

## Appointments: Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants

### Purpose

This policy defines and governs the employment relationship between the University, Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants.

### Policy

The University makes provision for the appointment as graduate teaching assistants and teaching assistants University students who can benefit from the financial support afforded to them and gain a valuable experience by teaching and working as academic colleagues. They in turn make a valuable contribution to the academic activities of the University within the scope of their appointment.

### Definition

**Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA):** a person who is expected to be a graduate and will normally be enrolled for a postgraduate qualification at the University, or who has finished their degree and is working for the remainder of the semester. Graduate teaching assistants will work under close supervision and are not expected to have course control or to give the majority of lectures in a given course. They may be required to provide tutoring, laboratory supervision, individual lessons, field work supervision, marking, and/or delivery of a limited number of lectures and/or seminars. The positions are part time and fixed term appointments.

**Teaching Assistant (TA):** a person who is expected to be a student at the University and who provides teaching support such as routine correcting, marking and demonstrations. Their work will be carried out under close supervision of academic staff responsible for the course involved. The positions are fixed term, hourly rate positions for undergraduate or postgraduate students.

**Academic Head:** the Head of the Department/School/Research Centre/Institute or other academic unit in which the employee is employed.

**Dean:** the academic and administrative head of a faculty.

### Audience

All academic staff of the University  
All graduate teaching assistant and teaching assistant appointees  
All staff in the Human Resources Division

### Relevant Legislation

Employment Relations Act 2000  
Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992  
Holidays Act 2003  
Privacy Act 1993  
State Sector Act 1988  
Wages Protection Act 1983  
Education Act 1989

## Legal Compliance

The University is legally bound by the Employment Relations Act, related legislation and any relevant collective employment agreement.

## Related Procedures

### Confidentiality

Academic Heads must ensure that confidentiality is maintained in all matters relating to the appointment of individuals. Where written applications are being considered the provisions of the Privacy Act 1993 must be followed.

### EEO

Selection procedures must be in accordance with the University's EEO Policy.

### Categories of Staff and Scholarships

It is at the discretion of each Department to decide which types of appointments they will offer within the guidelines and definitions provided. The Academic Head should have regard to the University's strategic objectives, including the emphasis on research and postgraduate work, in employing fixed term and part-time academic staff. The decision tree is provided to assist in establishing the appropriate type of appointment given the duties and the status of the appointee (see Appendix 1).

All appointees who are enrolled for graduate or postgraduate degrees (e.g. Masters, PhD) must comply with the appropriate degree regulations.

Students in receipt of a scholarship must also comply with the relevant scholarship regulations. To ensure equity and compliance with scholarship provisions, appointments are to be coordinated with scholarship receipt. In the event of scholarship award after the appointment date, the appointee MUST inform the Academic Head and the Scholarships Office.

### Employment Agreement

The University recognises its obligations to be a good employer.

Each staff member is employed under a written employment agreement between the employee and the Vice-Chancellor. The agreement is legally binding and once entered into can be varied only with the full agreement of both parties (unless it specifically allows otherwise).

Fixed term agreements must be in accordance with the Fixed Term Agreements Policy.

If conditions of work change during the specified period of employment, the staff member is encouraged to seek to have the agreement re-negotiated.

The agreement should be entered into as early as practicable. Where there is a clear need to appoint, this should be in the final weeks of the year preceding the employment so that the potential employee is assured of employment. If there are funding or academic uncertainties, one or more staff might be appointed early with other(s) appointed as soon as operational needs become clear.

The agreement must be negotiated and signed before the appointee begins work. It must specify:

- The duties required of the employee (e.g. teaching, marking, preparation, setting examinations or essays, delivery of a limited number of lectures and/or seminars and the associated preparation, attendance at training seminars, office hours, meetings and hours for administration and consultation).

- The period of employment

- The total number of hours work required

- The rate of pay.

Attention should be paid to the reasonableness of the amount of work to be done, in relation to the time allocated and the rate of pay.

Upon signing the agreement, employees must provide bank account details and fill out an IR330 immediately. The employee must be given a copy of their agreement, and a copy of this policy and procedures. Staff may obtain a copy of the collective employment agreement from the intranet.

Overseas students engaged on an employment agreement may require a „variation to work visa“ to allow work of up to an average of 20 hours per week.

### **Delegated Authority**

Each appointment must be made by the Vice Chancellor, a Faculty Dean, or delegated Academic Head or other person with written delegated authority of the Dean. Appointment of a Graduate Teaching Assistant for more than 0.5 FTE appointments or who is not enrolled in a postgraduate qualification must be approved by the Dean.

### **Time Sheets**

As hourly rate appointments, Teaching Assistants are paid by timesheet. Teaching Assistants and Academic Heads must ensure that time sheets are submitted to Payroll in time for inclusion in the fortnightly payroll. Any problems with pay should be addressed initially to the Administrative Assistant or corresponding office in the department, and then to Recruitment and Solutions where necessary.

### **Departmental Support**

Most of the items listed below should be available to Graduate Teaching Assistants with appointments around 50% full time equivalent, depending on the departmental resources and on the nature of the duties envisaged. For smaller percentage appointments, the level of support may vary to meet the needs of the staff member and the resources available to the Department. However many are considered as basic necessities without which teaching duties cannot be carried out effectively. Although they are not usually detailed in the employment agreement, they should be clarified verbally before the employee signs that agreement.

1. Space for teaching preparation and marking, and for consultation with students (in private where practicable). This space may be shared with other staff. Reasonable secretarial assistance.
2. Access to a computer and full access to the University staff email and mail system.
3. Access to a telephone within the Department.
4. Access to stationery for job related duties as required.
5. Access to office equipment (as may be reasonably required for the employee's duties).
6. Representation at staff meetings that consider the courses taught.
7. Access to departmental common-room (by arrangement with Academic Head).
8. Access to the Library as members of the University staff.

The University will use its best endeavours to provide Graduate Teaching Assistants with shared or individual access to these facilities for the purpose of work for the University wherever this is practicable during their employment with the University.

### **Tuition Fees Reduction**

Graduate Teaching Assistants who are engaged for a period of 12 months or more are entitled to a partial remission of fees (pro-rata to percentage of full time duties) under the terms of the collective employment agreement.

## **Annual Leave**

The term of the agreement should include a period for the annual leave to which the employee is entitled during the period of the agreement. Annual leave should be taken in blocks of time that allow reasonable leave through the fixed period of employment.

## **Membership of Associations**

Membership of the New Zealand Tertiary Education Union (NZTEU) is available to fixed term and part-time staff. Employees are encouraged to approach the branch organiser on extension 85169 or to email [teu@teu.ac.nz](mailto:teu@teu.ac.nz) or visit [www.teu.ac.nz](http://www.teu.ac.nz) for further information. (NZTEU is a new union created by the amalgamation of AUS and ASTE.)

## **Dealing with Problems**

The University is committed to resolving problems informally with the staff member and Academic Head wherever possible. Where a problem has not been resolved, the staff member is encouraged to refer the matter to their Dean. If the problem is not resolved, the employee may approach Human Resources. The employee may also approach the Lecturers' Association or the NZTEU for advice and assistance. NZTEU members are advised to approach the Branch Organiser as early as possible in any dispute. The Resolution of Employment Relationship Problems HR policy applies to all staff.

## **Procedure Summary Checklist**

A check list of the procedures to be followed by Academic Heads is attached at Appendix 2.

## **Related Documents**

Guidelines for the appointment, guidance and professional development of Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants  
Fixed Term Agreements Policy  
EEO Policy  
Guidelines for Academic Heads on leave management  
Guidelines for managing annual leave for staff on fixed term agreements  
Employment Agreement form: Teaching Assistant  
Employment Agreement form: Graduate Teaching Assistant  
Resolution of Employment Relationship Problems policy

**Prepared by:** Employee Relations Manager

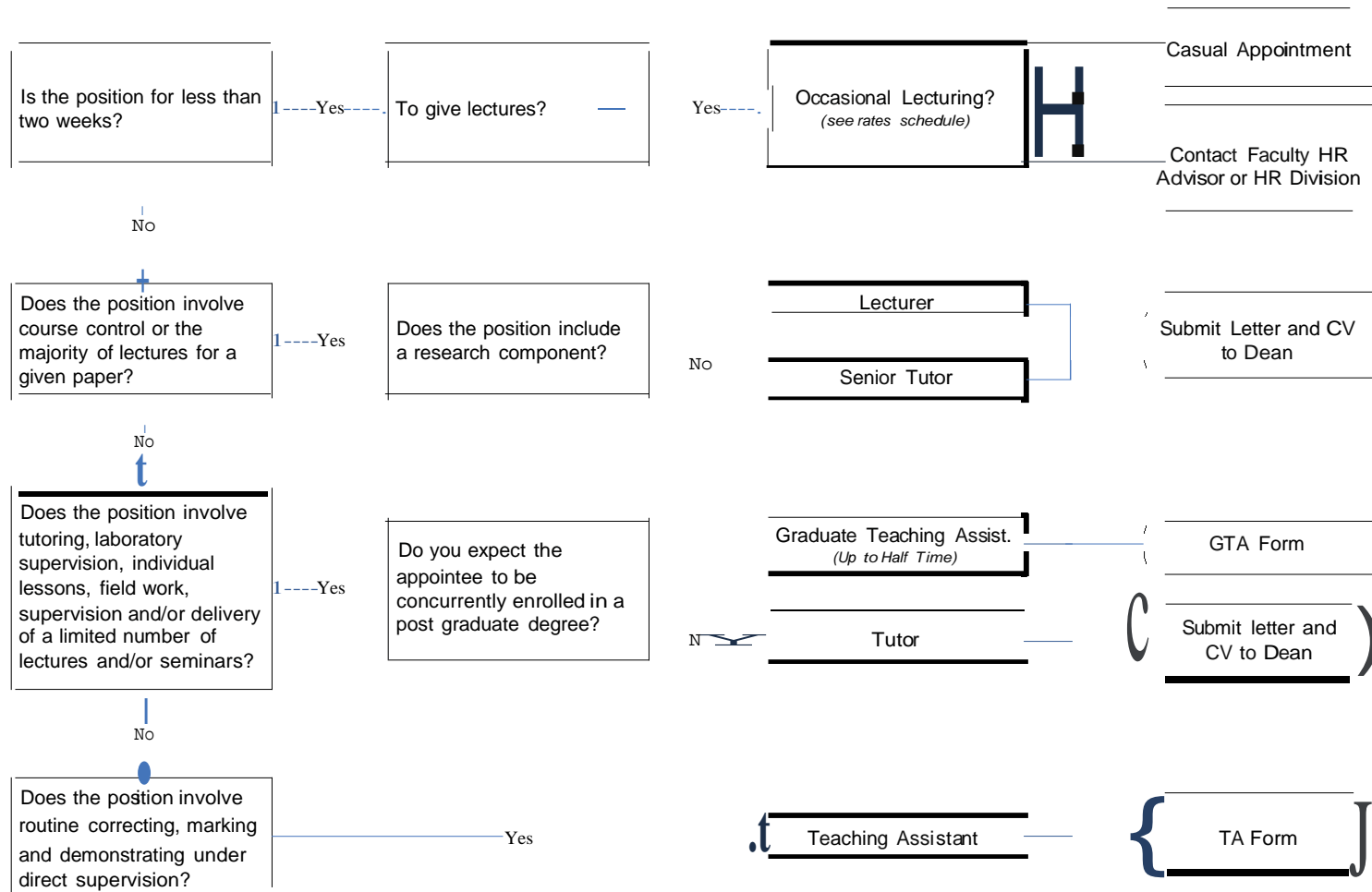
**Authorised by:** Vice Chancellor

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**APPENDIX 1**

**Which Position is Appropriate?**



## Appendix 2

### Procedure Checklist

This process is to be followed by Academic Heads when employing Graduate Teaching Assistants and Teaching Assistants. Post-graduate students may indicate their interest in such employment to their Academic Head.

- The Dean will advise the Academic Head of budgetary and other employment constraints.
- The Academic Head has authority to appoint fixed term GTA and TA staff providing they have clearly specified constraints provided by the Dean. (Note other fixed term staff appointments normally require the approval of the Dean, unless there is a written delegation).
- The Academic Head must follow this process when appointing GTA or TA staff:
  - Define the need and the criteria for appointing GTA or TA staff
  - Check "*Which Position is Appropriate*" chart in Appendix 1
  - Seek and receive expressions of interest from potential staff, being aware of EO issues.
  - Seek to appoint a diverse range of students (preferably through advertising locally and by approaching potential candidates).
  - Seek and receive written applications from applicants.
  - Offer employment to the most suitable candidate(s).Heads should seek the views of members of academic staff in following this process.
- The Academic Head offers appointment subject to agreement, and provides appointee with:
  - Copy of the Graduate Teaching Assistant and Teaching Assistant Policy and procedures\*
  - GTA or TA Employment Agreement form\*
  - IR330 form\*\*Available on the web under HR
- Return to Payroll Manager:
  - Signed Employment Agreement form
  - Completed IR330 tax form.