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1. Introduction

Welcome to the University of Leicester, this Handbook is designed to provide you with useful information regarding your Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) position at the University and it should be used in conjunction with your Departmental/School, College and Research Student handbooks and guidance.

The Graduate Teaching Scheme was developed in order to facilitate high quality and skilled graduates to pursue a PhD as well as to contribute to the teaching community at the University of Leicester.

As a GTA, you hold a unique role at the University as both a registered student (in receipt of a stipend) and an employee. As such a GTA holds two mutually dependent agreements - an employment agreement and a student agreement with the University of Leicester - and you are accordingly expected to abide by the terms and conditions of both agreements.

You will report to your line manager who will most likely be the Head of Department or School (or a designated academic member of staff) and will be required to undertake such duties as may be reasonably assigned and as detailed in the GTA job summary form. The precise nature of your duties may vary throughout the duration of your GTA term.

It is important to keep in mind that as a Graduate Teaching Assistant you are a research student, and it is the priority of the university that you complete your degree programme successfully; continuation as a Graduate Teaching Assistant is thus dependent upon satisfactory progress in your research degree.
1.1 Before you start

**PhD Offer and Student Registration**
Once you have accepted your GTA offer you will be issued with a student number. You will be required to complete the online student registration.

**Contract of Employment**
Once Human Resources (HR) are notified of your student number they will issue you with your GTA Contract of Employment.

**Offer Accepted**
Once you have read through your Contract of Employment you will need to accept the offer and ensure you complete all the actions requested including provide your right to work documentation to Human Resources. For international students please bring your visa documentation too.

**Fee Waiver Approved**
Once you have accepted your offer, the University Finance Office will be informed and will process your Home/EU rate fee waiver.

**Contact your School/Department**
Liaise with your School/Department to confirm arrangements for your GTA induction, training and workload assignments.

1.2 Your first day

**Student Registration**
Bring your completed documentation to Registry

**Induction**
Read the employment checklist provided with your contract and complete all the actions as soon as possible. Follow the normal PhD induction in your Department or School and meet your PhD Supervisor.
1.3 Shortly after you start

**Login Details**
Your department will confirm your IT login details. You will receive a staff and student login (see section 3).

**Stipend**
You will receive a University email notifying you that the cheque for your first stipend payment is ready to collect from the Fees Payment Office (Student Services Zone in the Charles Wilson Foyer).

**Training and Development**
You should ensure you enroll on the Preparing to Teach in Higher Education Course facilitated by the Leicester Learning Institute (LLI). (see section 5).

**Employee Self-Service (ESS)**
You should access ESS and check that all your employment and personal details are correct. You will be able to access your payslips from ESS.

**Induction**
Attend all relevant induction events, including the Doctoral College, College and Departmental inductions.

1.4 Key personnel

**Supervisory Team** - All research students have a supervisory team, normally comprising two members. These will be members of the University’s academic staff, normally but not always, from the same School/Department as you. Your first supervisor will have typically have primary responsibility for your supervision as a research student and the role of the other member(s) of the supervisory team will vary according to the circumstances.

**PG Tutor** – Each department has a designated PG Tutor (PGR Director in School of Business), who provides support, advice, and guidance on matters relating to your academic progress or any personal circumstances that may be affecting your progress. In the School of Business this role may be titled

**Probation Panel** – This Panel will consist of two academic members of staff within your school or department who will review your report and your probation review meeting to assess your academic progress. The Panel will then make a recommendation to the Head of Department and the Director of the Doctoral College (see section 4.1 for probation outcomes).
Line Manager – As a Graduate Teaching Assistant you are a member of staff and will have a designated line manager; typically the Head of Department. It is the Line Manager’s responsibility to manage staffing issues under the University’s procedures and make staffing decisions.

PGR Administrator – You will have an administrator who is responsible for the management of research student records within your department. The PGR Administrator will normally process forms affecting your registration and attendance, and is an important first point of contact for most things.

Mentor – You should be assigned as soon as you begin teaching. Mentors are staff members who are more experienced in higher education teaching and coach you.

Teaching Monitor – When your teaching is assessed a member of staff within your department will be assigned to monitor a portion of your teaching. Teaching monitors will analyse and assess your teaching practice.

2. Student Registration
As a new research student you need to register at the start of your course to confirm your place on the programme. You also need to register to gain access to University services and facilities such as the University Library and your University IT account.

2.1 Initial registration for new research students
As a new research student you will need to follow the steps as detailed in the three flow charts in Section 1.

Registration is a quick and easy process - just follow the registration instructions for new students.

Once you have registered for your first year, you will receive an identification card, certificate of registration, and an IT account.

2.2 Identification Cards
As a member of staff and a student, you will receive two separate identification cards.

Your student identification card lasts for the duration of your degree. You should keep your card safe; it gives you access to the University Library and you may need it to access specific department buildings or facilities or to prove your identity while on campus. There is a fee payable for replacement cards.

Your student identification card also shows your nine-digit student number. This is your unique personal identification number and must be quoted in all correspondence with the University concerning your registration as a student.

Your staff identification card lasts for the duration of your GTA employment contract and it gives you the same access as your student card. It also gives you access to Departmental or School printing facilities. To obtain a card you will need to be registered on the HR system and have your staff University IT account. Before you place a request for a card, please ensure that your details are correct by checking and updating your record using the Employee Self-Service.

To obtain your card, please go to the Security Lodge where a photo will be taken and the card will be produced immediately. Alternatively, if you upload a passport-style photo to Employee Self-Service,
your Department or School can request the card via an email to Security. Please note that this email will need to include your name and IT user name as well as confirmation of the building and any other facilities that you will require access to.

2.3 Certificates of registration
An electronic version of this certificate is issued automatically at the start of your research degree and confirms your registration as a postgraduate research student. This is an important document which you should retain. Upon request, Student Academic Services can print a certificate of registration for you, which you may need for proof of registration for visa and council tax purposes.

2.4 Annual re-registration for continuing research students
All research students are required to re-register each year on the anniversary of their initial registration. Instructions for doing this will be sent to your University student email account. You can find more information on annual registration on the Doctoral College website.

Re-registration is a quick and easy process that can be completed from any computer, anywhere in the world - just follow the registration instructions for continuing research students.

Please note that you will not be able to re-register if you have any outstanding fees, including tuition fees.

2.5 Registration period
The registration period for the degree of PhD is a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 4 years. Research students are required to maintain registration for at least the specified minimum period.

Research students are not allowed to maintain registration beyond the specified maximum period. Research students who have experienced extenuating circumstances which are accepted by the University may be given an extension of registration beyond the specified maximum period.

Your employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant is conditional on remaining a full-time registered student. If you are a UK or EU/EEA citizen, it may be possible to switch to part-time study; however your employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant will normally be terminated once a transfer to part-time study is made.

3. University IT and Email Accounts
As both a member of staff and a student, you will need to maintain two separate IT accounts.

When you have completed registration you will be asked to create a University IT account and email account. It is important that you do this - your University email address is our primary means of contacting you. Please check your University email accounts frequently to ensure that you do not miss any important communication from the University or your Department or School.

Please liaise with your Departmental or School IT contact to set up your Staff University IT account, password and username. IT Services will be able to do this once the Recruitment Team have generated your employee number and you will then be able to login to a University PC, use Blackboard, eduroam, Wi-Fi and many other IT systems and services. If you are having problems setting up or using your University IT account, or if you lose your password, please contact IT Services Desk by calling 0116 252 2253 or email to: ithelp@le.ac.uk.
4. Probation
As a GTA you have two probation periods, a student probation and an employment probation. It is important that you keep on track with your research project and that you manage your responsibilities as a postgraduate researcher and as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. If you cannot demonstrate good progress during your period of student probation your GTA contract may be terminated.

4.1 Student probation
You must complete an initial probation period of 12 months at the start of your research degree. This probation covers your progress as a research student.

Before the end of your probation period you will be required to complete a probation review. This will be used to determine whether you have made satisfactory progress to date with your research degree and satisfactory performance as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. The probation review comprises two parts:

- a written report from you, your supervisory team and your mentor
- a presentation and defence of your work to a Probation Review Panel.

You will be deemed to have successfully completed probation if it is the academic judgement of the Probation Review Panel that:

- your overall performance demonstrates appropriate progress to date
- there are no serious doubts about your ability to achieve the degree for which you are registered.

4.1.1 Student probation reports
Your Department or School will tell you when you are required to complete the written report for your probation review. Normally this will be around nine months after your initial registration.

Your written report will comprise two parts:

- a substantive piece of writing (5,000 to 10,000 words) describing your work to date – the format that this will take will depend on your discipline; it may take the form of a thesis chapter or be more of a technical report, but your Department or School will tell you what is required
- supporting documents, including:
  - a work plan for completing your thesis over the remaining period of your degree
  - a record of the skills and career development training that you have completed to date
  - records of all the formal supervisory meetings that have been held to date.

If you have any questions about the requirements for your probation report, you should discuss these with your supervisory team as early as possible.

Your supervisory team will prepare their own written report for your probation review and this will include a discussion of your progress to date and the feasibility of your work plan.

The written reports by you and your supervisory team will both be considered by your Probation Review Panel. This panel will normally comprise two members of the University’s academic staff. Members of your supervisory team are not allowed to be members of your Probation Review Panel.
Your Probation Review Panel will invite you to a probation review meeting. Normally this will take place eleven months after your initial registration. The format of the probation review meeting will depend on your discipline.

4.1.2 Student probation outcomes
In most cases the probation review panel will be able to tell you immediately following the end of the probation review meeting what recommendation they intend to make.

The probation review panel may make one of the following recommendations:

- that you should be allowed to continue with your research degree programme
- that you should continue on probation for a period of no more than six months and complete a further and final probation review before the end of that period
- that you should be transferred to a lower research degree programme
- that your registration should be terminated.

If the outcome of the probation results in termination of studies or transfer to lower degree, your employment contract may be terminated.

Further information on the student probation review can be found on the Doctoral College website.

4.2 Employment probation
Your employment probation period as a GTA is 9 months and will operate in accordance with the University’s Probation Ordinance. The purpose of the probationary period is threefold:

- to provide time during with you can demonstrate the required level of performance and suitability for the GTA role to which you have been appointed
- to provide support to you to reach and sustain the required standard of performance for the GTA role
- to enable the University to end your employment during probation in cases where performance is deemed unsatisfactory.

During the probation period you should expect to have regular, informal review meetings with your line manager.

Normally, three review meetings are recommended:

**Meeting 1 (Informal)** – on/around end of first month of employment

**Meeting 2 (Informal)** – on/around end of fifth month of employment

**Meeting 3** – typically before the end of the ninth month of employment (though this may be earlier if required). This is usually an informal meeting, unless there are performance issues, in which case it is likely to be a formal probation hearing under the formal probation procedure (please refer to the Probation Ordinance).

The employment probation reviews will include consideration of the following:

- your willingness as a GTA to engage in training and development opportunities
- your teaching feedback scores provided by students
- the outcomes of any observation of your teaching where appropriate
- your progress in your research.
Although the student probation is a separate process, your progress in your research degree may be taken into account as part of your employment probation.

As a GTA you will be expected to pass both probation periods in order to continue on your GTA contract. If you do not pass one element then this may result in the termination of your GTA contract and your research degree course of study. GTAs should therefore inform their supervisors and their line manager of any problems or difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

4.2.1 Extending your employment probation

Your line manager (in consultation with HR) may exercise the right to extend a probationary period by up to three months where:

- you as a GTA have not performed to the expected standards but where there is sufficient evidence that performance is likely to improve given extra time
- a manager does not have sufficient evidence to confirm that the expected standard of performance has been reached within the first 9 months of employment
- exceptional circumstances have had an impact on performance.

In cases where the GTA probationary period is extended, your line manager will meet with you before the original end date of the probationary period to explain:

- the reason(s) for the extension
- the length of extension
- assistance or training to be given during extension
- areas requiring improvement
- arrangements for monitoring and measuring improvement
- the consequences of not meeting the expected standard of performance.

It is recommended that your line manager writes to you after this probation meeting, outlining the above.

5. Training and Development

As a GTA, you will play a vital role in supporting the learning of students at the University. To support your own development as a teacher, you will receive initial training from the University’s Leicester Learning Institute (LLI) and from your department. There will also be a range of other teacher training opportunities that you will be able to access as you progress in your GTA role.

The University has a responsibility to all of its students to ensure that teaching staff are appropriately trained and capable of delivering course material at a standard expected at a university. In order to evidence that all GTAs have undertaken an appropriate level of training, it is a requirement of all GTAs to attend the Preparing to Teach in Higher Education course or to demonstrate that adequate prior training has taken place. It is recognised that many GTAs have substantial prior teaching experience, but at present there is not a standard means of recording prior experience outside of higher education teaching qualifications nor accreditation outside the UK. If you hold certification through the following you do not have to attend the Preparing to Teach in Higher Education course:

1. Institutional provision in teaching in higher education sector accredited against the UK Professional Standards Framework
2. Higher Education Academy Associate Fellow or higher
3. National Teaching Fellowship Scheme Individual Award
4. PGCE in higher education, further education, lifelong learning or any other equivalent UK qualification
5. Accredited as a teacher within your subject by a professional UK body
6. Other UK accreditation or qualification in teaching in the higher education sector.

Validation of the accreditation should will be verified by the Leicester Learning Institute convenor of the Preparing to Teach in Higher Education.

5.1 Training at the Leicester Learning Institute (LLI)

There are two courses run by the LLI that are relevant to those in GTA roles:

- Preparing to Teach in Higher Education
- University Postgraduate Certificate in Supporting Student Learning in Higher Education (30 credits)

5.1.1 Preparing to Teach in Higher Education course

The Preparing to Teach in Higher Education course is mandatory for all new GTAs to complete. It is an introductory course for those who are doing limited amounts of teaching within the University (e.g. GTAs, research students, research staff) and who are new to teaching in Higher Education. The course encourages participants to:

- Examine their role as a new teacher
- Look at their part in helping students learn
- Consider the ideas around what good teaching and learning looks like.

The course is separated into two strands and participants will choose to attend the one that most closely relates to the type of teaching that they will be doing. Each strand requires participants to attend two particular sessions:

**Strand A**

This strand is for those who are teaching in discussion-based seminar/workshop/tutorial type sessions. The first session cover two key topics:

- Developing effective learning environments
- Small group teaching

The second session is a 'Professional Group Meeting', which covers:

- Effective feedback principles
- Session planning activities

**Strand B**

This strand is for those who are taking a more practical and/or demonstrating role in their teaching. This could include demonstrating in lab or computer-based sessions. The first session covers three key topics:

- Developing effective learning environments in practical settings
- Small group teaching in practical settings
• Effective feedback principles.

The second session is a ‘Demonstrating in Practical Classes’ workshop.

Both Strand A and Strand B participants will be expected to complete some pre-reading on Blackboard before attending their first session. As such, the total number of hours required to complete this course is seven. As a mandatory course, this training will count towards your contracted hours of work.

The course will normally run at the beginning and mid-point of each semester. You are advised to contact Dr Kerry Dobbins (course convenor) kd154@le.ac.uk as soon as you start in order to book the next available date. More information about the course can be found on the LLI website: http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/lli.

Further online resources to support you after the course and as you continue within your teaching role can be found here:
http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/lli/recognition-for-teaching/careerdev/preparing-to-teach/gtas-and-pgrs-who-teach

5.1.2 University Postgraduate Certificate in Supporting Student Learning in Higher Education course (30 credits)

This is an optional programme for part-time tutors including research staff, postgraduate researchers, GTAs, PhD students, demonstrators and staff working in the Professional Services who contribute to teaching and/or supporting undergraduate student learning for 20 hours or more per academic year. As participants must be carrying out their teaching and/or supporting learning activities as they complete the programme the programme is not available to Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) who are not doing any teaching. The duration of the programme is two semesters and upon successful completion, participants should be able to:

• Contribute to the enhancement of student learning through the critical evaluation and application of effective teaching and/or feedback strategies
• Integrate pedagogic scholarship into their practice
• Assess their professional development needs and address these in a systematic and efficient manner
• Demonstrate how their practice aligns to Descriptor 1 of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF).

Participants who successfully complete this programme will also achieve Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

The outline of the programme is:

A. Core two-hour workshops:
  • Introduction to the UKPSF
  • Large and small group teaching
  • How students learn
  • Assessment and feedback strategies
University of Leicester

- Learning outcomes and curriculum alignment
- Developing technology enhanced learning
- Being a reflective practitioner.

Plus

B. Two Professional Group meetings
C. Peer observations
D. Teaching observation by Department
E. Engagement in on-line activities

The programme recruits twice a year and starts in September and January. Participants should have already completed the Preparing to Teach in Higher Education course before undertaking this programme. As this is an optional programme, the time to complete this training will not count towards your contracted hours of work. We would also advise you to consult your Head of Department (or line manager) first if you are interested in registering.

For further information about the programme, contact lli@le.ac.uk and/or visit the LLI website: http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/lli.

5.2 Other LLI training

The LLI offers a range of other learning and professional development opportunities that, as a member of University staff, you will be able to access. These include sessions on topics such as making effective use of Blackboard and Grademark, teaching international students and developing assessment and feedback practices. More information about these sessions can be found on the LLI website: http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/lli.

Attendance at any of these sessions will not count towards your contracted hours of work and we would advise you to consult your Head of Department (or delegate) before making a booking. As a Graduate Teaching Assistant, you are encouraged to seek additional developmental training, including the University’s Professional Educational Excellence Recognition Scheme for achieving Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy.

5.3 Departmental training

In addition to the training offered by LLI, you will receive departmental training that should focus on the particular methods and skills required for teaching your specific subject. This training should also introduce you to the administrative responsibilities that you may have as a teacher. Departments/Schools should ensure that you undertake some shadowing of more experienced colleagues in your first semester before you begin in your teaching role.

5.4 Time management

Managing your time as a GTA is crucial, particularly during your first year. If you experience any difficulty with this please speak with your line manager. Please also note that there is an online Time Management module offered by Staff Development which you may find useful: Time Management Online Module.
5.5 Training timeframe
The diagram below presents the timeframe during which you should complete your initial training as a GTA.

[Diagram showing In 1st month: Complete Department Induction, Attend College and School Inductions. In 1st to 3rd month: Complete Department training, Complete Preparing to Teach in Higher Education course.]

5.6 Time management
Managing your time as a GTA is crucial, particularly during your first year. If you experience any difficulty with this please speak with your line manager. Please also note that there is an online Time Management module offered by Staff Development which you may find useful:

Time Management Online Module

6. Teacher Monitoring
All Graduate Teaching Assistants are normally allocated a teaching mentor, typically separate to your supervisor and either a member of academic staff or an experienced GTA. Mentors will recognise aspects of teaching that are working well, identify training and development needs, demonstrate good practice, and assist in the development of teaching skills. Your mentor is the primary contact for anything concerning your employment as a Graduate Teaching Assistant.

As a new GTA, you will be monitored during your face-to-face sessions with students. The monitoring will be by an academic within your Department or School (not necessarily your mentor) and they will observe your teaching sessions and provide feedback in order to enhance the quality of your teaching practice and to further develop your teaching skills.

A debriefing session should be held promptly (no later than 48 hours) after the teaching observation where the observer provides feedback on the teaching session and you will have the opportunity to reflect on the session.

Continuation of a GTA contract is subject to satisfactory academic progress in the programme of study, as determined in the relevant regulations and conventions, as well as maintaining a satisfactory standard of teaching assistance work. If progress is unsatisfactory it may be necessary to commence formal performance management in accordance with the University’s Performance Management Ordinance. The purpose of this process is to provide a framework to ensure that GTAs are supported to adequately fulfil the responsibilities of their GTA role.

7. Suspensions and extensions
Research students are required to submit their thesis for examination on or before the date on which they complete the maximum registration period. An extension of registration may be given if the University accepts that there have been extenuating circumstances for the thesis being late. Research
students may also request to temporarily halt their degree (suspension) or permanently end their registration (withdrawal).

7.1 Requests for extension of registration
If you believe that you will need some additional time in which to complete your thesis you can request an extension of registration if:

- you can demonstrate reasonable progress to date and extenuating circumstances for the thesis being late
- you can demonstrate a viable plan for completing the thesis over the extension period
- you have the approval of your supervisory team and Department or School Postgraduate Tutor.

Extensions must be approved by the Director of the Doctoral College and are normally for periods of one to three months; longer extensions of up to six months (or separate extensions that cumulatively total six months) may only be requested only where there have been exceptional circumstances and an acceptable explanation as to why you did not suspend your registration.

Extensions of more than six months are not permitted and tuition fees are payable for all extension periods. Your employment contract will not normally be extended to coincide with any extension of study. An extension to your GTA contract will need to be agreed by your Head of Department or School and will be subject to the University and locally agreed approval processes.

7.2 Requests for suspension of programme
If there are specific reasons why you need to take a temporary break from your research degree, you can request a short suspension of your programme if:

- you are ill for an extended period of time, need a period of maternity/paternity leave or have some other serious personal or financial difficulties that are affecting your ability to study
- the suspension period will be at least three months long – requests for suspensions of less than three months will not be considered
- the suspension period will be no longer than twelve months – requests for a suspension of more than twelve months (or for separate suspensions that would cumulatively total more than twelve months over the length of your degree) will be approved only in exceptional circumstances

A request to suspend your programme must be made at the time the suspension is needed or in advance if at all possible – retrospective requests will not be considered under any circumstances. No tuition fees are payable for an agreed period of suspension; however, for the duration of the suspension research students are not entitled to any support from their supervisory team or Department or School.

If for any reason your registration is suspended this could affect your contract of employment as a GTA. In some instances, it may be that your contract comes to an end. You must inform the Head of Department at the earliest opportunity so that discussions can be held about how this might affect your employment as a GTA.

If you have a Tier 4 student visa obtained using a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) statement, the University will notify the UK Border Agency if you suspend your programme. Your leave to remain in the UK may be ended and therefore you should seek advice as early as possible if you are
considering a suspension. If your leave to remain in the UK ends you will need to return home until your suspension has ended. You will need to apply for a new visa to re-join your degree after your suspension has ended, as you will not be able to re-register with your existing visa.

7.2.1 Requesting a suspension
To request a suspension download and complete a suspension and request form from the Doctoral College website. Complete all sections of the form and get your supervisor to sign it indicating that they support your request. Once you have completed the form and obtained a signature form your supervisor the form should be submitted to your departmental or school administrator. All forms are reviewed by the Doctoral College and approval subject to the decision of the Director of the Doctoral College. It is also important to inform your line manager, as the suspension of your studies will also require a suspension from your GTA duties. Suspension of studies for the purpose of focusing on GTA work will not be accepted. Whilst on suspension you will not receive stipend payments, however you may be entitled to receive sick pay in accordance with the University’s Policy. Your period of absence will need to be certified with a medical ‘fit note’ and the level and length of sick pay will be dependent upon your length of service.

8. Transfer to Writing-Up Status
You are appointed to the role of GTA on a fixed term basis. Normally appointments are made for 4 years, however if you have already completed some of your studies you may be given a contract of 2 years or 3 years so that the end date of your contract coincides with the anticipated submission date of your thesis.

As a research student on a research degree programme you are expected to have completed your research and be well advanced with the writing of your thesis by the start of the final year of the maximum registration period. A writing-up period is designed to facilitate the completion of the thesis with research students no longer engaged in active research; thus a reduced fee is payable for the writing-up period.

As a GTA, you are not expected to transfer to writing up status and therefore this reduced fee is not applicable to you, unless you wish to end your employment contract during your final year.

If you transfer to writing-up status you are no longer considered a full-time student and therefore your employment as a GTA will end including your salary and stipend payments.

However, if as GTA you wish to request to transfer to writing-up status you can do so if:

- you have completed the specified minimum registration period
- you have completed all active research - including all experimental work, laboratory work, field work, archival work, and data collection
- you have the approval of your supervisory team and Postgraduate Tutor.

The writing-up period counts towards the specified maximum registration period and the writing-up period cannot exceed twelve months. At the end of the writing-up period you will be required to submit your thesis for examination.

Over the writing-up period you will continue to be offered formal supervision and this will include your first supervisor reading and commenting on the final draft of your thesis - provided that they are given
the draft thesis by a mutually acceptable date and in sufficient time before the required submission date.

In addition, you will continue to have access to the University Library and your University student IT account. You may continue to have access to appropriate Departmental or School facilities subject to the approval of the Head of Department or School.

9. Your Employment (HR)

It is important to remember that you are an employee of the University as well as a student. Your employment is governed by your contract and issues related to your employment should be discussed with your line manager, rather than your supervisor. If you have any questions related to your contract or employment you should consult HR; questions or concerns related to your study should be directed to your department or the Doctoral College.

9.1 Remuneration

The GTA package amount is equivalent to the Research Council UK Doctoral Stipend for each academic year and comprises a salary element with the balance payable as stipend. The total value of the annual package (salary plus stipend) remains unchanged during the academic year, but will be revised to the new Research Council UK Doctoral rate at the start of each new academic year.

9.1.1 Salary

The salary element is calculated using a salary point on the University’s single pay spine, in line with all other employees, eligible GTAs will receive a salary increment, your incremental date will normally be the anniversary of the first day of the first full calendar month after your commencement of employment date. The stipend element will be reduced so that the overall amount paid to you will be as stated in the original award letter.

You salary will be paid monthly in arrears; payments are made on the last working day of each calendar month. Dates will also vary in December due to the University’s closure period.

9.1.2 Stipend

Stipend payments are administered by the Finance Office (please see Key Contact section for contact details). Details of the total amount receivable at the start of the contract period are included on your GTA contract.

As detailed in section 9.1.1, if there is an increase to your salary in line with any nationally agreed pay awards and/or incremental payments the stipend element will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the salary increase for the year, such that the overall package will continue to be the equivalent of the Research Council UK Doctoral rate for that year.

Stipend payments will be made on a monthly basis in advance of the month - for example, your June stipend will be paid at the beginning of June.

For new GTAs the payment will be made by cheque at the start of the GTA contract, subject to completion of the University’s registration process. The remaining stipend payments will be paid monthly in advance by BACS, at the beginning of every month.
For existing GTAs the payment process will be exactly the same as above, with the exception that the first payment of the academic year will also be made by BACS, using the bank account details previously provided by students.

Stipends will be paid for the duration of your GTA contract, subject to your remaining a registered full-time student. Therefore, stipend payments will not normally be paid during periods of suspension; however, in exceptional cases, such as sickness and maternity, with agreement of the department and finance office, it may be possible to continue stipend payments during the suspension period. You should note that the total stipend cannot exceed 4 years and therefore if your student registration extends beyond the original end date you will not be entitled to receive a stipend payment for any extension period for completion of your research degree.

If you submit early or withdraw from your GTA contract before your contract end date then you will no longer be entitled to receive stipend payments and you will be required to repay any amount received in advance beyond your submission or withdrawal date. For example: *you are paid at the beginning of October for that month but withdraw/submit on the 10th of the month, then you will be required to pay back 21 days’ worth of stipend.*

### 9.1.3 Tuition fees

Tuition fees are administered by the Fees Payments Office. All GTAs are entitled to a tuition fee waiver equal to the value of the Home/EU fee.

International GTAs are required to pay the tuition fee difference between the Home/EU fee waiver and the overseas fee amount.

50% of the fees due are required to be paid before you can register as a student at the University. Please note that stipend payments can only be made after the registration process has been completed.

The fee amount is fixed for each year of the programme, allowing applicants to plan their finances for the duration of their GTA contract.

### 9.1.4 Other sources of funding

Other sources of funding, such as travel awards and Research Training Support Grants (RTSG), may be available within your College. Please speak to your line manager for further information about this.

Please note that there is no guarantee to further funding and the availability and amounts can vary from year to year and will be dependent upon local arrangements including local approval processes.

### 9.2.1 Hours of work

You will be contracted to 364 hours in a 12 month period. This equates to a nominal seven hours per week, which will be scheduled by the Department or School to reflect operational requirements. Your exact pattern of working will be agreed with your line manager and the number of hours may vary from term to term but the number of working hours shall be reasonable in the context of your academic commitments. You will be expected to have completed all 364 hours within the 12 month period from the start of your contract and in each 12 month period thereafter.

Your working time includes all duties as set out in the Job Summary Form. In addition, during your first year, you will be expected to attend a mandatory teaching course and this will also count towards your working time.

In accordance with the [University’s Student Regulations](#), your hours of work in this role are normally restricted to 8 hours per week and your teaching activities undertaken as a full-time research student.
should not exceed an average of eight hours a week. Provided that you do not surpass 364 hours of work within a 12 month period, you will not exceed the average weekly limitation of eight hours.

If you are a student visa holder, your total working hours for ALL employment must be in accordance with the limits set out in UKVI regulations. It is your responsibility to keep a record of all hours that you have worked for the University in any given year. You must immediately inform your line manager if you think that you could exceed this requirement at any time.

**If you hold a Tier 4 visa you must not exceed the weekly hours limited by the conditions of your visa.** Your weekly hour limitation under a Tier 4 visa is calculated on a rolling 7 day period not a calendar week (Monday to Sunday). If you believe you are at risk of exceeding the restriction of your visa, you must notify your line manager immediately and ensure you do not exceed the limit imposed by your visa. Research degrees do not have defined terms and therefore you cannot exceed the limitations at any point in the year. All paid work and volunteering counts towards your weekly limitation and work spread across multiple employers is still calculated together and subject to the same maximum limitation.

Your working time will be scheduled by your department or school for each semester, and it is your responsibility to understand and adhere to the local arrangements for recording your time worked.

### 9.2.2 Fieldwork and Fieldtrips

During the course of your research it may be necessary to conduct fieldwork or research off-campus. You should inform your manager before undertaking any off-campus study and arrangements should be made to ensure that you fulfil your employment obligations. Such arrangements may require you to segment your fieldwork in order to return to the university and perform teaching duties. It may also be possible to arrange work that can be conducted outside the university, for example marking, seminar preparation or one-to-one skype tutorials with students. With any arrangement for work to be conducted outside of the University it is important that you and your line manager agree upon the amount of time that will be committed to specific tasks and duties. For any period of off-campus study you must submit a completed Off-Campus Study form to the Doctoral College and complete any necessary risk assessment exercises in advance.

You may also be asked to accompany students on fieldtrips which will exceed the normal expected hours of work. In this case all of your hours engaged in teaching and supporting module coordinators should be accounted for and should not place you in excess of 364 hours of work within a 12 month period.

Before beginning fieldwork or accompanying a fieldtrip, you must agree your employee obligations with your line manager ahead of time. It is important that you complete all necessary risk assessments and obtain all necessary permits, licenses and visas. The diverse requirements of fieldwork is recognised and you should ensure that all arrangements are made and obligations confirmed with your line manager before engaging in off campus work.

### 9.3 Sickness absence

In the event that you are unable to carry out your GTA duties specified in your appointment letter due to illness you should report any sickness to your manager in accordance with the University’s [Sickness Absence Policy](#) (which may be amended from time to time). It is your responsibility to ensure that you adhere to reporting arrangements as detailed in the policy and any local operational arrangements. If you do not adhere to the local reporting arrangements any absence may be deemed to be unauthorised for which you may not receive occupational sick pay and for which disciplinary action may be taken.
This policy only applies to the employment element of the GTA scheme and not any stipend funding.

If you suspend your studies due to illness you may be entitled to receive sick pay in accordance with the University’s Policy. Your period of absence will need to be certified with a medical ‘fit note’ and the level and length of sick pay will be dependent upon your length of service.

9.4 Family friendly policies (maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave)

GTAs who meet the eligibility criteria are able to apply for paid University maternity leave, adoption leave and paternity leave and shared parental leave on the same basis, pro rata, as full-time staff. This relates to the employment part of the GTA agreement only. Information on these policies can be found on the Human Resources pages.

9.5 Annual leave

The full-time equivalent annual leave entitlement is 24 days, plus 6 closure days and 8 Bank Holidays. You will receive a 0.2 FTE pro rata entitlement. The closure dates are agreed by the University Council and announced at the start of each leave year. The University's holiday year runs between 01 January and 31 December and the University expects that members of staff will take their annual leave entitlement during the leave year.

At the start of each leave year the line manager (or designate) will calculate the pro rata holiday entitlement, bank holiday and closure day entitlements using the online calculator. This will confirm an annual amount of bookable leave based on your scheduled working pattern for the year ahead. The University shall be entitled to deduct from any payment due to you an equivalent to the amount of holidays taken over and above your entitlement as set out by your line manager.

Further details about the part-time calculation of annual leave can be found on the Human Resources pages for annual leave.

9.6 Difficult work situations

Whilst we all want every member of staff to have a positive experience during their time with the University, we recognise that things can go wrong sometimes. To ensure that any issues are managed appropriately, sensitively and in line with legislation, the University has a number of policies in place to support difficult situations at work.

Further information can be found on the Human Resources pages. We also advise you to get in touch with your HR Advisor (contact details can be found here).

9.7 Ending your contract

The University will follow the appropriate Ordinance or Policy and your line manager with support from Human Resources will provide you with advice on this.

Your contract of employment with the University of Leicester is conditional on you remaining a full-time registered student. At the end of your fixed-term contract it is expected that you will have successfully completed your PhD and will therefore cease to be a registered student. Towards the end of your contract we will follow the principles of the University of Leicester’s SOSR (Some Other Substantial Reason) Ordinance. As part of this process you will be given the opportunity to attend a meeting to discuss the ending of your contract. This process can be triggered at any time if your student registration ceases at any point during the term of your fixed term contract.
10. Key Contacts

Student Support Office
For any queries relating to your PhD registration such as registration, probation, supervision or examination contact the Doctoral College office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral College office</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pgresearch@le.ac.uk">pgresearch@le.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>+44 (0)116 252 2448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finance Office
For any queries relating to stipend payments or tuition fee waivers, such as

- Student registration issues
- Stipend payment dates and amounts
- Tuition fee waivers
- Notification of student bank details

Please contact the University’s Treasury Office as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GTA Finance</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gtafinance@le.ac.uk">gtafinance@le.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>+44(0)116 229 7452 or 2421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Human Resources
For any queries relating to your contract of employment with the University and your terms and conditions, such as

- Employment benefits
- Employee policies and ordinances

Further information can be found on the Human Resources pages of the website.
Alternatively you can contact the HR Advice team who will refer you to the HR contact for your area:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR Advice</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hradvice@le.ac.uk">hradvice@le.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>+44(0)116 252 2439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IT Services
For any problems with your IT account/s including problems logging in:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IT Services Desk</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ithelp@le.ac.uk">ithelp@le.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>+44(0)116 252 2253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Visa Queries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Office</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Welfare@le.ac.uk">Welfare@le.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>