Guidelines on teaching experience for PhD students

The department wishes to ensure that all its PhD students have appropriate opportunities to gain teaching experience during their studies. The model set out here, with an incremental scale of opportunities over the three-year period, is not a course requirement for the PhD, but establishes a sense of the level of experience that students might normally be encouraged to achieve. The detail of an individual student's teaching programme will always be subject to the approval of their supervisor, and a student's teaching experience will be a standard item for discussion in their annual review. We believe that the model set out here will cover what is needed for future career prospects, on the assumption that prospective employers will focus on quality and type rather than sheer quantity of teaching experience. Experience of different forms of teaching will allow candidates for posts to speak with authority about teaching at interview, but always in the awareness that prospective employers will be fundamentally interested in the achieved quality and future potential of their research.

Supervision

We believe that the first year of the PhD should be devoted to establishing the student's research programme and to specific training sessions, and that undergraduate supervision would not normally feature at this level. In the second and third years, students should all be able to gain supervising experience. PhD supervisors should ensure that their supervisees can achieve between 2 and 8 hours of experience in each year. While students can always decide to do more than this, excessive supervision can be counter-productive. The most efficient model would be to focus on one or two specific topics/modules of an undergraduate scheduled paper, rather than seeking to cover a wide range of material. When students respond to the call for information for the departmental list of supervisors, they should indicate such specific areas of interest, and undertake preparatory reading accordingly.

Language Classes

Having undertaken the Faculty's training session for language class teaching, second-year students will be offered the opportunity to gain experience in one or two types of 1A or 1B class. They will attend four sessions for each such class, before being given the opportunity to take a class for one session. The class teacher will give support (briefing before classes and feedback on the hour taught by the student). No teacher will have more than one student shadowing them at any time, and no class will have more than one PhD trainee in a given year.

Lectures

All students will have the opportunity to give a lecture as part of the department's standard provision during their third year. They will get some guidance from the usual lecturer (or paper convener), who will sit in and offer constructive feedback after the lecture. The department's Graduate Officer is responsible for liaising with second-year PhDs and their supervisors in the Easter term to arrange a lecture topic for the following year.