

RESEARCH DEGREE POLICY DOCUMENTS

Document 14 Policy on Postgraduate Research Student employment in teaching at UEA

Preamble

Postgraduate research students play an important role in the delivery of teaching at UEA, to the benefit of taught programme students, the research students themselves, and the University.

For taught undergraduate and postgraduate students, postgraduate research students broaden the range of expertise available to provide high quality education and can add a diversity of approaches to teaching. Research students can provide capacity that allows more small group and practical teaching and they can bring new research material and insights into the course.

For the research students themselves, the experience of teaching develops their skills, strengthens their CVs and provides an opportunity for taught programme students to provide input into their research.

For UEA, postgraduate research students provide teaching capacity, a greater range of skills and additional flexibility to our academic programmes.

The importance of postgraduate research teaching is highlighted in the [NUS/UCU Charter on Postgraduate Employment](#). This UEA policy draws upon the Charter.

The University recognises the importance of postgraduate research employment. UEA is committed to ensuring that the organisation of postgraduate research teaching should ensure that:

1. Postgraduate research students themselves are competent in the subject area and appropriately trained;
2. The allocation of teaching is undertaken in a manner that is fair and transparent;
3. The allocation of time, and thus payment, for postgraduate research teaching reflects in a fair manner the time demands of the role.

To this end, the UEA policy on postgraduate research teaching consists of the following key elements. Note that in this policy the term *teaching* is used to include all educational activities including preparation, demonstrating, lecturing, seminar delivery, assessment and administration.

Part A: Recruitment, Appointment and Employment Rights

1. Fair and equal appointment procedures

Opportunities to teach on undergraduate and postgraduate courses should be openly advertised, with a role description, to allow all suitably qualified

research students to apply for the role. This may be done in bulk (e.g. for all opportunities within a School) rather than on an individual basis. The role description should include any preconditions for the role. Successful applicants should receive a contract stating the working hours; the amount of pay; the timing at which payment will be made; provision for sickness and holiday leave. Where teaching forms part of a bursary or scholarship, there must be transparency in terms of expectation and reward.

2. A fair rate of pay

Payment for postgraduate research students undertaking teaching roles will be in accordance with [Associate Tutor](#) pay rates. Where pay rates include recognition of time spent in preparation or marking this should be indicated. Contracted hours for each activity undertaken should reflect a reasonable average for that discipline. Any variance from standard Associate Tutor rates will be clearly articulated. Guidance is available from [the Payroll Office](#) on tax and other deductions and, for international students, how National Insurance numbers are obtained.

3. Representation within UEA and by a trade union

Postgraduate research students who teach should have representation on appropriate teaching and learning committees and/or student-staff liaison groups at department/school and faculty level. Postgraduate research students have the right to be an active member of a recognised trade union and to be represented by that union to their institution. At UEA the recognised union for Associate Tutors is UCU.

Part B: Management, Training and Support

4. Induction and initial training

All postgraduate research students who teach should have completed appropriate basic training. Postgraduate research students who teach should also be provided by their School with an induction that introduces:

- Teaching structures at UEA
- The teaching approach being used in the module and course
- The subject to be taught
- The course materials
- Modes of assessment
- The use of Blackboard in the course
- Procedures for feedback and student complaints.

5. Mentoring and supervision

Postgraduate research students should be provided with appropriate levels of mentoring and supervision by an appropriately qualified staff member who is not on their supervisory team, normally the module organiser or course director. All postgraduate research students who teach should have access to a suitably qualified single academic point of contact with whom they should be able to raise issues and seek advice. This individual could provide an academic reference in the future.

6. Feedback on performance and progress

Postgraduate research students should be provided with feedback on their performance, areas that need improvement and their progress both formally and informally. Where appropriate this should include both student feedback and that from a more senior academic manager or mentor who has had the opportunity to observe the postgraduate teaching.

7. Resources to support teaching

Access to the necessary facilities and resources required to undertake the role. These could include printing and photocopying, use of teaching rooms, stationery and equipment, office space, a storage facility and access to online learning environments.

8. The availability of appropriate continuing professional development

Students should have access to appropriate continuing professional development, delivered [by CSED](#) or within their researcher development programme. Development opportunities should include the development of specific teaching skills such as lecturing or teaching students with specific support needs; introduction to pedagogic theories; or opportunities to undertake an accredited course in teaching in higher education.

Part C: Career Development

9. Academic culture

Postgraduate research students who teach should be included in appropriate activities on an equal basis with academic colleagues, and should receive opportunities to engage as professionals with the teaching culture of their School, including for example being eligible for teaching awards.

10. The balance between employment and research

Care must be taken to ensure that employment in teaching does not take precedence over the research in which the postgraduate is engaged, leading to a delay in submission for the degree award. Full-time registered research degree candidates are not normally expected to undertake more than an average of 6 hours paid employment per week, up to a maximum of 180 hours per academic year. Candidates should seek the approval of their supervisory team for any paid work undertaken, and must take responsibility for fully complying with any visa restrictions placed on employment.