Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students Engaged in Teaching

Responsibility for Policy: Registrar, Deputy Chief Executive
Relevant to: Postgraduate Research Students with teaching responsibilities
Approved by: Academic Board, 29th June 2015
Responsibility for Document Review: As above and/or Director of the Teaching and Learning Academy
Date introduced: November 2010
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Next Review Date: July 2019

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS
N/A

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

- Sessional staff – guidance for employing/processing sessional and other hourly paid staff
Introduction

1.1 Employment in a teaching or related capacity provides an excellent opportunity for postgraduate research students (PGRs) to develop valuable personal and transferable skills. It also ensures that research informs teaching and enables our undergraduate students to engage with those who are working at the cutting edge of their disciplines.

1.2 Teaching is to be undertaken by postgraduates on a voluntary basis only and students should not be made to feel pressurised into taking on unwelcome teaching commitments. Additionally, the scope for such opportunities varies between different Schools/Faculties and students should not assume teaching opportunities will always be available.

1.3 The University is not obliged to offer a PGR student any teaching experience.

1.4 The University recognises that the employment of PGRs carries a responsibility both towards the research student, to ensure that their ability to complete their research degree programme successfully within the expected maximum period is not put at risk, and towards the undergraduate students being taught, to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is safeguarded.

1.5 The University is therefore committed to providing PGRs with appropriate teaching and professional development opportunities, consistent with its responsibilities to support research students and to maintain teaching quality and academic standards.

2 Scope

2.1 This Code covers the employment of both full-time and part-time PGRs by Schools and Faculties in the exercise of their responsibilities for teaching and learning.

2.2 The Code applies only to individuals whose primary relationship with the University is as a PGR student. The Code does not apply to those PGRs who are primarily employees of the University and who are permitted to register for a research degree.

3 Advertising, Recruitment and Selection

3.1 The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in respect to employment. In selecting research students for teaching, Schools and Faculties should ensure that the University's equal opportunities standards are applied. This will normally involve advertising opportunities to all eligible students in the School or Faculty and giving them the opportunity to put themselves forward for consideration, and for the School or Faculty to apply a fair selection policy.

3.2 More information about the University's equal opportunities policy is available on the Human Resources portal page: http://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/EOU/90618.htm

4 Appointment

4.1 PGR students may not undertake any teaching duties without the permission of their Director of Studies and the relevant School Director.

4.2 The employment by the University of PGRs is subject to the normal provisions of employment law.
4.3 Prior to commencing their employment PGRs should be issued with a letter of appointment, which confirms the terms and conditions of employment, sets out the method of payment and specifies their duties.

4.4 As stated in paragraph 1.1, an important purpose of any employment provided is to offer the PGR an opportunity to acquire valuable professional and personal skills through practical work experience. In keeping with this purpose, employment will be conditional on the student’s continued status as a registered student of the University: where a student so employed ceases to be a student of the University, their employment will automatically cease. (This does not preclude the individual from being appointed to any other post with the University, subject to the University’s normal policies and procedures for appointment.)

5 **Maximum Hours of Work**

5.1 Schools and Faculties should ensure that any employment will not endanger the PGR student’s ability to complete a research degree programme within the time set by both the University and the student’s funding body (where applicable). School Directors are responsible for ensuring that this Code of Practice is implemented.

5.2 Employment of a full-time student should not normally exceed 6 hours per week and in all cases must not exceed 180 hours per year averaged over the course of the academic year. The limit of 180 hours incorporates related activities such as preparation and assessment or demonstrating. It is felt that further commitments would interfere with an individual’s studies.

It is recognised that some full-time students may need to work in order to survive financially and a more flexible approach may be considered in these cases. Full-time students who wish to undertake paid activities beyond 180 hours should discuss with their Director of Studies whether any teaching or other work undertaken will adversely affect the time available for the conduct of the research. The School Director is responsible for considering and granting approval for such cases. He or she must also ensure that the decision is recorded and that the situation is closely monitored to ensure that there is no adverse academic impact on the progress of the student’s research degree studies.

5.3 Students should note, however, that some sponsoring bodies (including Research Councils, Charities and other Sponsors) may impose a lower limit for paid activities per session. All students funded by such bodies are required to observe the limits imposed.

5.4 Part-time students are not subject to restrictions imposed by the University on the number of hours of paid work undertaken but their Director of Studies and Faculty Research Degrees Committee have responsibility for ensuring guidance is given on the amount of time that should be devoted to their research degree studies.

5.5 Students who are not nationals of states in the European Economic Area do not require permission to undertake certain categories of work: part-time work (defined as a maximum of 20 hours per week during term time); a work placement that forms a necessary part of the course of study; or vacation work (which may be full-time). In all cases, any such employment must be of a temporary nature. The student must also register with the Department of Work and Pensions and HM Revenue & Customs for National Insurance and Income Tax purposes. However, the expectation would be that such students would adhere to the University maximum levels of teaching activity (6 hours/week or 180 hours/academic year) to prevent any adverse impact on their studies.
6 Salary and Payment

6.1 PGRs must be employed on approved University rates of pay.

6.2 Guidelines on employing sessional staff and rates of pay can be found at http://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/personnel/87114.htm#S

7 Training and Induction

7.1 The University requires that all postgraduates with teaching responsibilities receive appropriate training and guidance.

7.2 Teaching and Learning Academy (TLA) will contact the School Directors to identify PGR students who require training. TLA will deliver the training and maintain a register of those students who have attended.

7.3 The training delivered is taken from the University’s teaching practice programme, ‘3is – Information, Ideas & Insights’ (which sits outside the Academic Framework) and is available for all postgraduates and LJMU staff. The training should be completed prior to the commencement of any teaching activity.

On request, students will receive an LJMU Certificate on completion.

Minimum training requirement for postgraduate students who teach

Completion of the following workshops:

Programme Induction
This session provides an overview of the HEA recognition status of Associate Fellow; the SEDA Supporting Learning Award and the professional values which embody the 3is programme. There is also the opportunity during this workshop to prepare for the Microteaching session.

Planning for Learning
This workshop will consider key planning issues before teaching begins, e.g. ideas for getting to know students and using the environment to promote learning. Focusing on designing lesson plans to promote effective learning, this workshop will consider a range of teaching methods and ways of evaluating practice.

Small Group Teaching
This workshop will explore a range of ideas for promoting student learning in small groups and overcoming some of the potential pitfalls.

Working with Large Groups
This session will provide an opportunity to discuss lecturing techniques and explore a range of ideas to promote learning in large groups. It includes a demonstration of the ‘clicker’ technology – a useful tool in large group teaching.

Introduction to Assessment
This workshop provides an overview of the general principles and practices of assessment in HE, providing a brief overview of LJMU assessment procedures. During this workshop, participants will also be provided with support and guidance on how to use assessment criteria and marking student work.

Microteaching
Students will be required to deliver a 10 minute teaching session in front of a small group of peers also completing the training (6-8 students). They will receive peer and tutor feedback on their teaching session to inform their practice.
Postgraduate students who teach will be required to complete the training outlined above. These workshops run over a two week period during September and are repeated in November and February each academic year.

TLA will contact the Directors of School (or designate) at the end of each semester to confirm which students have completed/are enrolled on training.

7.4 Postgraduates must:

- receive an induction into teaching in their School or Faculty;
- receive training in Health and Safety procedures;
- be fully informed of all risks and controls required as an outcome of any risk assessments;
- receive training in the use of any special equipment required for demonstrating or other techniques specific to the School or Faculty;
- receive all information for the module(s) on which they are teaching – module materials, Blackboard offerings and so on;
- be assigned a mentor with whom they should meet regularly to discuss their specific teaching duties and responsibilities, the modules within which their teaching takes place, their progress and any problems and marking;
- be encouraged to meet together in the School or Faculty to share ideas, resources and concerns. Appropriate issues arising should be considered by the School or Faculty learning and teaching committee or equivalent;
- be kept informed about relevant changes to academic policy for example attendance policy;
- be advised of any reasonable adjustments identified as part of an assessment of need for a disabled student that they will be engaged in teaching;

7.5 Any teaching undertaken by postgraduates should be included in module/programme review.

7.6 Faculties employing PGRs as teaching assistants must ensure that they do not lead modules.

7.7 PGRs employed in teaching related activities are responsible to the Dean of Faculty (or nominee).

7.8 PGRs who are employed to teach at University level share in the rights and responsibilities of other lecturers working at the same level.

8 Monitoring

8.1 As part of the overall monitoring and teaching quality assurance Schools and Faculties will need to ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide PGRs with feedback on their teaching-related activity. Performance issues should be managed in accordance with section 9 below.

8.2 Schools and Faculties should also have appropriate mechanisms in place to enable PGRs to provide feedback on issues related to employment, training and support.

8.3 The University’s Research Degrees Committee (RDC) will monitor the experience of PGR students who teach through the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).
9 Grievances and Disciplinary Procedures

9.1 Any concerns that the PGR may have relating to their employment by the University – including the termination of employment - will be managed in accordance with the Grievance Procedure:
http://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RegProcs_Staff/84252.htm

9.2 Where the Faculty has concerns that the PGR student is not fulfilling their duties effectively, the School will make arrangements to discuss its concerns and agree appropriate remedies. Where, following such meetings, the PGRs performance does not improve to the required standard, the Faculty should take advice from HR. The University’s Disciplinary Procedure applies to all staff employed by the University:
http://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RegProcs_Staff/82215.htm