



These FAQs should be read in conjunction with the Postgraduates who Teach Policy which is available here: <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/doctors-college/current-research-students/postgraduates-who-teach/>. (Any queries in relation to this document should be directed to doctoralcollege@ncl.ac.uk.)

Definitions of PGWT (Postgraduates Who Teach) Options:

Occasional Postgraduate Teacher (OPT)

Where ad-hoc or occasional teaching or teaching-related activities are required by an Academic Unit, these are made available through the Unitemps route. The teaching duties are undertaken alongside their degree programme and should not impact OPT's academic progress or duration of candidature. Teaching duties are not normally expected to exceed an average of 6 hours per week in academic session (i.e., 160 hours per year based on 27 teaching and assessment weeks in the University calendar). In addition, PG Teachers holding student visas should not work more than 20 hours in any week (in any employment role inside and outside the University) to avoid breaching student visa conditions.

Contracted Postgraduate Teacher (CPT)

Where the Academic Unit requires and can plan for a Postgraduate Teacher to undertake a guaranteed number of teaching hours in a specified period, a fixed term contract of employment, normally 12 months, can be offered for the teaching activity only. Remuneration by salary will be divided equally across the 12-month contract, usually from October to September inclusive. The teaching duties are undertaken alongside the degree programme and should not usually impact on a Postgraduate Teacher's academic progress or duration of candidature.

Postgraduate Teaching Assistant (PGTA)

Where the Academic Unit requires a Postgraduate Teacher to undertake a significant amount of teaching, normally in excess of 0.2FTE on average (equivalent to ~345 hours per year), a fixed term contract of employment can be offered which includes an academic offer of a place on a research degree programme alongside responsibility for provision of teaching throughout the duration of the research degree. The student will be registered as a full-time research student under the combined candidature which extends the duration of doctoral studies to 5 years, in recognition of the teaching activities alongside the academic degree, although early submission may be agreed subject to academic progress.

It is not compulsory for an Academic Unit to offer CPT or PGTA contracts, the decision should be made based on the teaching requirements within the Academic Unit.

For all PG contract options, the student is registered as a full-time student and would usually retain their student status for Council Tax purposes, but it is the student's responsibility to consider any other employment that they hold outside of the University that may have an impact on their eligibility for tax exemption.

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Employment-related questions

1. If a CPT (Contracted Postgraduate Teacher) has been given multiple contracts which span three years, would they convert to an open-ended contract?

No. These contracts are for students **only** and therefore they would not be eligible for the automatic conversion as stated in the [Fixed Term Contracts policy](#). However, if they are successful in a role on completion of the studies, we would honour continuous service if there were no more than a 4-week break in service.

2. Will a CPT be eligible for Redundancy?

It would be highly unlikely for a CPT to be made redundant. If there was no longer an operational need for a CPT during their one-year contract, we would consider alternative roles/duties before deciding to end their fixed-term contract early. If we did end their fixed term contract early, we would issue and pay contractual notice.

3. Are CPTs (Contracted Postgraduate Teacher) and PGTAs (Post Graduate Teaching Assistant) 'regular' or 'contingent' academic colleagues?

CPT's are contingent colleagues, like Associate Lecturers (Hourly paid contracts) and PGTA's are regular fixed-term colleagues.

4. Can a CPT be assigned additional hours?

A CPT can work additional hours, up to the **maximum of 20 hours per week** including CPT and Unitemps employment, and this would be administered through Unitemps system [Newcastle University Jobs - Unitemps](#).

5. How will annual leave be managed?

Both CPTs and PGTAs will receive their full student leave entitlement (30 days). In addition, and for the contracted hours worked Contracted Postgraduate Teachers (CPT), annual leave inclusive of bank holidays will be calculated and payable at a rate of 12.07% of the hourly rate. For Postgraduate Teaching Assistants (PGTAs) they will receive an annual leave allocation to book and take throughout the leave year, October – September.

The annual leave entitlement for PGTAs will be translated into hours and combined with the student leave allowance, also converted into hours. PGTAs will be requested to log both the total hours of student leave and paid leave needed based on their schedule/commitments during the requested leave period using both SP3 and the colleague leave system as appropriate.

Annual leave will normally be taken during university vacations.

6. How will sickness be managed?

For both CPTs and PGTAs, they will need to report their sickness absence in line with the school reporting procedures. Sickness absence will be managed in line with the [Colleague Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure](#). CPT's and PGTA's will be eligible to occupational sick pay as outlined within the policy. This will normally be via the line manager, usually the Head of Subject, but may also be Teaching Group Lead or Module Leader dependent on the set-up in the Academic Unit.

7. How will PDRs (Performance and Development Review) be managed?

CPTs will not have an annual PDR (Performance and Development Review) but should have regular performance 'check in's' to make sure they feel supported and are teaching at an adequate standard. PGTAs will also have regular performance 'check-in's' but they will have access to [Conversations and](#)

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Priorities, with agreed objectives and reviews.

For both CPT's and PGTA's, these conversations will be with their line manager, usually the Head of Subject, but may also be Teaching Group Lead or Module Leader dependent on the set-up in the Academic Unit.

- Under performance in teaching or teaching-related activity will result in termination of their teaching contract.
- Under performance as a research student will be addressed as part of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Students - Progression and Monitoring.
- Under performance in both instances would lead to end of PGTA offer, but termination of employment contract only would not automatically end research degree studies but would withdraw the studentship element.

8. Who will have line management responsibility?

It is likely that this will be the Head of Subject but will be decided locally by the Academic Unit, based on the activities being undertaken and the set-up in the Academic Unit. The CPT/PGTA must be made aware of the name of their Line Manager prior to commencing their role, and **this should not be the student's supervisor.**

9. If I am a Postgraduate Teacher and go on parental leave, will I receive parental leave payments?

This will depend on the Postgraduate Teacher's employment category as listed below:

- OPT: As this contract is a casual worker agreement, payments such as family leave, sickness etc. are not paid
- CPT and PGTA: Colleagues would be eligible for parental leave and payments based on the eligibility criteria of each policy. Please refer to the suite of [family leave policies](#) for more information as well as the Student Parental Leave Policy. [Student Parental Leave Procedure March23 for SESC.docx.pdf \(ncl.ac.uk\)](#)

PGTAs may also be eligible for a DC (Doctoral College) parental leave bursary. Please see relevant policy for more information [Doctoral College Student Parental Leave Bursary | Doctoral College | Newcastle University](#)

It is important to note that employment family leave is separate to Student Parent Leave. International research students must **comply with student visa regulations.**

10. Do Postgraduate Teachers need to declare participation in industrial action?

As a colleague, you would have to declare participation in action as there are pay implications, e.g., strike action, marking and assessment boycott. CPT's and PGTA's would need to complete the relevant online form to declare participation. OPT's are not required to do this as the hours would not be claimed through Unitemps

PGTA Remuneration

11. What is the PGTA remuneration package?

The PGTA remuneration package will comprise of salary for teaching activity and studentship covering the **difference** between the salary amount and the UKRI current annual stipend rate).

12. Will incremental progression apply?

CPT's and PGTA's will be based on a spot point on the pay spine which is Grade E point 25. They will receive an annual pay award (cost of living increase) which is negotiated by UCEA (Universities and

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Colleges Employers Association) with the trade unions on our behalf.

13. What will the programme fees be?

The University will pay course fees at staff rate (as set out under Section 6ii of the Doctor of Philosophy Progress Regulations).

PGTA Research Student Travel Grant (RSTG)

14. How will PGTA RTSG be calculated?

PGTAs should receive the equivalent amount of RTSG that is paid to a FT or PT student and this should be averaged out of over their minimum candidature period of 4 years. (For example, if a part time student receives £3,000 RTSG in total – paid over 3 years of minimum candidature at £1000 per annum – a PGTA student should receive £750 per annum paid over 4 years.).

Visa questions

15. Can student visa holders be offered a CPT or PGTA?

Yes, they can. However, they must not exceed the number of hours permitted in line with their visa permissions, e.g., 20 hours work per week, and they are responsible for ensuring compliance with this.

16. Will a PGTA be classed as an employee or student for their visa?

As the main activity and affiliation with the University is to study, their full-time research student status is retained for visa purposes and working hours will be compliant with their visa permissions.

Council Tax

17. Will Postgraduate Teachers be subject to Council Tax exemption?

Households where all occupants are full-time students do not have to pay Council Tax. Please refer to the following website to check exemptions. <https://www.gov.uk/council-tax/discounts-for-full-time-students>

18. Will Postgraduate Teachers be subject to national insurance and tax?

PAYE tax and national insurance contributions will be based on the HMRC threshold. More information can be found here: [here](#).

Academic Unit Considerations

19. Can Academic Units use Unitemps for unplanned or ad hoc teaching related activity? I

Yes, units can continue to use the Occasional Postgraduate Teacher (OPT) role and rate for an **unplanned ad-hoc** teaching need.

20. What happens if a PGTA or CPT can no longer do hours they have committed to?

As a colleague they would resign from their contracted post, giving the relevant notice (4 weeks) by completing the [leavers form](#).

21. Is there any flexibility on an October start date?

The policy states that CPTs are normally employed from October to September as they need to be registered students and registration for new students takes place in September. If they are a current student, they could start a CPT contract in September.

In relation to a later start date, there may be circumstances impacting on the start date of the CPT and in those cases, the CPT can start at a different point in the academic year. Where the contract

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starts later than October, the overall length of the CPT will be reduced, as the end date for the CPT will not extend beyond the 30th of September.

22. Can an Academic Unit employ a PGTA part-way through the academic year?

The normal expectation is that a PGTA commences at the start of an academic year, however, there may be circumstances which prevent this, e.g., students awaiting their visa, etc. In those instances, the PGTA would start when the student is able to register and the duration of the PGTA would be as specified in the original offer.

23. Can they/I teach in multiple units?

Your contract of employment will be in one academic unit. However, you can pick up additional hours/work through Unitemps if this does not exceed any visa restrictions or impact on your studies. You may wish to discuss this with your line manager or student supervisor.

Where a student works regular hours through their CPT/PGTA, these hours will be blocked out in the Unitemps portal.

Where a student works irregular hours, we would need to block a max number of hours out, so the student never goes over the 20-hour restriction.

24. Our PG Teachers are required to undertake the Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education before they are permitted to teach, do we pay the PG Teacher for this?

Yes - where the ILTHE is required in order to undertake a PG teacher role, it is expected that the PG Teacher will receive payment for this.

25. I am a CPT or a PGTA; will I be contacted on a work email or a student email?

CPTs and PGTAs will have two University email addresses – one as a student and another as a colleague for their employment contract. The student email address will be for correspondence relating to the research degree from the University, including their Academic Unit, Supervisory Team, Graduate School, etc.

26. I have a PGTA role, and I need to take an interruption of studies, what would happen to my study and employment dates?

If you take an interruption, your academic study dates would be amended in line with the length of your interruption of studies. **However, your employment contract will not be extended.** Depending on the reason for your interruption, you would need to consider whether you are able to continue with the duties of your PGTA role and whether you would need to take leave of some sort.

27. I am interested in a CPT or PGTA role, how do I find out about these opportunities?

These roles will be advertised and interested parties will be invited to apply. If you are successful, you will be offered a contract of up to 12 months for a CPT role, or up to 5 years for a PGTA role, conditional upon your registration on a PhD programme.

28. Would PGTA pay fees at staff candidature rate?

PGTA teaching and teaching related activities are covered by a contract for the whole duration of the PGR (Postgraduate Research) programme. It has been agreed that where a student is on a PGTA, the University would support the payment of fees at a reduced fee rate, normally available where there is an employment of more than 25% FTE (Full Time Equivalent). This is in accordance with the Doctor of Philosophy Progress Regulations.

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This would apply equally to Home or International students. Note that this does not apply to CPT contracts, which are less than 0.25 FTE, and therefore would not fit the criteria for the reduced fee rate.

29. Is there a default fee band for a PGTA, or would that vary by Academic Unit?

This would vary by academic unit as the fee band is usually determined by the nature of the research to be undertaken.

30. A current PhD student has been offered one of the PGTA positions, with the idea that they will transfer the remaining time of their PhD into 'PGTA time' – is this possible?

We would allow current Doctoral students to apply for an advertised PGTA, and their application would be considered alongside applicants who are not currently registered at Newcastle. This way the application would be considered as part of an open competition.

If a current student were successful, the length of the PGTA being offered to them would have to be less than the 5 years we indicate in the policy, as their already completed candidature on the Doctoral programme would need to be taken into account. **The length of the Doctoral programme would not be extended.**

In terms of calculating remaining candidature, it is only the minimum candidature period that is extended by a change in candidature. The pending submission period remains at 12 months, whether you are full-time, part-time, or combined.

For example:

If a full-time PhD student who had completed 12 months of candidature was awarded a PGTA, they would transfer on to combined candidature, which would give them a further four years to complete their PhD.

31. How does registration for the PhD work for a PGTA?

All PGTA's (whether they are Home or International) will be registered on a PhD under combined candidature, which has a duration of 5 years. Early submission may be agreed subject to academic progress.

32. What would happen to my PGTA contract if I submitted early?

If you were to submit earlier than the end of your PGTA contract, you could continue to teach as you would still be a registered student. You would be registered as 'Under Examination' while your thesis is being examined. However, if you were to successfully complete before the end of your PGTA contract, then the PGTA contract would end as you would no longer be a registered student.

However, the studentship element of the PGTA remuneration would cease on early submission, in the same way that this would for other research degree students in receipt of a studentship.

If you have successfully completed before the normal end of the PGTA contract, and the Academic Unit still needs the teaching activity to be fulfilled, the Academic Unit may consider whether a short-term contract of employment might be appropriate but cannot be guaranteed.