Hull York Medical School

Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

Committee	Outcome / Date of approval
Postgraduate Programme Board	8 September 2021
Board of Studies	29 September 2021
Joint Senate Committee	3 November 2021 via Chair's Action
To be implemented from:	3 November 2021
Responsibility to update:	GTA Coordinator

To obtain this Code of Practice in an alternative format, contact Governance@hyms.ac.uk

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Hull York Medical School Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) is largely adopted from the [University of York Policy of Graduate Teaching Assistants](#). The School aligns its key policies with one of our Universities to avoid duplication and to ensure that we consistently meet the standard set out in the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education. Adjustments to the Universities' Codes of Practice and Policies are made to ensure that this Policy meets the specific requirements of the School.

1.2. Postgraduate research students (PGRs, normally PhD students) who support student learning at the Hull York Medical School are referred to as Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs).

1.3. The School believes that the learning experience of its prospective and taught students can be enhanced by the contribution made by properly trained and supported GTAs. With their enthusiasm, creativity, and specialist knowledge, GTAs can ignite excitement and nurture interest in cutting edge research. As both students and early career researchers, GTAs can also help to bridge the gap between taught students and academic staff.

1.4. The School recognises that exposure to academic practice is an important aspect of a PGR's professional development. The School has, therefore, adopted a model for GTAs that is based on the idea that GTAs develop the required skills, confidence and experience through a combination of training, working alongside experienced practitioners, enculturation into institutional values around learning and teaching, and staged levels of responsibility. This model is delivered by academic departments, with central support.

1.5. The School recognises a duty of care to its taught students and to its GTAs. Through the implementation of this policy, the School aims to protect and support both parties, ensuring an excellent experience for all concerned.

2. Ownership and reference points

2.1. This policy is owned by the Joint Senate Committee, and is informed by and conforms with the [UCU/NUS Postgraduate employment charter](#).

3. Application of the policy

3.1. This policy applies to all GTAs at the Medical School. It does not apply to full or part-time members of academic staff who are enrolled for a research degree.

3.2. Opportunities for GTAs to support student learning include demonstrating, facilitating small group teaching, supporting online learning and marking. PGRs may also be engaged to invigilate and undertake teaching-related administration (e.g. scheduling seminar groups, or helping to prepare documentation for external review) but these activities do *not* fall under the scope of this policy.

4. Eligibility to serve as a GTA

4.1. Current Hull York Medical School PGRs (primarily those on PhD programmes but also those on other postgraduate research degree programmes, namely MPhil and Masters of Science by Thesis are eligible to serve as GTAs until they have completed their programme (i.e. until their award has been confirmed by the Joint Senate Committee).

4.2. Postgraduate Taught Students (PGTs) should not normally be engaged in supporting student learning. In exceptional cases (e.g. where a taught Master's student has considerable industry experience), permission for an exception to this policy should be sought from the Chair of Board of Studies who will seek final approval by the Chair of Joint Senate Committee. Approval will be granted on a named student basis, with approval lasting for a period of up to one academic year. For the avoidance of doubt, undergraduate students cannot be asked to serve as GTAs.

4.3.   PGRs cannot be engaged as GTAs on any teaching session/module which contributes to a programme on which they are enrolled. The GTA policy does not apply to PGRs participating in peer supported learning on a programme on which they are enrolled. Exception may be given to the Medical School's Postgraduate Training Scheme (PGTS) as it is not a traditional postgraduate taught programme that necessarily leads to an award. GTAs who teach the PGTS will require approval by the Chair of the Board of Studies.

5.   Availability of GTA positions

5.1.   Serving as a GTA can be a valuable development opportunity for PGRs, especially those who wish to pursue an academic career, as well as providing additional income. GTA positions are, however, limited and may be offered on a competitive basis. PGRs should, therefore, be aware that a GTA position cannot be guaranteed, even if they meet all the relevant selection criteria. All PGRs are, however, encouraged to access (ideally in their first year) some of the free training in learning and teaching provided by the School and the two Universities as part of their professional development.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MEDICAL SCHOOL TOWARDS GTAS

6.   Responsibilities of the School

6.1.   GTAs are used by the School to support teaching sessions/modules, and also by some support departments (e.g. to present to school parties or to serve as tutors in the Writing Centre and Maths Skills Centre). In the case of support departments, references within this Policy to modules should be applied to other units of learning and teaching activity as appropriate.

6.2.   The School is responsible for paying GTAs (and must factor GTA costs into the School's financial planning).

6.3.   The School is responsible for setting out the policy on GTAs, which explains what activities GTAs can undertake and at what academic level. It also includes details of: how GTAs are to be recruited, trained and supervised, continuing professional development opportunities, and representation and integration into the academic community. It is approved by the Board of Studies and will form part of the evidence base for periodic review. In the case of support departments, the policy is approved by the Joint Senate Committee and reviewed regularly.

6.4.   The School will provide essential information for GTAs in an easily accessible format (e.g. a webpage, and/or VLE site, and/or handbook). This information should include: the name of the GTA Coordinator, the School's policy on GTAs, GTA role descriptions, training and supervision requirements, continuing professional development opportunities, access to resources and facilities, and how they are represented within the School. The School will signpost relevant information, including the School's policies and procedures on learning and teaching, assessment, equality and diversity (including disability), student welfare, health and safety, and data protection.

7.   Responsibilities of the GTA Coordinator

7.1.   The School will appoint the GTA Coordinator (an academic member of staff or senior member of the professional support staff). The GTA Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the school implements this Policy, including:

- maintaining an overview of the use of GTAs in the School;
- acting as a source of advice and support for current and prospective GTAs, and for staff using GTAs to support learning;
- ensuring that the School complies with the policies and procedures relating to temporary and casual workers;
- overseeing the School's procedures for the recruitment of GTAs;
- overseeing the School's approach to the training and supervision of GTAs, including ensuring that:
  - o   appropriate discipline-specific training is provided

- procedures are in place to ensure that GTAs have undertaken the required University and departmental training
- GTAs receive appropriate support at module level
- ensuring that GTAs are notified of students who have support needs;
- ensuring that GTAs receive feedback on their performance for continuing professional development purposes;
- coordinating continuing professional development opportunities and encouraging GTAs to participate;
- working with module leaders to ensure that newly appointed GTAs are observed;
- working with module leaders to address any performance issues relating to GTAs;
- representing the development and other needs of GTAs on committees;
- ensuring that the policy on GTAs is kept up to date;
- ensuring that the information on GTAs is kept up to date;
- representing the School at meetings of GTA coordinators.

7.2. Aspects of the GTA Coordinator's role may be delegated to one or more members of the academic or support staff as long as the GTA Coordinator retains overall responsibility.

8.   Responsibilities of module leaders

8.1.   Module leaders are responsible for:

- the day-to-day supervision, line management and mentoring of GTAs supporting their modules;
- providing GTAs with a module-specific induction and any module-specific training;
- working with their GTA Coordinator to support the continuing professional development of GTAs and to ensure that newly appointed GTAs are observed;
- working with their GTA Coordinator to address any performance issues relating to GTAs.

8.2.   The GTA responsibilities of a module leader can only be transferred to others, with the agreement of the GTA Coordinator, if this is permitted within the School's policy on GTAs.

9.   Responsibilities of programme directors/leaders

9.1.   Programme directors/leaders should work with the relevant module leaders to ensure that, where possible, there is a consistent, programme level approach to the use of GTAs. As contributors to a programme's delivery, GTAs should be included as members of the programme team (see section on *Continuing Professional Development for GTAs*).

10.   GTA mentors

10.1.   The School may appoint experienced and high-performing GTAs to serve as GTA mentors, to assist staff in the supervision and mentoring of less-experienced GTAs (for example, to undertake the observation of newly appointed GTAs, see *Section on Performance Observation of GTAs*). GTA mentors must be supervised and mentored by an academic member of staff, who they can call upon for advice and support and, where necessary, to intervene.

THE NATURE OF GTA WORK

Principle: The Medical School should ensure that there is a clear rationale for the deployment of GTAs, in terms of the nature and academic level of the activities that GTAs support.

10.2.   GTAs support student learning in a number of ways, including:

- laboratory and field-work demonstrating;
- facilitating small group teaching (e.g. tutorials, seminars, and workshops);
- supporting online learning (e.g. moderating online discussion groups);
- marking, and giving feedback on, formative and summative assessments;
- preparing teaching materials (e.g. digital content).

10.3. The University of York has developed generic GTA role descriptors for: (i) tutors, (ii) laboratory demonstrators, and (iii) laboratory leaders, which may be supplemented by more detailed departmental/role-specific information.

11. What GTAs can do: activities and academic levels

11.1. This Policy sets out what activities GTAs can undertake and at what academic level (noting the restrictions and guidance below), and there should be a clear academic rationale for the decisions taken. The School is committed to the need to ensure an excellent learning experience for taught students, whilst aiming for a positive experience for GTAs too.

11.2. When deciding what GTAs can do, the School will consider:

- the needs of taught students (including prospective students);
- the expectations of taught students, including any claims made in publicity material;
- any professional, statutory or regulatory body restrictions;
- the degree of specialist knowledge and skills required for the particular activity and academic level being supported;
- the degree of individual GTA responsibility (e.g. whether they are leading or assisting with an activity);
- the level of preparation required of GTAs (e.g. whether they are delivering pre-prepared material or designing their own sessions);
- the nature of the supervision of GTAs provided by academic staff (e.g. whether direct or indirect);
- how experienced the GTAs are.

12. Use of GTAs to support undergraduate and Master's programmes

12.1. GTAs are primarily used to support undergraduate programmes (including support for prospective undergraduate students). Typical approaches to the use of GTAs are given below as reference points.

12.2. Departments should seek permission from the Chair of Joint Senate Committee if they wish to use GTAs to support any Master's level modules (including Master's level modules within an Integrated Master's programme). GTA support for Master's level modules should normally be limited to supplementary teaching roles e.g. supporting practicals or workshops (not, for example, lecturing, small group teaching or dissertation supervision). Approval, if granted, is in terms of using GTAs within a particular Master's level module(s) and for a particular purpose and may be subject to conditions (e.g. additional selection requirements or the provisional of supplementary training or support).

12.3. In the School, GTAs are often engaged as laboratory demonstrators and to support workshops (often under the close supervision of an academic member of staff) at undergraduate levels.

13. GTAs and marking

13.1. Marking and giving feedback on formative and summative work is a skilled activity and if done poorly can have a serious negative impact on the student experience, and implications for academic standards. The School will exercise caution in using GTAs to mark and give feedback on summative work, particularly at Year 3 MB BS level and above, and on work that requires the exercise of considerable academic judgment (e.g. essays and reports where markers cannot be provided with a detailed mark scheme and model answers).

13.2. The School will ensure that robust procedures are in place to train GTAs who mark and give feedback on work. GTAs need to have a clear understanding of the standards that the School expects of students at a particular academic level and for a particular type of assessment. GTAs need to have an awareness of academic misconduct and be able to give constructive feedback that helps students to improve their performance. Training should include not only discussion

of assessment policy, marking criteria etc. but also, practical exercises in marking and giving feedback.

13.3. The School will ensure that robust procedures are in place to monitor and where necessary, correct, GTA marking and feedback e.g. through the application of double-marking, moderation and table-marking practices.

13.4. GTAs can advise an internal examiner for a module on the marks to be awarded but the internal examiner must be in a position to take formal responsibility for the marks awarded.

14. GTAs and lecturing

14.1. GTAs should not normally be expected to deliver lectures, or to facilitate large group teaching in place of an academic member of staff. A GTA with specialist knowledge of particular relevance may, however, be invited to give one or more 'guest lectures' within a module. This can add vibrancy to a module and be hugely beneficial to a GTA's professional development. A module leader wishing to use a GTA to deliver a lecture on this basis should seek approval from the GTA coordinator and ensure that the GTAs is given the necessary support (potentially including a trial run through with feedback).

15. Use of GTAs for more substantive teaching roles

15.1. On rare occasions, there may be instances (for example where a PGR has considerable professional/industrial experience relevant to a particular module, combined with considerable teaching experience) where it is academically appropriate for a PGR to take on a more substantive teaching role within the School (e.g. co-teaching an undergraduate module with an academic member of staff who retains overall responsibility for module design, delivery and assessment). In this instance, the department should seek approval from the Chair of Joint Senate Committee and seek advice from Human Resources on how the individual should be engaged.

16. Use of GTAs in exceptional circumstances

16.1. In exceptional circumstances only (for example, the sudden illness of an academic member of staff), and having explored other options, a GTA may be asked to take on additional responsibilities on a short-term basis (e.g. to deliver a pre-prepared lecture or lead a seminar). Any such decision should be made in consultation with the Chair of the Board of Studies and/or the Dean of the Medical School or equivalent and *strictly* on the basis of what is in the best interests of students, and the department should ensure that the GTA has the necessary expertise, experience and support.

17. GTAs and the provision of pastoral support

17.1. GTAs should not provide pastoral support or general academic guidance (e.g. on module choices) to students. The School will ensure that GTAs understand the limits of their role and know what to do if a student raises a pastoral or general academic issue with them.

18. GTA access to student records

18.1. The School will ensure that their use of GTAs is in line with University policies on data protection. GTAs should not have access to SITS (the student records system) or other student records.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF GTAS

Principles: recruitment, selection and appointment procedures for GTAs should be fair, transparent, equitable, and in line with University rules and regulations on temporary and casual workers. The selection process should ensure that GTAs have the necessary capabilities for the roles they are being recruited to.

19. The nature of the engagement of GTAs and School responsibilities

19.1. GTAs are subject to the [policies and procedures for temporary and casual workers](#) set out by the University of York Human Resources. Where GTAs are engaged as casual workers, the School has particular responsibilities (see the section on *Pay and Conditions for GTAs* for further details).

20. Duration of GTA positions

20.1. The School will decide on what basis they wish to recruit GTAs, e.g. to support individual modules, groups of modules, or for a fixed duration (subject to performance and conduct). The School may also recruit a pool of GTAs to draw upon as the need arises, in order to maintain flexibility, but in this case it is vital that there is a transparent system for selecting suitably qualified individuals from the GTA pool when a specific GTA position becomes available.

20.2. Where demand for GTA positions within the School is high, the School will try to ensure that as many suitably qualified PGRs as possible can benefit from the experience.

21. Advertising

21.1. All GTA positions should be advertised in advance. To enable all suitably qualified PGRs to apply, GTA positions should be advertised widely.

21.2. GTA advertisements should include the expected hours of work and rate of pay, the academic level being supported, the purpose and duties of the role, and the required training, qualifications, knowledge, skills, experience and attributes. The advertisement should include the relevant generic role descriptor (see above), supplemented (if required) with role-specific information. The advertisement should also include details of the selection process and selection criteria. A template for the advertisement of GTA opportunities is available.

22. Selection process

22.1. There should be a clear and transparent process for GTA selection, which enables the School to identify which applicant is best suited to an advertised GTA position. The selection process can also be used to identify any PGRs who may need particular support or training if they are to meet the GTA selection criteria in future.

22.2. Prospective GTAs should be invited to submit (by an advertised deadline) a statement (either by letter or email) on how they meet the requirements of the advertised position. The School may choose to ask for supplementary information such as a CV and references. Applicants should provide evidence that their supervisor(s) supports their application, that they have undertaken the required training, and that they have the required English language skills.

22.3. Where GTA positions require direct interaction with students (whether face-to-face or virtual), the selection process should include a means of judging an applicant's ability to engage effectively with students e.g. through interview and/or a presentation and/or a mock teaching session. Where a GTA role involves marking and giving qualitative feedback on non-numerical work it is recommended that the selection process includes a practical exercise in which a PGR's potential to meet the school's standards, with respect to marking and giving feedback, can be assessed.

22.4. Applicants should be judged against explicit selection criteria based upon the requirements for the advertised position. All applicants for a GTA position should, where possible, be considered together.

22.5. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, all applicants should be asked if there are any particular arrangements or reasonable adjustments that could be made so that they can participate fully in the selection process.

23. **English language skills**

23.1. All GTAs should demonstrate a standard of English language communication skills appropriate to the role. Language competence must be checked by the School as part of the selection process. Where GTA positions require direct interaction with students, and/or marking and giving qualitative feedback on non-numerical work, GTAs who are non-native speakers of English must have IELTS 6.5 or above or demonstrate performance at this level.

23.2. For leading tutorials and seminars (and similar) GTAs should, in addition, have IELTS 6.5 or above in speaking or demonstrate performance at this level. A lower IELTS score can be justified *only* when GTAs are engaged solely to mark numerical work and this must be approved by the Board of Studies.

23.3. The School, through the Board of Studies, may opt to set a higher English language requirement for their GTAs than those specified here. The School will inform prospective PGR students where their GTA English language requirements are higher than those set for entry to their PGR programmes to avoid disappointment.

24. **Unsuccessful applicants**

24.1. Unsuccessful applicants should be offered an opportunity for feedback,and signposted to appropriate development opportunities. PGRs who do not meet the English language requirement should be encouraged to improve their English language skills.

25. **Appointment**

25.1. An offer of a GTA position should always be made in writing. For GTAs engaged as casual workers, the offer letter and Statement of Casual Engagement sets out the terms of the relationship between the School and the GTA and should include:

- a brief description of the role;
- the duration of the appointment;
- the duties of the role;
- any required training and/or induction activities;
- the hours of work (per week and in total) including, where applicable, the estimated time to be allocated to different responsibilities (e.g. preparation, contact and marking);
- the rate or rates of pay, and the intervals at which remuneration will occur;
- details of the academic staff member(s) with responsibility for supervising, line-managing and mentoring the GTA;
- details of where the GTA can access the School's policy on GTAs and School information for GTAs;
- any legal obligations that work as a GTA in a specific department may entail.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GTAS

Principle: as trainee academics, GTAs take responsibility for acting in the best interests of the student experience.

26. **GTA's responsibilities**

26.1. In accepting a position, a GTA commits to:

- undertaking the required training and induction;
- allowing sufficient time to prepare for allocated tasks;
- undertaking their responsibilities in a professional manner and to the best of their abilities;
- engaging with their GTA supervisor/mentor on an ongoing basis;
- seeking support and guidance where necessary, particularly if they have any concerns about their performance;
- participating in continuing professional development opportunities;

- raising any concerns about the module, or students on the module, with an appropriate member of staff;
- participating in programme and/or School quality assurance and enhancement activities as required;
- acting in accordance with relevant University and School policies and procedures on learning and teaching, assessment, equality, diversity and inclusion, student welfare, health and safety, and data protection.

26.2.   A GTA should alert their GTA coordinator to any situation, including a personal relationship with a student, in which there is, or there could be perceived to be, a conflict of interest between their self-interest and their professional responsibility as a GTA. GTAs are bound by the University of York's Personal Relationships Policy.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF GTAS

Principle: GTAs should receive the training and supervision they need to undertake their duties effectively.

27.   Mandatory training

27.1.   Before starting work as a GTA, PGRs should have undertaken training that provides them with:

- an understanding of the role of the GTA in supporting learning within the School, and in the area where they will be working (including the limits of their role);
- the skills they need to undertake the GTA role effectively and with confidence (e.g. for GTAs leading seminars this might include session planning, facilitating discussion, and classroom management, and for GTAs serving as demonstrators this might include supporting learning within a laboratory setting and giving constructive feedback on laboratory reports);
- an introduction and signposting to key University and School's policies and procedures of relevance to the GTA role (learning and teaching, assessment, equality and diversity, student welfare, health and safety, and data protection).

27.2.   In practice, this means that before starting work as a GTA, a PGR should have undertaken:

- the University of York's *Introduction to Learning and Teaching* (ITL)[1] (the most relevant of the ITL training workshops as advised by their School GTA Coordinator) or the University of Hull's *Passport to University Teaching* (PUT)
- **appropriate training provided by the department where they will be working**.

27.3.   The School offer a formal and comprehensive GTA training course, rather than providing training on a piecemeal or ad hoc basis.

28.   Mandatory GTA module inductions

28.1.   In addition to the training provided by the University and School, **GTAs should receive a GTA-focused induction for each module that they are supporting, in advance of their contribution to the module**. The module induction provides an opportunity for the module team to come together, and includes the module-specific material that GTAs require in order to provide effective support.

28.2.   The induction for a module should be provided by the module leader and is likely to include:

- meeting the module team (academic staff, GTAs, and sometimes support staff);
- an overview of how the module fits into the programme: what purpose the module serves and how it contributes to fulfilling programme learning outcomes;

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[1] The Introduction to Learning and Teaching (ITL) is a training workshop (with a number of tailored variants) provided by Academic Practice and formally overseen by the Academic Practice Board of Studies.

- an overview of the module including how the content, teaching methods, assessment and feedback align to enable the students to meet the module learning outcomes;
- an overview of the student cohort (e.g. prior experience, particular needs);
- the specific responsibilities of GTAs within the module;
- an introduction to the module VLE site and/or other electronic systems necessary for the role;
- any adjustments needed to accommodate students with disabilities;
- module-specific training (this is likely to be limited where departments provide a comprehensive GTA training course);
- [for seminar leaders] reading lists, content and learning activities for each seminar session;
- [for demonstrators] module-specific health and safety, risks and how these are mitigated, hands on experience of equipment and practical tasks, expected results and common problems;
- [for markers] the module's assessment, marking criteria and expectations for feedback, practical tasks to help calibrate standards.

29. Exemption from mandatory training requirements

29.1. A department may seek approval, from the Chair of Joint Senate Committee, for PGRs who undertake their departmental training to be exempted (but only if they wish) from undertaking the ITL or PUT. The School's request will be approved if it can provide evidence that it provides a formal and comprehensive GTA training course, that has been carefully structured, is delivered to a high standard, and covers the syllabus of the ITL or PUT. Approval may be time-limited and significant changes to the department's GTA training course may invalidate the approval. Departments granted an exemption will be notified of any changes to the ITL or PUT syllabus by Academic Practice (York) or The Teaching Excellence Academy (Hull). In departments which have an exemption, the departmental Board of Studies is responsible for the oversight of its GTA training course and ensuring it remains aligned to the ITL or PUT.

29.2. An individual PGR may seek approval from the relevant GTA Coordinator to be exempted from undertaking the ITL and/or School training. Approval may be granted if the PGR has an appropriate teaching qualification (e.g. a PGCE in Post Compulsory Education) and/or can provide evidence of having successfully completed equivalent formal training at another UK university. If the qualification/training was completed more than 24 months previously, approval should only be granted where the PGR can provide evidence of recent successful teaching at tertiary level.

29.3. GTAs who are new to a module should not be granted an exemption from the module induction. GTAs who have supported a module in a previous year should be present at part of the module induction, to allow them to meet the rest of the module team and to learn what aspects of the module have changed from previous years (but may be exempted from other parts of the module induction with the permission of the module leader).

30. Payment for training, induction and continuing professional development

30.1. PGR attendance at the ITL or PUT and/or at a formal and comprehensive departmental GTA training course that is open to all PGRs within the School is not paid because such training can be considered an expected part of a PGR's professional development and is a pre-condition for obtaining a GTA post. Participation in continuing professional development activities for GTAs (e.g. peer observation) is not paid as it can be considered an expected part of a PGR's professional development. Attendance at GTA module inductions and compulsory attendance at additional programme/module meetings or incidental training should be paid (at the lower marker rate) because it cannot be considered an expected part of a PGR's professional development.

31. Attendance of GTAs at taught sessions

31.1. Module leaders may wish to encourage GTAs to attend particular taught sessions in preparation for their GTA role (e.g. the lectures linked to the seminars that GTAs are facilitating). If

attendance at teaching sessions is required, the details should be made clear at an early stage and the GTAs should be paid (at the lower marker rate).

32. Supervision, line-management and mentoring

32.1. The module leader is normally responsible for the day-to-day supervision, line-management and mentoring of GTAs who are supporting their module. The module leader should meet regularly with the GTAs to offer guidance and support and to provide opportunities for the GTAs to discuss how the module is going and to raise any issues or concerns.

33. Performance observation of GTAs

33.1. Newly appointed GTAs who interact directly with students should be observed by an academic member of staff (or GTA mentor). The timing of the observation should enable any performance issues and development needs to be identified at an early stage (i.e. normally within the first few weeks). The GTA Coordinator and module leaders are responsible for working together to ensure that all newly appointed GTAs are observed. If performance issues or development needs are identified (either as part of an initial performance observation or by other means), further observations may be required (see section on *Managing GTA Performance*).

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR GTAS

Principle: GTAs should receive formal and informal feedback on their performance, and support for their continuing professional development.

34. School support and training for GTAs

34.1. GTAs should have access to a range of support for their continuing professional development, including specialist training, feedback on their performance, and facilitated reflection.

34.2. All PGRs and the GTA Coordinator will be invited to join a GTA Community site on Microsoft Teams or other online channels approved by the School. The online area is intended to serve as a portal linking to information and resources on professional development and training for GTAs, support, recruitment and employment issues.

34.3. The School will provide an informal forum for GTAs to support each other. The emphasis of the forum scheme should be on the provision of constructive written and/or oral feedback. The PST scheme may include additional observations of GTA teaching by academic staff or fellow GTAs, GTAs observing and/or shadowing academic staff, mentor/buddy schemes (linking novice and experienced GTAs), opportunities for GTAs to share and review teaching and assessment materials or feedback on student work, and supporting informal GTA groups (e.g. action learning sets, a journal club, an online community of practice) etc.

34.4. The School will provide training to support the continuing professional development of their GTAs, particularly to address needs identified by their GTAs or students (e.g. from module evaluation forms), or relating to discipline-specific practices.

35. Central training for GTA continuing professional development

35.1. GTAs (and PGRs who are not offered or able to take up a GTA position) are encouraged to access training, support and professional development offered for GTAs by the University of Hull or the University of York at no cost as part of the institution's commitment to PGR/GTA professional development.

35.2. GTAs at York who are contemplating a career in academia should consider applying for the York Learning and Teaching Award (YLTA) and/or engaging with York Professional and Academic Development scheme (YPAD), both of which enable GTAs to secure transferable recognition for the work they do. Successful completion of the YLTA programme gives GTAs Master's level credit and HEA Associate Fellowship. YPAD provides a mechanism by which

individuals can critically explore ways to improve their teaching and support for student learning, whilst providing an opportunity to secure HEA fellowship at an appropriate level.

35.3. GTAs at Hull who are contemplating a career in academia should consider taking the credit-bearing module *Professional Practice in Teaching and Learning in HE*. Successful completion of the module gives participants recognition as an Associate Fellow of the HEA.GTAs undertaking a Hull York Medical School degree will have access to both University of Hull and University York GTA training and support. However, GTAs undertaking a University of Hull degree will only have access to the University of Hull GTA training and support. Likewise, GTAs undertaking a University of York degree will only have access to the University of York GTA training and support.

36. Feedback to GTAs on their performance for continuing professional development

36.1. GTAs will receive feedback on their performance. This feedback may come from observation (see above), evaluation forms (see below), directly from students (see below), and from other forms of monitoring (e.g. moderation or double marking of a GTA's marking and feedback). Feedback should be prompt to enable GTAs to adjust their approach, if this is necessary, as soon as possible.

36.2. GTAs are encouraged to reflect upon the feedback they receive and identify how they might improve their performance. To facilitate this reflection, GTAs will have the opportunity to discuss the feedback with a member of the academic staff other than their research supervisor (for example the GTA Coordinator, relevant module leader etc.). The academic member of staff should, where applicable, point the GTA towards relevant development opportunities e.g. additional training, pedagogic literature, peer observation/shadowing of academic staff.

37. Student surveys and evaluation forms

37.1. Student surveys and evaluation forms issued to students (e.g. module evaluation forms) will enable students to comment on the performance of GTAs and this information should be shared with GTAs and discussed at relevant School committees.

37.2. Where GTAs play a significant role in supporting students (e.g. as seminar leaders or laboratory demonstrators) the format of evaluation forms should enable feedback to be directed to individual GTAs (i.e. forms should ask students to select, or invite them to name, the GTA(s) that they have interacted with). Feedback on individual GTAs should be anonymised before discussion in School committees. If performance issues or development needs are identified (either for an individual GTA or a group of GTAs), the GTA Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that these are addressed (see section on *Managing GTA Performance*).

38. Direct feedback from students

38.1. GTAs who interact directly with students should be encouraged to elicit immediate informal feedback from those students (e.g. at the end of each session). GTAs may need training to help them identify suitable methods for obtaining such feedback.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR GTAS

39. Recording of training courses

39.1. GTA training courses (including the *Introduction to Learning and Teaching*) offered by the University of York are recorded in SkillsForge which means that PGRs can produce a record of the training that they have undertaken to share with future employers.

40. References

40.1. A GTA should be able to seek a reference from a member of staff (this might be a module leader or the GTA Coordinator) who can comment with authority on the GTA's work in supporting student learning.

MANAGING GTA PERFORMANCE

Principle: the School must deal effectively with any concerns about GTA performance.

41. Management of GTA's performance

41.1. GTAs fall within the scope of the University of York Statement on Teaching Performance Expectations.

41.2. The School is responsible for ensuring a high-quality student learning experience and GTA Coordinators and module leaders should deal swiftly and robustly with any concerns about a GTA's performance (whether this arises from student reporting, observation, evaluation forms, or other forms of monitoring).

41.3. Where it is felt that there is potential for a GTA to improve their performance to an acceptable standard within an appropriate timeframe, action should be taken to facilitate this (e.g. through the provision of further training, or asking the GTA to team-teach alongside an academic member of staff or more experienced GTA). If it is felt that the GTA is not in a position to improve their performance to an acceptable standard within an appropriate timeframe, the GTA should be suspended from their position and offered development opportunities. GTAs should only be redeployed if their performance has been judged to be satisfactory.

REPRESENTATION OF GTAS AND INTEGRATION INTO THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Principles: GTAs should have appropriate representation within the School and at higher levels within the University, and have the right to be represented by a trade union. GTAs should be integrated into the professional academic culture within the School.

42. The School's representation of GTAs

42.1. GTAs will be invited to represent on relevant School's committees, including the relevant Programme Board.

43. University representation of GTAs

43.1. The Graduate Students' Association at York and the Hull University Student Union are responsible for representing the views of GTAs at University level.

43.2. GTAs have the right to be an active member of a recognised trade union and to be represented by that union to the University.

44. Valuing the experience of GTAs

44.1. GTAs should be included in programme teams and given opportunities, as valued colleagues, to give feedback to the School on the modules and programmes on which they support learning, with a view to helping the School to improve the student experience.

44.2. GTAs should also be given opportunities to provide feedback, to the School, on their experience as GTAs, including the quality of the training, supervision, and support provided. The GTA Coordinator will ensure that they take action in response to GTA feedback.

44.3. GTAs should be involved, as partners, in quality assurance and enhancement processes, including module and programme review, Annual Programme Review and Periodic Review.

44.4.　GTAs should be invited to, and encouraged to attend, the School's learning and teaching events, such as away days, conferences, and workshops.

44.5.　GTAs are eligible for University teaching awards and departments are encouraged to recognise GTA excellence alongside that of academic staff.

FACILITIES AND RESOURCES FOR GTAS

Principle: GTAs should have free access to the facilities and resources that they require to undertake the role.

45.　GTAs' access to facilities and resources

45.1.　GTAs should have free access to the facilities and resources that they require to undertake the role, for example:

- teaching materials
- relevant VLE/intra-web sites or similar
- photocopying/printer credit
- suitable space to meet with students.

THE GTA AS A PGR: BALANCING GTA ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH

Principle: GTAs should be enabled to have an appropriate balance between their GTA activities and their research.

46.　GTA and PGR commitments

46.1.　GTA work should be undertaken voluntarily and PGRs should not be pressured into undertaking unwelcome GTA commitments. The PGR and their supervisor(s) must ensure that GTA work does not contravene rules relating to hours of work (see section on *Pay and Conditions for GTAs*), nor take precedence over the research project and jeopardise the successful on-time submission of the thesis.

46.2.　At an early stage in a PGR's research degree programme, the supervisor(s) and Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) should discuss with the PGR the value of being a GTA, and encourage the PGR to complete the required training in good time. Where teaching opportunities are not available within the School, the PGR should be advised to explore possibilities in other departments and/or centrally.

46.3.　If a PGR wishes to apply for a GTA position they must seek approval from their supervisor(s). Approval should normally be granted if, and only if, the PGR is making good progress with their research degree programme. If a PGR is refused permission and wishes to query that decision they should contact the School's GTA Coordinator for advice in the first instance. If they wish to take the matter further they should contact the Chair of the Postgraduate Programme Board.

46.4.　Following appointment as a GTA, supervision and TAP meetings should be used to monitor the PGR's GTA workload, to ensure that it is manageable (the TAP form includes a question about GTA responsibilities). If serving as a GTA is having a negative impact on a PGR's research degree programme, the supervisor should not approve future applications for GTA positions.

46.5.　At the start of their research degree programme, PGRs should focus on establishing their research and undertaking any required training (including GTA training). This means that PGRs (unless they have significant teaching experience) should not normally undertake any substantive GTA work (e.g. involving significant preparation) in their first term and possibly their first year. PGRs should be cautioned against relying financially on GTA work towards the end of their research degree programme, when their priority should be the submission of the thesis.

PAY AND CONDITIONS FOR GTAS

Principle: GTAs should have a fair rate of pay for all hours worked and their conditions of engagement should be fair, transparent and in line with University policy.

47.   Regulation of GTAs, including in relation to conduct and performance

47.1.   GTAs are engaged as temporary and casual workers and their payment and conditions are subject to the policies and procedures for temporary and casual workers set out by Human Resources at the University of York.

47.2.   Any concerns regarding the conduct and/or performance of a GTA will be dealt with under the relevant staff policies of the University. Misconduct as a GTA may have implications for a PGR's student status. A PGR's conduct as a student may also have implications for their ability to serve as GTA and, for this reason, if a GTA has their PGR student status suspended or terminated for any reason, their GTA role should be reviewed and may also be suspended or terminated.

47.3.   GTAs are normally engaged as casual workers. The Medical School (or other recruiting entities) are responsible for complying with the requirements set out by Human Resources (HR) with respect to the engagement of casual workers including: (i) checking that a prospective GTA is registered with HR as a casual worker via Dashboard (see below), (ii) issuing each GTA with a letter and GTA statement of Engagement, (iii) authorising Dashboard timesheets to enable GTAs to be paid, and (iv) maintaining appropriate records. Dashboard is the University's system for registering, booking and paying casual workers and whilst most of the registration process is online, right to work checks must take place in person[2], with prospective GTAs bringing in documents for HR verification BEFORE they do any GTA work. PGRs cannot be booked in Dashboard unless HR hold proof of their right to work. Payment for GTA work should be claimed through Dashboard. At the end of a booking, Dashboard will generate a timesheet, which the GTA can confirm or amend and submit for approval. Additional rules apply to GTAs who are on Tier 4 student visas. Full details on the engagement of casual workers are available from HR (https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/browse/temporary-workers). Responsibilities may change in response to government policy, including rulings from UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

47.4.   A PGR on a leave of absence may be engaged as a GTA (subject to any visa restrictions) but the School will ensure that this is in the PGR's best interests and does not conflict with the reason for which they were granted leave of absence. PGRs on leave of absence may be able to access University training for GTAs where the Chair of Postgraduate Programme Board in agrees that this is in their best interests.

47.5.   Reasonable adjustments in working practices (e.g. increasing the time allowed for preparation or marking scripts) should be made for any GTAs with a disability. Advice should be sought from the School's HR adviser.

48.   Payment of GTAs

48.1.   Rates of pay for GTAs vary according to the task performed and level of individual responsibility. Rates of pay are set by the University of York, with reference to the institutional pay scale, and revised on an annual basis. The lower (marker) rate of pay is applicable for GTA training and preparation (where this is paid).

49.   Hours of work for GTAs

49.1.   PGRs must abide by the restrictions on paid work detailed in the University of York Policy on Research Degrees. Full-time PGRs can undertake a maximum of 20 hours of paid work a week but this is subject to supervisor approval and may be further limited by restrictions imposed by

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[2] There may be circumstances when an in-person check cannot occur: in these instances please contact HR Compliance (hr-compliance@york.ac.uk) to seek advice on how the check will be carried out.

the PGR's sponsor/funding body and/or the UKVI[3]. All GTA hours (i.e. including preparation and marking time) count towards the weekly maximum and departments should check that GTAs are not going over the weekly limit by undertaking paid work (GTA or otherwise) outside the department.

49.2.   GTAs should be paid for the hours worked. When calculating the amount of time required by GTAs for tasks such as preparation, marking and giving feedback, departments must be reasonable in their expectations and should consult with their GTAs on this point.

49.3.   GTAs are entitled to paid holiday which may not be taken at the times they are required to support learning.

50.   Teaching stipends

50.1.   PGRs should not be expected to work as GTAs without receiving payment. Where a PGR receives a stipend from the School in return for supporting learning, the number of hours of work required per year should be clearly set out and the stipend should provide at least the cash equivalent that the PGR would receive if engaged directly as a GTA. PGRs receiving a stipend for supporting learning should have the same rights and support as other GTAs.

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[3] The UKRI training grant guidance states that the amount of time spent on teaching or demonstrating work is at the discretion of the student and their supervisor but it is recommended that it should be no more than **six** hours in any week.