

Faculty of Humanities Framework for Training and Supporting Teaching Assistants

This document aims to set out a Faculty of Humanities Framework on training and supporting Teaching Assistants. The intention is that this framework would apply to all postgraduate research students employed to support academic staff in the delivery of teaching to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students.

In addition to setting out the framework, this document also aims to set out the responsibilities of the School, the Faculty and the University in ensuring that the quality of teaching and support provided by Teaching Assistants is of a high standard.

Appointment of Teaching Assistants

As of April 2009, a University Working Group has been established to review the circumstances in which it is appropriate to engage Teaching Assistants, in relation to job descriptions, person specifications; and contractual issues. This Faculty Framework is intended to complement the work of that Working Group and will be reviewed and revised as appropriate once the University Working Group has reported.

Role of the Faculty

It is expected that Schools will implement their own training programmes to supplement the generic training provided by the University. The role of the Faculty will be:

- to provide generic Humanities online support materials
- to monitor the provision of training and support within Schools
- to disseminate best practice and shared practice

A Summary of the Key Principles of the Faculty Framework for Training and Supporting Teaching Assistants

1. All Teaching Assistants would be expected to attend the University's Graduate Teaching Assistants Programme. If students can demonstrate that they already have the knowledge and competencies delivered by this programme, they may be exempt from attendance.
2. Each School will have appropriate structures in place to support Teaching Assistants and those academic members of staff with responsibility for Teaching Assistants.
3. Each School will have in place an induction programme for Teaching Assistants providing them with the information they will need to be able to undertake their duties. Students will be required to complete the induction programme.
4. All students undertaking teaching/facilitation duties must be attached to the member of staff responsible for the particular unit.
5. Teaching Assistants will not have sole responsibility for marking any work or examinations that contribute to a student's final mark in a unit assessment.

Key Principles

All PGR Students will have completed the Faculty's Skills Audit as part of their PGR programme and will therefore be able to identify areas for further training and development in accordance with the required competencies for a Faculty of Humanities Teaching Assistant.

1. **All Teaching Assistants would be expected to attend the University's Graduate Teaching Assistants Programme. If students can demonstrate that they**

already have the knowledge and competencies delivered by this programme, they may be exempt from attendance.

It would be considered good practice for TAs to attend this programme before they start their teaching duties. However, it is recognised that this is not always possible.

The Faculty will provide a web resource for Teaching Assistants identifying and promoting opportunities for training and development.

2. Each School will have appropriate structures in place to support Teaching Assistants and those academic members of staff with responsibility for Teaching Assistants.

Schools must have as a minimum requirement, the following:

- A named administrative contact within the School PGR Office to co-ordinate and monitor Teaching Assistants; and to dissemination to Teaching Assistants and those academic members of staff with responsibility for Teaching Assistants.
- A named academic co-ordinator, to provide support should the student have any difficulties that cannot be resolved with the academic responsible for the unit they are teaching.
- It may be appropriate, in some circumstances for Schools to establish a forum for TAs to share good practice, discuss issues and provide peer support.

3. Each School will have in place an induction programme for Teaching Assistants providing them with the information they will need to be able to undertake their duties. Students will be required to complete the induction programme.

The induction programme can be at either School or discipline-level, as deemed appropriate by the School.

This should include:

- Named School contacts for support and development
- Access to resources and information outlining policies and procedures that they may need to refer to and be aware of in their roles. The Faculty will provide online resources. Schools must provide School specific material.
- Information on School-specific training available to Teaching Assistants.

4. All students undertaking teaching/facilitation duties must be attached to the member of staff responsible for the particular unit.

It is the responsibility of that member of staff to:

- Brief the student on matters specific to the unit
- Provide the materials necessary for the successful discharge of the student's teaching responsibility
- Oversee the student's teaching activity and meet regularly with all Teaching Assistants for that unit to reflect on performance, student feedback and other issues relating to the responsibilities of the Teaching Assistant(s).
- Where appropriate, direct the Teaching Assistant to opportunities for further development and support
- Ensure that there is a written record of the Teaching Assistant's performance in that role so that it can feed into future references.
- Ensure that the Teaching Assistant's supervisor is made aware of the Teaching Assistant's performance in that role at the conclusion the unit. This could be done through a report; the supervisor sitting in on one of the taught sessions; or both.
- Be aware of the whether the Teaching Assistant's progress on their postgraduate programme is satisfactory.

The specific responsibilities for Teaching Assistants will be at the discretion of the School and the academic member of staff responsible for the unit the Teaching Assistant will be delivering. However, those responsibilities must be within the defined guidelines provided by the University and delivered in writing to the student before they commence their TA role.

5. Teaching Assistants will not normally have sole responsibility for marking any work or examinations that contribute to a student's final mark in a unit assessment.

Teaching Assistants are not formally University examiners, therefore, where they are used, they may assist in marking (e.g. as first marker or part marker) and must normally have attained the qualification above that for which they are marking. Where Teaching Assistants do mark work, the academic member of staff responsible for that unit must:

- provide appropriate training and guidance for that activity
- check the work examined by Teaching Assistant(s) and approve the marks awarded. Where there is more than one TA assisting with marking, checking by the academic lead should include an equal sample from all TAs involved. All borderline marks awarded by a TA should be checked by the academic lead.
- review the quality of the feedback provided to students on their work to ensure that the comments will be useful to the student

Schools should determine their own policy and procedure for this activity.

Schools are required to develop their own structures for training and supporting Teaching Assistants following the principles within the Faculty Framework. Details of such structures must be provided to the Faculty PGR Office.

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Document Control	
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