Study of PGR students’ attitudes towards and experience of teaching-related activities

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Executive summary

This report sets out the findings from survey research which sought to better understand the experience of Newcastle University’s post-graduate research (PGR) student community regarding teaching opportunities. More specifically, the research – utilising both quantitative and qualitative data – was designed to help explain why the University tends to achieve relatively poor PRES results (compared with the Russell Group average) in the case of ‘teaching opportunities’ (specifically questions 10 and 12). This is particularly intriguing given that “Newcastle fares better than the average [Russell Group institution] in 32 out of the 38 questions.” (QuiLT, 2011)

The study was commissioned by QuiLT on behalf of the Student Opinion Steering Group (SOSG) and was undertaken by researchers from Newcastle University’s Centre for Knowledge, Innovation, Technology and Enterprise (KITE). It follows an earlier KITE study (‘A study of Newcastle University PGR students who teach’, October, 2011) which recommended that further research be carried out in order to facilitate evidence-based action. The data-collection process took place during the Summer/Autumn of 2012 and the research design sought to meet a number of objectives, formulated from questions raised by KITE’s earlier study into this issue:

- Identify which ‘kinds’ of PGR students are carrying out teaching-related duties, whether they are full time of part-time, funded or not funded, whether they are UK or international students
- Identify which school/research institute these students are registered with in order to detect patterns/inequalities in terms of the make-up and attitudes of students
- Identify the kinds of activities these students have been carrying out and in which schools
- Identify the range of ways in which students have accessed (or tried unsuccessfully to access) paid teaching-related opportunities
- Ascertain respondents’ attitudes towards: the level of opportunity to teach that exists; the degree of support they have received to carry out these activities; and their overall experience of teaching

The survey achieved a 14% response rate (331 respondents from a population of 2300) comprising a good spread of both UK and international PGR students across the three faculties.

The key findings discussed in this report are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which PGR students want to/are doing teaching-related work?</th>
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<td>• The overwhelming majority (82%) of the sample declared an interest in undertaking some teaching related activities during their time as a PGR student (regardless of being full-time/part-time, sex, school/research institute and even regardless of their funding status) and a significant proportion of these (56%) indicated that they had undertaken some kind of University teaching development activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Of those respondents who were interested in teaching, 65% were successful in securing certain teaching-related activities within the University (in broadly similar proportions...</td>
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across the three faculties). Of course, this implies that the University is not meeting the desires of a considerable number of PGR students to gain teaching experience.

- UK students were significantly more likely to be successful in obtaining teaching work than their international counterparts (72% and 47% respectively), as were PGR students who had done some kind of teaching development activity than those who had not (80% versus 41% respectively).

### How do respondents (try to) access opportunities to teach?

Although we cannot be sure whether the actions detailed by respondents directly led to them securing teaching-related work, the qualitative data offer deep insights into respondents’ experiences and demonstrate the diversity of actions taken by the PGR student community in accessing teaching opportunities. Respondents’ actions have been grouped along two dimensions – first, those that imply the student being proactive versus reactive in trying to access teaching opportunities, and second, those that imply the student taking action on a formal basis versus taking more informal, speculative action.

- A very similar amount of actions related to formal and informal activity although much more of this activity was proactive than reactive.

- A lot of the activity undertaken by PGR students in seeking to access teaching opportunities was both formal and proactive (82 students), suggesting that, where they exist, established processes for securing teaching work are utilised (e.g. school allocation systems; contacting the school office/graduate school).

- Another area of high activity, again indicating respondents being proactive about seeking teaching work but this time more informally, relates to the exploitation of personal contacts (contacting supervisors/academic staff). Many of the respondents reporting these actions were based in SAgE and HaSS-based schools.

- Reflecting more reactive behaviour (and an issue of concern for those desiring more transparency in how teaching opportunities are allocated), a significant number of respondents (34) reported having been approached by their supervisor(s) or other academics about doing teaching-related activities. This activity was reported by PGR students based in schools across the university, although a disproportionate number were based in Engineering schools of different kinds.

- The majority of the reasons offered by respondents relating to why they were unsuccessful in securing teaching work related to issues where, arguably, there is scope for improvement on the part of the University (e.g. no/insufficient teaching opportunities; unaware of how to access opportunities; application process flawed or unfair).
What kind(s) of teaching-related work are respondents doing?

- A variety of teaching-related activity is being carried out by PGR students (some students perform more than one activity). Of the 146 respondents who reported securing some kind of teaching-related work: 36 respondents were lecturing; 74 respondents were doing demonstrating work; 68 respondents were leading seminars/workshops; and 46 respondents were supervising students.

- Significantly more PGR students from the Medical Sciences and SAgE faculties were undertaking demonstrating activities while proportionately more HaSS students were lecturing/leading seminars. Work is not spread equally among schools.

- The majority of respondents who were undertaking teaching related activities were spending less than 40 hours per year doing so.

- In addition to lecturing, seminar/workshop leading, demonstrating, and supervising/tutoring, many students (69% of those who had also done a teaching-related activity) had undertaken marking activities. Again, UK students (74%) are significantly more likely than their international peers (54%) to secure marking work.

- 94% of respondents reported carrying out preparation work. Of those, 50% spent 1-2 hours per week preparing. Respondents associated with HaSS devoted significantly more hours to preparation activities than their counterparts in SAgE and Medical Sciences.

- When asked whether they were paid for all of the teaching/markig/preparation activities they undertook, most (71%) responded positively.

- Of the remainder (who claimed they were not fully compensated), a large number reported not being paid to carry out preparation work, an issue that is clearly one of concern for some PGR students, particularly those who carry out a lot of preparation, as many HaSS-based students do.

What do PGR students think of the opportunities to teach and the experience of teaching?

- A majority (69%) agreed/strongly agreed with the statement: ‘I expected to have the opportunity to teach when I began my postgraduate research studies’.

- Opinion was very much divided on the question of satisfaction with the opportunities that exist for PGR students to teach – 46% reported some level of satisfaction while 31% expressed dissatisfaction. There appears to be no relationship between opinion on this issue and respondents’ sex or UK/international status although levels of satisfaction vary across schools/research institutes.

- There was a similar response to the question of how satisfied students were with the level of support available to them to access teaching opportunities – less than half of the respondents
(47%) expressed satisfaction in this regard and 32% reported dissatisfaction.

- As for why PGR students may feel dissatisfied with the teaching opportunities and level of support that exist at the University, a number of factors were revealed by the data:
  - A lack of opportunities in students’ specific settings (schools/research institutes)
  - A lack of clarity in the processes that lead to attaining teaching work.
  - The unclear relationship between securing work and the need to acquire adequate training came across as an issue of considerable concern for a number of PGR students (described as a ‘Catch 22’ situation)
  - Perceived unfairness in the allocation of teaching-related work (e.g. the hand-picking of students to teach by academic staff)

- As well as the level of support in accessing teaching opportunities, previous research has suggested PGR students experience considerable variability in how supported they feel during the process of carrying out teaching-related activities. Compared with how (un)-supported respondents felt in securing teaching work, a relatively high percentage responded positively (76% agreed/strongly agreed) to the statement: ‘I have received adequate support from academic staff to carry out my teaching’. Concerns in this regard related to the variability of support, which can result in a certain amount of confusion over how students should approach their teaching duties.

- While dissatisfaction was expressed about certain aspects of their experience, the overwhelming majority of respondents (who secured work) have found the experience valuable – 89% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement: ‘My experience of teaching has been a worthwhile aspect of my studies’. Many of the students’ comments emphasised the value of this experience to career development.

- Given the perceived benefits of taking on teaching-related activities, it is perhaps unsurprising that those who have already undertaken this kind of work demonstrated an appetite to do more. 76% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement: ‘I would like the opportunity to do more of the teaching activities I currently perform/have performed’. An even higher proportion (81%) of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the related statement: ‘I would like the opportunity to perform other kinds of teaching related activities’.

- Previous research suggests that there is often a concern among university staff that PGR students may be unable to manage undertaking teaching-related activities alongside their studies. This concern appears not to have been shared by respondents who had some experience of this work. This is reflected in the responses to the statement: ‘I have been able to cope with the demands of teaching related activities whilst progressing with my own research studies’. 84% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this statement.
Respondents’ specific suggestions for improving the PGR student’s experience

As well as providing rich qualitative data to help us better understand the experience of the PGR student, respondents’ free text comments included a number of specific suggestions about how the University’s processes and structures associated with PGR teaching could be improved. These include:

- Peer support structures
- More diverse teaching development activities /exposure to other areas of teaching experience
- More teaching-related opportunities, even on a voluntary basis
- Clarification of eligibility to teach (there may well be local policies on this issue)
- Utilisation of diverse media to communicate teaching opportunities
- Creation of different online and offline structures to better coordinate the allocation of opportunities
- Ability to pursue teaching development activities even if PGR student is not seeking teaching opportunities immediately
- A number of the suggestions sought to overcome perceived problems with the relationship between securing work and the need to acquire adequate training – what some respondents called a ‘Catch 22’ situation. Most suggestions imply a deeper level of coordination between schools/research institutes and the SDU.

In summary, most members of the University’s PGR student community are interested in gaining teaching experience of one kind or another but a considerable number of them, particularly those who are international, do not manage to secure teaching-related work. Routes to securing work are diverse in nature, in part because, according to PGR students, there is inconsistency in the presence of adequate formal processes for accessing opportunities (even if there do appear to be some useful examples of good practice). Many PGR students are proactive in seeking out work. At the same time, however, there appears to be quite a lot of informal approaches by supervisors/staff (as well as the perception of such approaches), which is an issue of concern for some. Among this community, there are calls for: the implementation of formalised, transparent processes for accessing teaching opportunities where they do not already exist; more opportunities (even if unpaid) to teach; more and better support from staff in securing teaching work; better coordination between schools/research institutes at the local level and the SDU’s provision of development activities (though there was very little in the way of criticism of the experience of the SDU’s programmes).

As far as those PGR students who do manage to find teaching-related work are concerned, even though there are reports of poor support from staff, overall the experience is considered valuable, particularly in the context of what is viewed as a competitive, global landscape for securing permanent employment.

Hence, one way to interpret the results would be to suggest that the main focus of improvements should be in the provision of more opportunities facilitated by more transparent processes. While action in this area may well improve PGR student satisfaction in this area, it is clear that members of this community who do gain teaching experience put a high value on positive, supportive working relationships with academic colleagues and the opposite experience can be demoralising for PGR students. What also seems clear is that in order for any improvements that might be made to the systems that support PGR teaching to be successful, the supervisor community would need to be aware of and supportive of such changes.
Introduction

This report sets out the findings of a survey which focussed on postgraduate research (PGR) students’ attitudes towards and experiences of teaching-related activities. The study was proposed by members of Newcastle University’s Student Opinion Steering Group (SOSG) and was undertaken by researchers from Newcastle University’s Centre for Knowledge, Innovation, Technology and Enterprise (KITE).

The initial impetus for this study, and an earlier KITE study (‘A study of Newcastle University PGR students who teach’, October, 2011), was to improve the University’s understanding of why Newcastle University tends to achieve relatively poor PRES results (compared with the Russell Group average) in the case of ‘teaching opportunities’ (specifically questions 10 and 12), especially given that the University has achieved better than the Russell Group average for a majority of variables over recent years. The final report for KITE’s earlier study recommended that further research be carried out in order to facilitate evidence-based action. A greater understanding of a number of issues was recommended, including: what teaching-related activities are happening where; the inequality of teaching opportunities among the PGR student community; why UK PGR students are more satisfied than their Non-UK peers with the experience of teaching; the apparent inconsistency in the amount and kind of support available at school level for PGR students who teach; and the factors that have a positive effect on PGR student satisfaction with carrying out teaching activities.

In order to address this challenge, an online questionnaire-based study incorporating both closed and open questions was designed in conjunction with the University’s Postgraduate Deans. The main data-collection process took place during the summer of 2012. The research design sought to meet a number of objectives:

- Identify which ‘kinds’ of PGR students are carrying out teaching-related duties, whether they are full time of part-time, funded or not funded, whether they are UK or international students
- Identify which school/research institute these students are registered with in order to detect patterns/inequalities in terms of the make-up and attitudes of students
- Identify the kinds of activities these students have been carrying out and in which schools
- Identify the range of ways in which students have accessed (or tried unsuccessfully to access) paid teaching-related opportunities
- Ascertain respondents’ attitudes towards: the level of opportunity to teach that exists; the degree of support they have received to carry out these activities; and their overall experience of teaching

The issue of PGR student teaching is deemed a worthwhile one to investigate given the range of potential benefits associated with this activity, both for the PGR student and the undergraduate recipient of that teaching, not to mention the increasing reliance on PGR students to support schools in responding to teaching demands. In addition, the climate in academia is such that it is increasingly important for the PGR student wishing to pursue an academic career to gain teaching experience during her doctoral studies. At the same time, if the PGR student’s experience of teaching is not appropriately supported, it can give rise to a range of problems and concerns for PGR students and undergraduates alike, as well as having QAA implications.
The first section of this report introduces the questionnaire used to collect the underlying research data. The next section sets out the findings that followed the analysis of the data; it is organised into sections focussing on the key questions this research sought to answer – Which PGR students are interested in teaching?; Which PGR students are doing teaching-related work?; How did respondents (try to) access opportunities to teach?; What kind(s) of teaching-related work are respondents doing?; What do PGR students think of the opportunities to teach and the experience of teaching? The findings section comprises the analysis of quantitative data (utilising Excel and SPSS) as well as qualitative data collected via several free text questions. The following section incorporates some of the specific suggestions made by respondents about how the University’s processes and structures associated with PGR teaching could be improved. Finally, the report lists a number of recommendations that arise from the research.

The research instrument

An online survey was built using the online questionnaire tool Survey Monkey. Once a first draft had been created, this was shared with members of the SOSG and the PG Deans for their input. The form of the questionnaire was refined as a result of going through this consultation process on a number of occasions. The final version was then piloted amongst a small number of PGR students (across faculties and both UK & International) to test its clarity and suitability.

Following the piloting phase, the questionnaire was emailed to all 2300 enrolled postgraduate research students. The email included a short introduction to the study. Two weeks after the initial email had been sent, a reminder was sent to the population and responses were collected for a further two weeks.

Findings

Description of population and sample

The questionnaire was sent out to a distribution list of all registered postgraduate research students at Newcastle University. From the distribution list of 2300 students, 331 completed the survey (60% female; 40% male) giving a response rate of 14.4%. As figure 1 shows, the sample is made up of a good spread of PGR students across the three faculties: HaSS (110 respondents); SAgE (83 respondents); Medical Sciences (138 respondents). The sample achieved is broadly in proportion to the entire population of PGR students: HaSS – 775 students (34%); SAgE – 732 students (32%); Medical Sciences – 793 (34%). As the figures suggest, a slightly higher proportion of Medical Sciences students responded and a slightly lower proportion of SAgE students.

figure 1: proportion of respondents by faculty
The most common programme being pursued by respondents was the PhD programme (78%) with the other most populous courses being the Integrated PhD (7%) and the MRes (6%). Looking at the full population of PGR students, 68% were registered on PhD courses, 4% on Integrated PhDs, and 7% on MRes courses – as such, the population was relatively well represented by the sample. The vast majority (89%) of respondents were full-time students, with 11% being part-time. This reflects very closely the population of PGR students – 78% full-time and 10% part-time (the rest of the population is made up by staff members). Most of the respondents (81%) were in their first, second or third year of their postgraduate research course. The majority of the remaining students were in their 4th or 5th year, while a very small number had been registered for longer than 5 years.

The survey achieved a good response rate from international students – they made up 39% of the respondents. Of those international respondents who had achieved an IELTS qualification, the most common score was 6.5 (36%), with 85% obtaining a 6.5 or higher. Alternative English qualifications that were detailed in the survey included the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Advanced Placement International English Language (APIEL) examination and the Certificate of Proficiency in English (CIP).

Respondents were asked if they had received any form of funding to pursue their postgraduate research degrees. 20% stated that their studies had been ‘self-funded’ (see figure 2 below). While the majority of respondents claimed to be receiving some kind of funding assistance, this is not to say that their studies were entirely funded (respondents were able to select more that one source of funding). See Appendix for further detail/graphics of demographic characteristics.

**figure 2: responses to ‘Are you in receipt of funding for your research programme?’**
**Which PGR students are interested in teaching?**

Before exploring PGR students’ experience of trying to secure and carrying out teaching work, the research was interested to understand the level of interest among this community for getting involved in teaching-related activity at all. As KITE’s earlier study established, PGR students engage in a variety of activities that relate to teaching and learning. In order to clarify what the survey was interested in gaining information about, the questionnaire stated what kinds of actions could constitute ‘teaching activities’: lecturing, leading seminars/workshops, demonstrating, or supervising/tutoring students (assessment marking activities were considered separately).

The results showed that the overwhelming majority (82%) of the sample declared an interest in undertaking some teaching related activities during their time as a PGR student. When respondents’ characteristics were taken into account such as their sex, funding status, or whether they were a UK or international student, there was little difference in the desire to undertake teaching activities. While no relationship was of statistical significance, the data suggest that part-time students are slightly more interested in teaching than their full-time counterparts (84% versus 74% respectively) and that HaSS-based students are more interested in teaching than peers based in the SAgE and Medical Sciences faculties (88% versus 84% and 77% respectively). The number of respondents who declared not to be interested in teaching was small. Of the reasons for responding in this way, the most common by some way was a feeling of not having time to take on teaching activities (see Appendix for further detail).

Of all the students surveyed, a significant proportion\(^1\) indicated that they had undertaken one or more of the formal university teacher development programmes (see figure 3), while more than 50 respondents have completed ‘school-based’ teacher development activities. By far the most common qualification achieved by respondents was Newcastle University’s ITLHE Part A.

**figure 3: responses to ‘Please indicate whether you have carried out any of the following teaching development activities at Newcastle University’**

\[^1\] The number of responses in these categories equated to 47% of the sample although some respondents selected more than one.
Of those students who said that they were interested in undertaking teaching related activities, 56% had taken part in one or more of the teaching development activities shown above. It is also interesting to note that of these respondents, 8 stated that they had no interest in undertaking any teaching related activity during their time as a PGR student; there is a suggestion here that such developmental activities are not only valued in an instrumental way. Looking across faculties, a higher proportion of SAgE PGR students (64%) have taken part in teaching development activities of some kind compared to counterparts in HaSS (44%) and Medical Sciences (38%). This relationship is statistically significant (chi square result .001²). This finding is in line with results from KITE’s earlier study in which we found that the majority of PGR student teaching is done in the SAgE faculty.

**Which PGR students are doing teaching-related work?**

Of those respondents who did want to teach and took steps towards securing this kind of work, many (65%) were successful in doing so. If we break the results down by faculty (see figure 4 below), the data suggest that SAgE-based students (71%) were slightly more likely than their peers to secure work (66% of HaSS students and 60% of Medical Sciences students), although the relationship is not statistically significant. Many of the other demographic characteristics similarly do not appear to have an effect on the likelihood of PGR students securing work.

**figure 4: responses to ‘Were you successful in securing teaching work?’ by faculty**

However, as figure 5 below demonstrates, UK students were significantly more likely to be successful in obtaining teaching work than their international counterparts (chi-square result .002) – while 47% of international students who were interested in teaching were successful in accessing work, 72% of their UK counterparts did so. It is possible that respondents’ perceived (i.e. by University staff) English language ability might be an explanatory factor. While data to test this directly have not been collected in this study, by extending this logic, it can be hypothesised that international respondents with greater English language ability are more likely than their

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² 0.05 is generally viewed as an acceptable level of significance within social science research
international peers to secure teaching work. However, this was not borne out by the data inasmuch as there was no correlation between a higher IELTS score and success in accessing work.

**Figure 5: responses to ‘Were you successful in securing teaching work?’ by UK/non-UK status**

The other variable that proved statistically significant (chi square result .000) related to whether or not respondents had done some kind of teaching development activity – i.e. those who had (80%) were more likely to have secured some work than those who had not (41%). This is not to suggest that taking part in developmental activities guarantees PGR students of teaching-related work. As we will see later on in the report, various factors connected with the processes of applying and key relationships appear to be important in determining success. What may be seen as surprising is that a number of respondents (35) based in all three faculties appear to have secured work in the absence of any University developmental activity. This includes 9 students carrying out lecturing activities (or 25% of those doing lecturing), 18 (or 27%) leading seminars/workshops, 10 (or 22%) carrying out supervision/tutoring activities, and 13 (or 17%) demonstrating. Of course, some of this group may have undertaken equivalent teaching development activities prior to joining the University.

**How did respondents (try to) access opportunities to teach?**

A key finding from previous KITE research was the lack of clarity around how PGR students managed to access teaching opportunities. Improving understanding of these processes was an important objective of this study.

It was anticipated that PGR students take steps to access opportunities in different ways; hence, respondents were asked to state the action(s) they took in a free text box. Responses have been manually coded to categorize respondents’ thoughts and identify the most common approaches; the results are shown in figure 6 (below). This question was responded to by 205 respondents; however, because some respondents made more than one point in their comments, the number of ‘responses’ represented in the graph total more than this figure.
While it has undoubtedly been very valuable to elicit the unstructured thoughts of PGR students, as with any qualitative data of this kind, certain comments made by respondents may be open to interpretation. Hence, in analysing the data relating to this question, it is not always clear the order in which respondents took certain actions; i.e. did they speak to their supervisor before applying to teach via a school allocation system? (nuances of this kind would be better yielded via an interview where a dialogue is possible) Further, certain actions may have been categorised differently because of the language used by respondents even though, in practice, they did very similar things; i.e. it is possible that comments categorised as ‘contacted school office’ and ‘via school allocation system’ imply virtually the same actions – as will be explained below, however, both actions imply a degree of proactivity on the part of the student and of interacting with formal university processes. Also, we cannot be sure whether the actions detailed by respondents actually led to them securing any work.

Having mentioned these caveats, the advantage of this kind of open question is that it provides respondents with an opportunity to set out what was significant for them (rather than for the researcher) about the process of trying to secure teaching work. Further, many of the data yielded by this question offer deep insights into respondents’ experiences and, as a whole, demonstrate the diversity of actions taken by the PGR student community in accessing teaching opportunities.

In order to draw out issues of particular interest from the range of respondents’ comments, the actions can be grouped along two dimensions – first, those that imply the student being proactive versus reactive in trying to access teaching opportunities, and second, those that imply the student taking action on a formal basis versus taking more informal, speculative action. This leaves to one side those responses grouped as ‘no action taken yet’ (28) as well as those categorised as ‘unclear’ (13), where it was difficult to interpret the comment.
Looking at the total of valid responses, a very similar number related to formal and informal activity. However, much more of this activity can be described as proactive than reactive. A lot of the activity undertaken by PGR students in seeking to access teaching opportunities was both formal and proactive (82 students), suggesting that, where they exist, established processes for securing teaching work are utilised. For example, 34 students reported making use of a ‘school allocation system’ in trying to access work. The data suggest that this route is most common in certain HaSS schools – English Literature, Language and Linguistics and Geography, Politics and Sociology in particular – and a number of research institutes based in the Medical Sciences faculty. If this kind of formalised school-based system for allocating teaching opportunities is viewed as desirable (as it is by many PGR students), the data would suggest it is a route only taken by (or available to?) a relatively small number of PGR students (around 15% of valid actions).

Further, while systems for allocating teaching work may be in place in certain schools and while they may usefully facilitate access to teaching opportunities for some PGR students, experience of them was not universally positive:

“I have applied for any teaching opportunities offered through the schools I am part of. However, this past year their system of recruiting was not very efficient and I was left off the email asking for applications. It was fairly unpleasant and awkward to secure teaching at that stage. I was offered admin work in lieu, however at the post-grad level, I should be teaching, not doing admin as that is not nearly as good for my future career.” (PhD Student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)

Although few SAgE-based students referred specifically to an allocation system, a number of respondents from that faculty reported proactively using formal routes to access teaching work. For example, many of those (15) who ‘contacted the school office’ (which, in practice, may indeed have involved the use of an allocation system of some kind) were SAgE-based. Others citing this route were based in Medical Sciences research institutes. A similar route (‘contacted the graduate school’) was most common among respondents (12) from those same research institutes.

The final set of actions being categorised as formal and proactive relate to respondents reports of having taken part in teaching development activities (17) or having applied to do so (4). While, in itself, this action is insufficient to secure teaching work, it is interesting that the majority of these respondents were based in the Medical Sciences, suggesting that there may be more awareness there that having completed some kind of training is an expectation before securing work.

Another area of high activity, again indicating that respondents have been proactive about seeking teaching work, but this time more informal in nature, relates to the exploitation of personal contacts. The largest single category of action involved respondents contacting their supervisor(s) – 38 PGR students referred to this. 26 respondents reported having contacted academic staff (which may or may not include supervisors).

“When I applied for the PhD, I spoke about my life project and explained that I would like to become a lecturer. My supervisors offered me the opportunity of demonstrating in practicals in which they were lecturers. Now, I am not only involved in their lectures.” (PhD Student, Biology)

“Asked PhD supervisor and other members of economics faculty. They guided me to ITLHE.” (PhD Student, Newcastle University Business School)

It is interesting to note that many of the respondents who reported contacting their supervisor/other academic staff as a route to accessing teaching work were based in SAgE (Engineering schools in
particular) and HaSS-based schools (although a number were registered with research institutes in the Medical Sciences). Could it be that some schools in these faculties have less well-established formal systems in place to promote and facilitate teaching opportunities compared with the Medical Sciences faculty (despite it being noted above that certain HaSS/SAgE schools appear to have well-functioning systems in this regard)?

As well as PGR students apparently taking the initiative to contact academic staff on this issue, a significant number of respondents (34) referred to having been approached by their supervisor(s) or other academics about teaching-related activities.

“Offered opportunity by PhD supervisor” (PhD student, Institute of Cellular Medicine)

From the perspective of those who desire transparency in how teaching opportunities are allocated, this finding is somewhat concerning, if not surprising given existing anecdotal evidence. This activity was reported by PGR students based in schools across the university, although a disproportionate amount was based in Engineering schools of different kinds.

The remaining action reported by quite a few respondents (28) involved responding to communications about teaching opportunities from a school or graduate school – for the purposes of this discussion these are seen as examples of students being reactive to a formal process. Respondents in this group were mainly based in one of several HaSS schools or a Medical Sciences research institute.

Overall, then, it appears that the majority of PGR students demonstrate proactive behaviour in order to access teaching opportunities. Some have the option of school-based systems for allocating opportunities, others, more speculatively, contact supervisors/academics in the hope of securing work, while some students are fortunate enough to find themselves being approached by academic staff on an individual basis. Even if it is not always clear how supervisors are involved, the supervisory relationship seems to be a key feature of many of the actions taken by PGR students. This may be in terms of dissuading PGR students from taking on teaching work (in the interests of progressing with their research, as some respondents mentioned had happened to them), or pointing students towards particular processes or colleagues, or directly facilitating teaching work.

As well as understanding the routes students took to acquire teaching work, it is interesting to explore why those PGR students who expressed a desire to teach (and took steps of some kind to secure that work) may have ultimately been unsuccessful in doing so. In order to do this, respondents who were in this position were asked to detail why they thought they had been unsuccessful. Given the relatively small number of responses for many of the categories shown in figure 7 below, the results should be interpreted with care.
In total, the survey yielded 65 responses to this question (the comments of a small number of respondents have been categorized more than once).

If we ignore those responses categorized as ‘unsure why unsuccessful’ (3) along with ‘did not apply’ (13), we can see that the majority of the reasons relate to issues where, arguably, there is scope for improvement on the part of the University. For example, the greatest number of students by far (18) put their lack of success down to there being no, or insufficient, teaching opportunities.

“Too many applicants for limited number of positions.” (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

“There is only very few opportunities, so by the time we see the email the position is already allocated.” (PhD student, Northern Institute for Cancer Research)

At the same time, 4 respondents reported being unaware of how to access opportunities, and 3 talked about the application process being flawed or unfair.

“Other PhD students take on teaching opportunities quicker because they already know how to use the allocation system” (PhD student, Computing Science)

“Not really sure how to go about applying for roles within the schools” (EdD student, Education, Communication and Language Sciences)
While it is possible that some of these students could have made more effort to find out about and access teaching opportunities, when seen in conjunction with other findings (detailed below) relating to perceived levels of institutional support and the degree of fairness associated with these processes, it is arguable that improvements can be made by the relevant university actors.

The other set of explanations for not successfully securing teaching work offered by respondents point more towards factors that PGR students themselves have more scope to effect – ‘missed application call(s)’; ‘lacked qualifications’ / ‘specialist knowledge’ / ‘experience’; ‘teaching not prioritized’; ‘insufficient time to teach’; ‘language barrier’. At the same time, some of these responses may imply a lack of clear information and/or consistency about the institutional expectations of PGR students wanting to undertake teaching of some kind – hence, there may well be useful actions for the university to take to minimize these kinds of responses in the future. Indeed, some respondents (perhaps those who ‘missed application calls’) did state that there should be more frequent opportunities to register an interest in teaching. Although only 3 respondents offered ‘language barrier’ as the reason they believe they did not secure teaching work, when seen in the context of the finding set out above that UK students were significantly more likely to be successful in obtaining teaching work than their international counterparts, this issue these comments (see below for examples) may raise concerns.

“The language barrier seems to be the most challenge” (PhD Student, Newcastle University Business School)

“Perhaps because I am not a native speaker?” (PhD student, Modern Languages)

What kind(s) of teaching-related work are respondents doing?

As previous KITE research had suggested, PGR students at Newcastle University carry out a range of teaching-related activities. The survey clarified this situation by finding that 36 respondents (25% of the 146 respondents who reported securing some kind of teaching-related work) reported being involved in lecturing, 74 respondents (51%) were doing demonstrating work, 68 respondents (47%) were leading seminars/workshops and 46 respondents (32%) were supervising students (NB some students were carrying out more than one activity). Figure 8 (below) shows the break-down of teaching-related activities by faculty (see tables in Appendix for further detail). As expected, the graph shows that significantly more PGR students from the Medical Sciences and SAgE faculties were undertaking demonstrating activities while proportionately more HaSS students were lecturing/leading seminars. Far less variation in the amount of supervision/tutoring activity taking place was found. And no obvious relationship was discerned between the sex or nationality (i.e. UK vs international) of the respondent and how much of each activity was being done.
If we look at the school/research institute level, it is interesting to see where most of the activity is. In terms of lecturing, most schools/research institutes had one PGR student performing this activity. However, three HaSS schools (Arts and Cultures; Education, Communication and Language Sciences; and Geography, Politics and Sociology) and one SAgE school (Civil Engineering and Geosciences) each had 3 PGR student lecturers. The HaSS schools that dominate leading seminars/workshops activity are Geography, Politics and Sociology (11 respondents), English Literature, Language and Linguistics and Newcastle University Business School (both 8). The School of Biomedical Sciences had 7 respondents undertaking this activity. Other settings had between 1 and 4 PGR students engaged in this work. Similarly, most schools/research institutes had between 1 and 4 PGR students doing demonstrating work. The settings with significantly more were Biomedical Sciences and Civil Engineering and Geosciences (both 11 respondents), Biology (7), and Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering (6). Finally, in terms of supervision/tutoring activity, most settings had between 1 and 3 respondents doing this work. The exceptions were Civil Engineering and Geosciences (5 respondents), Education, Communication and Language Sciences and Geography, Politics and Sociology (both 4).

When the relative size of schools’ PGR student communities is taken into account, what is interesting about these findings is that, in the case of the HaSS faculty, a school like Geography, Politics and Sociology appears to have a considerably higher proportion of its PGR student body performing teaching-related activities than, for example, schools with bigger PGR student communities such as Education, Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University Business School, and English Literature, Language and Linguistics. Similarly, in the case of SAgE, Civil Engineering and Geosciences has a lot of PGR student activity compared with Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering or Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials.

As well as capturing a picture of the kinds of activities being performed by PGR students, the questionnaire sought to better understand how much of their time students were devoting to this work, in terms of the activity itself as well as preparation. Adding another layer of detail, figure 9 (below) shows how significant this teaching-related activity was (in terms of the number of hours students spent doing the activity during an academic year), broken down by type of activity. This clearly shows that the majority of respondents who were undertaking teaching related activities were spending less than 40 hours per year doing so. However, it is important to note that those students who were undertaking more than one activity would be spending a greater length of time on these activities. When this variable was analyzed against different characteristics of the respondents, nothing of significance was shown.
Respondents were asked how long they had been performing these teaching-related duties for. 41% had been doing so for less than a year. Just over a quarter (26%) had been doing this work for 2 years, a further 21% for 3 years, and the remaining 12% for between 4 and 10 years (see graph in Appendix for further detail). Although not statistically significant, the data suggest that female PGR students are more likely than their male peers to continue with this work for longer – the maximum amount of time a male student has been teaching is 4 years, compared to up to 10 years for female students.

In addition to the teaching-related activities already referred to (lecturing, seminar/workshop leading, demonstrating, and supervising/tutoring), many students (69% of those who had also done a teaching-related activity) had undertaken marking activities. As figure 10 (below) shows, Medical Sciences-based students do more marking than their peers elsewhere. At the individual school level, the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics (with 9 respondents) had the most PGR students performing marking. The data also suggest that UK students (74%) are significantly (chi square result .020) more likely than their international peers (54%) to secure this work. This finding echoes the earlier result in terms of securing teaching-related activity. This research did not explore how PGR students go about attaining marking work (see Appendix for detail of the number of assessments respondents mark).
Turning to the question of how much preparation PGR students do in relation to the teaching-related activities they undertake, 94% reported carrying out some preparation work. Of those, 50% spent 1-2 hours per week preparing (see figure 11 below). Respondents associated with HaSS devoted significantly more hours to preparation activities than their counterparts in SAgE and Medical Sciences, although the test of significance is not reliable given the low count of certain categories – the most common number of preparation hours for HaSS-based students was 3-4 hours per week while it was 1-2 hours for SAgE and Medical Sciences students (see Appendix for further detail). Given the variation in types of teaching activity across the faculties set out above, this result is not too surprising (i.e. the amount of PGR student lecturing happening in HaSS in particular). Also, while not statistically significant, the data suggest that international students spend more time preparing than UK students – for example, 31% of international PGR students prepare for 3-4 hours per week compared with 13% of their UK counterparts.

**Figure 10:** marking activity by faculty

**Figure 11:** responses to ‘How many hours preparation would you tend to do in an average week during the academic year?’
Finally, when asked whether they were paid for all of the teaching/marking/preparation activities they undertook, most (71%) responded positively; the remainder claimed they were not fully compensated. Questionnaire respondents were offered the opportunity to explain the non-payment of work and the results have been categorized as shown in figure 12. In the case of a number of respondents (5), they had not been paid because teaching-related activities of some kind were integral to their university post (all of these were based in the Medical Sciences faculty).

**figure 12: responses to ‘If you have NOT been paid for all the teaching/marking/preparation activities you have carried out, please provide details of why not’**

A large number of the comments related to not being paid to carry out preparation work (anecdotally, it is understood that the policy in many schools is that the basic rate of pay for casual teaching is said to account for preparation time). As well as constituting some of the responses to the question of non-payment, a number of respondents referred to this issue elsewhere in the questionnaire (in the free text comments where PGR students were asked to reflect on the overall experience of teaching at Newcastle) – some of these comments will be reported on here. Hence, this issue is clearly one of concern for some PGR students, particularly those who carry out a lot of preparation, as many HaSS-based students do.

“I have nominally been paid for all teaching/marking, although payment is not always adequate for the amount of time that I have actually needed to spend on preparation (particularly as a literature tutor, where it is sometimes necessary to read a full length novel each week in addition to other preparation), as well as additional 'buddying' meetings and observations. For marking we were generally paid £1-2 per script, which does not usually equate to minimum wage - particularly when you have little previous marking experience and need to spend upwards of 30 mins marking each script.” (part-time PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)
“To not be paid to spend about 3 hours a week preparing for classes is ridiculous. I don’t want to teach unprepared and that is not what my students are expecting, however to justify spending those hours away from my own work, I really do need some sort of incentive aside from the fact that I don’t want to deliver a seminar unprepared. The onus should not be entirely on me.” (PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics/ International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies)

Apart from preparation time, a number of respondents commented on not being financially compensated for carrying out duties (including some supervision activity) associated with the teaching work.

“It was a requirement for TAs who were teaching the course for the first time to attend all lectures (2hrs per week) but there was no extra payment for this time. I met students in my own time while they prepared for their assessment and this wasn't included in my pay.” (PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)

A third area where respondents felt insufficiently compensated related to marking work. In this case, PGR students are generally paid for the activity but many felt the payment (which tends to attach a fixed amount of time to the marking of each script) often fails to reflect the time incurred.

“Marking was paid at a half hour per assessment, however, they took closer to 2 hours each to mark. It was very discouraging and made me not want to do the work.” (PhD student, International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies)

As the graph shows, a number of PGR students have carried out informal work of different kinds for academic colleagues for which they were not paid. Some appear to resent the unpaid nature of this work; others gave the impression they were happy to do it. This respondent provided an interesting insight into the developmental value associated with undertaking unpaid activities:

“I was paid for all the teaching I carried out, but volunteered to produce seminar material and the reading list as I needed the experience and there was no opportunity to secure paid work. The voluntary sessions (for the prospective MA students) were a favour for a member of staff and I was happy to do this unpaid. The shadowing (a member of staff working at MA level) was necessarily unpaid and I did it because other PhD students had secured MA teaching slots and I was worried about my falling behind (in terms of future employability)” (PhD student, Arts and Cultures)

As many of these comments demonstrate, financial compensation for teaching-related work is an issue that exercised a number of the survey respondents. In addition to the matter of whether or not certain activities attract payment, this PGR student perceived inequalities in rates of pay for comparable activities:

“In my experience, pay rates and payment calculation systems often vary widely between different schools and sometimes within schools. Given that teaching opportunities are relatively scarce, this lack of transparency often results in a difficult balance of petitioning for the opportunity, calculus on the benefits, and individual, as opposed to collective, negotiation. In this sense, it is fortunate that the staff are approachable and accommodating - because neither the university administration nor the relevant Trade Unions are prepared to address this.” (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)
Private and Confidential

For other respondents, the level of remuneration for teaching work is simply inadequate, and higher rates of pay may aid recruitment of a higher calibre of PGR student.

“The university feels we are paid adequately for the bare minimum. Please bear in mind people at similar stages of their career with worse academic outcomes from their original degrees easily earn double what we do! It might be time to start paying better to attract the best candidates to PhDs, there is a tipping point between enjoying your work and getting paid for it....” (PhD student, Institute of Genetic Medicine)

According to one respondent, however, the current arrangements were seen as perfectly adequate:

“Preparation for seminar teaching is not included in the number of hours worked, so I was not officially paid for the hours spent preparing. However, the hourly fee is generous so I felt adequately compensated for my time.” (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

What do PGR students think of the opportunities to teach and the experience of teaching?

In order to better understand students’ attitudes to the issue of teaching opportunities as well as their feelings about the experience of teaching that some have had, a series of statements were put to respondents at the end of the questionnaire. Some statements were targeted at all respondents; others were relevant only to those who had undertaken teaching of some kind. These results are supplemented by students’ free text comments which provide deeper insights into areas of the PGR student’s experience that may help to explain feelings of dissatisfaction (and satisfaction). These qualitative insights serve to develop some of the themes raised earlier in relation to respondents’ thoughts on why they had not been successful in securing teaching work.

**Expectations of teaching experience**

One aspect of PGR students’ experience that arguably frames their attitudes more broadly relates to expectations of teaching work. All survey respondents were asked to consider the statement: ‘I expected to have the opportunity to teach when I began my postgraduate research studies’. A majority (69%) agreed/strongly agreed with this statement. There does not appear to be any significant relationship between responses to this statement and other demographic variables (i.e. respondents’ sex, UK/international status and so on). And interestingly, neither is there a relationship between expectation of teaching opportunities and respondents’ success in securing this kind of work; so, those PGR students who had no expectation of acquiring teaching work were as likely to find work as those who did have that expectation. Given the finding (reported on above) that securing teaching work often demands proactivity on the part of the PGR student, it may be that some of those who expected to get such opportunities felt they would not need to make much of an effort to find it.

**Overall satisfaction with teaching opportunities**

While many PGR students had not expected to teach before coming to Newcastle, it would appear that their expectation changed once they had begun their studies; this is suggested by the sample’s response to the statement: ‘Overall, I am satisfied with the opportunities that exist for me to teach’. Opinion was very much divided on this issue; 46% agreed/strongly agreed with the statement while 31% disagreed/strongly disagreed with it (see figure 13 below). There appears to be no relationship between opinion on this issue and respondents’ sex or UK/international status. As for where respondents are based (i.e. their school/research institute), there is more of a suggestion of a
significant relationship (chi square result .009) although because of the low numbers in certain categories the degree of confidence in this relationship is low. It is nevertheless interesting to note the diversity of results between settings. For example, 50% or more of respondents\(^3\) based in the following schools/research institutes disagreed/strongly disagreed with the idea that they were satisfied with teaching opportunities: HaSS – Arts and Cultures (54%), English Literature, Language and Linguistics (50%), Newcastle Institute for the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (100%); SAgE – Chemistry (100%), Mathematics and Statistics (100%); Medical Sciences – Psychology (50%). Conversely, 50% or more of respondents based in these schools/research institutes agreed/strongly agreed with the statement: SAgE – Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (75%), Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials (50%), Civil Engineering and Geosciences (56%), Computing Science (67%), Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering (67%), Mechanical and Systems Engineering (75%); Medical Sciences – Biomedical Sciences (57%), Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences (67%), Institute of Cellular Medicine (62%), Medical Sciences Educational Development (100%), Northern Institute for Cancer Research (60%); HaSS – Geography, Politics and Sociology (50%), Modern Languages (67%). As these lists suggest, HaSS-based schools fare rather worse than those in the other two faculties in terms of respondents being satisfied overall with the opportunities to teach that exist.

**Figure 13: responses to ‘Overall, I am satisfied with the opportunities that exist for me to teach’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It might be hypothesised that respondents who managed to secure some kind of teaching work would be satisfied with the opportunities available. The data suggest this is not the case, even though the relationship between securing work and overall satisfaction is a significant one (chi square result .000). So while a majority (64%) of those who secured work were satisfied, 20% were not. And even though the majority (65%) of respondents who failed to access teaching opportunities were dissatisfied with this state of affairs, 16% still reported satisfaction. Hence, it would appear that finding work is only one factor in deriving satisfaction with this area of the PGR student’s experience. The following comment provides one perspective on this suggestion:

“I was expected to teach – no option and found MSc students stupid, slow and unprepared for the self motivation required to do a very short project of their own. They expected all information handed to them on a plate and they still did not understand good laboratory

\(^3\) The percentage of respondents who responded in these ways is shown in brackets. In some cases, the number of respondents is very small and should therefore be interpreted with caution.
practice. They wasted my time and theirs.” (PhD student, Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials)

Availability of opportunities to teach
Despite the negative teaching experience of certain PGR students, securing (or not securing) work is still significant in determining satisfaction. Many respondents referred to a lack of opportunities in their schools/research institutes – arguably, these feelings would result in PGR student dissatisfaction:

“there are too few teaching opportunities for HASS students” (PhD student, Education, Communication and Language Sciences)

More opportunities to help teach statistics. I am based in Maths and Stats departments but there are not enough opportunities to teach (PhD student, Institute for Ageing and Health)

The seminar for the ITLHE Part A outlined the infrastructure but failed to outline what kind of opportunities exists and how to best maximise what's available. There are multiple opportunities within the language department, but none in IoN. I have not even heard of any supervisory student roles communicated within IoN.” (PhD student, Institute of Neuroscience)

“More opportunities to lead courses (in order to get on the ITHLE B course⁴) and lecture would be welcomed. Additionally, further information on how to get more involved in university teaching as a career would be interesting as well.” (PhD student, Biology)

As we saw earlier, teaching opportunities are even harder to come by for international students. This respondent makes a clear link between this situation and international students’ command of English:

There are few teaching opportunities for international students because of the language barrier. (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

Support in accessing and securing teaching opportunities
It is known that the level of support experienced by PGR students in securing teaching-related work is variable. This research confirms this idea and deepens our understanding of some of the main issues relating to this variability. It may well be that a sense of overall dissatisfaction with teaching opportunities is impacted by the degree of support experienced by students in trying to access teaching work (the numbers are too small to test reliably for this). In response to the statement, ‘I am satisfied with the level of support available to me to access teaching opportunities’, less than half of the respondents (47%) agreed/strongly agreed while 32% disagreed/strongly disagreed (see figure 14 below). As far as the relationship between responses to this variable and whether or not work was secured is concerned, the results were very similar to those relating to overall satisfaction levels reported on above. The relationship was confirmed to be statistically significant, with a majority (63%) of those who had secured work being satisfied with the level of support and 22% remaining dissatisfied despite accessing work.

⁴ This comment seems to suggest a misunderstanding about what a student requires to pursue the programme
Clarity and effectiveness of university processes

Many students’ free text comments pointed towards a lack of clarity in the processes that lead to attaining teaching work. This is a feeling shared by PGR students across the university, as the following comments demonstrate:

“It is not at all clear what steps should be undertaken to secure any teaching opportunity - apart from speaking to your supervisor/head of school” (PhD student, Arts and Cultures)

“I feel the amount of information available on teaching opportunities is quite limited, and would really like this to become more available” (PhD student, Institute of Genetic Medicine)

“Not really sure how to go about applying for roles within the schools.” (EdD student, Education, Communication and Language Sciences)

I don't really hear anything about how to get involved with teaching. (EngD student, Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials)

It could perhaps be advertised more. The whole concept of doing teaching/demonstrating work seems to be one you only really begin to find out about if you take it onto yourself to look into it. (PhD student, Institute of Cellular Medicine)

Some respondents expressing a similar viewpoint called for there to be more formal systems to coordinate the allocation of teaching-related work. Although not exclusively so, a number of these comments were made by HaSS-based PGR students:

“There was no formal method to find out who might need a teaching assistance. It is all talking to many different faculty individually (as there is not a faculty meeting where students can join in). For a new student to navigate a "system" with no established procedures and not knowing who might have a teaching assistant position, it is a very unfair position to be in and very unrealistic for a first year student to figure any of this out in time to do teaching in their first year (if at all).” (PhD student, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)
There should be a proper mechanism for allocation of teaching hours among postgrad research students. Currently, I and my other colleagues are dissatisfied with the criterion. In fact, no one knows the mechanism of allocation of teaching hours at the moment.” (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

Another PGR student based in Newcastle University Business School appeared to have encountered an allocation process of sorts but criticised its organisation:

The allocation is very haphazard. I do have an opportunity to express a preference for the kinds of modules and number of hours but the teaching allocated to me does not appear to take this into account. Of course, being at the bottom of the academic food-chain, this is to be expected! (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

This respondent, based in the School of Mathematics and Statistics, was even more critical of her/his school’s approach:

“Actually have a proper plan for developing these skills in the School of Maths and Stats - their current "plan" is a joke. At least now there are tutorials for Postgraduates to lead but this is too little and far too late for some research students development.” (PhD, Mathematics and Statistics)

Other respondents expressed dissatisfaction over the communication of key information. For example, these Medical Science-based respondents appealed for better and more timely information about the University’s teaching development activities as well as teaching opportunities:

“I wanted to do some lab demonstration in the second year of my PhD, but had not been made aware of the demonstration course early enough in first year to undertake the training to do so - demonstrator training takes course very far in advance of any opportunities to do lab demonstration.” (PhD student, Institute for Ageing and Health)

“Opportunities could be better publicised and information regarding teaching qualifications should be sent to postgraduate students.”
(Integrated PhD student, Institute of Cellular Medicine)

The relationship between securing work and the need to acquire adequate training came across as an issue of considerable concern for a number of PGR students. It is not entirely clear whether these concerns relate only to the University’s centrally delivered development activities (by the SDU) or whether they also relate to activities delivered by individual schools/faculties. One area of specific concern (relating to centrally delivered development activity) was described by different respondents as a ‘Catch 22’ situation whereby they understood they were required to secure teaching work prior to enrolling on the development programme:

“The requirement that PGRs ought to have teaching requirements before being able to commence ITLHE doesn't appear to work. Having commenced teaching in October 2011, having teaching requirements for the next semester, and petitioned to be admitted to the course, I have yet to have been offered a place (although I have very recently been told to "watch this space").” (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)

“...it is not clear what entry qualifications would be required to access teaching in Newcastle in the first place - as far as I remember, once I asked about qualifications, I was told that I could only enrol on a training course for higher education teachers IF I had any
This student called for teaching development programmes to be run more frequently so that PGR students in his/her situation could begin teaching-related work with less delay:

“Was on the waiting list to go on the ITLHE part A course for over a year, which is required to be able to do seminar leading- as a result I haven’t had the opportunity to experience this yet. I’d like these courses to be run more often so that we don’t have to wait so long for a place!” (PhD student, Institute for Ageing and Health)

Providing a different perspective on the issue of accessing teaching opportunities, a – albeit smaller – number of PGR students felt that the information and opportunities to teach were there but students needed to be proactive in order to seize them. Interestingly, this perspective was articulated by students based in two of the same locations as respondents quoted above who were entirely unclear of how to access opportunities:

“I believe there is ample opportunity if one wants to pursue these activities. I have seen circulating emails to inform postgraduate students of such opportunities.” (1st year PhD student, Institute of Genetic Medicine)

“In my personal experience, the people who show interest to teaching are very welcome in the School. The Module Leaders and the other staff people are continuously supporting me and I feel that I contribute to the school teaching quality.” (3rd year PhD student, Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials)

Although the majority of the sample was full-time PhD students, other voices were represented by the data. Here, we can see the perspective of a part-time PhD student and a MLitt student. Both felt as if there are barriers in the current system (specifically that teaching opportunities are only available to full-time PhD students) that leave them feeling undervalued:

I understand that the university policy regarding teaching experience is to favour full-time students over those who undertake the PhD programme in a part-time capacity. This could be interpreted as discriminating against part-time students, particularly mature students, who, as practising professionals, can offer far greater knowledge of their specialist area and of the professional environment. Due to professional commitments, it is often not possible for part-time students to commit to the teaching certificates which, I understand, are a prerequisite of teaching within the university. I feel that this condition needs revision, for, as stated above, considerable knowledge and expertise are being excluded as a result. I would suggest that, in future, professional experience brought to the university by mature students should be recognised and be regarded as equivalent, if not greater, qualification. (part-time PhD student, Arts and Cultures)

“I have been a teacher for 35 years in schools. I do not need career development but would enjoy using my skills. I have the understanding that teaching opportunities are limited to PhD students. I have pgce and MA (Ed), so although my subject knowledge is at a lower level, my generic teaching skills are rather wasted at present.” (part-time MLitt student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)
**Fairness in the allocation of teaching-related work**

Previous research has indicated that a significant area of concern for PGR students in relation to teaching opportunities relates to perceived levels of (un)fairness regarding the allocation of teaching work. Of specific concern is the perception that certain PGR students are hand-picked by academic staff to carry out work to the detriment of others. Comments from a number of students (from all three faculties) supported this view:

"This is made harder by the fact that some course leaders offer lectures directly to those PhD students they consider to be the most knowledgeable in certain areas (e.g. to those working with new technologies), and do not make those opportunities public. So, in my department we have one student who has led around 5 MA sessions over two years, at least 3 of which could have been taken by any one of us. There is thus a great deal of **ill feeling** among PhD students, not primarily because the work is paid (although I can understand that might be a factor) but because the system, while aiming at fairness, is in fact deeply unequal. It results in those not selected feeling that their work is of little value or interest to the department." (PhD student, Arts and Cultures)

Additionally, the recruitment of teachers is sometimes quite unfair with clear school favourites from their previous studies at the school. As someone who moved to NCL to study at the university, I would expect to be treated fairly and have all the opportunities that someone who did their MA there would have. It sometimes feels like it is an old boys club and newcomers are not able to access the same level of support in their desire to teach. (PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics/ International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies)

Access to teaching opportunities in my school has not always seemed to be distributed fairly - certain students appear to be given preference/overlooked depending on who they are supervised by, and there is a lack of clarity about who is eligible to be given undergraduate teaching (different PGRs were told that they were/were not eligible during first year of study, and after thesis submission). There have been some positive changes over the course of my studies, but I think there could still be room for improvement. (part-time PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)

"From my perspective the opportunities to teach are quite limited in MAST and they end up not being of centralised distribution, so you might never be informed of what you can and cannot do as the professors will contact directly who they are used to work with. Also, it is recurrent that a few students will take most opportunities, leaving the others with limited access to T&D functions, which can be highly limiting for the development of these people skills and often an excess of work, diverting the time form the PhD, to the people doing all the T&D..” (PhD student, Marine Science and Technology)

Interestingly, the above student’s suspicions were confirmed by a MAST-based colleague:

"There are numerous opportunities available to teach in MAST, there is however some biased towards some students for example I have been demonstrating for 3 years and am often asked independently to demonstrate for a particular module. For all I appreciate the opportunity it can come across to other students as unfair as they feel the opportunities are being unfairly distributed.” (PhD student, Marine Science and Technology)

Even in cases where teaching allocation systems are in place, organised on a ‘first come first served’ basis, respondents identified practical problems in accessing the amount of work they would like:
“Allocation of teaching opportunities, in particular demonstrations, should be fair spreaded among interested people - each of them should be given at least one slot of teaching per week in the subject they're interested in. At the moment, some people willingly do most of the job whilst others (which can actually be good teachers) don't get that experience at all. This is due to first-come-first-served allocation which favours those who come first and not always those who can teach well. I believe this can and should be changed, although it would require some effort. As a suggestion, a credit system which during allocation favours those with less credits (less experience) would be fairer and would generally improve the quality of teaching in the long run. More people could have experience and thus there will be a higher chance that a potentially good teacher chooses teaching as his/her primary job later on.” (PhD student, Computing Science)

“I would like to be more involved in seminar work but I think this is more due to my choice of subject which makes me not as highly qualified to assist. I do think that the teaching opportunities for students are good yet whether you get any demonstrating posts is very much a lottery based system where some people get a lot more hours then others. It seems to be a race on who can get their availability sent in 1st. Makes the process rather stressful.” (PhD student, Northern Institute for Cancer Research)

Most of the issues reported on so far in this section relate to the existence and effectiveness of formal processes and policies. The comments of some respondents were focussed more on the attitudes of academic staff and the degree of support they had experienced in assisting them to secure teaching-related duties:

“Although I have secured teaching roles within the school of Psychology is has been nearly impossible to do so within my own institute/school and my supervisor/group members have been extremely unsupportive.” (PhD student, Institute of Cellular Medicine)

“Needs to be supported and recognised as valuable by supervisors” (PhD student, Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences)

Not all of the comments reflected a negative experience in this regard:

“In my school (ECLS), the support has been excellent and there are always teaching/marking opportunities for PhD students. We also all have very good relationships with the academic & administrative staff in our school - it could not be any better!” (PhD student, Education, Communication and Language Sciences)

**Perceived level of support in carrying out teaching work**

As well as the level of support in accessing teaching opportunities, previous research has suggested PGR students experience considerable variability in how supported they feel during the process of carrying out teaching-related activities. Again, the quantitative and qualitative data collected here illuminate this issue further.

Respondents were asked to reflect on the statement: ‘I have received adequate support from academic staff to carry out my teaching’. Compared with how supported respondents felt in securing teaching work, a relatively high percentage responded positively (76% agreed/strongly agreed) to this statement (see figure 15 below). Looking at those who disagreed/strongly disagreed (9%), there does not appear to be a relationship with a specific faculty/school. When looking at the types of activities these students were undertaking, only one student had been lecturing; the others had been demonstrating, seminar leading, or supervising students.
While the majority of respondents who had done some kind of teaching work reported feeling adequately supported by staff, certain free text comments reflected the opposite experience. This respondent clearly feels under-supported:

“Teaching opportunities for demonstrating/ seminar leading in Biomedical Sciences is reasonably easy to get but academic supervisors do not support you in doing it (unless its for them!).” (Integrated PhD student, Biomedical Sciences)

For these respondents, the issue is more one of variable support, which can result in a certain amount of confusion over how students should approach their teaching duties:

“1. Level of support/materials provided by module leaders varies wildly, from courses that are completely planned out in advance to being essentially left to my own devices 2. Lack of clarity sometimes about expectations for student support outside of teaching, e.g. meeting students 1 to 1, dealing with student queries, etc.” (PhD student, Modern Languages)

“The University however is very mosaic in its approach to correctly briefing postgrads before sessions, some lecturers are excellent while others think a title of a subject is good enough, giving the seminar leader notes 5 minutes beforehand despite repeated requests for better guidance! This reflects poorly on the University which on the whole has a very high standard of teaching.” (PhD student, Institute of Genetic Medicine)

“I have often felt unprepared when demonstrating. Students always ask questions about how to approach various assessments and we generally don't find out until the assessments have been handed in” (PhD student, Institute of Neuroscience)

The lengthy comments set out by one respondent offer an insight into how her/his experience of taking on teaching work at Newcastle University compares unfavourably with her/his experience of doing the same in the United States. Her/his comments focus on the perceived relatively lowly status of the PGR student at this university:
“Some thoughts: During my first master’s program, which I undertook in the U.S., I was awarded a teaching fellowship/ assistantship for which I was responsible for the planning and teaching of an undergraduate module. My stipend covered my tuition and most living expenses, which is typical of the U.S. system. Although I am paid an hourly rate for my teaching duties here, the pay by no means covers the cost of my education, let alone living expenses. I am grateful for the opportunities I’ve been given, but I believe the U.S. system is much more supportive of post-graduate teachers. After all, in many cases they are doing the same work as faculty, especially those, like me, who lecture and do seminars, with similar responsibilities and expectations (in terms of quality of teaching, etc). Of course, in many US universities postgrads teach many of the classes offered by a department. They are truly part of the teaching staff. Here, they are more likely to assist in courses taught by faculty, rather than run their own. I understand that this makes a difference in terms of pay. However, in a department like mine (here in Newcastle), where student-faculty ratios are getting worse, faculty grossly overworked, and students consequently under-served, perhaps a review is in order that at least explores the possibilities of postgrads taking on a larger proportion of teaching (for which they are better compensated). We are still cheaper than faculty and can provide so much needed support to overworked, over-stretched faculty members.” (PhD student, Arts and Cultures)

Overall perception of teaching experience
While some PGR students who have taught at Newcastle reported being dissatisfied with certain aspects of the experience, the findings suggest that the overwhelming majority of respondents have found the experience valuable. PGR students with teaching experience were asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement: ‘My experience of teaching has been a worthwhile aspect of my studies’. A very high percentage (89%) of respondents agreed/strongly agreed, even though, as we saw earlier, only 76% felt adequately supported by academic staff to carry out this work. No statistical significance was found in relation to any of the demographic variables, although it is interesting to note that 100% of the part-time PGR students strongly agreed that their experience had been worthwhile.

The following comments reflect how PGR students from across the university, both international and UK, valued the opportunity to teach for a range of reasons, many related to career development:

“These opportunities are very good for international students to practice not only teaching skills, but also English skills.” (PhD student, Institute of Cellular Medicine)

“I just would like to say that demonstrating was for me a really great opportunity to improve my English. It was not only an opportunity to develop more pedagogic skills, I also learnt a lot of vocabulary and saw how the English Academic system work (and compared it to the French one). That really gave me skills and keys for my future.” (PhD student, Biology)

“My experience of teaching has been very positive. It has allowed me to enhance my professional and communication skills in a way that will complement my future career plans.” (PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)

“Demonstrating is a really good way to build up some student contact and share your skills with people willing to learn. It is always good fun and the undergraduate office staff are excellent at coordinating the demonstrating calendars.” (PhD student, Northern Institute for Cancer Research)
“I think undertaking teaching is a valuable in many ways; improving communications skills in addition to building upon other skills e.g. written feedback when marking reports. I would definitely encourage all students to undertake some teaching responsibility to gain experience which will help them in their career” (PhD student, Institute of Cellular Medicine)

**Appetite for more teaching work**

Given the perceived benefits of taking on teaching-related activities, it is perhaps unsurprising that those who have already undertaken this kind of work demonstrated an appetite to do more. Respondents were asked to reflect on the following statement: ‘I would like the opportunity to do more of the teaching activities I currently perform/have performed’. 76% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the statement; just 7% disagreed with the idea. The enthusiasm to take on more work was in evidence regardless of the amount of work the respondent was already doing. In the case of those who were lecturing, there was most disagreement with the statement among those who were doing only 1-20 hours on average per year, and then only a small percentage (13%). Almost all demonstrators, including the respondent doing over 300 hours per year, wished to take on more. In the case of those supervising/tutoring or leading seminars/workshops, interest in doing more work tailed off for respondents doing around 180 hours per year.

Respondents with experience of teaching were also asked the extent to which they agreed with the statement ‘I would like the opportunity to perform other kinds of teaching related activities’. A significant proportion (81%) agreed/strongly agreed with this statement, a higher number than those wishing to take on more of the same teaching activity. The only demographic of any significance related to whether the respondent was full-time/part-time – the data suggest that part-timers are less likely than their full-time peers (chi square result .005) to want to take on other kinds of teaching activities. The following comments add depth to these figures and demonstrate the frustration felt by some respondents who would like more exposure to different aspects of teaching:

*It is a very good opportunity but not empowering. Imagine having no opportunity to assist in advanced years until end of PhD program. I have only taught first years and never been given opportunity to teach other years. It has been good in as far as earning money is concerned but not empowering in the aspect of teaching, for example I feel like it is good to introduce us on how to prepare a module, among others.* (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)

*“Nonetheless it would have been useful to have the chance to apply for upper level (stages 2 & 3) teaching, and/or lecturing practice in the school.”* (part-time PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)

*“Greater opportunities for seminar leading (teaching, not just listening to presentations), with paid preparation time would be good. Also, casual marking (not having demonstrated) would be a good option.”* (Integrated PhD student, Institute for Ageing and Health)

**Ability to cope with teaching work**

Previous research suggests that there is often a concern among university staff that PGR students may be unable to manage undertaking teaching-related activities alongside their studies. This concern appears not to have been shared by respondents who had some experience of this work. This is reflected in the responses to the statement: ‘I have been able to cope with the demands of teaching related activities whilst progressing with my own research studies’. 84% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this statement, thereby adding weight to the finding set out above that

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3 because of the low numbers in certain categories the degree of confidence in this relationship is relatively low
students have an appetite to carry out more teaching-related work. Just 5 students disagreed with the statement. Although the number of students responding this way is small, it is interesting that all of them were UK students registered on PhD programmes within the HaSS faculty (English Literature, Language and Linguistics; Geography, Politics and Sociology; Newcastle University Business School; and Newcastle Institute for the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities). This group were mainly doing lecturing and seminar leading activities and it is not the case that all were doing far more hours than their peers (1 respondent was doing 61-80 hours lecturing and 1 was doing 81-100 hours of seminar work). Similarly, the amount of preparation that these 5 respondents were doing was not excessive in relative terms – four of them were doing less than five hours on average per week but one was doing more than ten hours. Only one of the five students agreed they had received adequate support from academic staff in carrying out their teaching. Somewhat more puzzling is that four of the five agreed that they would like to take on more of the same teaching activity. And although these students did not feel they were able to cope with the demands of the teaching related activities they had taken on, they all agreed that doing this work had been a worthwhile aspect of their studies.
Specific suggestions from PGR students

As well as providing rich qualitative data to help us better understand the experience of the PGR student, respondents’ free text comments included a number of specific suggestions about how the University’s processes and structures associated with PGR teaching could be improved. A range of these suggestions are set out below organised by topic.

- **Peer (including academic staff) support structures**

  “The only thing I would suggest is introducing a peer-network for postgraduate teachers (e.g. teaching assistants - perhaps across schools - could meet regularly to talk about their experiences)” (PhD student, Education, Communication and Language Sciences)

  “…research students in the same or similar subjects should exchange ideas and experiences through the official meeting for each month. Initially, new comers can join in for adaptation to the change of teaching style.” (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

  *More observation and feedback from faculty/peers on my teaching delivery* (part-time PhD student, Institute for Ageing and Health)

  *I would benefit from some tutorials in teaching methods a few times a year. I would benefit from having a group to discuss my experiences and difficulties.* (part-time MMus student, Arts and Cultures)

- **More diverse teaching development activities /exposure to other areas of teaching experience**

  “In the interests of career development and preparing PGRs for the academic market beyond the PhD, more opportunities to have involvement and experience in module content and delivery would enhance employment practice and potentially lessen the burden on module leaders. Having a working knowledge of the process of module design and delivery would enhance Newcastle graduates in a hugely competitive market for early career academics- it could maybe be built into HASS training/module delivery? There are courses in SDU but no current opportunities that allow this as far as I know. Not everyone will perhaps want to do it and obviously important periods of PhD need to be taken into account but a structure in place to allow for students to enhance their employability and try to gain an edge in a hugely competitive market for junior positions. It could certainly attract more PGRs to Newcastle if delivered and publicised well.” (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)

- **More teaching-related opportunities, even on a voluntary basis**

  “There exists a double bind in my department: there are minimal slots available to lecture, but offers to lecture voluntarily cannot be accepted as the university requires all teaching to be paid. Further, across the five MA courses on which we could teach, opportunities are uneven. One course has multiple PhD-led lectures. Two have none. Thus in my case, I have been informed that the two courses closest to my research cannot afford to pay me to lecture, and that the

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6 It is understood that the CASAP/ITLHE programmes are under review but previous versions of the CASAP and Module 3 appeared to cover module design.
university will not allow me to do so voluntarily. While I understand the reasons for this, in practice the system has created an impossible hurdle – I simply cannot get experience teaching.” (PhD student, Arts and Cultures)

“It could be improved by some more short courses within each school. Some volunteer opportunities for teaching could be recommended for those who are interested.” (PhD student, Civil Engineering and Geosciences)

“...teaching with certain hours (e.g. assistance for the supervisor) should be compulsory for students since their careers are likely to relate those kinds of activities even no paid.” (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

“However, the university can give more opportunities for those who are the second year students as follows: First, they can play a role as teaching assistance for their supervisor even no paid, just for experience.” (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

- Clarification of eligibility to teach (there may well be local policies on this issue)

“It seems odd that teaching vacancies are emailed to students who are in their first year only to be told that no first year students will be considered.” (PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)

- Utilisation of diverse media to communicate opportunities

“It would be helpful if the opportunities were more widely advertised, EG on social media as well as by email.” (PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)

- Creation of different online and offline structures to better coordinate the allocation of opportunities

“I think it might be a good idea to create a university-wide service/website to list available teaching opportunities to postgraduates and also include a ratings-based hiring mechanism where postgrads are rated by module leaders and students. This can help find the postgrads who are more capable to carrys specific tasks and also encourage healthy competition.” (PhD student, Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering)

“The faculty need to do more and establish a clearinghouse, webpage, formal solicitation, etc. to regularize the availability of information on teaching assistance positions.” (PhD student, Agriculture, Food and Rural Development)

“Allocation amongst the students who are interested in developing these skills could possibly be coordinated at faculty level to plug gaps in resources/opportunities” (PhD student, Mathematics and Statistics)

“Most of my teaching opportunities have been accessed through speaking with others who currently undertake the role and occasionally through the Grad/Medical School. If there is not one already, perhaps a link on the University intranet could provide information about getting involved in teaching.” (PhD student, Institute of Cellular Medicine)
Private and Confidential

- Ability to pursue teaching development activities even if PGR student is not seeking teaching opportunities immediately

“I have no experience in accessing teaching opportunities due to some challenges of language. Nonetheless, there are some way to improve such opportunities. First, the training classes of teaching should be opened for anyone who would like to attend even they do not teach in the current year. This can give them chances to know expectation for the role of teaching.” (PhD student, Newcastle University Business School)

- A number of the suggestions sought to overcome perceived problems with the relationship between securing work and the need to acquire adequate training – what some respondents called a ‘Catch 22’ situation. Most suggestions imply a deeper level of coordination between schools/research institutes and the SDU.

“Postgrads could have the training opportunities signposted earlier and have them tied into enough teaching hours to progress to the next level of training.” (PhD student, Arts and Cultures)

“I am so pleased with ITHLE training idea. It will be more helpful if the ITHLE can enlist interested student right from the time of the training and also get feedback from them. From the monitoring, they can also help liaise with their (i.e. those interested) various schools to see if they can give them enough teaching/demonstration room to proceed to ITHLE B rather than leaving everything in the hand of the postgraduate students to sort out. It make it easier to graduate into the other level i.e. ITHLE B. The idea of ITHLE and other teaching training is fantastic.” (PhD student, Civil Engineering and Geosciences)

“I wanted to do some lab demonstration in the second year of my PhD, but had not been made aware of the demonstration course early enough in first year to undertake the training to do so – demonstrator training takes course very far in advance of any opportunities to do lab demonstration.” (PhD student, Institute for Ageing and Health)

“I undertook the ILTHE Part A only a few weeks before beginning teaching. If this could have been done the year before I think it may have given me a little more time to prepare for the teaching experience.” (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)

“I undertook the part A of the ITLHE introductory course but this took place after I had started teaching, it wasn’t a major problem but would have made more sense it the course had taken place first.” (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)

“The School(s) and the Faculty/ies need to better coordinate their scheduling and training programmes.” (PhD student, English Literature, Language and Linguistics)
Recommendations

As this report has demonstrated, the experience of Newcastle’s PGR student community when it comes to accessing and carrying out teaching duties is variable. Some school/research institute settings appear to facilitate a much more satisfying experience than others. As such, the suggestions set out here are relatively broad in nature and will have to be considered in the specific context of local settings. A number of recommendations follow from a consideration of the findings generated by the survey data (some of these may overlap with respondents’ suggestions set out in the section above).

- Given that the overwhelming majority of PGR students (regardless of school, sex, UK/non-UK status and even funding status) declare an interest in undertaking some kind of teaching-related activity yet far fewer gain experience doing so, consideration should be given as to how more (and if possible varied) opportunities could be created. In view of some respondents’ apparent willingness to carry out such work on a voluntary basis, could allowing PGR students to undertake unpaid work represent part of the solution?

- A related issue is one of managing expectations of PGR students with regard to teaching-related opportunities. A number of respondents commented that the University may well benefit (in recruitment terms) from doing this in view of the value placed on gaining this kind of experience among the PGR student community.

‘I believe, mention of such opportunities in prospectuses, or website or by HaSS faculty may be good, too.’ (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)

- In view of the apparent imbalance between UK and international PGR students undertaking teaching-related (and marking) activities, consideration should be given to how international students could be offered more chance to contribute. Part of the response here may be to clarify what level of English competency is expected for different kinds of activities.

- The existence of formal allocation systems appears to be patchy. At the same time, there seems to be a demand from PGR students for increased transparency/formality in processes for informing students about, and facilitating access to, teaching opportunities. Hence, it would be useful to consider whether the organisation and visibility of such systems could be improved and at what level (school, faculty, university etc.) this should happen. Investment in this area is likely to mitigate the current sense of unfairness (and therefore dissatisfaction) associated with the allocation of work felt by some PGR students. As key figures in the facilitation of teaching opportunities, supervisors would need to be aware of and supportive of any changes.

- Any reappraisal of teaching opportunities and work allocation processes could usefully incorporate a wider review of support structures for the PGR student community – it is clear that where a supportive culture exists this is highly valued by students. In this regard, it should be borne in mind that a number of respondents called for some kind of peer support network (with a teaching and learning emphasis) – it may well be that there are already good examples of these around the University.

- Given the spread of results to the question of satisfaction with the opportunities that exist for PGR students to teach, there may well be examples of good practice that other local settings can learn from. By way of illustration, the following respondents’ comments may be useful in this regard:
“Overall the structure at School of GPS is quite adequate for allocating work to all PG students who are interested in teaching.” (PhD student, Geography, Politics and Sociology)

“An email was sent out to all PhD students during first year of studies by the teaching and demonstrating coordinator in the medical school. Initially this asked students to register their interest in teaching/demonstrating opportunities, to which I said I would like to do demonstrating. Following completion of ITLHE Part 1, I was added to a list of people eligible to demonstrate. Details of specific practicals were emailed usually at the start of each term to people on the demonstrating list, and were allocated on a first come first served basis” (PhD student, Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences)

- The findings suggest that there is a good deal of ignorance among the PGR student community about several issues, including:
  - who is eligible to teach (including whether part-time PhD students and Research Masters students can do so)
  - what teaching development activities students are expected to have undertaken prior to teaching
  - how they might go about securing an opportunity to teach.

Clarification of these issues would no doubt be well received and improve PGR student satisfaction.

- Results suggest confusion and dissatisfaction about the relationship between undertaking teaching development activities and securing teaching work. One of the implications of respondents’ comments is improved coordination between schools/research institutes at the local level (where teaching opportunities exist) and the SDU’s provision of academic development activities. A consideration of what might be possible in this regard would be useful.

- Some respondents’ comments suggested a degree of confusion/dissatisfaction regarding pay rates for teaching-related work: e.g. what rate of pay relates to what activities (i.e. lecturing vs demonstrating vs marking and so on); what activities PGR students can expect to be paid for (i.e. Do extra activities outside the core activities of lecturing or demonstrating attract compensation?); the amount of preparation pay rates assume. It would be useful if these and related issues could be clarified and made available (perhaps online) to PGR students if they are not already. Also, some respondents would favour a re-consideration of whether current pay rates for different teaching-related activities (e.g. lecturing versus demonstrating) adequately reflect the amount of effort (including preparation) PGR students expend on each.
Appendix

Which school/unit are you registered with?

![Bar chart showing the number of students registered in different schools and units.]

Are you a part time or full time student?

![Pie chart showing the percentage of full-time and part-time students. 88.5% full-time, 11.5% part-time.]
What kind of programme are you registered on?

What year of study are you in?
Are you male or female?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>40.2%</td>
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Are you a UK or International student?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UK</th>
<th>International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are an international student, and English is not your first language, please select the average IELTS score you have achieved.

![IELTS Score Distribution](image)
Are you in receipt of any funding for your postgraduate research degree?

Which PGR students are interested in teaching?

What school/unit are you registered with?
If NO - what is your main reason?

What kind(s) of teaching-related work are respondents doing?

Lecturing - Number of hours per academic year * faculty Cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>faculty</th>
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<th>Medical Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAgE</td>
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<td></td>
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Leading Seminars/Workshops - Number of hours per academic year * faculty Cross tabulation

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<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SAgE</td>
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<tr>
<td>1-20 hrs</td>
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### Seminars/Workshops - Number of hours per academic year

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<th>61-80 hrs</th>
<th>81-100 hrs</th>
<th>101-120 hrs</th>
<th>161-180 hrs</th>
<th>181-200 hrs</th>
<th>201-220 hrs</th>
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### Demonstrating (in a laboratory or fieldwork setting) - Number of hours per academic year * faculty Cross tabulation

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<th>HaSS</th>
<th>Medical Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>301-320 hrs</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Supervision/Tutoring - Number of hours per academic year * faculty Cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
<th>SAgE</th>
<th>HaSS</th>
<th>Medical Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-20 hrs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-40 hrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60 hrs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-80 hrs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101-120 hrs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181-200 hrs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which students were doing the most preparation?

If YES how many hours preparation would you tend to do in an average week during the academic year? * faculty Cross tabulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>faculty</th>
<th>SAgE</th>
<th>HaSS</th>
<th>Medical Sciences</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chi-Square Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>46.747(^a)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>51.146</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) 18 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .28.
How long have you been carrying out any of the preceding teaching activities?

How many assessments are you marking?