UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL

THE ACADEMY

Developing Liverpool

Mentor Handbook for PGCAP and ULTRA

CONTENTS **Page**

Welcome	3
Contacts	3
Purpose of Mentoring	4
Mentor Support	4
Role of the Mentor	5
Benefits of Mentoring	6
The UKPSF	6
PGCAP Programme information	7
ULTRA Information	7
Peer Observation of Teaching	8
Giving Feedback	9
Registering as a Mentor	9
Links to Relevant Documentation	9

1. Welcome

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for agreeing to act as a mentor for ULTRA and / or the PGCAP. We view this as an extremely important and valuable role and appreciate you taking on this responsibility. We hope the following information will help you to be aware of what is involved in this role, as we believe it is crucial our mentees are supported appropriately to develop in a challenging environment. Your role of mentor is therefore paramount in enabling this to happen. Underpinning this role is the notion of a two-way relationship, with both parties encouraged to have mutual respect and value for each other as colleagues and fellow professionals.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or think we can give you any further assistance in this role.

2. Contacts

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3. Purpose of Mentoring

To provide support to those who are undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate Academic Practice (PGCAP) and University of Liverpool Teaching Recognition and Accreditation Framework (ULTRA). Being a mentor is voluntary, as long as you can fulfil the essential prerequisites for mentors and attend some of the Mentor Network Meetings.

What is Mentoring?

Mentoring is essentially about supporting others to develop more effectively. Mentoring is not teaching or training, although has elements of coaching at times. A mentor needs to be someone who can listen and ask the right questions to challenge the mentee to identify what they need to do in order to develop. In a mentoring relationship, attitude, motivation and skills can be identified, and these apply to both the mentor and the mentee. In adult learning the responsibility for learning is on the learner, so the mentee must also take some of the responsibility for the success of the mentoring relationship. Mentors provide support to help participants by drawing on their own experience, and to be a 'critical friend'.

Prerequisites for Mentors:

- Be a member of staff at University of Liverpool
- Have achieved recognition as a Fellow, Senior or Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA)
- Commit to attending at least one Mentor Network Meeting each academic year
- Declare any conflict of interest, for example, if your mentee is a participant on the ULTRA Scheme, you would be unable to review their application if you were an ULTRA Panel member

Mentor Support

You will be supported through a range of mechanisms (all sessions can be booked on Core HR):

Mentor's training - This is a general workshop that aims to equip anyone who is either currently acting as a mentor or who may be in the future, with the necessary skills to mentor staff in order to achieve greater levels of competence and confidence and improve long-term performance.

Mentor's Network - This is a general network that is run for those registered as mentors with the University Mentoring Network. The aim is to develop mentoring skills, gain peer support with mentoring related challenges and provide an opportunity to work together to explore how we can grow and improve the network.

PGCap and ULTRA Mentor Network - This is specific network that exists to support colleagues who are mentoring peers undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP) or the University of Liverpool Teaching Recognition and Accreditation (ULTRA) scheme. These network meetings take the form of an informal 'bring your own lunch' gathering. The idea behind the meetings is to discuss with peers any challenges, concerns or ideas that you have for mentoring specifically in relation to the PGCAP and ULTRA in a confidential and supportive environment.

The regular PGCAP and ULTRA Mentor Network Meetings will take place with the PGCAP and ULTRA team. These will run termly and take the form of an informal 'bring your own lunch' network meeting. You are required to attend one of these a year, although we encourage you to attend more. The idea behind the meetings is to discuss with peers any challenges, concerns or ideas that you have for mentoring in a confidential and supportive environment.

4. The Role of the Mentor
Enrol on the University Mentor Portal following the guidance in the Mentor Portal User Guide
Once a mentee contacts you through the portal, agree a procedure for scheduling meetings and communicating with your mentee in line with reasonable professional expectations of the role
Arrange meetings with the mentee to provide feedback and guidance on their written application for ULTRA, or the aspects of their progress and development whilst they are on the PGCAP programme
Be conversant with the UKPSF and the requirements of the PGCAP and ULTRA, and use these documents as a frequent and consistent reference point when providing guidance and advice
Be committed to and supportive of the mentee's progress and development by challenging them to improve their performance and outlook as a professional practitioner
Support the mentee to engage with the programme units or completing their HEA Fellowship application
Encourage the mentee to engage in self-reflection and evaluation of their own learning, teaching and assessment and support of students
Support the 'action planning' process and encourage the mentee to take responsibility for creating and determining their own actions
Support the mentee in reflecting on their current and future CPD encouraging a suitably broad conception of what constitutes CPD
Where work and/or applications are unsuccessful, assist the participant in responding to the feedback received
Attend regular Mentor Network meetings, and maintain a dialogue with the PGCAP and ULTRA teams

Mentors are not expected to:
Compile any of the work or application on behalf of participant
Have the same subject background as the participant
Proof-read or provide detailed corrections to work or applications

5. Benefits of Mentoring

Being a mentor will support you in your own continuing professional development. It will also strengthen your own awareness of learning, teaching and assessment practised by your colleagues. Mentoring can help you to generate some evidence required for Senior Fellow (D3) by helping you to demonstrate your contribution to supporting the development of other people's practice. For those who are Senior Fellows, it will support you in maintaining your good standing and sharing good practice, or potentially accumulating evidence and experience in making an application for Principal Fellowship (D4).

6. The UKPSF

The UKPSF is a descriptor-based framework and provides a general description of the main dimensions of the roles of teaching and supporting learning within the HE environment. It forms the basis for the award of four categories of HEA Fellowship: Associate Fellow, Fellow, Senior Fellow and Principal Fellow. Fellowships are awarded depending on an individual's role and experience, and on the basis of successful and effective demonstration against the relevant dimensions of the UKPSF.

The framework identifies the diverse range of teaching and support roles and environments, which are expressed in the Dimensions of the Framework. Engagement with these Dimensions forms the basis of all HEA Fellowship applications and the type of engagement, described as 'descriptors', is differentiated according to the level of fellowship.

Areas of Activity (A)	Core Knowledge (K)	Professional Values (V)
A1 Design & plan learning activities and/or programmes of study **A2** Teach and/or support learning **A3** Assess and give feedback to learners **A4** Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance **A5** Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices	**K1** The subject material **K2** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme **K3** How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s) **K4** The use and value of appropriate learning technologies **K5** Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching **K6** The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching	**V1** Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities **V2** Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners **V3** Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development **V4** Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice

7. PGCAP Programme Information

The PGCAP has been tailored specifically to support engagement with the UKPSF. It is for those staff who work in Higher Education (HE) in a teaching role and aims to support and enhance the development of a rich, diverse learning and teaching culture at the University of Liverpool. The programme is work-based and flexible, drawing on participants' experience as learners, teachers and professionals within the University. The programme is intended to contextualise this professional practice within an approved and accredited reflective pedagogic framework.

The main aims of the programme are to encourage the development of high quality academic practice that enables staff to gain a teaching qualification and professional recognition, and support staff to develop the knowledge, skills, expertise and values necessary to sustain effective academic practice and support student learning in line with the University of Liverpool's Education Strategy 2026. Participants will engage in high quality professional development in support of excellence in learning and teaching.

Please read PGCAP Handbook and the Website for the further information and Workshop Days.

8. ULTRA Scheme

The University of Liverpool Teaching Recognition and Accreditation Framework (ULTRA) has been developed for experienced teaching staff and forms part of the University's strategy towards a professional approach to teaching in higher education to ensure that all those who teach and support learning at Liverpool have the opportunity to engage in effective and appropriate continuing professional development (CPD), and gain recognition for their contribution to the student experience. The ULTRA Framework is closely aligned with the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Supporting Learning in Higher Education (UKPSF), which is the nationally recognised framework for benchmarking success within HE teaching and learning support. ULTRA is externally accredited by Advance HE. This means that any member of staff who completes ULTRA will receive nationally recognised HEA Fellowship in the appropriate category.

University of Liverpool are accredited to award the following categories of fellowship:

D1 Associate Fellow (AFHEA)
D2 Fellow (FHEA)
D3 Senior Fellow (SFHEA)
D4 Principal Fellow (PFHEA)

To understand the requirements of ULTRA it is extremely important that you read the ULTRA Handbook and attend an ULTRA Information and Guidance Workshop for participants.

Please see the Website for scheduled workshops and dates for ULTRA Recognition Panels.

9. Peer Observation of Teaching

This mainly applies to colleagues undertaking the PGCAP, however this may be useful for ULTRA colleagues too (particularly in relation to collating evidence for their D1 and D2 applications). As a mentor for a mentee on the PGCAP, in particular, you may be asked to carry out an observation of learning and teaching to authenticate practice in order to meet the requirements for HEA fellowship. The observation process is not about judging

performances, but about mutually beneficial learning conversations between colleagues. It is important that you attend observation development prior to carrying out an observation. An observation for the PGCAP should include three key elements:

- **A pre-observation meeting** where the person to be observed (mentee) explains to the observer the objectives of the learning activity (this could be in person, through e-mail or phone etc)
- **The Observation** itself
- **A post-observation discussion** where the mentor analyses how far the specific objectives of the learning activity have been met and give comments and suggestions on methods employed and possible improvements

In **preparing** for the Observation you should:

- ensure you have a means of recording thoughts and ideas during the session
- ensure, as far as possible, that the normal pattern of learning is not disturbed or disrupted by the observation
- offer immediate verbal feedback, recognising that this will need to be supplemented by comments in writing which are shared at a subsequent meeting

Such ground rules, if established and followed, can go a long way to removing the initial tension which might be present during any observation.

The Mentee should provide you with:

- planning documentation
- copies of any resources to be used, including presentations and handouts
- a module handbook or specifications, if applicable
- assessment information, if relevant
- feedback from any previous observations where relevant

Recording an Observation

Observations will be recorded on the University of Liverpool Peer Observation of Teaching form (Appendix B). Please make use of the UKPSF when offering mentee feedback. All feedback will be confidential between the mentor and the mentee.

After a three year archive period observation feedback should be destroyed in as secure manner as possible.

10. Giving feedback

It is important that the feedback given to your mentee should be ***constructive*** and ***developmental.*** It is suggested that ideally two kinds of feedback should be offered following an observed session.

Firstly, some verbal generalised feedback as soon as possible after the session, intended to offer some response to the lecturer/practitioner who may be anxious to know the Observer's reactions.

Secondly, arrange some time after the observation to have a full de-brief session around the written report completed on the University of Liverpool Peer Observation of Teaching form. This has the advantage of the observer having a chance to think through what is important enough to record and discuss. It also allows the person observed to gather their own thoughts about the session and to make their own appraisal to match with the Observer's in a constructive dialogue.

Guidelines for Giving Feedback

The Observer should:

- Focus on behaviours that can be enhanced rather than the person
- Limit the amount of feedback to that which the observed can cope with
- Make positive suggestions for improvement
- Avoid making value judgements
- Use questions to guide the discussion and plan responses
- Encourage the Mentee to engage in reflection at a personal and professional level
- Encourage Mentee to reflect using the UKPSF

11. Registering as a Mentor

Please refer to the PGCAP and ULTRA Mentor Portal User Guide

12. Links to Relevant Documentation

ULTRA

- ULTRA Handbook

ULTRA Peer Observation:

- Peer Observation of Teaching Policy
- Observation Form to Facilitate Discussion
- Guide for Peer Observer Guide for Peer Observee
- For further support as a Peer Observer and to sign up for a support workshop please visit the website

PGCAP

- PGCAP Handbook
- Authentication of Practice form can be found at the back of the PGCAP Handbook

Contacts

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