

Policy on Postgraduate Research Students who Teach

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- outline the University's expectations for postgraduate research (PGR) students who undertake teaching responsibilities;
- provide information for PGR students, supervisors and employers about the training requirements;
- clarify the normal responsibilities which might be expected of PGR students who teach.

2. Links to other policies and guidance

[Teaching Accreditation, Recognition and Qualifications Policy](#)

3. Introduction

Plymouth University values the contribution of PGR students who teach. This can be a very beneficial activity for students and for the university, enabling:

- PGR students to develop valuable experience for a future academic career;
- Undergraduate students to benefit from being taught by someone who may be closer to their experience of being a student
- Increased support for research-led teaching across the institution.

There are a range of academic roles which PGR students may have in the university, including core academic staff who are also undertaking a PhD; staff in combined teaching and studentship roles; and PGR students who undertake small amounts of teaching. This policy applies **only** to the third group, since the first two groups are covered by the Plymouth University Teaching Qualifications and Recognition Policy.

4. Teaching and assessment duties

Teaching, demonstrating and assessment duties might include the following:

- a. Seminars
- b. Practicals
- c. Tutorials
- d. Field Trips
- e. Occasional Lectures
- f. Contributing to supervision of undergraduate dissertations
- g. Contributing to management of online discussion
- h. Marking and giving feedback

PGR students may be involved in formative or summative marking, with appropriate training and supervision/mentoring. All marking will be subject to clear marking criteria and

appropriate moderation. They should not be designing or setting assessments. PGR students should not normally be involved in teaching or assessing at Masters level, or marking level 6 dissertations unless they have relevant specialist knowledge and/or approaching the submission of their thesis. They are not usually expected to undertake pastoral care duties.

Full-time research students may be contractually limited by their sponsor in the amount of teaching they are able to undertake outside of their full-time study towards their research degree. For the Research Councils and University Studentships this is limited to 6 hours per week across the calendar year. This time includes all preparation, assessment and marking as well as face to face contact and any necessary training. This should be maintained for all full-time PGR students. Part-time students should be treated *pro rata*.

5. Training requirements and opportunities

Prior to any PGR student undertaking teaching duties, the University's policy is that they must be prepared for the role and undertake the necessary training, as outlined in the [Teaching Accreditation, Recognition and Qualifications Policy](#).

Research students should not undertake teaching duties without the appropriate pre-requisite training, unless they have a prior qualification or recognition from Advance HE at Associate Fellowship or higher.

Educational Development is responsible for providing the appropriate training through:

- Introduction to Teaching and Learning (ITL) (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/qualifications-and-recognition/itl>) for those teaching 15 hours or more over a year.
- Supporting Assessment Learning and Teaching (SALT) (<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/qualifications-and-recognition/salt>) for those teaching less than 15 hours in total over a year.

Line managers / supervisors should use the [Teaching Accreditation, Recognition and Qualifications Policy](#) to determine the most appropriate training for their PGR student. In addition, schools are responsible for providing induction and mentoring/ supervision for PGR students who teach. Training in related areas is offered through the Researcher Development Programme in the Doctoral College: <https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/the-graduate-school/researcher-development-programme>

6. Quality Assurance

Aside from those staff with a core teaching role, PGR students are not expected to be Module Leaders or to attend Subject Assessment Panels, nor are they expected to have any role in programme management. PGR students will not be the sole or main supervisor of an undergraduate or postgraduate research project or dissertation. Schools should ensure that the contribution of PGR students to teaching is reviewed in line with other teaching. This will include evaluation of the performance of PGR students who teach (using standard student and staff feedback methods) to ensure that students receive teaching of the appropriate quality.