

GUIDELINES ON ENABLING RESEARCH STAFF IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK TO DEVELOP TEACHING SKILLS

These guidelines are focused particularly on teaching opportunities for early career research staff however; much of the guidelines will also be relevant to research staff at other levels (Post PhD) whose teaching development skills should be supported.

1. Introduction

1.1 University College Cork is committed to the training and development of research staff and recognises that the opportunity to teach is not only beneficial for researchers in terms of career and skills development but is also a beneficial experience for students, giving a broad exposure to a diverse academic community.

Research staff are encouraged to engage in teaching where there is opportunity, however, it is important that this engagement is managed appropriately within the context of the underlying core research role and associated responsibilities and with reference to the terms and conditions of the research funding supporting that activity. Research staff who do avail of teaching opportunities that may arise will be supported and mentored in the delivery of teaching. (See below 4.2)

2. Opportunities to teach

2.1 It is recognised that any teaching opportunities that may arise will vary between disciplines and will also be constrained by the requirements of particular experience and relevant knowledge as they relate to the teaching opportunity in question. As such opportunities can and will be limited by individual requirements, but in so far as possible will be communicated to all eligible researchers.

2.2 The process and arrangements for selecting the research staff member(s) to be involved in teaching should be fair and transparent and conducted at local level. Selection will be based on the staff member's relevant skills, knowledge and experience having due regard to the expertise and knowledge requirements of the opportunity in question.

2.3 The purpose of these guidelines is to facilitate the personal/professional development of researchers as provided for under the University policy on the Employment and Career Management Structure for Research Staff

3. Activities and responsibilities

3.1 Research staff may contribute to the following teaching activities, appropriate to their knowledge, skills and experience:

- Seminars, tutorials and workshops
- Laboratory and other practical classes, including projects
- Field trips
- Teaching
- Supervision of student research, as appropriate
- Assessment and feedback, subject to clear marking criteria, suitable moderation and University Quality Assurance processes.

3.2 The teaching engagement of research staff should not exceed a total of 24 contact hours over the course of the academic year (whereby a part-time researcher will undertake a lower number of hours, on a pro-rata basis).

3.3 Research staff would not normally be expected to take on an academic personal tutor role but should, however, be made aware of the University's system of pastoral support, and know how to direct students to appropriate members of staff if the need arises.

3.4 Whilst teaching opportunities provide an important professional and personal development opportunity for researcher staff at UCC, there is no obligation on a member of research staff to contribute to teaching activities.

4. Training and support

4.1 Research staff will receive an informal induction to teaching practices within their area to cover information relevant to the kind of teaching they will be involved in delivering. Where eligible to register, research staff are encouraged to complete the Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education or equivalent such programme (e.g. CIRTLL workshops) to support the development of their teaching skills.

4.2 All researchers should be assigned a more experienced colleague to mentor them in all aspects of their teaching (typically assigned by the Principal Investigator and Head of School). The mentor is responsible for providing guidance and support on local teaching and assessment practices and for giving them feedback on their teaching.

4.3 A discussion about possible teaching opportunities and current responsibilities may be included within the Staff Review and Development process for research staff.

5. Quality Assurance

5.1 The involvement of research staff in the delivery of teaching should be managed and reviewed with the overall learning experience of students in mind and is at the discretion of the Head of School. The quality of this experience will be central to the decision making about the type, content and amount of teaching undertaken by any early career researcher.

5.2 As part of standard University quality assurance processes, teaching performance of research staff will be evaluated the same manner as other staff (e.g. through peer observation or student feedback processes) in order to ensure that students receive teaching of the appropriate quality.

6. Remuneration

6.1 The opportunity provided to early career research staff and research staff at other levels to engage in teaching is developmental in line with the provisions of the University Employment and Career Management Structure for Research Staff and is limited in line with these guidelines. Additional remuneration does not attach to early career researcher teaching or research staff at other levels.

7. Note

7.1 As these are guidelines there is no right to access teaching inherent within these guidelines. Teaching will be assigned as deemed appropriate by the Head of School/Unit/College. Research funding agencies' contracts of funding may also, in some instances, discourage or prohibit any activities such as teaching that are not set out in the research funding agreement's terms and conditions.

7.2 With regards to researcher teaching opportunities the University regards that the minimum qualification for teaching is a PhD.