

Policy on Postgraduate Research Students who Teach

1. Introduction

1.1 Oxford Brookes University values the contribution of postgraduates in the teaching and assessment of undergraduate students. This provides valuable experience for our Postgraduate Research (PGR) students, some of whom are considering an academic career.

1.2 The involvement of PGR students in the teaching process has mutual benefits for students and staff:

- undergraduates benefit from interacting with individuals who are often closer to their experience of being a student than academic staff;
- the PGR student gains valuable transferable skills to benefit their career development by participating in teaching and the wider activities of their school;
- staff are supported in providing research-led teaching.

1.3 Given this, the University encourages its PGR students to apply to undertake suitable teaching activities, whenever the opportunity arises, and when it is judged suitable for the student to do so. The University, however, does not guarantee that such opportunities will arise during a PGR student's programme of study.

1.4 This policy applies only to individuals whose primary relationship with the University is as a PGR student. It recognises that PGR students have various relationships with the University and that aspects of the policy will need to be applied flexibly to take into account their changing circumstance (e.g. in the weekly hours dedicated to research). It does not apply to those PGR students who are already contracted academics of the University and who are permitted to register for a research degree.

2. Opportunities to Teach

2.1 All PGR students should be made aware of any teaching opportunities available to them and the process for application, although such opportunities to teach will vary across schools and faculties, and are dependent upon the subject area and its preferred modes of delivery.

2.2 The process and arrangements for selecting PGR students to be involved in the teaching process should be fair and transparent and must support the University's commitments under the Equalities Act 2010 and the Access and Participation Plan 2020-25 to remove discrimination and bias within recruitment processes. Selection will be based on teaching requirements; the PGR student's communication skills, knowledge of the taught subject; and an assessment of their progress on their programme of study (see 2.4).

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2.3 Unless there is a contractual agreement, PGR students cannot be compelled to undertake teaching duties. However, the University encourages students to teach where opportunities exist in light of the benefits outlined in section 1.2.

2.4 Teaching must not impede the successful completion of the student's own research degree and must not contravene any relevant funding conditions. PGR students may only undertake teaching activities with the permission of their Director of Studies and School/Departmental Postgraduate Research Tutor.

2.5 Where the requirement for teaching forms part of a Scholarship, there must be transparency in terms of expectation and reward. The requirement to teach should form part of the interview for the Scholarship, and should be set out in the Terms and Conditions of the Scholarship Agreement

3. Activities and Responsibilities

3.1 A PGR student may contribute to the following teaching activities:

- Seminars, tutorials and workshops
- Laboratory and other practical classes
- Field trips
- Occasional lecturing (see 3.3 below)
- Assessment and marking, subject to clear marking criteria and suitable moderation.

3.2 Care must be taken to ensure that employment in teaching does not impede the progress of the PGR student's studies. The teaching activities of PGR students should not normally exceed an average of 6 hours per week during a semester, unless the terms of their Scholarship Agreement permit otherwise, and they must never exceed 20 hours per week (including all preparation, assessment and marking, as calculated according to the University's Work Load Planning model).

3.3 PGR students should not normally deliver lectures, although they may be invited to provide a guest lecture if their research specialism is directly related to a particular module.

3.4 A PGR student should not normally be involved in teaching at Masters Level, unless they have relevant specialist knowledge and the relevant Programme Lead has approved their involvement.

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3.5 PGR students should not be expected to provide pastoral care for other students. They should, however, be made aware of the University's system of pastoral support, and know how to direct students to appropriate members of staff if the need arises.

3.6 PGR students **must not** be responsible for curriculum or module design and should not:

- Be responsible for setting seminar topics;
- Develop essay questions;
- Be expected to put in more time preparing for a session than they are paid for;
- Supervise dissertations;
- Be responsible for the delivery of a module, or be designated a module leader.

4. Payment and Remuneration

4.1. All PGR students engaging in teaching duties beyond shadowing or observing to gain experience, and outside of any teaching required contractually as part of a studentship agreement, will need a contract of employment appropriate to the duration and nature of the work. If there are no contractual obligations to teach, PGR students cannot be compelled to undertake any teaching or marking duties.

4.2 PGR students must be contracted for teaching duties and paid the rate agreed within that contract in line with approved University rates of pay and terms and conditions:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/human-resources/working-here/employment-policies/employment-of-associate-lecturers/>

5. Training and Support

5.1 All PGR students who undertake teaching must receive appropriate training. This should be undertaken before or during their first year of teaching and must include:

- An initial discipline-specific induction, which must be provided by or within the Faculty Doctoral Training Programmes;
- The training courses for postgraduate teachers are provided by the Oxford Centre for Academic Enhancement and Development (OCAED), entitled "General Teaching Associates (GTA) Course-3 days".
[\(https://www.brookes.ac.uk/ocsltd/teaching-and-learning/recognition-and-funding/doctoral-students/\)](https://www.brookes.ac.uk/ocsltd/teaching-and-learning/recognition-and-funding/doctoral-students/)

5.2 It is deemed good practice for PGR students to begin their teaching experience by taking part in a co-taught or team-taught unit.

5.3 Each PGR student's teaching (including any assessment) should be mentored and monitored by a member of academic staff (typically the module leader). The mentor is responsible for providing the PGR student with feedback on their teaching through

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monitoring and providing guidance on assessment in line with established moderation and assessment practices. Mentors must approve any teaching materials devised by the PGR student, should this be permitted. Mentors are also encouraged to advise students on any further opportunities for training relating to teaching.

5.4 A PGR student's experience of teaching, and any related skills development, should be discussed as part of the formal review of their development and progress, in line with the requirements for Annual Progress Monitoring as set out in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

6. Publication of Policy

6.1. This policy will be made available to all students on the University's website and on the relevant Faculty e-learning platforms.

7. Implementation of Policy

7.1 Senior Postgraduate Research Tutors and/or Heads of Doctoral Training Programmes are responsible for ensuring that local practice within their Faculty is in line with the principles outlined above.

7.2. The policy will be reviewed annually by the University's Research Degrees Committee.

For further information about these regulations, please contact Student Central – Research Degrees Team.

Approved by:

Research Degrees Committee, 14 June 2022
 Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee, 15th June 2022
 Academic Board, 6th July 2022