

Guidelines for the recruitment and training of casual tutors in the Faculty of Economics and Commerce

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The faculty's tutors fulfil a vital role in the delivery of a high quality learning environment for our students. They are the most important interface between the lecturing staff and their students. Improving the quality of tutorial delivery is therefore an essential element in continuing to raise the quality of teaching in the faculty as a whole.

Recruitment and Selection of Casual Tutors

1. A position description for tutors in the faculty should be devised. This could be generic or department specific. Selection criteria should also be in place.
2. Applicants should submit a CV outlining their work/tutoring experience, referees and containing their academic transcript.
3. Tutors may be appointed from the PHD, Master or Honours level. Students who have completed one degree of a combined degree course and are in their fourth year at university may also be appointed where their academic results are excellent.
4. All new tutors should be interviewed prior to appointment. These interviews should be conducted by a member of the staff familiar with the requirements of good tutoring and the nature of the subjects for which the tutor is being considered. The Teaching and Learning Unit staff would be available to assist in this regard if required. Ideally they should take place in person however in exceptional circumstances a telephone interview may suffice. Referee checks should be made. If an interview panel is used there should be gender balance in selection of members of the panel.
5. On appointment the appropriate HR form -- Casual Contract of Employment must be completed and the conditions of casual employment must be explained and given to each staff member

The Training and Support of Casual Tutors

1. All new tutors should be required, as a condition of their appointment, to attend training and orientation sessions organized by the Department (for which they should be paid). In addition, administration meetings may be conducted at the start of semester for all tutors in each department. The training for new tutors should generally be conducted on a department by department basis so that the culture of the department can be reflected in the training.
2. The Department may wish for the Teaching and Learning Unit to conduct these training sessions in collaboration/cooperation with each department.
3. Training should include the following areas:
 1. Strategies to encourage preparation and participation by students
 2. Appropriate questioning techniques
 3. Cultural diversity sensitivity
 4. Time management
 5. Marking and assessment
 6. Equity issues
 7. Use and abuse of technology
 8. Conditions of employment for casual staff in the University

4. Lecturers or Senior Tutors should meet regularly with tutors in order: to consider the following matters:
 - a) To provide feedback to the lecturer-in-charge on how the students perceive the subject.
 - b) To allow tutors to clarify points with the lecturer in relation to the tutorial content
 - c) To allow the lecturer to set the approach he/she wants tutors to take in each tutorial
 - d) To allow tutors to form a peer support group to whom they can refer on tutorial related issues
 - e) If Departments wish, in large subjects, the Teaching and Learning Unit could conduct short 15 minute teaching related modules (teaching nuggets) to provide on-going training to tutors as appropriate during the semester.
5. Tutors should be paid for meetings that are additional to meetings for standard preparation, and training sessions. The dates of the meetings and training sessions should be communicated to tutors at appointment and attendance should be a condition of appointment.
6. It is desirable that tutors be observed early in the teaching year. Any observation of tutors will be undertaken with their permission. The purpose of the observation is to provide the tutor with support and specific feedback on their teaching. A written report may be provided to the tutors with the option of a private consultation to discuss the report further with the observer. The observation is primarily for the professional development of the tutor and is confidential. The one proviso to confidentiality is where there is an exceptionally serious problem that should be brought to the attention of the Head of Department. The Teaching and Learning Unit can undertake the observations on behalf of the Departments if this is deemed to be appropriate by the departments.

The Employment and Duties of Casual Tutors

1. Tutors are required to spend two additional hours associated working time for each original tutorial they conduct and one additional hour associated working time for each repeat tutorial they conduct. It is up to individual Departments to decide how best to use the associated working time (subject to University guidelines) and to inform tutors accordingly. This working time would include of course preparation time.
2. A tutor should not tutor in more than two subjects and a maximum of 8 hours per week per subject.
3. A tutor should not take more than four tutorials a day and not more than three in a row without a break
4. If the tutor is a full time permanent resident or international PhD student, (as a guide and in accordance with the recommendations from the School of Graduate Studies (SGS)) the tutor cannot do more than one initial and six repeat tutorials per week. SGS recommends that a full time PhD should not do more than 9 hours casual work per week. However in relation to tutorial teaching each initial contact hour is deemed to involve an additional two hours of marking, preparation, consultation and administration. If a PhD tutor teaches one initial and seven repeat tutorials this is broadly within SGC guidelines and the 8-hour teaching in any one subject constraint.
5. As a guide tutors who are in their fourth or honours year should not be given more than four tutorials in the Faculty comprising one original tutorial and three repeats.
6. While there is often slippage in these hours due to tutors leaving unexpectedly these maximums should be observed at appointment. The reasons for these maximums are:

- a) It is difficult to give the same standard of tutorial when it is repeated too often – tutors become bored/impatient.
 - b) If a tutor has to leave unexpectedly it is difficult to find a replacement when more than six tutorials in any one subject have to be covered.
 - c) If casual tutors are also studying more than 12 tutorials could be expected to interfere with their progress.
7. Tutors are responsible for keeping attendance records and are responsible for recording the participation mark if this is part of the assessment in the subject in which they tutor.
 8. While casual tutors are not required to mark final exams, the normal expectation is that casual tutors will make themselves available for this task. A casual tutor who does not intend to mark final exams should inform the lecturer-in-charge as soon as possible.

Performance of Casual Tutors

1. In the event of tutor evaluations, each department should arrange for student questionnaires for tutors to be distributed at the same time as the questionnaires for lecturers. The results of these questionnaires should be made available to tutors after the examination marking period is concluded. In large subjects the mean on each question in the subject should also be available to tutors.
2. Lecturers and/or senior tutors are responsible for addressing issues related to tutors who do not perform well. Tutors who do not perform may be referred to the Teaching and Learning Unit. Where a casual tutor scores poorly in two consecutive semesters, reappointment for a third semester should be carefully considered.
3. Tutors who score highly should be sent a letter of congratulation/appreciation by the Head of Department.