

An Insider's Guide to Becoming a Business Academic

Questions, Answers and Checklists for New Business Academics

Dr Philippa Hunter-Jones
The University of Liverpool Management School, UK

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ABOUT THE GUIDE:

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This Guide is one outcome of a HEFCE funded, JISC/HEA managed, **Open Educational Resource** (OER) project. The Guide is intended to be a re-purposable resource, of relevance not only to business education, but also adaptable to other subject areas and for generic application. It has been designed to take account of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) and includes a range of templates (checklists) which might be used as evidence towards professional recognition against that Framework. Examples of this professional recognition might include postgraduate certificates, HEA fellowships and other forms of professional development at any of the UKPSF descriptor levels.

The content included in the Guide has been developed by the author and does not necessarily represent the views of her host institution. All errors are her own. Do let her know (P.Hunter-Jones@liverpool.ac.uk). It is primarily written for the UK Higher Education (HE) sector. In the spirit of OERs, please use it, and feel free to re-purpose or re-model it **citing both the full reference as indicated on page 1, and also adding [phj:010611:01liv](#) in your attributions.**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Philippa Hunter-Jones has worked in a College of Higher Education, a post '92 university and a pre '92 university. She has also delivered programmes in India, Bulgaria and Poland. She has worked in a range of Divisions, Departments, Schools, Knowledge Platforms, Research Clusters and Themes across a variety of subject areas including Sport, Leisure, Tourism, Hospitality and Events, and more recently, Marketing within a Management School.

She began her first (fixed-term) lecturing post on a Thursday in September. The following Monday, with no formal 'teacher training', she delivered her first lecture to 60 students. The technology (overhead projector) failed... Fifteen years, three jobs, two babies and one PhD later she was invited to attend her first induction... It was fascinating! She continues to enjoy the challenges of this often bewildering environment and thanks John, Lucy and Alexandra for keeping her sane.



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1. SUMMARY



This Guide is designed to help you, the new Business academic, through the early days and years of your new academic role.

It is designed to:

- answer questions frequently asked at this point
- identify questions **you** need to ask
- identify operational issues which are likely to arise from day one
- provide suggestions and checklists on how to manage these issues

It includes questions and answers linked to:

- [Entering Higher Education](#)
- [The Academic as a Teacher](#)
- [The Academic as a Researcher](#)
- [The Academic as an Administrator](#)

It is long and inevitably generic too. To get the most out of it, treat it as a resource that you dip in and out of as needed and use the Appendices to help you to personalize it. It is underpinned by a belief that the key to long term success in Higher Education (HE) is linked to citizenship, respect for others and relationship building through

NETWORKING:

Network: Many academics are actually shy and retiring. Some of us actually dread entering a room full of strangers (imagine how your students feel entering a mass lecture room...). However, building collegial communities and making connections from day one is the key to your long-term success in the academic game, a game where the language of instruction is word-of-mouth, networking and goodwill. Working at letting people know who you are and what you are about will open many future teaching and research doors including invited speaker opportunities, joint projects, grant applications, editorial board membership, job opportunities and so on. Attendance at conferences and seminars from an early stage will help with this. Remember that your own institution will offer opportunities here. Pace yourself though. You have got a lot on your plate in these early years. Expect it to take at least two to five years to settle in to your new academic role.

The role is deceptively complex.

Ethics: Keep relationships professional at all times. Think hard about your presence and interaction on social networking sites and similar technological platforms. Be consistent in your treatment of students and listen to what they have to say. Clearly communicate to students how you will handle their contacts, their e-mails and your office hours for instance. Student satisfaction will be directly linked to what you tell them you will do in the



first place. If you say you are going to do something, do it. If you cannot keep your promise explain why. Do not promise things you have no way of delivering on. Do not predict marks. Take responsibility when things do not go to plan. Disasters happen to us all. Whilst a certain amount of worrying about things is healthy, do not dwell. Learn from mistakes and move on. Never discuss a student, or give out any details about them, with other students, or their parents, without their permission. Keep records of meetings with project / dissertation students and any other students where problems are discussed. Date all correspondence. Check out Departmental protocols regarding the storage of correspondence. Advise students to keep copies of original documents e.g. sickness notes. **Follow University protocols and ethical guidelines in research.**

Teaching: Enjoy your lecturing and have fun! If you look unhappy, bored, disinterested, fed-up, grumpy, depressed how can you expect your students to engage with you? Never overrun in your lecture/seminar slot. Students need time to get to other classes even if you do not. Regardless of what the research tells us, attention spans are short. A lecture which includes no interaction will lose students very quickly. Similarly, it is a rare colleague who successfully competes with lunchtime, or a late afternoon session. Overloading with subject content will not be welcomed, no matter how fascinating you think it is. Stick to making a small number of key points well. Be innovative in your delivery. Listen and respond to students. Informally evaluate your module after about four or five weeks of delivery. Simple questions such as what works for you? what is not working for you? can be very effective in ironing out issues at an early stage. Get students on board in working out the class rules for late arrivals, use of mobile phones and other technological gadgets and talking in class. Whilst for you marking will feel like it is never going to end, how work is marked and the time it takes to return marked coursework are two particularly important issues for students. Follow Departmental marking criteria (where available) and make sure your submission date/s allow you to work to Departmental protocols. Students often have competing demands on their time (e.g. part-time work). Avoid re-scheduling their contact if at all possible. Whilst regularly updating teaching materials is fundamental, you are unlikely to have enough time to conduct a full annual overhaul. Set in motion a biennial review process and rotate the modules you review. Teaching responsibilities often change, at times, with little warning. **Expect change and enjoy the rare periods of stability!**

Workplace: We have all been 'new' at some point and know how unsettling it can be. Colleagues are a fantastic resource base. Utilise their expertise. Many will operate an open door policy even though they too are under pressure. The beginning of the academic year (September) is the most common pressure point. Whilst academic staff are often fickle and move between institutions, support staff are much more likely to be loyal, remain for years in one institution and have a tremendous knowledge base as a consequence. They know what works and what does not... They are the oracle. Respect their wisdom.



Remember work is only one part of the equation. Many colleagues face considerable external pressures too: they have long memories and will never forget a helping hand. For some academics, teaching offers one of the few opportunities for interaction with colleagues, module team teaching for instance. For others, the world of higher education (HE) can be a very isolating experience. This is a very common feeling exacerbated by the simplicity of sending e-mails. **You are not alone in feeling alone!**

Opportunities: Grab them when they come along. They may not appear again. The only failure in life is being too scared to try something in the first place. Opportunities linked to managing the teaching and assessment of large student cohorts and international students will be particularly useful in these early days. Longer term, e-learning and blended learning are important to look into. Equally investigate research opportunities linked to being an early career researcher too. There are many schemes which you might qualify for at this stage including those operated by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (www.esrc.ac.uk), the British Academy (www.britac.ac.uk) and the Leverhulme Trust (www.leverhulme.ac.uk). **Ask lots of questions of colleagues!**

Research: From day one begin to seek out opportunities to engage with research, however big, or, at this stage, most likely small. Join on-line forums. Register for journal table of contents notifications. Be strategic in your selection of professional organisation membership. You cannot join everything. Your subject area will have a pecking order. All do. Ask a number of colleagues and see which organisations get the most recommendations. At this stage you may or may not have clearly defined research targets. Regardless, work on letting others know that you exist. Writing book reviews can be an enjoyable and painless means of self promotion. You are probably reading the books more closely than anyone else at this point anyway! A genuine research contribution will not appear overnight. A substantive paper will take years to write. Expect this. You are not thick. You are thorough. Never overrun in a conference presentation. This is bad time management and selfish. **The worst thing you can do is to wait for 'a clear patch' to work on research. You will retire first.**

Know your Institution: Get to know your institution beyond your own department. How does it work? Who are the key players and decision-makers? How are resources accessed? How can you influence decisions? How can you progress? Sitting on cross-faculty committees can be an excellent way of engaging more widely with your institution. Get to know your institution through the eyes of your students too. How does it work? What do they have access to, both in person and on-line? You are not a trained counsellor. You will need to know what support networks are available to students e.g. health? counselling? student finance? accommodation? careers and employability, other?



You also need to check out the institutional protocols regarding replying to e-mails, attending lectures, meeting personal tutors, reporting illness, applying for mitigating circumstances etc. Documentation for students, handbooks for instance, is increasingly comprehensive and plentiful. Staff resources can be less so. **Take advantage of both staff and student resources!**

Identify: Think about the identity you would like to develop with colleagues and students. What do you want to be remembered for? A selfless, considerate colleague? The academic who cuts research corners? The lecturer who was always late? Disinterested in students? Focused upon their own research? Or the lecturer who was well prepared or took the trouble to take time out to listen and help? Students are very supportive, *and forgiving*, of lecturers who genuinely care about them and their needs. *They know!* Treat students as you hope others would treat a member of your family. As you deliver a lecture to hundreds of them remember that they are individuals with individual needs. **You were a student once.**

Next Step: Think about your career development in the short and long term. Where would you like to be in 5 years time? Developing a respectable research profile? Aspiring to management? The two routes are not mutually exclusive but both demand time and the development of particular skills. Take responsibility for checking out staff development opportunities and utilise them accordingly. Face up to the reality that there is never ever enough time. All conscientious colleagues will be in a similar position. The sooner you accept this, and organise your workload to recognize this, the happier you will be. The Academic Year Pressure Points (see [Appendix 1](#)) attempts to help you with this. **You cannot do everything. Prioritise.**

Game playing: Academia is not a job. It is a way of life and one from which you are unlikely to ever switch off. It can be likened to a game. Engaging in research is probably *the* fundamental rule of the game. You are unlikely to ever reach the premier league without a research profile. Internal promotional opportunities will be similarly compromised. As it stands research 'success' is measured in a formulaic and controversial manner. At this stage you cannot do anything about this. Instead of wasting energy getting fed-up about this and other annoyances (e.g. workload models, marking, administration loads...), and you will, use this energy to get you into a position of future influence. Develop research areas that you genuinely care and are passionate about. Be realistic in your targets. Small, but perfectly formed and delivered outputs are far better than large, innovative but never written up studies. Be ethical in your research practices. And above all *enjoy* the game as much as you can. **You've made it to the pitch – work hard at not being substituted!**



2. CONTENTS



1. Summary	4
2. Contents Page	8
3. Introduction: About this Guide	12
• Welcome to the world of Academia	12
• Why has this Guide been written?	12
• Are 'new' Business Academics all the same?	13
• Given the diversity of circumstances, what is the point of developing one guide?	14
• How is this Guide structured?	14
• A comment on terminology used	14
• What are Departmental protocols?	15
4. Entering Higher Education: Common Questions and Answers	16
• What is academic life really all about?	16
• Which function is the most important?	16
• In the UK, what are 'old universities' and 'new universities'?	16
• What is the National Student Survey (NSS)?	17
• What is the Browne review?	17
• Why do management employ 'new' academic staff?	17
• Who are my colleagues and where do they fit in?	18
• How do I meet my colleagues?	18
• What questions should I ask on, and from, Day One?	18
• What are the key documents I really need on Day One?	19
5. The Academic as a Teacher: Common Questions and Answers	20
Teaching Activity:	
• What teaching will I be responsible for?	20
• What level of teaching can I expect to be involved in?	20
• Will I have to prepare all the teaching materials from scratch?	20



• What do I do if I am asked to teach outside of my subject area?	21
• How many hours will I have to teach?	21
• What is a workload model?	21
• What is the difference between a lecture, a seminar and a tutorial?	22
• What might my typical teaching and learning related activities include?	23
• What will I need to begin my teaching?	23
• Where will I find out information?	24
• What are module learning outcomes?	24
• Do I have to cover all module learning outcomes?	24
• How much freedom do I have to teach what I want in a module?	24
• Will I be expected to supervise student projects?	24
• Will I be given any pastoral roles in the early days?	24
• How do I learn to teach?	25
• What do I do if I want to organise a field trip?	25
• Will I be subject to inspections/audits?	25
• Do I have to take attendance registers?	26
• What do I do if a student is ill in class e.g. an epileptic fit?	26
• How do I change the content of a module, or introduce a new module?	26
• How do I know if I am a good or bad teacher?	26
• What facilities will my teaching rooms have?	27
• Can I use my own laptop in teaching rooms?	27
• I am timetabled for one hour lectures. Do I lecture for the full hour?	27
• Am I responsible for the state I leave the teaching room in?	27
• What do I need to do if I want to invite a Guest Speaker in?	28
• Do I need to evaluate my teaching at all?	28
• How are courses reviewed?	28

[The Student Population:](#) 29

• What can I expect in terms of students?	29
• What are Generation Y students?	29
• What will the student population expect from me?	30
• What questions are students likely to ask me?	30
• What are students particularly focused upon?	30
• What do I do if students are disruptive e.g. arrive late, talk	30



<u>through my lectures, use their mobile phones?</u>	
• <u>How should I respond if a student challenges my lecture materials?</u>	31
• <u>Should I know the names of students?</u>	31
• <u>What do I do if my students are struggling with speaking or writing in English?</u>	31
• <u>How do I manage student contact with me?</u>	32
• <u>What do I do if students complain to me about a colleague?</u>	32
• <u>Am I allowed to have a relationship with one of my students?</u>	32
<u>The Assessment Process:</u>	33
• <u>How do I set coursework and examination papers?</u>	33
• <u>What do I need to do for students who are re-sitting coursework and/or examinations?</u>	33
• <u>How do I stop students from copying the work of others?</u>	34
• <u>How do I mark work and how much feedback is required?</u>	34
• <u>How do I mark group work?</u>	34
• <u>Can I take marking home?</u>	35
• <u>What are the usual marking bands?</u>	35
• <u>How do I cope with invigilating examinations?</u>	35
• <u>What do I need to do regarding the External Examiner?</u>	36
6. <u>The Academic as a Researcher: Common Questions and Answers</u>	37
• <u>What is scholarly activity?</u>	37
• <u>What are the most common examples of this activity?</u>	37
• <u>How important is it that I become involved in scholarly activity?</u>	37
• <u>Which form of scholarly activity is the most important?</u>	38
• <u>Will I be given a timetable allowance for this activity?</u>	38
• <u>What funding options should I consider at this stage?</u>	38
• <u>Will I be able to use this activity in applying for future jobs and promotional opportunities?</u>	38
• <u>Will I benefit financially from other forms of scholarly activity?</u>	38
• <u>How do I find out opportunities to become involved in this work?</u>	38
• <u>What are the RAE and the REF?</u>	39
• <u>Research outputs seem important. How are decisions reached regarding the quality of research outputs?</u>	40



7. <u>The Academic as an Administrator: Common Questions and Answers</u>	41
• <u>What is administration in HE?</u>	41
• <u>What are the most common examples of this activity?</u>	41
• <u>Does assessment and marking count as administration?</u>	41
• <u>How much time should I spend on administration?</u>	41
• <u>Will I be given a timetable allowance for this activity?</u>	42
• <u>Will I be able to use this activity in applying for future promotional opportunities?</u>	42
8. <u>References and Useful Information Sources</u>	43
9. <u>Appendices:</u>	46
• <u>Appendix 1 The Academic Year Pressure Points</u>	46
• <u>Appendix 2 Checklist: Coping from Day One</u>	53
• <u>Appendix 3 Checklist: Preparing to Deliver a Module</u>	68
• <u>Appendix 4 Checklist: Preparing a Module Handbook</u>	70
• <u>Appendix 5 Checklist: Preparing a Coursework Assignment</u>	72
• <u>Appendix 6 Checklist: Beginning Research</u>	74
• <u>Appendix 7 Attributions for Open Business Resources</u>	78



3. INTRODUCTION: ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Welcome to the world of Academia



A joyful world full of many ironies:

- Our title 'academic' for most of the population means abstract, conjectural, hypothetical, impractical...
- We send e-mails to colleagues two feet away from us and then complain our own inbox is full.
- We pick up e-mails in supermarkets telling us a journal has rejected our life work.
- Our newspaper articles, read by millions, are ignored in research assessment exercises.
- Our journal articles, read closely by ten people (including our parents) if we are really lucky, *are* interrogated in research assessment exercises.
- We are surrounded by students who own better technological gadgets than we do and they are supposed to be the poor ones...

So why join it?! This is a world of intellectual challenge and stimulation, of multiple opportunities to engage in meaningful work, offering freedom, autonomy and variety. In this world you are fundamentally paid to read, reflect, write and debate at length in the pursuit of excellence. This is priceless. Remember this in moments of despair and cherish it!

This world has its own distinctive culture, language and inevitable bureaucracy (for a jargon buster see <http://research-archive.liv.ac.uk/3593/>). It operates on a currency of goodwill. How much you will enjoy and gain from this career to an extent is in your hands. Many argue luck also plays a part... This Guide attempts to help you start the process by introducing academic life through a series of questions and answers. Some of these questions you may already have thought of. Others may not even have occurred to you at this stage.

Why has this Guide been written?

In 2008, the Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance (BMAF) Subject Centre of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) launched a project to investigate the support and development needs of new academic staff in Business-related disciplines. The experiences and expectations of new academic staff, senior management and representatives of their respective academic development units were collected across eight UK institutions. The full details and outcomes of this study can be accessed at:



www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/projects/detail/new_academic_staff

One area of need identified within new academic staff interviews was for the development and circulation of a **'hit the ground running'** resource which:

- explained what being a new academic was all about;
- answered the many questions new academics have at this stage of this job, including those questions we might feel uneasy asking.

This Guide has been developed in response to this need.

Are 'new' Business Academics all the same?

No. Being 'new' might take any number of forms:

- You might be a member of staff in your first full-time academic post having completed full-time education, a PhD for instance.
- You might be a member of staff entering the profession after a period of 'industry' employment.
- You might be an international member of staff entering the country, perhaps for the first time, to take up your post.
- You might be moving between culturally different institutions and feel 'new'. In the UK this might include moving between a pre '92 (often referred to as 'an old university') and post '92 university (often associated with a former polytechnic) for instance.
- So too, you might be a part-time member of staff, or visiting lecturer who have a number of other commitments to attend to alongside your education role.

Being a Business Academic might also take many forms. You may be involved in any one, or more, of the following:

- Accountancy, E-Business, Entrepreneurship, Economics, Events, Finance, Graduate Employability, Hospitality, International Business, Law, Leadership, Management, Marketing, Operations Management, Public Policy, Retail, Service Management, Sport, Strategic Management, Supply Chain Management, Tourism and other.

You may enter academia with:

- A raft of academic qualifications, including a PhD.
- A raft of qualifications, and nearing completion of your PhD.
- Professional qualifications.



- Other attributes.

Given the diversity of circumstances, what is the point of developing one Guide?

Regardless of your entry route, or subject area, you will share one thing in common with past and present generations; at this point you will feel:

- **overwhelmed**
- probably **isolated**
- likely **bewildered**

What does all the jargon mean?! Yes, you are likely to receive an induction, be allocated a mentor or buddy, be able to access considerable staff development opportunities and be subject to appraisals and annual reviews, but this may not happen on day one, or even week one of your new job. What do you do? How do you survive? This Guide intends to help you through these early days and years by:

- answering questions frequently asked at this point;
- identifying questions you need to ask;
- identifying operational issues which are likely to arise from day one;
- providing suggestions and checklists on how to manage these issues in the short and longer term.

How is this Guide structured?

- It works on a simple question and answer basis.
- The questions are derived from three sources:
 - Source one: questions which arose in the original new academic interviews (www.heacademy.ac.uk/business/projects/detail/new_academic_staff).
 - Source two: questions which arose in a 'New and Aspiring Business Academics Workshop' hosted by BMAF and the author in 2011.
 - Source three: questions identified through research undertaken by the author.
- The answers are derived from various sources:
 - Some are factual with sources provided.
 - Others, in keeping with the Guide, are based upon experience and insights. These answers are inevitably subjective and should be interpreted as such. No claims are made that they are applicable to all situations, all of the time. They have been developed by an author who fundamentally adores her work and wants you to too. All errors are her own. Use the answers as you see fit and add to them.



- The content covers:
 - General question areas
 - Teaching and learning
 - Research and scholarly activity more generally
 - Administration

A comment on terminology used:

- We all work in institutions with their own terminology. To accommodate this, this Guide uses the term '*Department*' to mean the unit you are working in. You may well be working in a Department, but so too you could be based in a School, Subject Group, Research Group, Research Cluster or a unit of another name. It uses *Module* to indicate the course you are teaching. Your institution may refer to this as a unit, course or other. If you stay in academia long enough you will use all these terms at least once!
- Each institution will also operate its own interpretation of the academic year. For instance, some will operate a two semester year (September to February and February to June), others a three semester year (September to February, February to June and June to September), and others a three term year (September to Christmas, Christmas to Easter, Easter to June). This Guide works on the notion of two teaching semesters (September to February and February to June) and one semester of dissertation/project supervision (June to September).
- Please substitute the terminology and interpret the academic year as appropriate to your circumstances.

What are Departmental protocols?

- Departmental protocols are rules that operate at a local level.
- They will cover a host of issues including setting and marking assignments, meeting and responding to student needs, information needed by External Examiners and so on. This Guide makes continual reference to them. This might lead you to believe that they appear in a written format, perhaps a staff or student handbook or other detailed documents. Whilst this might be the case, it is much more likely that protocols will be communicated verbally through conversations with colleagues, or appear on single sheets of paper. Do not be misled into thinking that comprehensive materials will automatically exist.



- Where protocols are only verbally available be sure to question them with a number of colleagues. Folklore can sometimes take over in academia!



4. ENTERING HIGHER EDUCATION: COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is academic life really all about?

- Entering employment in HE can be an unnerving experience. At your interview you may well have discussed a host of questions linked to teaching and contact hours, opportunities for research and promotion. You may even have reached agreements within the interview regarding what your likely work commitments will be. It is quite common for these agreements to exist only in verbal format.
- Likely you will enter academia with particular personal objectives, aspirations and a set of expectations. Some will be realistic. Other's not.
- Often these might be linked to developing a research profile. Indeed you may have been employed on the basis of your emerging research profile. This is very positive, but not an entirely accurate reflection of your probable workload in the early years.
- Your work is more likely to revolve primarily around three functions, not one: teaching and learning, research and scholarly activity, administration.
- *Teaching and learning will probably take up most of your time at this stage.* The Guide has been developed to reflect this.

Which function is the most important?

- The relative importance of each function will be determined to a large extent by the culture of your institution.
- In reality this culture is in turn specifically influenced by *how* that institution is *funded*.
- Institutions with significant research incomes will have a very strong research culture and expect you to focus most attention accordingly. Often these are 'old universities'.
- Institutions more dependent upon teaching income will naturally be heavily loaded towards teaching, and aspire to research excellence. Often these are 'new universities'.

In the UK, what are 'old universities' and 'new universities'?

- The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 significantly altered 'university' supply, granting former polytechnics university status with their own degree awarding powers (Callender and Jackson, 2008).



- 'Old universities' also referred to as 'pre '92 universities' are those institutions which were universities prior to the 1992 Act.
- 'New universities' also referred to as 'post '92 universities', are those institutions which became universities as a result of the 1992 Act. They are predominantly former polytechnics and Colleges of HE.

What is the National Student Survey (NSS)?

- Reference: www.thestudentsurvey.com
- This is an annual national survey, completed on-line by final year HND and undergraduate students in most further and higher educational institutions across the UK.
- The survey began in 2005.
- It comprises of twenty-one questions in six sections and one overall satisfaction question.
- The data is used to compile comparative data published on www.unistats.com, a website designed to help future students choose where and what to study.
- It is launched in January/February time of each academic year.
- It is administered by an independent market research agency.
- Remember that regardless of what we think about this survey and the methodology employed, the findings appear within the public domain. They will inevitably influence potential students and their parents in their choice of HE institution.

What is the Browne review?

- The full title of the Browne review is the Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance (Browne, 2010).
- This review, together with the UK Coalition Government Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 (HM Treasury, 2010) recommends a shift away from traditional public sector funding support into a free market economy, alongside encouraging further HE competition.
- There is no one common UK HEI response to these reviews.
- The different level of fees across England, Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland is one clear example of this.

Why do Management employ 'new' academic staff?

Research by BMAF indicates that Management are excited by the appointment of 'new' academic staff. They see you as:

- Encouraging the flow of talent.
- Providing 'new blood' to an organization.



- Offering a means of challenging existing policies and practices within an Institution
- Offering different perspectives which can re-ignite subject area debates.
- Offering an infectious enthusiasm which has a positive impact upon fellow colleagues.
- (Possibly) Being able to relate to, and interact effectively with, the student population.

Who are my colleagues and where do they fit in?

- Your internal colleagues will include: fellow academic staff and many groups of support staff including library, IT staff, media resources, building managers, café staff, parking attendants.
- Academic staff might include any combination of the following: professors, readers, principal lectures, senior lecturers, lecturers, associate lecturers, teaching fellows, graduate teaching assistants, PhD students.
- Academic staff may be full-time, part-time, permanent, on fixed term contracts. They may be contracted to full lecturing and research duties, or may be focused upon particular components of this, teaching for instance.

How do I meet my colleagues?

- Ask – is there a coffee morning or another opportunity to meet colleagues informally? Don't meet them for the first time at an external conference. It is embarrassing.
- Introduce yourself to support staff and ask what they need from you. This is likely to include your availability to see students and when you are planning to have coursework submitted.
- Support staff are often the oracle. They are your lifeline. They work to tight deadlines e.g. in preparing exam board spreadsheets, which are usually set centrally. They seldom have any influence over the setting of these deadlines. Do not make their job any more complicated than it needs to be.

What questions should I ask on, and from, Day One?

Focus upon:

- **People**
- **Access codes**
- **Teaching Commitments**
- **Information Technology**



- **E**ssentials
- **N**on-teaching responsibilities
- **C**ontractual requirements
- **E**nvironment

The questions linked to these areas are detailed in [Appendix 2](#).

What are the key documents I really need on Day One?

- Departmental telephone/e-mail contact list.
- Campus map.
- Departmental Health and Safety information.



5. THE ACADEMIC AS A TEACHER: COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Whether you consider yourself a 'teacher' or not, the reality is that most likely a major part of your job in these early years will include you delivering teaching materials to a student population. This is consequently the main section of the Guide.



This section includes questions linked to:

- [Teaching activity.](#)
- [The student population.](#)
- [The assessment process.](#)

TEACHING ACTIVITY:

What teaching will I be responsible for?

- You are likely to be responsible for the management and delivery of one, two or more modules. Responsibilities beyond this will vary, but are likely to be limited in your first year.
- Expect a large degree of autonomy. Inviting guest lecturers, developing industry projects, determining suitable reading literature and much more will be your call. *This freedom is priceless.*

What level of teaching can I expect to be involved in?

- You might be involved in any of the following: foundation degree, Higher National Diploma (HND), degree, postgraduate teaching and post-experience activity or research student (MPhil/PhD) supervision. Each has a particular set of needs.

Will I have to prepare all the teaching materials from scratch?

- If it is a new module, running for the first time, then yes, you probably will.
- If it is an existing module, which you are taking over from another colleague then it will depend upon your colleague.
- Some colleagues will willingly share resources with others. Passing over teaching materials for you to work from, or modify, will be second nature to them.
- Other colleagues may be less accommodating and offer little or nothing.
- Let's hope you work with the first group!



What do I do if I am asked to teach outside of my subject area?

- In the first instance you are likely to be given teaching which others do not want and you may have no direct experience in. Everyone goes through this. Be patient. In time you too will be able to pass unwanted teaching on.
- You may be asked to cover work which only has a limited lifespan, for example, there are only two years left of a particular programme. This can be extremely frustrating and a very poor use of resources. Accept this and try not to dwell on it. Again, others will have experienced this too so will understand your annoyance even if they cannot do anything about it.

How many hours will I have to teach?

- Some, but not all, institutions have contractual obligations as to the number of hours you are expected to teach. Many of the 'new university' contracts for instance often stipulate no more than eighteen hours class contact time in any one week.
- Whether institutions will hold you to such contractual obligations in your first year will vary considerably. At this stage many institutions may try to reduce your teaching load in order to help you to establish yourself and become more familiar with working in the HE context.
- Institutions will have some way of working out your workload. This is usually done through the application of a workload model.

What is a workload model?

- A workload model is an extremely crude attempt at quantifying how we spend our time as an academic.
- There is no common workload model across HE. All institutions, if not Departments, develop their own model. Consequently even within one institution the model will differ on a Departmental basis.
- The model usually works on awarding a certain number of hours to the different functions you perform. For instance you might be awarded 60 hours for the delivery of one 10 credit module which includes 12 weeks of one hour lectures, 12 weeks of three one hour seminars, marking and moderation of 120 coursework assignments and examination scripts.
- You will likely be awarded time for administration and time for research too. At this stage do not expect a lot of time for these functions unless you are carrying an administrative role, course leadership for instance, or are involved in a research project which carries research funding with it.
- The model will probably have been developed to provide a sense of fairness across a Department.



- How equitable the model is will depend upon the level of detail it takes account of. For instance, workload models often struggle to cope with differentiating between modules with high and low student numbers. Modules with high student numbers inevitably take considerable time to manage effectively. You will probably exceed the maximum hours allocated for teaching just dealing with the correspondence and marking attached to such a module.
- Workload models seldom differentiate between modules where you are expected to develop materials from scratch and modules where you have been given materials to work from.
- Similarly assessment practices are unlikely to be a feature of the model. There is a world of difference between marking 200 essays and feeding 200 multiple choice response sheets through an automated process...
- Workload models also cope only with explicit functions. They seldom take account of the hours you might spend helping students, and staff, or sitting on institutional non-essential committees in areas you might care about, environmental or disability support groups for instance.
- For your own sanity try to see them as a crude attempt at workload management. If you take them too seriously, or dwell on them, you will become really, really fed-up. Rise above it and note ways to refine the model when you are in a position of influence in future years!

What is the difference between a lecture, a seminar and a tutorial?

- A lecture usually takes place on a weekly basis and delivers the primary content of the module.
- It is usually delivered, cohort size allowing, to all students taking a particular module in one go.
- If the cohort size is too big for one delivery the lecture may need to be repeated. To be fair to all students make sure that the repeat lecture follows the same script and examples as the first delivery did.
- A lecture is usually tutor led and often quite formal in style.
- The amount of student input into a lecture will vary considerably. This really will reflect the lecturing style of the tutor taking the lecture.
- The terms seminar and tutorial are often used interchangeably to mean more or less the same thing.
- These classes are usually considerably smaller than lectures with numbers perhaps in the region of 15 to 25 students.
- They make take place on a weekly basis, or every other week.
- They are usually structured in a way which gets students involved in discussions and debates. For instance, the tutor may ask for reading or research to be



undertaken in preparation for the class. This activity then either forms the central talking point of the seminar, or underpins the emergent conversations.

- As with multiple lecture deliveries, make sure you are consistent in your delivery of multiple seminar/tutorial classes.

What might my typical teaching and learning related activities include?

- Ordering books.
- Curriculum design: content and pedagogical issues.
- Updating module specifications.
- Teaching materials: design, preparation, delivery and evaluation.
- Producing schemes of work.
- Delivery of teaching materials which might include lectures, seminars, tutorials, practical work, e-learning, blended learning.
- Evaluation of teaching activity is usually completed towards the end of a module delivery. Your Department is likely to have a standard proforma to apply. Check this out and how, where and when to report the findings. Do students get to see the results? Ask.
- Coursework assessment: design, administration, advice, marking, student feedback, results analysis.
- Examinations: design of both first and resit papers, preparation of suggested solutions, response to external examiner feedback on your papers, possible invigilation duties (main and resit period), marking, moderation, feedback (your Institution will have a policy on what you can/cannot feedback on examination papers), results analysis, examination board attendance (might include an interim board, pre-board and actual board).

What will I need to begin my teaching?

- Formally approved module specification, or similar document. This is the document which has been approved by validation/re-validation events. It is often available online. The Student Support Office will know where.
- Module Handbook – there may be a Departmental template for this and other documents. Ask.
- Assignment documentation and deadlines.
- Classlists (lectures and tutorials/seminars).
- External Examiner requests or feedback.
- Access to the course/programme regulations.
- See [Appendix 3](#), [4](#) and [5](#).



Where will I find out information?

- Colleagues, support staff in particular.
- Your institutional intranet is likely to be a mine of information. You are likely to have a wealth of policy documents at your fingertips.
- A considerable amount of information might be found in a staff handbook (if available) or student handbook (most likely available).

What are module learning outcomes?

- Learning outcomes map out what a module is intended to cover. They define the content of the syllabus.
- It is important to include them in module handbooks.
- It is also useful to use them to structure your lecture sessions. Noting which outcomes will be addressed in a lecture helps students piece together the module overall.

Do I have to cover all module learning outcomes?

- Yes, but not necessarily all outcomes in every assignment activity.

How much freedom do I have to teach what I want in a module?

- Meeting the module learning outcomes is the key to the module delivery.
- How you explore these outcomes, your selection of examples for instance, is up to you.

Will I be expected to supervise student projects?

- Yes. This might include acting as an undergraduate placement tutor, undergraduate and postgraduate dissertation supervisor, MPhil/PhD supervisor.
- Each supervisory role is different.
- There is likely to be a Departmental/Institutional document/handbook linked to different types of project, for the student at least. Ask.
- Check out the role of ethics too. Does your Department have an Ethics Committee? Are all projects, undergraduate and postgraduate, to be subject to ethical approval? What is the process? Institutional and/or Departmental documentation will exist for you to consult.

Will I be given any pastoral roles in the early days?

- Likely. These might include: Personal Tutor, Mentor and Referee.



- Check out Departmental protocols on writing references. There may be a standard proforma to follow, or rules about who can and cannot write a reference.
- Requests for references can appear at anytime throughout the year. January onwards is a particularly popular time as many students begin to apply for further courses.
- International students usually apply to multiple courses within multiple institutions. Be prepared to receive multiple reference requests.

How do I learn to teach?

- Your institution will require you to complete some form of professional development in this area. It might take the form of a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, or a shorter more focused programme. This professional development will introduce you to a host of pedagogical tools you can use e.g. lecture delivery, action learning, experiential learning etc.
- It will not happen on day one however. Prepare yourself to drive the car before you have even taken driving lessons.
- Ask a colleague/s if you can sit in on their sessions to get some ideas. Few colleagues enjoy being 'observed' so do not take it personally if some say no. There are plenty who will say yes.

What do I do if I want to organise a field trip?

- There will be Department protocols here linked to risk assessments and insurance matters.
- There may be a field trip co-ordinator who can offer advice.
- If not, find a colleague who has organised a trip and follow their advice.

Will I be subject to inspections/audits?

- Yes. These are likely to include:
 - Peer review of your teaching, although check out union guidance on this.
 - Internal curriculum reviews
 - Institutional audits
 - Professional body inspections where relevant e.g. Accountancy
 - Accreditation Body inspections
 - These inspections will usually be a central talking point of Departmental meetings, Boards of Study, for a considerable time prior to the event itself. At this stage, it is unlikely that you will take any lead role in these activities beyond your own module contributions.



Do I have to take attendance registers?

- Check out Departmental protocols here.
- It is likely to be a requirement for international students.
- Monitoring attendance is often very helpful for identifying 'problem' students, and students with problems.
- Circulate a class list and ask students to sign in.
- Policing the accuracy of register completion is impossible in large groups. Appeal to students to help you here. Does the student cohort want absent students to be given credit for attendance? You will find that increasingly they do not.

What do I do if a student is ill in class?

- With large student cohorts you are more likely to confront heart stopping moments like this than ever before.
- The collapse of a student for whatever reason e.g. an epileptic fit, is a key example of this.
- Ask your Health and Safety officer for advice here *before* you begin lecturing. They will either know the answer or be able to direct you to the relevant contact here. Advice will be available.
- Whatever situation you confront, and no matter how you feel, attempt to remain as calm as you can. The student cohort will be looking to you for re-assurance.

How do I change the content of a module, or introduce a new module?

- Updating module content or introducing a new module is important and expected in this subject area.
- The University will have formal processes through which you do this. These might include review by Boards of Study at a Departmental level (minor modifications), or a fuller review (major modifications). Which process you need to follow will depend upon the extent to which you are altering the module.
- Remember though that your module is unlikely to operate in splendid isolation. You will need to consider the breadth and depth of module content, pre-requisites, delivery styles and assessment design in light of the rest of the programme/s the module contributes to.

How do I know if I am a good or bad teacher?

- Human instinct means that we are more likely to 'complain' than we are to praise.



- Encouraging students to provide feedback throughout their programme is a healthy way of keeping on top of any issues which might be festering away.
- Complaints may take a number of forms and will be of varying seriousness.
- There will be Departmental protocols on responding to complaints.
- Often it is not the complaint itself which creates big problems, but the way in which it is handled.
- It is really important to try to deal with matters as quickly and thoroughly as possible, communicating progress to the student as you proceed.
- Moments of praise will appear. Savour them!

What facilities will my teaching rooms have?

- Facilities are likely to vary widely.
- Whilst lecture rooms will probably have an Overhead projector (OHP), computer and data projector installed, do not presume they will all be there and functioning.
- Always have a back-up, worst case scenario plan in your mind.
- Seminar rooms are likely to be less well equipped, unless you have specifically requested particular facilities in them.

Can I use my own laptop in teaching rooms?

- You might well have to! Check with the AV technician as to how to use this and access networked areas too.

I am timetabled for one hour lectures. Do I lecture for the full hour?

- No. Usually this time allocation includes time for students and staff to move between classes.
- It is more likely that you will start on the hour and finish by ten minutes to the hour. Check your own institutional arrangements here.

Am I responsible for the state I leave the teaching room in?

- Custom and practice means that we should all take responsibility for ensuring that the room we leave is fit for another group to use.
- If you re-arrange the room furniture return it to the original arrangement. Clean the boards and get students to remove their rubbish.
- Unless a colleague is obviously entering the room, power down data projectors (the bulbs cost a fortune); turn off lights and other power sources.
- Return keys (e.g. DVD cabinet) to the office you collected them from.



What do I need to do if I want to invite a Guest Speaker in?

- Check out the Departmental arrangements for paying a guest speaker before you agree to anything. Most will speak for free anyway, particularly where you offer to return the compliment.
- Check out parking arrangements and book well in advance.
- Let Reception know you are expecting this speaker and how to get hold of you when they arrive.
- Make sure you equip the speaker with clear information about where to find you, when, what you hope they will cover and how long they have to deliver their material.

Do I need to evaluate my teaching at all?

- Yes. There will be Departmental processes here. These are likely to focus upon evaluating the module at the end of each delivery, possibly using a standard Departmental proforma.
- You will probably have to write a report based on the evaluation and possibly also post this onto the VLE so that students can see what was raised and how you intend to respond to the points they raise.
- It is also a good idea to carry out an informal module evaluation during the module delivery too. Around week four or five would be a good time as this gives you plenty of time to correct any problems and prevent them from festering.
- Make sure students feel free to comment anonymously and ask them what they like and dislike about the module.
- Summarise the findings and report these back to them the following week highlighting how you plan to respond to any comments made.
- It may not be possible, or desirable, to change the module delivery to accommodate all concerns. This is to be expected. The key is that you acknowledge to students that you have noted all their concerns and that you explain why it is that you are unable to respond to some e.g. group work assessment is often unpopular but may be a programme requirement at a particular level of study.

How are courses reviewed?

- All courses are usually reviewed as part of an annual monitoring programme.
- The review process will likely consider: module feedback (staff and students), survey data and performance statistics, external examiner feedback.



THE STUDENT POPULATION:

What can I expect in terms of students?



- Expect to be faced with large cohorts of students. Lecturing to classes in excess of 100 or more is common in business subjects. Marking will inevitably be on a similar scale.
- Students might be in a large group but they are still individuals with individual needs.
- Expect increasing numbers of students, particularly at postgraduate level, to be international, English not their first language.
- Expect students to have commitments outside their education. Avoid re-scheduling classes where possible as many set up part-time working commitments alongside their 'normal' timetable.
- Expect an increasingly diverse population. Widening participation is an important feature of HE today. Ask what this means in your own institution.
- Students might be full-time or part-time. You will notice considerable differences between the two groups. Students engaged on part-time programmes are often extremely motivated but are also likely to confront many hurdles in completing their studies. Pastoral support can make or break their experience.

What are Generation Y students?

- Many students will be part of the Generation Y birth cohort, born broadly between 1977 and 2001 depending upon which research study you read. They are likely to be digital natives connected 24-7, civic-minded, self-confident, service-minded, optimistic, environmental, educated, entrepreneurial, bored by routine, opinionated, success-driven, diverse, lifestyle-centered and goal orientated (Palfrey and Gasser, 2008; Tapscott, 2008).
- Generation Y is also the helicopter generation, with parents hovering over students, acting in an advisory role (Gibbs, 2009). You will confront this at Open Days. Parents are likely to be paying out a lot of money to support their child through HE. You may also receive direct communication from parents during the course of study. Students are adults. There are issues of data protection to consider. Check out your Departmental/Institutional position on responding to parents.
- For home students, this generation has been educated through the National Curriculum, GCSEs, A Levels and similar vocational courses each designed to continually test their ability in bite-sized chunks. They are used to re-submitting work, often on multiple occasions, to improve their grade. Assessment practices within HE will come as a big shock to them.



What will the student population expect from me?

- Support, care and attention to detail.
- Their 24-7 digital connection means that you are just as likely to receive e-mails during the day or night. They are used to instant messaging and checking out social networking sites multiple times a day and night. They will expect a response. Check out your Departmental/Institutional position on this. Many institutions now will have a policy, for instance, responding within 3 working days.

What questions are students likely to ask me?

- Are lectures compulsory?
- Are seminars/tutorials compulsory?
- How will the coursework be marked?
- What marks will be awarded for each component of the assessment?
- When will the work be marked?
- What happens if I fail?
- What happens if I submit the work late?
- Will you be running revision sessions? Details?
- What will the examination cover?
- How will examination questions be marked?
- How can I get the best mark in examinations?
- Are there any past examination papers/model answers I can consult?
- How do I access past examination papers and solutions?

What are students particularly focused upon?

- Students are increasingly focused upon their assessment marks and how to maximise these.
- Be transparent throughout the assessment process.
- Stick to Departmental marking criteria for consistency.

What do I do if students are disruptive e.g. arrive late, talk through my lectures, use their mobile phones?

- There may well be Departmental protocols in this area.
- Get your students on board with how to manage disruptive situations and work out the class rules regarding late arrivals, use of mobile phones and talking in class.
- Students increasingly today get annoyed when other students disrupt their learning. Their intervention can often be far more effective than your own.



- Feedback shows that they appreciate being involved in the decision-making process.

How should I respond if a student challenges my lecture materials?

- Great! Welcome it!
- Also pre-empt it. Explain clearly from the beginning that you cannot possibly know everything, and encourage students to question you.
- If you are asked a question that you cannot answer, tell the truth and let them know that you will get back to them on their question in the next lecture. Some-one will probably 'Google' the answer for you by the end of the lecture anyway.

Should I know the names of my students?

- Yes, but in large groups this is incredibly difficult to achieve.
- At the very least, work hard at knowing your personal tutees and other students you have a particular pastoral or administrative role for.

What do I do if my students are struggling with speaking or writing in English?

- This is an increasingly big problem.
- It is likely that your Department, or your institution more broadly, will run classes to support students in this situation.
- Check out the arrangements for this early on.
- Identifying students in this situation can be challenging in large groups.
- Make sure all students are given the opportunity to talk in seminars/tutorials.
- Be vigilant in marking coursework and examinations. Raise your concerns with your Director of Teaching and Learning as early on as possible.
- Students with weak English skills will often use e-mail as their preferred route of communicating with you.

How do I manage student contact with me?

- Follow Departmental protocols. These protocols should provide advice on what is expected regarding your response to e-mails and setting up office hours.
- If there are no protocols then ask colleagues in your subject group what approaches they adopt and attempt to emulate these.
- Students welcome consistency.
- Students do not handle change particularly well. If you set up office hours and then need to alter them, make sure that you clearly communicate these changes.



- If you are unavailable on e-mail put your out-of-office on to indicate this.
- If you do not have, or are not going to use, a blackberry, smart phone, iphone or other similar gadgets tell them. They probably do and will not understand why you do not instantly get back to them.
- The bottom line to getting this right is to clearly communicate how and when you can be contacted and to *stick to your own rules!*
- Some students will eat up your time. Some will have very good reason for this. Others will not. You need to look closely at how you manage your time here. Where appropriate:
 - Refer students to other services, counselling or careers for instance.
 - Remind students that you have a responsibility to be available for others. You have to share your time fairly.

What do I do if students complain to me about a colleague?

- Encourage them in the first instance to raise the matter with the member of staff involved.
- If this is not appropriate then follow the Departmental complaints procedure.

Am I allowed to have a relationship with one of my students?

- This is a can of worms. There may be Departmental guidance on this, but probably not given how sensitive the matter is.
- It has to be your call, but remember that there is an in-balance of power between a lecturer and student. To engage in a relationship may threaten the professionalism that you are probably working so hard to achieve. Ask yourself – would they be interested in you if you were not a lecturer?



THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS:



How do I set coursework and examination papers?

- The nature, weighting and length of assessments, coursework and examinations, will be pre-determined by your Department/Institution. They are likely to differ by level of study.
- This information will be set out in your formally approved module specification. For example a 10 credit module might stipulate one coursework assessment (essay), 2000 word limit maximum, worth 40% of the module mark and one, two hour examination paper, worth 60% of the mark.
- You will need to stick completely to what your module specification says in this area.
- Check out Departmental protocols in terms of the return of marked coursework. This may be within three or four working weeks for instance. Set your coursework deadlines to allow you to achieve this. Make sure these deadlines can be accommodated by the support office if they are receiving the work in.
- There are usually rules about the use of previous assignments and examination papers. For instance, you may be unable to set the same assessments within a five year period.
- Exam papers, resit papers and model answers will be required months prior to the examination itself. This might be around October time for a January examination, or February time for a May examination.
- Usually your assessments will be seen by an internal moderator who is one of your colleagues, and an External Examiner. The internal moderation process is carried out as you develop your assessments. This means that any glaring problems with the assessment will (hopefully) be picked up at this early stage.
- Inevitably work sent off to External Examiners for their comment takes time to be reviewed. That said, where there are glaring problems these are usually identified and communicated back as quickly as possible.

What do I need to do for students who are re-sitting coursework and/or examinations?

- Module leaders have a responsibility to ensure re-sitting students are able to access resit guidance.
- This guidance might take the form of revision notes, past examination papers and model answers.
- Communicating this information to your student is really important. Posting this guidance on the VLE might offer one solution. This might be a Departmental expectation. Check Departmental protocols here.



How do I stop students from copying the work of others?

- Plagiarism is an increasingly important issue in HE, helped particularly through the internet.
- Check out your Departmental and institutional protocols here at an early stage.
- Note particularly what constitutes plagiarism and how to deal with it.
- Check out what information is communicated to students in this area.
- Re-enforce this information in your lectures.
- It is likely that your Department will utilise a software package to detect plagiarism. Turnitin is a popular package in HE, but not the only one. Familiarise yourself with the features of the package you are to use.

How do I mark work and how much feedback is required?

- Familiarise yourself with your Institutional regulations regarding marking practice
- Make sure your written feedback is *legible*!!
- Be consistent and transparent in your marking practices.
- External Examiners often ask staff to make sure that they use the full range of marks available for a module to avoid 'bunching' of marks.
- Marking to the Departmental marking criteria *will* help you with this.
- Be very careful about marking close to different marking bands.
- Take on board comments your internal, and external moderators might have.
- Feedback is of varying importance to students. Some simply want to know the mark awarded and never bother to collect the full feedback sheets you will spend hours producing. Other students want to know how every mark was awarded, or indeed 'lost'.
- You need to provide sufficient feedback to help a student understand their strengths and weaknesses.
- To be of any real use to the student, this feedback should also provide advice on how they might improve their marks in the future.
- Moderation must occur before work is returned to students. Your Department will have a formula to determine how many scripts to moderate. This might be in the region of 10% of the overall sample, taken from across the marking range. Check this out and stick to the rules. There might be different rules for new staff – check.

How do I mark group work?

- This is often a hot potato and there are likely to be Departmental protocols here. If there are none, speak with subject colleagues about how they manage this situation.



- Questions you particularly need answering are:
 - Are there any limits on group size?
 - Are there any limits on the weighting of group work assignments?
 - What are the marking criteria for group work?
 - What are the procedures for managing malfunctioning groups?
 - What happens if the assignment is submitted incomplete?
 - What do I do if a student has to resit a coursework activity which is based upon group work?

Can I take marking home?

- Check Departmental protocols here.
- The question you need to ask yourself is can you ensure the security of scripts taken home?
- Increasingly today student coursework is submitted on-line, often through plagiarism detection software. This has the added advantage of there being a copy of all coursework in the system.
- However, examination scripts are different. The examination paper you mark will probably be the only copy of the script. Make sure you take every precaution not to lose these scripts. Even leaving them in the boot of your car whilst shopping on the way home is a high risk strategy. They are irreplaceable.

What are the usual marking bands?

Usually at undergraduate level these are:

- 70% and upwards, a First Class/Class I mark.
- 60-69%, an Upper Second, or a II:I.
- 50-59%, a Lower Second, or a II:II.
- 40-49%, a Third Class, or III.

Marks which fall below 40% are fails. However they will vary in how they are treated. Check out your institutional protocols here. Question for instance whether marks in the range of 35-39% can be compensated.

How do I cope with invigilating examinations?

- You are unlikely to be in charge of an examination room at this stage.
- Nevertheless, check out examination office procedures including what to do in the event of cheating and fire evacuation. Your institution will have a policy regarding these situations.



- If you are a module leader your institution may well have a policy that you are expected to be present for the first ten minutes of your exam paper to answer any questions. Ask.

What do I need to do regarding the External Examiner?

- Whilst the particular responsibilities of the External Examiner vary from institution to institution, fundamentally their role is to advise on the consistency of academic standards and practice across institutions.
- Consider them to be a critical friend.
- In the early years, you are unlikely to have responsibility for making direct contact with an External Examiner, unless you are a programme leader, or there is a 'problem' linked to one of your modules.
- It is much more likely that you will be called upon to provide key information about the modules for which you are responsible. This information might include: Module Handbook; Module Coursework Assessment; Module Marking Criteria; Module Examination Paper with Suggested Solutions; Module Resit Examination Paper with Suggested Solutions; Module Results Analysis; Module Leader Report
- You are likely to meet the External Examiner at your Interim or Final Examination Boards. There may be a number of External Examiners present at these Boards. Externals might be taken on to cover programmes or subject areas.
- External Examiners are expected to produce a report of their experiences each year. This report is taken very seriously. It is read by senior management within the University and is used to inform future practices.



6. THE ACADEMIC AS A RESEARCHER: COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



What is scholarly activity?

- Scholarly activity is an implicit function of an academic career.
- This is the function which allows us to keep on developing as academics.
- This is the function which you are least likely to have time to work on, particularly in the early days and years. As a result the research part of this function is often the area which colleagues will get most stressed about...
- Make time for research whenever you can. Do not wait for clear patches. They seldom appear.
- Start small and try and integrate this activity into your everyday life.
- [Appendix 6](#) details questions linked to research that you need to ask from Day One.

What are the most common examples of this activity?

- Research activity, including personal research activity and team activities.
- Conference attendance and participation.
- Consultancy activity.
- Involvement in projects such as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP's).
- Professional updating.
- Academic enterprise.
- External Examinerships.
- Editorial Board membership.
- Professional Body activities.

How important is it that I become involved in scholarly activity?

- Fundamental. Engaging in scholarly activity is probably the unwritten rule in your institution, although how you go about this will often vary considerably.
- This is the area which will open many doors for you throughout your career.
- It also offers you the chance to engage more widely outside academia too.
- Wider engagement with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors will be really helpful for your teaching and learning activities. These links might act as guest speakers, or have a pedagogical input e.g. contributing to forms of experiential learning for instance. They will help you keep up-to-date with your subject area too.



Which form of scholarly activity is the most important?

- Check your institutional position here.
- Whilst all examples have a role to play you will probably find the answer is *research*.
- Certainly in terms of your own professional development, a research profile is the area that you are most likely to need and be judged upon.

Will I be given a timetable allowance for this activity?

- At this point in your career it is unlikely that you will be given a lot of time.
- As with teaching and learning activity, the amount will be determined locally through your Departmental workload model, or equivalent.
- In time you will start applying for research funding externally. Such monies might then be used to buy you out of some teaching.

What funding options should I consider at this stage?

- Chicken and egg! Funding bodies need to be convinced that you are capable of delivering on projects they fund. To convince them you often need evidence of previous success...
- Apply for small pots of money to build up this evidence. Applying for internal funding and funding from professional organisations is often a good way to get started here.

Will I be able to use this activity in applying for future jobs and promotional opportunities?

- You are unlikely to be able to succeed in HE without it!

Will I benefit financially from other forms of scholarly activity?

- Some forms of scholarly activity will carry financial incentives, consultancy and External Examiner appointments for instance.
- Talk to your Finance Officer about the rates that you can charge and any Institutional cut that you need to take account of.

How do I find out opportunities to become involved in this work?

- Another chicken and egg! The more you become involved in this area and make a name for yourself, the more you will be invited to do. It is all about *networking*.



- In the early days work on letting people know you are there and that you are interested in this area of academic life.
- Join professional bodies and attend their events. This is a good way of meeting like minded people and of finding out what is going on.
- Take advantage of your own Institutional opportunities too.
- Be patient and do not expect everything to happen at once. It can take years to develop a profile in this area. It can take years to write a substantive article.

What are the RAE and the REF?

- These terms are linked to how research monies are distributed across the HE sector.
- The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) was a peer reviewed exercise aimed at determining the quality of research in UK HE institutions (HEIs).
- It was a joint initiative between the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), the Higher Education Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DEL).
- The exercise ran in 1992, 1996, 2001 and 2008.
- Further information can be accessed via www.rae.ac.uk and www.hefce.ac.uk
- The Research Excellence Framework (REF) replaces the RAE as the new system for assessing UK HEI's research quality.
- It continues to be a joint venture between the four UK funding bodies.
- The first REF will be completed in 2014.
- The census date for staff eligible for inclusion is 31st October 2013.
- Research output eligible for inclusion is that published (in the public domain) between 1st January 2008 and 31st December 2013.
- Institutional submissions will be assessed in terms of:
 - The quality of research outputs (citation information is important here).
 - The wider impact of research.
 - The vitality of the research environment.
- It will operate on a five point scale from unclassified to 4* research.
- Further information can be accessed via www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref
- The RAE contained many anomalies, sole authored work considered equal to multiple authored work for instance. The same work 'claimed' by authors from different institutions. It is probable that the REF will have its host of anomalies too. You cannot do anything about them at this stage. Ignore them and focus upon getting off the research starting blocks.



Research outputs seem important. How are decisions reached regarding the quality of research outputs?

- This is a highly contentious area!
- REF documentation publishes guidance on the five point scale used to determine quality (unclassified to 4* research).
- Distinctions are made between research of national and international standing.
- Demonstrating research impact is an important requirement of the new REF.
- Journal listings are being increasingly used by authors to guide where we attempt to publish our research.
- The Association of Business Schools (ABS) Journal Quality Guide (Harvey, Kelly, Morris and Rowlinson, 2010) is one of the Journal listing guides commonly referred to within the BMAF area (accessible via www.the-abs.org.uk).
- There is considerable unease as to the power that lists such as this hold (see for instance British Accounting Association (2010)).
- Again at this stage in your career you will not be able to do anything about these frustrations. As with the workload model, do not dwell. See research as part of the academic game. Put your energies into trying to play and keep in the game. That is hard enough!



7. THE ACADEMIC AS AN ADMINISTRATOR: COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Most academic staff do not enter HE to be administrators. However, it is an inevitable part of the academic function. Common questions linked to this area include:

What is administration in HE?

- This is work that supports your academic role.
- It might be linked to any of the academic functions you are involved in.
- There are no hard and fast rules as to what counts as administration, although there are certain activities which are commonly attributed to this area.

What are the most common examples of this activity?

- Compiling class attendance records, responding to staff and student questions, developing paperwork attached to your modules, entering marks onto systems, attending Boards of Study, attending Exam Boards, attending other committees, writing references, invigilating examinations/resit examinations, pastoral support, attending Open Days and other recruitment events, assisting with Clearing activities for instance.
- It is also usual to be given at least one specific administrative role too. Ideally this role will appear from your second year, but do not be surprised if it appears earlier.
- Common roles include: Course leader, Admissions tutor, Placement tutor, Fieldtrip co-ordinator, Senior tutor, Quality Assurance Officer.

Does assessment and marking count as administration?

- No and Yes.
- No: setting assessments, marking and second marking them are part of your teaching and learning function.
- Yes: entering marks onto the system could be considered to be an administrative role.

How much time should I spend on administration?

- You have to balance things here.
- On the one hand you are unlikely to ever become a professor spending lots of time on administration.



- On the other hand, you have a responsibility to ensure that you competently attend to administrative matters, and in a timely manner.
- If you delay others will suffer too. Support staff often waste many hours chasing academics for bits of information.

Will I be given a timetable allowance for this activity?

- Most likely.
- But as with teaching and learning and research activity, the actual amount of time will depend upon your Department and the nature of their workload model.

Will I be able to use this activity in applying for future promotional opportunities?

- Administration is often the 'taken for granted', 'expected' activity of academic life.
- Whilst on paper it may play a minor role when seeking promotion, or applying for new jobs, it does provide others with important insights into you as an academic and how much of a team player you are. Who wants to work with a colleague who is only focused upon themselves?



8. REFERENCES AND USEFUL INFORMATION SOURCES



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9. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 THE ACADEMIC YEAR PRESSURE POINTS

Use this table to help you to anticipate pressure points and prioritize duties and targets accordingly. It operates on the basis:

- That your employment starts at the beginning of the academic year (September). For many, this is not necessarily the case.
- That you are based in a Department operating a three semester model: September to January (teaching), February to May (teaching), June to September (dissertation supervision).
- That you do not, at this stage, have programme leadership, or similar, responsibilities.

Where these assumptions are not relevant, you will need to adjust the table accordingly.

MONTH	ADMIN PRESSURE POINTS	TEACHING – UNDERGRADUATE	TEACHING – POSTGRADUATE	RESEARCH
September	<p>SEMESTER 1</p> <p>You are likely to be involved in a number of activities -</p> <p>Undergraduate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible Attendance at a Resit Exam Board 2. New student registration 3. New student induction 4. Returning 	<p>You will need to prepare:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module Handbooks 2. Module Assessment/s <p>Reading Lists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Lecture materials 4. Seminar 	<p>Dissertation marking and moderation</p> <p>You will need to prepare:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module Handbooks 2. Module Assessment/s <p>Reading Lists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Lecture materials 4. Seminar 	<p>September, particularly early on, is a popular time for conferences</p> <p>Your research time in the early year/s will be compromised through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching responsibilities 2. Your own



	<p>students induction</p> <p>Postgraduate:</p> <p>1. Dissertation submission.</p> <p>2. New student registration</p> <p>3. Induction</p> <p>General Meetings:</p> <p>1. Staff</p> <p>2. Subject teams</p> <p>3. Research teams</p>	<p>materials</p> <p>5. Place book orders</p> <p>You will need a copy of:</p> <p>1. Your Timetable</p> <p>2. Lecture class register</p> <p>3. Seminar class register</p> <p>It would be good to send an e-mail welcoming personal tutees back and confirming your contact details.</p>	<p>materials</p> <p>5. Place book orders</p> <p>You will need a copy of:</p> <p>1. Your Timetable</p> <p>2. Lecture class register</p> <p>3. Seminar class register</p> <p>It would be good to send an e-mail welcoming personal tutees back and confirming your contact details.</p>	<p>completion of 'teaching' qualifications</p> <p>Some institutions will give a timetable allowance for this. Others will not. Either way, you will still find yourself short on research time.</p>
October	<p>Boards of Study usually begin. You can expect to meet at least once a term.</p> <p>Examination and Resit Papers requested</p>	<p>Lecture/seminar delivery begins in full</p> <p>Coursework assessment/s set</p> <p>Monitor attendance and report any concerns</p> <p>Produce Examination and</p>	<p>Lecture/seminar delivery begins in full</p> <p>Coursework assessment/s set</p> <p>Monitor attendance and report any concerns</p> <p>Produce Examination and</p>	



		resit papers for your modules. Suggested solutions are often required too.	resit papers for your modules. Suggested solutions are often required too.	
<p>READING WEEK – Some institutions will have a reading week towards the end of October or into November. Others will not. Either way, remember, around this time energies will be low. Students and staff are tired. First year students may be home sick and/or questioning their course choice. Awareness of this might help you spot possible ‘problems’.</p>				
November	Ongoing meetings	Lecture/seminar delivery in full flow Coursework assessment/s ongoing Monitor attendance and report any concerns	Lecture/seminar delivery in full flow Coursework assessment/s ongoing Monitor attendance and report any concerns Postgraduate Graduation Ceremonies often occur around this time	
December	Ongoing meetings Admissions activities increase	Lecture/seminar delivery drawing to a close Coursework assessment/s submitted, or soon to be Module evaluation	Lecture/seminar delivery drawing to a close Coursework assessment/s submitted, or soon to be Module	



		needed	evaluation needed	
CHRISTMAS VACATION – International students always leave before the end of term. Probably at the beginning of the final week, if not before.				
January	<p>Expect an increasing request for references from here until the end of the academic year</p> <p>Exam Invigilation duties – may or may not include invigilating your own exam</p> <p>Availability for the first 10 minutes of your own exam is a likely requirement</p> <p>Entering of marks</p> <p>Preparation of your Module Leader Report for Semester 1 modules</p> <p>Preparation of External Examiner documentation</p>	<p>Revision period</p> <p>Institutional Exam period</p> <p>Intense marking and moderation activity, often within an extremely tight window.</p> <p>You will also need to prepare for Semester 2</p>	<p>Revision period</p> <p>Institutional Exam period</p> <p>Intense marking and moderation activity, often within an extremely tight window.</p> <p>You will also need to prepare for Semester 2</p>	
February	<p>SEMESTER 2</p> <p>Semester 1 Exam Boards</p>	<p>Teaching begins.</p> <p>You will need to prepare:</p>	<p>Teaching begins.</p> <p>You will need to prepare:</p>	



	<p>Boards of Study: you can expect to meet at least once a term.</p> <p>Examination and Resit Papers requested for Semester 2 modules</p> <p>Open Day activities increase from now on.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module Handbooks 2. Module Assessment/s <p>Reading Lists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Lecture materials 4. Seminar materials 5. Place book orders <p>You will need a copy of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your Timetable 2. Lecture class register 3. Seminar class register 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Module Handbooks 2. Module Assessment/s <p>Reading Lists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Lecture materials 4. Seminar materials 5. Place book orders <p>You will need a copy of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your Timetable 2. Lecture class register 3. Seminar class register 	
READING WEEK – Again whether this happens will be an Institutional decision				
March	<p>Ongoing meetings</p> <p>Ongoing reference requests</p> <p>Admissions</p>	<p>Lecture/seminar delivery for Semester 2 in full flow</p> <p>Coursework assessment/s set</p> <p>Monitor attendance and</p>	<p>Lecture/seminar delivery for Semester 2 in full flow</p> <p>Coursework assessment/s set</p> <p>Monitor attendance and</p>	



	activities	report any concerns Produce Examination and resit papers for your modules. Suggested solutions are often required too.	report any concerns Produce Examination and resit papers for your modules. Suggested solutions are often required too.	
EASTER VACATION – Again international students always leave before the end of term. Probably at the beginning of the final week, if not before.				
April	Ongoing meetings Ongoing reference requests	Lecture/seminar delivery drawing to a close Coursework assessment/s submitted, or soon to be Module evaluation needed	Lecture/seminar delivery drawing to a close Coursework assessment/s submitted, or soon to be Module evaluation needed	
May	Exam Invigilation duties – may or may not include invigilating your own exam Availability for the first 10 minutes of your own exam is a likely requirement Entering of marks	Revision period Institutional Exam period Intense marking and moderation activity, often within an extremely tight window.	Revision period Institutional Exam period Intense marking and moderation activity, often within an extremely tight window. Dissertation	



	Preparation of your Module Leader Report for Semester 2 modules Preparation of External Examiner documentation		activities begin	
June	Examination Boards. Might include: Pre Exam Board Final Exam Bd There will be separate boards for u/g and p/g programmes Boards of Study		Dissertation supervision	
July	Graduation ceremonies Review meetings		Dissertation supervision	
August	Mid August – ‘A’ level results released. Clearing duties may be assigned. Re-sit period	Marking and moderation of re-sit coursework and examinations	Dissertation supervision Marking and moderation of reit coursework and examinations	



APPENDIX 2
CHECKLIST: DAY ONE - PATIENCE

Questions to ask on, and from, Day One:
P eople
Do I have a mentor/buddy? Do they know that they have this role? How do I access them?
Who is my Head of Department and how do I get to see him/her?
Who is my line manager?
Who is the Departmental Health and Safety Officer?
Who is the Finance Officer?



Who is the Purchasing Officer?
Who is the Payroll Officer?
Who is the Pensions Officer?
Who is in charge of parking permits?
Who is the library contact?
Who is the media resources contact?
Who is the IT contact?



Who is the Departmental timetable co-ordinator?
Who is/are the teaching room/s technician/s?
Who is the font of all Departmental/Institutional knowledge?
Who is in charge of stationery?
Are there any opportunities to meet other staff members?
Other questions:



Access codes

Where can I access a telephone/e-mail list?

Do I have a telephone extension number and how do I set up the answerphone?

How do I access my telephone answerphone off-site?

Do I need an access code/card to use photocopiers?

Do I need an access code/card to use printers?
Do any rooms have key pads and what are the codes?
How do I access the building/my office out of hours?
Other questions:



Teaching Commitments

What is my teaching and when does it begin?

How do I receive remission from teaching?

Where can I access my timetable?

How do I find the rooms I am teaching in?

What facilities are there in these rooms?
What are the term dates?
What are the teaching dates?
What are the examination period dates?
Other questions:



Information Technology

Do I have a networked computer?

How do I set up my username and password?

Is there a virtual learning environment (VLE) that students and I are expected to use?

Who can help me understand this VLE?

Other questions:



Essentials

Where is my office/desk and how do I access it and the key to it?

Do I have a printer and where do I get printer paper and ink cartridges from?

If I am in a shared office, is there a room I can book if I need to meet with students on a one-to-one basis?

Is there a Departmental meetings calendar?

What do I need to do to work off-site?



What am I expected to do regarding my office hours?
Where are the photocopiers?
How do I get bulk materials photocopied?
How do I send post, internally and externally?
Other questions:



Non-teaching responsibilities

Is there a workload model and how does this work?

What allowances am I given in the workload model (e.g. research)?

What is/are my administrative role/s?

What am I expected to do in terms of research?

Other questions:



Contractual requirements

What are my normal working hours?

Are there any allowances for working above and beyond these hours?

What is my holiday entitlement?

How do I claim this entitlement?

Can I take a holiday at anytime of the year?



What do I do if I am sick?
Will I be expected to work during the 'summer' vacation?
Is there a dress code?
Other questions:



EEnvironment

How do I access the Institutional Strategic Plan?

How do I access a campus map?

Where is the library?

Where is the post room?

Where are the toilets?

Where is/are the café/s?
Where are the bike racks?
Are there any staff showers?
Is there a kitchen/fridge I can use?
What is the policy regarding office bins?
Other questions:



APPENDIX 3 CHECKLIST: PREPARING TO DELIVER A MODULE

Information you will need:
Module specification confirming: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning outcomes• Assessment types and weighting
Timetable confirming: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture slot/s• Seminar/tutorial slot/s
Campus map to identify teaching rooms
Classlists/Registers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lecture• Seminar/tutorial slot/s
Information regarding re-sitting students: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With attendance• Without attendance
Information you will need to produce:
Module handbook (see Appendix 4)
Coursework assessment/s – agree submission deadlines with support office in advance (see Appendix 5)



Examination and resit papers + suggested solutions
Reading lists – copy to library staff too
Information you will need to check out:
Location of teaching rooms
Facilities available in teaching rooms
Technical support for your teaching rooms
Photocopying procedures
Library facilities
External Examiner comments on earlier module deliveries
Course/programme regulations
Departmental policies regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest speakers • Field trips



APPENDIX 4
CHECKLIST: PREPARING A MODULE HANDBOOK

Useful information to include:
Official title of module and code
Name of the Department responsible for the module
Year and semester of delivery
Module credit value
Pre-requisites
Programmes the module is eligible to
Lecture schedule and rooms
Seminar/tutorial schedule and rooms
Module leader and teaching team information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name• E-mail• Telephone• Office address• Office hours
Module objectives
Module learning outcomes



Teaching and learning strategy
<p>Assessment strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coursework brief • Submission instructions • Guidance on plagiarism
<p>Lecture programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week number and date • Topic area • Learning outcomes • Suggested reading
<p>Seminar/tutorial programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week number and date • Topic area • Learning outcomes • Suggested reading
<p>Reading list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential • Recommended • On-line sources
Date document last revised and by whom

Source: ULMS (2011)



APPENDIX 5

CHECKLIST: PREPARING A COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Useful information to include:
Official title of module and code
Name of the Department responsible for the module
Year and semester of delivery
Module credit value
Module leader and teaching team information: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name• E-mail• Telephone• Office address• Office hours
Name of assignment activity
Assignment instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type of activity e.g. essay, report, presentation, other• Weighting of assignment• Clarify whether individual or group work activity• Confirm maximum length acceptable and exactly what this does and does not include
Submission instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirm date and time• Confirm type of submission needed e.g. hard copy, on-line submission, combination of the two



Detailed assignment brief outlining clearly what the student is expected to do
Marking guidelines including reference to marking criteria
Suggested reading
A cautionary note regarding plagiarism



APPENDIX 6
CHECKLIST: BEGINNING RESEARCH

Questions to ask on, and from, Day One
How important is it that I become involved in research?
What are the University's priorities for research? And where can I read about them?
Can I pursue my own research interests? Or must I follow Departmental/Institutional interests?



What is the 'best' research output to work towards?

Should I just try and get anything I can published?

Where should I aim to publish?



Questions to ask on, and from, Day One Continued.

How many publications should I aim for in a year?

What mentoring support is available to help to develop my research profile?

Do I have a research allowance if I want to attend conferences?

What other internal funding can I apply for? And how do I do this?



What sources of external funding should I consider applying for at this stage?
Which other colleagues should I talk to about research?



APPENDIX 7 ATTRIBUTIONS FOR OPEN FOR BUSINESS RESOURCES



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Description	This document is designed as a ‘hit the ground running’ guide for new and aspiring academic staff primarily in the area of Business education. It works on a simple question and answer basis, covering general question areas, teaching and learning, research and scholarly activity and administration. This resource has been developed as part of the JISC/HEA OMAC strand Open for Business project (for further details see http://sites.google.com/a/brookes.ac.uk/bmaf-oer-omac)
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