

Training for PGRs who Teach

Background

Until now, training for Physics PGRs involved with teaching or Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) has been module-specific and generic training has been optional. The University and Faculty has for some time now been trying to improve several aspects of the experience of GTAs e.g. payments, conditions and this has now extended to GTA training. As part of this effort, the University has stipulated that training for GTAs be mandatory and paid. As a result, an online Researcher Professional Development (RPD) course on “Introduction to Teaching” for GTAs has been developed. This course is available on MyPlace at

<https://classes.myplace.strath.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=25487>

The course consists of 6 topics/modules :

Topic 1 : GTA responsibilities

Topic 2 : Learning & Teaching Methodology

Topic 3 : Inclusive teaching

Topic 4 : Academic integrity

Topic 5 : Assessment & feedback

Topic 6 : Professional Development in Learning & Teaching

Duration is approx. 10 hours which corresponds to 1 PG Cert credit. Completion was intended to be compulsory for all GTAs before teaching.

In Science, Chemistry requested that their GTAs be allowed to opt out due to the fact that they already provide generic training on teaching in their department. This started a discussion of what parts of the university's generic training course should be considered essential for GTAs in Science, which has resulted in the university agreeing to allow Science GTAs to take a reduced version of the course which is expected to consist of modules 1,2,5 & 6 of the RDP course above.

Generic Training Programme for Physics GTAs

In addition to the university requirement, the Institute of Physics recommended that GTAs complete Equality & Diversity training on Unconscious Bias, Micro Behaviours and Disability Awareness, together with staff involved in teaching. The generic training programme for Physics GTAs will therefore consist of :

1. Topics 1,2,5,6 of the RDP course (~3 hours)
2. Equality & Diversity training courses Unconscious Bias, Micro Behaviours and Disability Awareness (~3 hours)

Additional training will be module specific (nominally ~4 hours) – this forms a total GTA training programme of ~10 hours for which GTAs can claim 1 PGR credit. The module-specific training will require some formalisation so it can be shown to be completed/approved before teaching begins.