Graduate Teaching Assistants

Scope:
All full and part time students registered on a postgraduate research degree programme at City who are engaged in teaching or teaching-support activity at City.

Specific arrangements for validated research degree programmes are set out in the Validation and Institutional Partnerships Handbook.

Specific arrangements for research degree programmes offered in partnership with another institution will be set out in the Memorandum of Agreement for the partnership.

Senate Regulations:
- Regulation 24 – Doctoral Programmes
- Regulation 23 – Masters Degrees by Research

Date approved/re-approved:
- APPSC June 2010 (as a Statement of best practice)
- Senate March 2013 (as a Senate Policy)
- Senate July 2017 (revisions approved)
- Senate July 2019 (revised and renamed from Research Students who Teach policy)

Date for review:
To be reviewed on a periodic basis, with allowance for minor annual updates by the City Graduate School Committee, as required.

To be read in conjunction with:
- Section 9 of City’s Quality Manual, in particular:
  - Principles of Good Practice for Preparing Doctoral Students who Teach
  - Peer Supported Review of Education Policy

Equality and Diversity statement
City, University of London is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all its activities, processes, and culture, under its Public Sector Equality Duties and the Equality Act 2010. This includes promoting equality and diversity for all, irrespective of any protected characteristic, working pattern, family circumstance, socio-economic background, political belief or other irrelevant distinction.

Where relevant to the policy, decision-making panels will ensure a reasonable gender balance (with at least one man and one woman) and will actively consider representation of other protected groups.
**Graduate Teaching Assistants**

With effect from the 2018/19 academic year, with the exception of those in receipt of a Doctoral Training Studentship in Cass Business School, any postgraduate research student who is offered and accepts work in a teaching-related capacity will be identified as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA).

**Principles**

1. In accordance with the Concordat to support the Career Development of Researchers and the QAA Quality Code, the University recognizes the value that postgraduate research students can bring to the student experience through engagement in the full range of teaching activity. The University additionally recognizes the benefits that teaching experience can bring to the career and professional development of its research student population.

2. Teaching activity includes teaching and/or assistance with teaching; preparation time; assessment and feedback on assessment; and tutorial and seminar support.

3. Engagement of a research student in teaching activity should not jeopardise the progress and completion of their research studies or the experience of the students in receipt of this activity and as a result a maximum number of hours for which a student can be contracted as a GTA has been set. Students are not required to undertake or accept the offer of teaching activity.

4. The scope for teaching activity varies between different Schools and Departments/Centres and opportunities may not always be available. Decisions on the allocation of teaching duties will be transparent and made based on the qualifications, experience, aptitude and skills of each individual. Teaching opportunities should be advertised publicly.

5. Research students in receipt of funding from an external body are required to observe any restrictions or any requirements of the sponsor with regard to teaching.

6. Any paid employment, including teaching or teaching-related activity that a research student undertakes as a GTA must have the approval of the first supervisor and Senior Tutor for Research where the student’s research is based.

7. City requires all research students to have received adequate and appropriate preparation and formal training before undertaking any teaching and/or assessment activity within the University and to ensure that they are fully equipped with the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience in the subject area being taught. Schools and Departments/Centres are required to monitor the preparedness and performance of their research students who teach.
8. Postgraduate research students acting as GTAs must not have sole responsibility for marking any work or examinations that contribute to a students’ final mark in a module assessment.

9. The City Graduate School Committee will receive and consider a report from each School on the preparedness of its research students to teach and its peer review activity annually.

10. GTAs are required to operate in accordance with the University’s regulations, policies and procedures.

Definitions of teaching activity

11. The following duties may fall within the scope of a Graduate Teaching Assistant contract:

12. Teaching: This can cover a variety of activities such as:
   a. Independent (unsupervised) lecturing: giving a presentation or talk on a particular topic or series of topics
   b. Leading small group study: scheduled sessions where the research student takes a leading role in interacting with students in a small seminar group or the delivery of practical sessions, demonstrations or workshops
   c. Assisting: activity in lectures, practical sessions, tutorials and seminars but where the research student is doing so in a supporting capacity to another member of staff in the delivery of the lectures, seminars, tutorials or practical sessions, rather than taking a leading role

13. Assessment and Feedback on Assessment: This covers activities such as:
   a. the marking of students’ work against marking criteria within the scope of the approved module specification, both for formative or summative assessments, or providing feedback to students on their performance in formative and summative assessments.
   b. Preparation: This covers activities involved in preparing for teaching tutorial and seminar support, practical sessions and assessment. This could include, for example, background reading required to teach on the module, preparing lecture slides and handouts, designing seminar sessions or designing assessments within the scope of the approved module specification or other related activities.
   c. One-to-one academic support: This covers scheduled ‘office hours’ or group support on issues most typically determined by the student(s), such as exam revision techniques.
Contractual arrangements

The following information is a summary only and should be read in conjunction with the following documents (which are available on the City Staff Hub):

a. GTA role profile  
b. Key Principles on the Employment of Graduate Teaching Assistants;  
c. GTA Agreement (employment contract).

14. Any postgraduate research student who is offered and accepts work in a teaching-related capacity will be identified as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) and paid via a contract of employment.

15. GTAs must be given clear information on their teaching duties and total hours before they commence teaching activity and agree to this.

16. The rate of pay for GTAs is aligned to Grade 6. Appointment will normally be to the first incremental point on Grade 6. Where there is continuous employment incremental progression will apply (until the top of Grade 6 is reached).

17. Full-time research students may undertake work where this is compatible with their training and with their supervisors’ approval, and does not interrupt the progress of their PhD. It is recommended that this activity is no more than 6 hours in any week; averaging may occur across weeks and pro-rating where GTA work takes place in a single term (where restrictions of the funding body or visa permit this). Such activity includes teaching, preparation time, delivery, assessment and feedback on assessment, and seminars and/or tutorial duties.

18. Part-time research students (e.g. 0.5FTE) may undertake work as a GTA work pro rata. If teaching activity is made available during non-contracted hours and accepted by the part-time student, this may be undertaken in addition.

19. Students on Tier 4 visas will receive guidance from the Institution before undertaking paid and unpaid teaching duties to ensure they are aware of and comply with the requirements and restrictions of their visa. Students on Tier 4 visas must comply with the requirements and restrictions of their visas relating to number of hours of work and averaging of hours does not apply.

20. A multiplier for preparation applies in respect of any independent (unsupervised) teaching and lecturing; this is the hourly rate of pay x 2.5. All other teaching-related activities (including, for example, supervised teaching, support classes, feedback and assessment) are paid at the flat hourly rate.

21. In terms of assessment/marking, Heads of Department, with advice from module leaders, shall determine how much time is required for a research student to mark a paper or piece of coursework (e.g. an undergraduate coursework laboratory exercise). Determination of the 'hours-to-mark' will be drawn on past experience, or in consultation with the GTA if it is to be undertaken for the first time. This time is
multiplied by the total number of papers/coursework being marked by the GTA and that product becomes the total hours which the GTA is paid.

22. All calculated (paid) hours are included in the maximum annual hours permitted (which in 2017/18 was 150 hours), this limit excludes mandatory training where required (currently 24 paid hours).

Training, Development and Progression

23. Schools, Departments and Centres are responsible for ensuring that research students engaged in teaching activity are adequately and appropriately prepared, normally through attendance of the face-to-face elements of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment module on the MA Academic Practice, delivered through the University’s Learning Enhancement and Development Directorate prior to starting teaching. Any alternative training must be confirmed as being equivalent to the LTA module by LEaD before teaching commences.

24. The Learning, Teaching and Assessment module must be completed at a time that enables the prospective Graduate Teaching Assistant to be able to teach within three months of attending the face-to-face elements of the module; this is an assessment requirement to allow the reflective practice to be completed.

25. Subsequent GTA contracts should not be offered other than to those who have passed this training (or been formally exempted from it) and it is the responsibility of the School, Department or Centre to ensure that requests to issue such contracts are not made to the Human Resources Department for those who are not qualified to receive them.

26. GTAs should receive regular and constructive feedback on their performance and to support this, they will be allocated a mentor within the School, Department or Centre where the teaching activity is undertaken. This individual will be responsible for supporting and guiding the GTAs in their teaching activity, including giving them regular and constructive feedback, highlighting issues which need attention. The GTA’s mentor will normally be the Module Leader for the module that their teaching activity relates to, but can be the students’ supervisor or another member of academic staff.

27. Teaching activity should be peer reviewed at least annually by a member of academic staff in the Department/Centre in accordance with the City’s Policy on Peer Supported Review of Education¹. In accordance with City’s principles of good practice, peer review should normally be undertaken by the supervisor or person mentoring the GTA’s teaching activity. Further guidance and advice will be obtained through the module evaluation process or from the module leader, where Schools opt to include the GTA in the module evaluation process.

¹ References to staff in the context of the Policy on Peer Supported Review of Education include Visiting Lecturers and Research Students.
28. Where teaching activity is calculated on the basis as set out above, the GTA’s teaching mentor should monitor, in discussion, instances where time spent significantly exceeds the notional allocated hours so that appropriate action can be taken, which may include additional support for the student.

29. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring the progress of their research students during the year through procedures set out in City’s Research Degrees Framework (Section 9 of the Quality Manual). This includes identifying where teaching activity as a GTA may jeopardise progress and completion of research studies.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

30. School Boards of Studies or appropriate sub-committees of School Boards of Studies are responsible for overseeing the quality and standards of taught provision, including consideration of the contribution of research students to any teaching activity as a GTA, through regular analysis of the outcome of the module evaluation exercise and any other appropriate measures. Data related to the training, preparation and support provided to research students who teach should be compiled within Departments/Centres on an ongoing basis and reported to BoS termly. This should be supplied in a timely way to allow the City Graduate School to report to Senate. A *pro forma* Excel spreadsheet for the monitoring of this activity is available.

31. Boards of Studies should consider and agree any actions required where the data highlight instances where the policy is not being fully implemented.

32. A summary of the reports from Boards of Studies will be presented to Senate each year.

33. Schools should choose to identify a member of staff to oversee the responsibility for monitoring teaching activity under the Policy and for liaising with the City Graduate School in particular to facilitate the compilation of data for Senate on GTA activity.