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8 December 2014

Dear Mr Fox

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated 18 November 2014, seeking information on PGWT training. I am pleased to provide the following response:

I am interested in the training Postgraduates who teach [PGWTs] receive before they are allowed to teach. I would like to know (for each department where PGWTs are used)

The University has a Policy for Postgraduates who Teach which outlines the training that all PGRs who Teach must undertake before teaching.

http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/resources/policy/postgraduates-who-teach.htm

1. Training and Support for PGRs who Teach

Prior to starting teaching and during early phase of teaching

1.1 The University adopts an apprenticeship model for its PGRs (see guidance notes). As part of this it wishes to encourage **all** first year PGRs to undertake some training or exposure to academic practice. This can be achieved through participation in training offered centrally or by their department(s)[5]. This training will be provided free as part of the University commitment to the PGR student experience.

1.2 The University requires **all**[6] PGRs who wish to pursue paid teaching opportunities to undertake *either* the 'Introduction to Learning and Teaching' training course (one day) **or the PGWT Intensive Residential (two days - these are both offered by the** Researcher Development Team) and departmental training as outlined in 1.6 ideally in advance of beginning to teach or if that is not possible, early in the same term as they commence teaching. PGRs who wish to teach should be encouraged to take advantage of central and departmental training opportunities. Details of the departmental training provision must be made available to all students via a webpage or appropriate internal mechanism.

The Guidance Notes for departments in implementing the University Policy on Postgraduates who Teach state:

1. Training and Support for PGRs who Teach

The Policy for PGWT states that the University adopts an apprenticeship model for its PGRs. The apprenticeship framework is based on the idea that students learn through a combination of training, working alongside experienced practitioners, enculturation into institutional values around learning and teaching and staged levels of responsibility. The framework is aimed at postgraduate research students to help them to develop the skills, confidence and experience they need to support UG learning at the University of York and wherever else they may find employment. The framework is our commitment to the quality of the student experience and to researcher development. As part of this apprenticeship we wish to encourage *all* first year PGRs to undertake some training or exposure to academic practice. This can be achieved through participation in training offered centrally or by their department(s).

This training will be provided free as part of the University commitment to the PGR student experience.

- Details of all the central training to support PGWT

The Researcher Development Team (RDT) , in conjunction with the Learning Enhancement Team, will support departments in developing and co-facilitating in-house training. Experience has shown that where training for PGWT has been developed and delivered with academic staff from the department it is far more useful so departments are encouraged to use the RDT as a support function. Departmental co-ordinators for PGWT are encouraged to communicate with the RDT about developing appropriate tailored training.

Peer observation, team teaching, obtaining rapid feedback from students being taught and other such approaches should be used as a method for monitoring the development of the PGWT and providing supportive feedback. PGWT should be recruited to paid teaching opportunities on the understanding that they will be willing to be observed or otherwise monitored both as part of their initial training and during the period they are teaching.

http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/resources/policy/pgwt-appendix1-guidance.htm

1.3 It is expected that departments will satisfy themselves of the following before allowing a PGR student to engage in paid teaching:

a. that the student is making appropriate progress with their PhD and that teaching will not obstruct any future progress
b. that the student is sufficiently prepared, has undergone the required training and is adequately supported by the module leader(s).

The TAP form will ask for verification of these two conditions being met.

http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/resources/policy/postgraduates-who-teach.htm#1

1.4 All departments should identify a person or persons responsible for PGWT (a PGWT co-ordinator)[7]. This person will be responsible for co-ordinating the selection, training and support of PGWT, have an overview of what PGWT are doing and communicate with academic supervisors and module leaders to ensure appropriate support is in place. It is anticipated that the co-ordination role would be carried by an academic and represent PGWT development on relevant committees. A list of PGWT departmental co-ordinators should be made available on all departmental websites and a central website. A copy of the list will be held centrally. The co-ordination role should be clearly defined and publicised along with the name of the department's co-ordinator on each departmental website and in relevant student handbooks.

1. How many mandatory hours of training must PGWTs complete before they are allowed to teach or offer instruction of any kind?

See point 1. Either a one or two day residential programme run by the central team plus whatever additional requirements individual departments make of their PGWT in advance of teaching.

2. Of those hours, how many of them are spent on training PGWTs to be able to mark student's work [i.e essays, exam papers, etc.]

I am only interested in 'mandatory' hours that PGWTs must complete, rather than any voluntary training that is offered. Where possible, please break down the data by type of PGWT role [i.e. does a Science lab assistant require different training to other Science PGWT roles?]

The process of giving feedback on student work is covered in the mandatory RDT programmes such that students are able to provide constructive feedback on student work.

The central training does not include marking student work since this would require access to all the assessment criteria for every piece of assessed work set by departments. Departments are encouraged to offer this training.

Note: We estimate that contacting all departments to ascertain their individual training requirements would exceed the appropriate costs limit under section 12 of the Freedom of information Act 2000. The 'appropriate limit' is currently £450 for universities, as defined by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. This letter accordingly acts as a refusal notice in respect of the information sought.
The requested information is not held in a single database or document. The information is held across several departments, and individuals within those departments, it is estimated that the time taken to determine whether the information is held, locate the information, retrieve the information, and extract it, exceeds the costs limit of £450 (equivalent to 18 person hours of work).

This completes your request.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted in writing to me, at the above address, detailing grounds for appeal/complaint. A full copy of our review procedure can be accessed at http://www.york.ac.uk/recordsmanagement/foi/foi-policy/foi-complaints/.

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries concerning this response.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Hughes
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