Good Practice in Relation to Research Students Involved in Teaching Support

Sectoral High-level Principles (as per October 2022)

1. *IUA institutions recognise that while the core of doctoral education is deep engagement with a question, problem or hypothesis at the frontier of knowledge, and advancement of this frontier under the guidance of expert and committed supervision, engagement in academic support activities provides opportunity for research students to develop broad professional skills under the national framework for doctoral education.*

2. *The IUA institutions undertake to operate transparent processes for student recruitment, training, workload and oversight of research students that provide academic support*

3. *The IUA institutions undertake to provide clarity on the financial benefit [and career development benefits, as well as the expectations of PhD students who provide academic support][1] to research students that provide academic support, be it in the form of direct payment, or as a financial payment of stipend or a deduction from fee level. Most IUA institutions are in the process of de-coupling payment for academic support activities from stipend payments and/or fee deductions.*

4. *The IUA institutions undertake to provide clarity on the maximum academic support workload that a research student will be permitted to undertake during their programme, to ensure that such activities do not adversely affect research progress and completion times.*

1 Purpose

In order to support the IUA Sectoral High-Level Principles detailed above, the purpose of this document is to outline general guidance for good practice in the provision of teaching experience to full-time postgraduate research students registered in DCU. This document is to be read in conjunction with the DCU Teaching and Learning Strategy and Research Strategic plan(s), and any specific postgraduate research scholarship terms/guidelines. It is a component of the University's plan to better integrate teaching and research. More specifically, it aims (i) to facilitate the development of a transferable skill-set, including teaching skills, among research students, (ii) to enrich the delivery of our programmes through the active contribution of trained lecturers/tutors/demonstrators and graders, and (iii) to assist lecturing staff in their teaching activities, especially where large groups are involved.

At present, full-time research students are registered with their specific school under different schemes, such as but not limited to:

- Self-funded
- Internally funded full scholarships (i.e. fees+ maintenance)
- Internally funded partial scholarships (i.e. fees only)
- Externally funded scholarships

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[1] Additional DCU comments added within brackets to the IUA Principles.

While this is generally be applicable to all research students undertaking teaching activities, issues relating to workloads and payment will be determined by the relevant scheme.

2 General principles and allocation of responsibilities

2.1 While it may not be possible to offer every student the opportunity to teach as this depends on matching needs and knowledge within a School and Faculty, when possible, full-time research students will be afforded the opportunity to develop and enhance their teaching skills by contributing to the teaching and learning activities of their School/Faculty.

2.2 Module development, delivery, assessment and upload of results, are the primary responsibility of the Module Coordinator.

2.3 The Head of School has responsibility for oversight of the nature of teaching activities and workload undertaken by research students registered with their School.

2.4 The nature and allocation of the research student's teaching activity will be agreed by the Head of School, the student's supervisor, the Module Coordinator and the research student prior to the beginning of the academic session. The work should be such as to contribute to the student's career development and transferable skill-set.

2.5 Training and preparation of the postgraduate research student supporting teaching activities, will be the general responsibility of the School/Faculty and the specific responsibility of the Module Coordinator related to the module itself.

2.6 The Head of School has responsibility to ensure that the research student receives adequate support and supervision for the teaching activities undertaken.

2.7 It is the Head of School's and the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee's responsibility to ensure that Quality Assurance procedures are adhered to.

2.8 The Head of School may nominate another member of staff (e.g. Deputy Head, Research/Teaching convenor, etc.) to be responsible for the oversight of a research student's workloads and support. In this case, it is the nominee's responsibility to carry out the tasks listed under the Head of School's remit.

2.9 In limited cases the management of the above may be managed at a Faculty level, therefore any reference to the Head of School would lie with the relevant nominee(s) whose responsibility is to carry out the tasks listed under the Head of School's remit above.

3 Scope of research students' teaching activities

3.1 Teaching activities undertaken by research students will normally be based in the School (or Faculty) with which students are registered. Where teaching activities are based in a different School (or Faculty), the prior agreement of the Head of School with which the research student is registered with, will be required.

3.2 Research students undertaking teaching activities will work under the direction and guidance of and in full collaboration with the Module Coordinator responsible for the

module(s) which the research student will support. The Module Coordinator may or may not be the student's supervisor.

3.3 Depending on the teaching needs of a School or Programme, the scope of research students' teaching activities will normally include, but will not necessarily limited to, any of the following:

- Tutorial and seminar teaching (face-to-face or online)
- Supporting and/or contributing to lecture delivery (e.g., facilitating group activities during lectures, assisting lecturer with the use of learning technologies before or during lecture, occasional delivery of lecture, etc.). However, any contribution to lecture delivery would be limited in line with the hours total effort specified in Section 4 (e.g., not constitute the delivery of a full module), in such cases, if a student is invited to deliver more than what is specified above, it must be remunerated at the part-time lecturer rate.
- Demonstrating in laboratories or practical settings

The above activities may include the following, however the payment of such may be other than that detailed in 4.4 (lecture/tutor/demonstrator rates or script/assessment payments) depending on the support required.

- Marking student assessment, providing feedback, assisting in the conduct of assessment (e.g., video recordings of oral presentations, invigilation of class tests, including computer-based examinations/tests, etc.)
- Contributing to module development (e.g., creation of teaching materials under the direction of the Module Coordinator) and/or module assessment

4 Workload allocation and payment

4.1 The workload allocated to research students include all related teaching and learning activities as specified in 3.3 above. Other activities are not covered and should be addressed as appropriate.

4.2 Recipients of internally and externally funded scholarships will be expected to contribute to the teaching activities of the School/Faculty with which they are registered for the duration of their scholarship.

Firstly, 'total effort' refers to preparation time associated with a specific contact hour.

The workload for the recipient of a full internal scholarship will generally not exceed an average of 6 hours total effort per week or 144 hours total effort over two semesters or 250 hours per year (i.e., spread across 42 weeks).

The total workload for the recipient of an external scholarship will generally not exceed an average of 6 hours total effort per week or 144 hours total effort over two semesters or 250 hours per year (i.e., spread across 42 weeks), within the limitations stipulated by the funding body.

The workload for the recipient of a <u>partial internal scholarship</u> will normally not exceed an average of 3 hours total effort per week or 77 hours total effort over two semesters or 125 hours per year (i.e., spread across 42 weeks). Additional hours may be offered and may be paid at an alternative (i.e., tutor/demonstrator) rate. The total workload will generally not exceed an average of 6 hours total effort per week or 144 hours total effort over two semesters or 250 hours per year (i.e., spread across 42 weeks).

4.3 Depending on School/Faculty needs and available resources, <u>self-funded</u> research students may be offered the opportunity to contribute to the teaching activities of their School/Faculty. The total workload will generally not exceed an average of 6 hours total effort per week or 144 hours total effort over two semesters or 250 hours per year (i.e., spread across 42 weeks).

4.4 Teaching activities will normally be paid at the lecture/tutor/demonstrator rate, as per DCU Payroll specified hourly rates (these rates cover preparation and delivery time) https://www.dcu.ie/finance/payroll-pay-scales. This is administered through the HRs Staff Request Application system (https://www.dcu.ie/hr/staff-request-application), managed by the School/Faculty. Contracts are issued by HR plus information relating to a personalised Core HR portal. Submission of 'Hours' claimed are made through the students Core HR portal. The lecture/tutor/demonstrator rate does not include exam script/assessment payments which is administered through a separate process (https://www.dcu.ie/hr/payment-correcting-end-semester-exam-assessments). For queries on this or other HR processes, contact should be made with the designated School/Faculty HR Officer/HR Business Partner.

4.5 Ideally the workload will be determined in advance of the start of the academic session by the Head of School or Faculty, communicating this to the student's supervisor and the research student themselves.

4.6 In the case of externally funded students and where applicable, the student's supervisor and the award holder/scholar/student, have the responsibility to inform the funding body of such teaching assignments in accordance with the relevant terms and conditions.

4.7 The research student has responsibility to keep their supervisor(s) informed of their teaching workload allocation, agreeing such and to review this activity regularly.

4.8 Where required by a Faculty Dean, Associate Dean or Faculty Committee (Research or Teaching), a record of the hours and nature of the research student's total workload would be kept and logged by the Head of School or nominee at the end of the academic session.

5 Professional development and support

5.1 Research students undertaking teaching activities within the School/Faculty will be provided with an annual induction programme introducing them to *inter alia*:

- University provision for development, training and support
- Academic regulations (including Marks and Standards), programme specific regulations and procedures
- The programmes of study for which they will teach, including programme management and administrative processes
- Health and safety issues and regulations

Responsibility for this induction programme lies within the School/Faculty.

5.2 Research students undertaking teaching activities will have a teaching mentor appointed by the Head of School. This should be an experienced member of staff who can provide practical support and guidance, answering general queries pertaining to the research student day-to-day operational teaching duties. Regular meetings between the research student and mentor can provide part of the student's graduate training programme. The mentor may be the Module Coordinator or the student's supervisor.

5.3 The scope of teaching activities and associated workload undertaken by research students in their first year will be commensurate with prior relevant teaching experience and the conditions of their scholarship where applicable.

5.4 Unless they have relevant teaching experience, research students carrying out or expected/intending to contribute to teaching activities should undertake the '*Postgraduate Tutoring Principles and Practices*' module, ideally within their first year, for additional support.

5.5 Research students with relevant teaching experience may where appropriate, take up a full workload from the start of their first year.

5.6 Research students, if sought, should be provided with the opportunity for feedback and review from the Module Coordinator, of their teaching role. The mechanism for feedback and review should be discussed and agreed upon before the start of the academic session in accordance with the DCU Quality Assurance and Enhancement policy and procedures.

5.7 Suitable teaching materials will be provided by the Module Coordinator. In addition, any necessary/relevant equipment, facilities and/or support must be made accessible to research students undertaking teaching activities, managed by the Module Coordinator. Where teaching activities necessitate contact with students outside formal classes, the School/Faculty must provide guidance on any space that may be available for this purpose when required.

5.9 Teaching activities and workload undertaken should be retained by the research student within their own personal portfolio of graduate training activities.

6 Quality Assurance

6.1 Research students should familiarise themselves with the information provided in 5.1

6.2 Where research students are expected to mark and provide feedback on student's work from modules on which they teach, the Module Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that those procedures relating to GDPR guidelines, the moderation of marking, assessment feedback and communication of results are followed.

6.3 Where research students are expected to invigilate class tests for those modules on which they teach, this duty must be undertaken in accordance with the University regulations and School policy and procedures with regards to assessment.

Version Control

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End.