

# Research Students Who Teach: Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Southampton values the significant contribution that research students can make to the education of undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. The support they provide is mutually beneficial. The taught student educational experience is enhanced through the support of research-informed teaching, whilst research students can develop a range of professional skills.
- 1.2 The University is committed to ensuring that research students are offered appropriate teaching activities wherever possible, and that these students are properly trained and supported to undertake such activity. The University will not place unreasonable expectations on research students who undertake teaching activities, and teaching activities should not affect any research student's ability to complete their research degree.
- 1.3 The University is also committed to ensuring the quality of experience of taught students, and will put in place appropriate mechanisms to assure the quality of teaching activities delivered by research students.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy and accompanying Guidance is to:
  - 2.1.1 define the University's expectations for research students who undertake teaching activities;
  - 2.1.2 define the responsibility of Faculties and Schools in the engagement of research students on a casual work basis;
  - 2.1.3 ensure a fair, transparent, and equitable appointment of research students to teaching opportunities;
  - 2.1.4 ensure that appropriate training, support and mentoring is in place for research students who teach;
  - 2.1.5 ensure robust quality assurance processes are in place in order to maintain educational delivery standards.

## 3. Scope

- 3.1 This Policy applies to all research students who undertake teaching activities as detailed in paragraph 4 below.
- 3.2 Duties undertaken by a research student as a condition of a grant, bursary, studentship, or similar award made by a Faculty, School (or University Institute) are covered by this policy. This includes Mayflower Scholars.
- 3.3 This Policy does not apply to research students who have a substantive employment contract with the University and who are permitted to register for a research degree or to part-time research students who have separate teaching responsibilities related to their professional duties.
- 3.4 This policy does not apply to teaching or related activities of non-credit bearing provision, for example the University's Lifelong Learning Days.

## 4. Teaching Activities

4.1 A research student may be involved in the following types of teaching activity at both undergraduate and postgraduate taught levels:

- seminars, tutorials and workshops;
- laboratory and other practical classes;
- substantial assistance supporting taught students' project work;
- field trips;
- assisting with assessment and marking, subject to clear marking criteria and suitable moderation and training;
- developing and delivering distance learning materials.

4.2 A research student may not be involved in the following types of teaching activity:

- setting summative assessments;
- teaching at the level at which they are studying. Whilst this restriction does not include those research students who are participating as equals in group work activities, iPhD students may teach (but not assess summative work), students on the same qualification, provided they have been enrolled for at least one academic year more than those they are teaching;
- delivering lecture courses, although research students may be invited to provide guest lectures if their research specialism is directly related to the topic of the module;
- taking overall responsibility for a module;
- providing pastoral care. However, research students should be aware of the University's system of pastoral support, and know how to direct students to appropriate members of staff if the need arises.

## 5. Responsibilities

5.1 **Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC)** is responsible for:

- 5.1.1 ensuring that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is safeguarded;
- 5.1.2 ensuring the existence of professional development courses which are mandatory for training research students who undertake teaching activities, consistent with its responsibilities to assure teaching quality and academic standards.

5.2 The **Faculty in which the research student is enrolled** has oversight, responsibility and accountability for:

- 5.2.1 ensuring that the research student's ability to complete their degree within the maximum permitted period of candidature is not put at risk through involvement in teaching activities;
- 5.2.2 approving the engagement of a research student in a teaching activity: approval is given by the Faculty Director of the Graduate School, consulting where necessary with the research student's supervisory team;
- 5.2.3 actively monitoring the hours worked by a research student to ensure that they comply with the University's stated hourly limits (e.g. visa/funding restrictions);
- 5.2.4 discussing the experiences of research students as teachers, and any need to enhance the related skills development training.

- 5.3 The ***School in which the research student is engaged*** has oversight, responsibility, and accountability for:
- 5.3.1 ensuring that the engagement of research students for the delivery of teaching activities is compliant with this Policy;
  - 5.3.2 recruiting research students for teaching activities in a fair and transparent manner (paragraph 6);
  - 5.3.3 ensuring registration with UniWorkforce if payment is to be made;
  - 5.3.4 actively supporting research students undertaking teaching activities who have protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010);
  - 5.3.5 protecting the health and safety of the research student as a worker of the University, and as an enrolled student in accordance with the [University's Health and Safety Policy Statement](#);
  - 5.3.6 not knowingly engaging a research student over the University's stated hourly limits (paragraph 7) or in breach of visa conditions in any capacity (inclusive of work, paid or unpaid, outside the duties referred to in this Policy). It is however the responsibility of the research student to declare the hours they are working, paid or unpaid, by any employer (paragraph 5.5);
  - 5.3.7 providing research students who are undertaking teaching activities with a clear written indication of the work expected of them (paragraph 8);
  - 5.3.8 providing discipline-specific training and support for research students that is consistent with their duties (paragraph 9);
  - 5.3.9 evaluating the teaching performance of research students engaged by them in order to ensure that taught students receive teaching of the appropriate quality;
  - 5.3.10 providing information to the Faculty in which the student is enrolled on the number of hours worked;
  - 5.3.11 providing appropriate mechanisms for research students to provide feedback to the School on any concerns or issues with engagement, training or support in relation to their teaching activities;
  - 5.3.12 ensuring that module leaders are aware of their responsibilities (paragraph 5.4);
  - 5.3.13 ensuring that any concerns with (or failure in) the application of the Policy are escalated to the Faculty Director of the Graduate School.
- 5.4 The ***module leader*** is responsible for:
- 5.4.1 the overall content, co-ordination, setting of, and conducting of assessment within the module;
  - 5.4.2 determining how collaboration with the research student will work;
  - 5.4.3 giving guidance and advice to the research student as appropriate throughout the process of preparation, teaching, assessment and feedback.
- 5.5 The ***research student*** is responsible for:
- 5.5.1 informing their engaging Faculty and the Faculty in which they are enrolled of the number of hours for which they are engaged, paid or unpaid, in any capacity and by any employer and ensuring the hours worked are declared on each timesheet submission to demonstrate compliance;
  - 5.5.2 ensuring that they do not breach the work restrictions associated with their visa. More information can be found through the University's '[Working in the UK](#)' website;

- 5.5.3 meeting the requirements of their funding body, where applicable, with regards to work;
- 5.5.4 ensuring that their ability to complete their research degree is not put at risk by any work they undertake. For this purpose research students are recommended to regard the maximum hours of work specified in paragraph 7 of this Policy as being inclusive of all work, including that with external employers;
- 5.5.5 discussing potential teaching activities with their lead supervisor;
- 5.5.6 taking advantage of available teaching development opportunities consistent with their engagement in order to keep their skills updated;
- 5.5.7 complying with the terms of reference of the university's Casual Worker Permit scheme, including the [Guidelines on Consensual Relationships](#);
- 5.5.8 ensuring that they are suitably prepared for each teaching activity they are asked to undertake;
- 5.5.9 complying with the policies and regulations (including all health and safety requirements) of the University of Southampton at all times.

## 6. Opportunities to Teach

- 6.1 Teaching opportunities vary across disciplines, dependent upon the nature of the subject/discipline and its preferred models of delivery. Teaching activities may be unavailable in some disciplines, or may be limited and not available to all students in others. However research students with the appropriate skills, training and experience may seek teaching opportunities in their own or any other part of the University.
- 6.2 The Faculty, School or University Institute will attempt to make all relevant research students aware of any teaching opportunities available to them including: the process for application; the duties; and likely hours involved in the position, including the time required for preparation.
- 6.3 Recruitment will be carried out in line with the principles of the University's [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#) of merit, fairness and transparency. Selection will be based on the teaching activities required, and an appropriate balance of the research student's teaching and communication skills, experience, and knowledge of the subject.

## 7. Maximum Hours of Work

- 7.1 As a guideline, engagement of any full-time research student should not normally exceed six hours per week in total (although short-term exceptions to this may occur, with the support of a research student's lead supervisor, when a research student is engaged, for example, to support field work), and should not exceed 180 hours per academic year. The pattern of work and study for part-time research students should be adjusted proportionately.
- 7.2 Research students who are in receipt of external funding should abide by the UKRI Terms and Conditions of Training Grants and the [UKRI Training Grant Guide](#). Paragraph 68 of the Training Grant Guide stipulates that "*Students may undertake teaching or demonstrating work when this is compatible with their training and provided their supervisors approve. The total time spent (including preparation and marking) should not interfere with the progress of the PhD... It must not be compulsory...*" Regardless of the research student's funding source, the amount of time is at the University's discretion but it is recommended that this is no more than six hours in any week.
- 7.3 Students on a Tier 4 visa must comply with any relevant restrictions relating to their work including any restriction on the hours and type of work. Up to date information can be found through the University's '[Working in the UK](#)' website.

## 8. Registration, Salary and Payment

- 8.1 Research students will need to register with UniWorkforce and to provide appropriate documentation to demonstrate their right to work in the UK. Once registered, research students will be issued a Casual Worker Permit from the University. This should be shown to prospective managers prior to starting work. The Casual Worker Permit shows that all the required checks<sup>1</sup> are in place, the research student has been set up on the Payroll system and also highlights any restrictions that may be in place, e.g. visa hours limit.
- 8.2 Research students assigned to teaching activities must be registered through UniWorkforce, unless the student holds an officially-recognised University teaching bursary scheme (i.e. Mayflower Scholarship).
- 8.3 The engaging School must provide the research student with a written summary which includes a clear statement of the activities they will carry out, the likely number of hours involved and the rate of pay. These expectations may change during the course of a research student's period of teaching activity, with any changes agreed by both the research student and engaging faculty and confirmed in writing.
- 8.4 There may be occasions where research students may wish to volunteer in an unpaid capacity to assist with teaching activities where this would further their own development. Such activities must be agreed as part of the Academic Needs Analysis and must be in the best interests of the student.
- 8.5 PGR students engaging in teaching are set up and paid on a casual basis. Unless required as part of a bursary scheme, e.g. Mayflower Scholarships, there is no mutuality of obligation between the University and research students are not compelled to accept teaching duties offered.

## 9. Training, Support and Quality Assurance

- 9.1 All research students who undertake teaching activities must receive appropriate training as required by AQSC. This must include:
  - 9.1.1 as a minimum, an initial general training course on teaching skills (currently Orientation to Teaching/Demonstrating Steps 1 and 2) must be completed before starting to teach/demonstrate. Orientation to Teaching/Demonstrating Step 3 (or a discipline-based equivalent) must be completed within 12 months of starting to teach. Further information can be found [here](#);
  - 9.1.2 a module-specific annual induction for the relevant module(s) the research student is involved in.
- 9.2 There may only be exceptions to these requirements where a research student's previous experience in teaching is clearly documented. Such variations can only be agreed by the Deputy Head of School (Education) in the engaging School and must be included in the written summary provided to the student by the engaging Faculty.
- 9.3 The University deems it good practice for inexperienced research students to begin their teaching activities by contributing as part of a larger team.
- 9.4 Summative assessment will always be the responsibility of an academic member of staff. However for some forms of assessment, and in some subject areas it may be appropriate to engage assistance from research students (for example, to provide taught students with timely feedback on coursework). When research students undertake summative assessment, it is the responsibility of the module lead to ensure that:
  - the research student has the appropriate level of technical expertise;
  - the research student has been suitably trained for the particular assessment, and has been given clear and detailed guidance by the module leader on the assessment

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of compliance with training requirements

criteria (including a detailed mark scheme where appropriate) and the feedback that should be given to taught students;

- the research student has the relevant experience to undertake the assessment;
- the marking of assessments by a research student must be overseen and carefully moderated by an Academic member of staff, this would normally be the module lead.

9.5 Any teaching or assessment activity performed by a research student should be mentored and monitored by a member of academic staff.

9.6 Where the School that is responsible for the delivery of the teaching activity has concerns that the research student is not fulfilling their teaching activities effectively, it should make arrangements to discuss its concerns, initially with the student, and to agree appropriate remedies. If this fails to resolve the issue, research students who do not meet the requirements of the teaching activity they have been selected to undertake may be suspended from this post.

9.7 Where the Faculty in which the student is enrolled has concerns that the research student's teaching responsibilities are having a negative impact on progress of their programme of study, this should be raised initially with the student during a supervisory meeting. It may also be necessary to refer to this in a Progression Review meeting.

9.8 If a research student wishes to raise a complaint about the support they have been offered in relation to their teaching responsibilities, this does not fall under the terms of the Regulations Governing Student Complaints, as such a complaint relates to their paid casual work. If attempts to resolve the situation informally are unsuccessful, it may be appropriate for research students to raise a formal grievance

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