Code of practice for Associate Tutors, Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics involved in teaching

Academic year 2026/27

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Context

1. This *Code of practice* applies to any Associate Tutor, Guest Speaker and Visiting Academic involved in the University's taught provision at both undergraduate and taught postgraduate level.

2. The *Code of practice* should be read in conjunction with the terms and conditions of employment covered in the *Associate Staff – Employment Guidelines* and with the University's *Visiting Academic Staff Appointment Procedures*.

3. This *Code of practice* has been developed with reference to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*.

4. Exceptions to the responsibilities set out in this *Code of practice* require the appropriate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean's approval. Exceptions may only be those arising from Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements or the needs of subjects which require specific industry or professional expertise. Criteria underpinning exceptions have been established and approved by the University in June 2015 and are given in Appendix 1.

Purpose

5. The University recognises the contribution Associate Tutors, Guest Speakers and Visiting Academic staff make to the delivery of a learning environment which is cognisant of relevant professional and industry requirements.

6. The purpose of this *Code of practice* is to establish the principles underpinning the appointment and responsibilities of Associate Tutors, Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics by setting out their responsibilities in relation to teaching activities. It seeks to ensure that they are appropriately qualified, supported, and trained, ensuring that the student experience and academic standards are maintained.

7. The *Code of practice* sets out the following:

   - Process and criteria for the appointment of Associate Tutors.
   - Qualifications and teaching experience of Associate Tutors.
   - Responsibilities of Associate Tutors.
   - Responsibilities of Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics involved in teaching.
   - Induction, training, support, and monitoring.

Appointment of Associate Tutors

Process

8. The appointment of associate staff is carried out in accordance with HR policies and processes. The appointment of Associate Tutors will only be considered after teaching has been allocated to Academics, Teaching Fellows, and consideration of service teaching arrangements. Associate Tutors can only be appointed on the basis of the criteria outlined below.

9. All Associate Tutors are expected to undergo the appointment and induction process specified in this *Code of practice*.

Criteria for appointment

10. Associate Tutors may only be appointed on the basis of the following criteria:

    - A short-term or standing need for specific expertise not available in the Faculty or elsewhere in the University.
    - Need for temporary cover in cases of unexpected staff shortages (e.g. staff resignations, paternity leave, long-term sickness).

11. Programmes which have a standing need for specific expertise not available in the Faculty or elsewhere in the University need to indicate this when they undergo validation or revalidation, and provide a rationale for the use of external experts in the delivery of the curriculum.

Qualifications and teaching experience of Associate Tutors

12. Associate Tutors are expected to be qualified to the same standard required of Teaching Fellows who lead modules within the same subject area:

- They must possess an honours degree or appropriate equivalent professional qualification.
- As is the case for Teaching Fellows, a teaching qualification is required.
- Where appropriate, for instance in the case of practice-based modules, relevant teaching experience in higher education may be considered following HR review against the UK Professional Standards Framework.

Responsibilities of Associate Tutors

13. Associate Tutors may be involved in the following types of activity:

- Have sole responsibility for the delivery of a module; however, the Module Leader will always be a member of academic staff.
- Undertake formative and summative assessment.
- Act as a personal tutor.

Associate Tutors with the appropriate previous experience may also supervise and assess dissertation or project work for a module carrying a value of 30 credits or more at any level in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ).

14. Associate Tutors may not be involved in the following activities:

- Administrative responsibilities.
- The supervision and assessment of dissertation or project work for a module carrying a value of 30 credits or more at any level in the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), unless they have appropriate previous experience.

15. Where Associate Tutors do not supervise dissertations or projects, they may provide specific expertise as part of a supervisory team but may not offer comments on submitted dissertations or provide clarification of marks.

Training and support for Associate Tutors

16. Associate Tutors will be qualified to the same level as Teaching Fellows and may have a wide range of teaching experience and expertise. However, they will require briefing and training in order to deliver an effective student learning experience. All Associate staff will be allocated a departmental mentor, usually an experienced academic who has run the same or a similar module. The mentor is responsible for providing the Associate staff member with support and advice on an individual basis, covering requirements for teaching, assessment and marking, and information on processes, procedures, and *Regulations*.

17. Following an appointment, the appointing School is responsible for the induction of the Associate Tutor and for communicating with them throughout the term of appointment. All Associate Tutors are required to take part in an induction which will provide information about the University's procedures, practices, policies, and academic *Regulations*, as well as conditions of employment. This is supplemented by information on discipline/programme/module specific aspects provided by the

Faculties. An introduction to teaching in higher education is offered by the Surrey Institute of Education as part of induction.

18. Associate Tutors are required to follow the University *Regulations* and adhere to the policies set out in the relevant *Codes of practice*; of particular importance in this respect is the *Code of practice for assessment and feedback*. Training in these aspects will be provided as part of the induction for Associate staff.

19. On appointment and activation of IT accounts, Associate Tutors are automatically enrolled on the University's Virtual Learning Environment, SurreyLearn. They are expected to adhere to the minimum threshold standards set by the University for module presence on SurreyLearn and to familiarise themselves with the information and guidance for teaching staff available on SurreyLearn. Support and training are provided by the Surrey Institute of Education. Associate Tutors are also encouraged to enrol onto the 'Building your SurreyLearn course' which is available online.

20. Faculties are responsible for informing Associate Tutors about any development activities offered by the School and University.

Monitoring and evaluation of Associate Tutors

21. Programme Leaders are responsible for providing Associate Tutors with feedback on their teaching plans and the setting of assessment tasks before teaching commences. The University also conducts peer-review of Associate staff for enhancement purposes.

22. Associate staff will receive feedback from students through the module evaluation process. Programme Leaders will contact an Associate Tutor to discuss any themes arising from student feedback about their teaching.

Appointment and responsibilities of Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics involved in teaching

23. Faculties may appoint professional or industry experts and, where appropriate, academics from other institutions to deliver specific aspects of their teaching. Staff engaged as Guest Speakers may be employed on a voluntary basis or on a short-term teaching contract which may comprise no more than 16 contact hours per semester. All appointments must be approved by the relevant Head of School or Department and signed off by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean.

24. Visiting academic staff are appointed following the procedures set out in the *Visiting Academic Staff Appointment Procedures*.

25. Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics may undertake the following responsibilities:

- Contribute to the delivery of modules at FHEQ Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7.
- Formative assessment at FHEQ Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7.

26. They may **not** be involved in the following activities:

- Summative assessment at any FHEQ Level.
- Supervision of dissertation or project work for a module carrying a value of 30 credits or more at any FHEQ Level, except to provide specialist knowledge and experience as part of a supervisory team.

27. Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies may require an exception, in this case approval must be sought from the appropriate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean. Criteria have been established and approved by the University and are given at Appendix 1.

Support, monitoring and evaluation of Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics involved in teaching

28. Module Leaders are responsible for providing academic support, information, and advice to Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics, covering all processes, procedures, and requirements for teaching and formative assessment. Module Leaders are also responsible for informing students on their modules about the specific roles and responsibilities undertaken by Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics.

29. Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics are evaluated as part of the online module evaluation process.

30. The Surrey Institute of Education offers introductions to teaching for Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics.

Appendix 1 – Criteria for exceptions and exceptions to the *Code of practice for Associate Tutors, Guest Speakers and Visiting Academics involved in teaching*

Exceptions to the requirements of the *Code of practice* will only be those arising from Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements or the needs of subjects which require specific industry/professional expertise.

All exceptions require to be supported by the appropriate Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Executive Dean and approved by the University Education Committee.

1. **Professional Body requirements for the setting of coursework and examinations in clinical subject areas**

   In clinical subject areas where there is a PSRB requirement to deliver and assess clinically related material or specialist topics, and this expertise does not exist within the Faculty, Guest Speakers, for instance NHS staff, may contribute (as part of the module team) to the setting and marking of individual coursework or examination questions which will be double marked by the Module Leader.

2. **Summative assessment of practice learning components in professional preparation programmes in the Schools of Health Sciences, Veterinary Science and Medicine and School of Medicine**

   In line with PSRB requirements for programmes in the Schools of Health Sciences and Veterinary Science and Medicine, practice based 'mentors' or 'practice educators' may undertake the summative assessment of practice learning components within the practice environment. Prior to that, the Module Leader is responsible for ensuring that practice based 'mentors' or 'practice educators' are formally trained on Surrey assessment procedures, including marking criteria, feedback, calibration and moderation of marks, etc. Practice based 'mentors' or 'practice educators' involved in summative assessments should also be familiar with the *Code of practice for assessment and feedback*.

3. **Summative assessment of the extended research project, MPhys Physics programme in the School of Mathematics and Physics**

   For externally-based MPhys extended research projects (as part of the MPhys Physics programme in the School of Mathematics and Physics), the University permits an appropriately qualified academic at the student's host institution to act as a co-examiner for the dissertation and oral examination, alongside a University of Surrey academic member of staff. A University of Surrey academic with appropriate subject expertise is appointed as a visiting tutor and retains responsibility for academic oversight, ensuring alignment with programme learning outcomes, assessment requirements, and University regulations. Research practice-based supervisors/assessors involved in summative assessments should also be familiar with the *Code of practice for assessment and feedback*.