

## **GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT (GTA) POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH**

Annually the University of Bristol Law School advertises and recruits a Graduate Teaching Assistant as a scholarship for a PhD student. The job description (role), award details, criteria and selection process are detailed below. This is a highly competitive scholarship with a rigorous recruitment process and monitoring of satisfactory research progress and teaching performance indicators.

### **1. Role**

A GTA scholarship requires the Postgraduate Research (PGR) student to teach Undergraduate students, as well as carry out research. The University of Bristol policy on PGRs who Teach<sup>1</sup> makes it clear that teaching is optional for most PGRs, therefore the Law School takes care to ensure that anybody appointed as a GTA is capable of teaching and has sufficient time to do the job properly. The GTA will have a **teaching contract**, making it very clear what is expected from their teaching role, and puts in place the framework to allow them to deliver on both teaching and research.

### **2. Hours**

The GTA scholarship award will be for 4 years, or until first submission of the PhD thesis if this is earlier. During the first 3.5 years the GTA Scholar will be registered as a full-time student carrying out research as a PhD student and is expected to spend time supporting undergraduate teaching, typically in tutorial classes and under the direction of the member of academic staff responsible for the taught unit. Assuming that a GTA scholar will work ~ 47 weeks per year, the teaching time will be ~250 hours per year, or ~875 hours over the 3.5 year contract. The final 6 months will be free of teaching, to enable the GTA to focus on completing their PhD. The teaching hours must include reasonable allowance for **all** teaching activities – preparation, marking, communication with students, meetings, training, outreach – and schools will periodically monitor the workload and ensure that it remains in keeping with the contracted hours.

Tier 4 visa-holders should be aware of the working conditions attached to their visa. Hours spent on teaching activities (as listed above) will contribute to the weekly limit stated on their Tier 4 visa (Usually 20 hours per week). For more information, see <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/work-visas/>

### **3. Awards**

Each GTA studentship will cover research degree tuition fees at the **Home rate**, a pro-rata PhD research stipend and payment for part-time teaching. For 2021/22, the tuition fee and stipend is split as follows:

Tuition fees	£4,475
Research stipend	£13,267.65 (85% of of national 20/21 minimum £15,609 set by RCUK) <sup>2</sup>
Teaching payment	£4,377.50 ( up to 250 hours x £17.51 per hour, Teaching Support Role -

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/pgr-docs/pgrswhoteach.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/skills/funding-for-research-training/>

Graduate Teacher Level 2)

**Total** £22,120.15 approx.

---

#### 4. Selection Criteria

Applicants should:

- hold an offer (unconditional) of place to study a PhD with the School,
- expect to hold a first class/good upper second class Bachelor's and Master's with distinction/merit (or equivalent qualifications) in any relevant discipline.

Candidates will be selected for these awards on the basis of:

- academic excellence;
- teaching experience (or potential), matched to teaching needs;
- research potential.

For applicants whose first language is not English the **minimum** English language requirements for a PhD applicant is [Profile B](#) (IELTS 7.0 overall with a minimum of 6.5 in all bands) however Candidates for GTA positions are likely to be asked for higher grades because of the teaching component. Overseas students may apply but these awards cover **Home fees only** and so they will be required to pay the difference between home and overseas fees.

#### 5. Selection Process

For 2021-22, the recruitment timeline for the Graduate Teaching Assistant award is as below:

- a. Interview if shortlisted, to assess the candidate's teaching potential. This will be conducted either in person or online by the PGR director and another senior member of the PG team. They will last a max of 30 minutes, including a 10 min presentation. Presentation title will be released to the shortlisted candidates in due course.

Selection Timetable:

- Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Sept deadline for submission of CV and Teaching Experience Statement (1 page document)
- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> Sept – shortlisting finalised and invitation to interview communicated.
- Wednesday 15<sup>nd</sup> (morning). TBC – Graduate Teaching Assistant interviews (applicants will be invited to a formal interview on MS Teams)

#### 6. Support and Mentoring

Training and support for teaching will be provided in line with the University's policy on 'PGRs who Teach'<sup>3</sup>. Each GTA Scholar must have a named Teaching Mentor, who cannot be one of their supervisors, and who may require the GTA to undertake further training above the University minimum as appropriate for local teaching

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/pgr-docs/pgrswhoteach.pdf>

needs. The school should set out a mentoring scheme appropriate to their discipline and the particular activities the Scholar is likely to be asked to do. This needs to be structured with clear and specific demands placed on

the Mentor and the Scholar, so both know what is expected of them. This is important both for the professional development of the GTA and for the students they teach.

A single member of staff must be identified as the Senior Mentor, who will be responsible for overseeing the mentoring scheme for all GTAs within the school. This could be, for example, the Postgraduate Director or the Undergraduate Director, but could also be another member of staff (e.g. Education Director). The Bristol Doctoral College will provide the institutional strategy and guidance for enhancing the experience for all GTA Scholars and relevant stakeholders.

## **7. Dealing with Unsatisfactory Performance of teaching duties by a GTA Scholar**

The Scholar's performance will be monitored carefully in both research and teaching. The appropriate guidance, support and training the Scholar receives will enable them to improve as a teacher. This may also involve adjusting the teaching activities to suit the Scholar's personal strengths (e.g. subject knowledge etc.). If it is found that the Scholar's teaching does not reach a minimum acceptable standard, despite appropriate guidance, support and training, then the Scholar will be withdrawn from teaching activities and the Scholarship reviewed. This may only be done in consultation with the Head of School and the Postgraduate Director.

All GTA Scholars, as PhD students, will be reviewed annually to ensure that they are making satisfactory academic progress, and this academic review will be entirely separate from the assessment of their performance as teaching assistants. In terms of PhD progression, requests from GTAs for extension or suspension of study on the basis of their teaching load will not be permitted. If a Scholar is not making satisfactory academic progress according to University Regulations<sup>4</sup>, then the Scholarship will be reviewed.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/pgrcode/section6/>