

University of Exeter Doctoral College

Employment of Postgraduate Research Students as Part-time Teaching Assistants – Temporary Policy in Response to Impact of Coronavirus Outbreak

Context

Under normal circumstances, the submission of assessed work in the taught faculty would be spread over a long period, allowing the recruitment and selection of postgraduate research students as part-time teaching assistants (PTAs), and the marking work they do, to be conducted over an extended period. As a large volume of assessed work will now be submitted at the same time, there is a need for a rapid allocation of additional PTA contracts. This document sets out the principles and procedure for allocating these contracts, including relaxing the maximum number of hours' employment within a week and over the course of an academic year.

Principles

1. This document describes temporary changes to the process of approval and to the maximum allowable number of hours' employment. In all other respects, the employment of PTAs will continue to be subject to the principles detailed in the code of good practice, [TQA Chapter 9: Employment of postgraduate students](#).
2. College Directors of Postgraduate Research (DPGR) will be granted delegated authority (that normally sits with the Dean of Postgraduate Research and of the Doctoral College) to approve the additional hours for individual PGR students, including to exceptionally allow PTAs to work over and above the normal maximum permitted hours of 6 hours per week and 180 hours over the course of a year.*
3. This temporary policy applies only to PGR students who have previously been allocated a PTA contract.
4. In the case of students who are currently interrupted, the University's [PTA Guidance for Managers](#) should be applied.
5. In approving exceptions to the maximum employment hours, College DPGRs will assure themselves that the employment will not endanger the student's ability to complete their programme within its time limit.
6. The approval of additional employment hours will not exceed the maximum number of employment hours stipulated by a student's funder.
7. The approval of additional employment hours will not exceed 36.5 hour per week, which is the maximum number of employments hours permitted by the University.
8. The undertaking of additional employment under this policy will not be grounds for deferring an assessment deadline, nor for a future application for an academic appeal or extension to a programme of study.

* *Where reference is made to the College DPGR in this document, they may delegate their authority, when necessary, to the Associate Dean (Research and Knowledge Transfer).*

Procedure

1. The Department will seek approval for the additional PTA hours from the College in line with College processes for approving additional spend. In so doing, the Department confirms that they have identified a PTA Coordinator in line with [section 10 of the Code](#) of Good Practice.

2. The student PTA may be approached by the College, Department or PTA Coordinator and offered additional PTA work. The student must confirm the following:
 - that they have sufficient capacity to undertake this work without causing detriment to their academic progress on their programme of study;
 - that the maximum number of hours agreed are not in excess of 36.5 hours per week and not in excess of the maximum permitted by their funder, if applicable;
 - that they have completed Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE) Stage 2 training;
 - in the case of a student who is on a Tier 4 visa, they must additionally confirm that the additional hours will not be in excess of the maximum working hours permitted within the terms and conditions of their visa.
3. The College, Department or PTA Coordinator will seek approval from the College DPGR. The College DPGR must assure themselves of the following:
 - the Department has identified a PTA Coordinator;
 - the student's primary supervisor has given consent for their student to undertake additional teaching duties and confirmed that the additional work will have no detrimental impact on the student's academic progress.
4. The College DPGR will confirm consent by email to the College. Complex cases requiring additional scrutiny will be referred to the Dean of Postgraduate Students for consideration.
5. The PTA will claim the additional hours through the iTrent system when they are completed. No changes to the PTA contract will be made.

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