for teaching and demonstrating duties.

7. Any student engaging in teaching and demonstrating must have already obtained a qualification at the level they are teaching.

8. Postgraduates who teach must possess a good standard of English, equivalent to a minimum of IELTS 6.5, and where required by the School a higher level.

9. All postgraduates who teach must satisfactorily complete formal training before they begin to teach. Training will be available for all postgraduates who teach from the Staff Development Unit.

10. Postgraduates cannot teach on any module that contributes to the programme they are currently registered on.*

11. Schools must not make excessive demands on the student’s time. Tutors and supervisors must be consulted about the time devoted to such duties and teaching hours must be consistent with the requirements of the student’s work, the terms of their studentship and any visa arrangements. Any disagreements should be resolved by the Head of School or nominee.

12. Postgraduates who teach can first or second mark assignments provided they have received guidance in this area, have clear marking criteria and moderation processes are in place.

13. Schools remain ultimately responsible for the quality of teaching on their programmes and Module Leaders for the quality of the teaching of postgraduates on their module, including module assessment where postgraduates are involved in this activity.
Training and Support

14. All postgraduate teachers should normally successfully complete the Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTNE), before they teach. Though not mandatory, on completion of this participants can also apply to undertake Module 1 of the Higher Education Academy accredited Certificate in Advanced Studies in Academic Practice (CASAP), Learning, Teaching and Engaging Students (LTES) which leads to Associate status (Descriptor 1) of the Higher Education Academy. It is necessary to have teaching experience before signing up to this module.

15. If specialist postgraduate training, not provided by the ILTNE, is required an alternative can be proposed by the relevant Faculty Dean of Postgraduate Studies and approved by the Chair of ULTSEC, provided that this training is at least equivalent to that provided by ILTNE, although it may be more focused, and is reviewed as part of the Faculty’s normal quality assurance procedures.

16. Postgraduate Deans are responsible for granting and keeping a record of individual exemptions for postgraduates from University training, based on the criteria below. Exemption from attending the programme will normally apply if:
   a. A postgraduate already has a teaching qualification comparable with the relevant elements of the ILTNE (e.g. PGCE).
   b. The HoS, or their nominee, recommends exemption for some other reason such as; a postgraduate has 3 years teaching experience at this level or equivalent professional experience; at least 1 years prior teaching or professional experience at this level combined with evidence of learning (e.g. professional development activities such as workshops and seminars on teaching).

Responsibilities of the Postgraduate Teacher or Demonstrator

17. Postgraduates who teach should attend and participate in all training and briefings provided by the University and School.

18. Postgraduates who teach should participate in the student feedback mechanisms that the School employs to monitor teaching.

19. Postgraduates who teach should attend appropriate Boards of Studies, Staff Meetings and other meetings as specified by the School e.g. teaching away days relevant to their teaching.

20. Postgraduates are responsible for consulting with tutors or supervisors concerning their teaching and ensuring that it is consistent with the requirements of their project and studentship.

Responsibilities of the School

21. Postgraduates who teach should be provided with School resources, course materials and support, adequate to fulfil their teaching/demonstration responsibilities.

22. Postgraduates should be told how much time they are expected to spend on their duties and the hours for remuneration.

23. It is the responsibility of the module leader to provide support and guidance to postgraduates undertaking teaching.

24. The School should organise appropriate induction and briefing sessions for postgraduates who teach.

25. The School is responsible for ensuring that postgraduate teachers participate in the training necessary to carry out their teaching.

26. It is the School’s responsibility to ensure that postgraduates are aware of any relevant health and safety procedures.

27. There should be clear and regular procedures for review and evaluation of postgraduates’ performance,
using peer observation and standard student feedback procedures. Schools should take appropriate action if the feedback is negative.

28. Postgraduates who teach should be provided with an opportunity to give feedback on both their teaching and the support available for teaching to the School, and procedures for raising any issues should be made clear to them.

* This does not prevent postgraduates passing on their experiences on the programme to their peers where this does not contribute to the assessment.