



Te Kete Aronui · Division of Humanities
Guidelines for Tutor and Demonstrator Employment

These guidelines for the Division of Humanities amplify the University-wide Guidelines available at

<https://docushare.otago.ac.nz/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-10982/>

1 The role of tutors and demonstrators

University Guidelines Definition

Tutors or demonstrators are normally students who will work under the supervision of an academic staff member. In the course of the academic year, tutors or demonstrators are employed primarily to teach in an assigned number of tutorials or laboratories, and may be required to mark and return assessed work or co-ordinate a group of other tutors or demonstrators. It is expected that most tutors and demonstrators will be appointed at the beginning of the first semester.

Tutors and demonstrators provide a major supporting role in student learning. They are normally students who, in the course of the academic year, are employed to teach/demonstrate in an assigned number of tutorials/laboratories in order to fulfill the student learning outcomes for each tutorial/demonstration as designed by the senior staff member responsible for the academic content of the course. They may also be required to mark and return assessed work.

In order to carry out these duties successfully it is important that they possess the appropriate training and/or experience, and are properly supervised and evaluated. It is expected that tutors/demonstrators will work closely with the co-ordinator and lecturer(s) responsible for the paper, and will receive appropriate mentoring.

As well as being junior teachers in their specific disciplinary (and transdisciplinary) and applied contexts, they are also learners in the skills of tertiary teaching. For at least some MA or PhD research students, tutoring and demonstrating is an important part of preparation for an academic career, and these students should be given particular opportunities to develop their teaching skills. Most tutors/demonstrators are also postgraduate students and act as role models of postgraduate study. They may therefore have a complex relationship with academic staff members and other students: as supporting staff to a lecturer, as a student to a supervisor, as a tutor/demonstrator to a fellow-student, and so on. It is important that these different roles are clearly understood by all involved, and that appropriate support is given to tutors/demonstrators in all their functions.

In some large-class situations a tutor/demonstrator may be invited to co-ordinate a group of tutors/demonstrators. The role of academic co-ordination properly belongs to the lecturing staff, so this task would normally be confined to administrative co-ordination. Where it takes place it should receive appropriate remuneration.

2 The selection of tutors and demonstrators

2.1 *Seeking tutors and demonstrators*

Departments should call for *expressions of interest* from potential tutors and demonstrators. The call should be posted on departmental noticeboards and postgraduate email lists (within the discipline or in cognate disciplines), and at Student Job Search. The call will probably specify the papers for which tutors are required. A call should be issued in October, and if necessary a further call may be issued in February, although expressions of interest can be received at any time during the year. The call should outline the criteria and process of selection (see below), and should refer applicants to these Guidelines, available on the Humanities website. Reference may also be made to the HEDC website for tutors and demonstrators: <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/magnolia/td/introduction.html>.

Expressions of interest must be made in writing and include a covering letter (or, where, requested, an application form) stating the applicant's experience and in which papers they would prefer to tutor. An up-to-date curriculum vitae should be included.

2.2 *Criteria for selection*

As many as possible of the following merit criteria should be used in evaluating potential tutors and demonstrators.

- Knowledge and understanding in the disciplinary area, usually represented by a relevant qualification.
- Evidence of having completed, or willingness to complete, an HEDC course for tutors/demonstrators, or previous experience in tutoring/demonstrating, appropriately assessed.
- The abilities to communicate ideas clearly and in a well organized fashion, and to establish rapport with students.
- Enthusiasm for tutoring/demonstrating, and to develop a portfolio of teaching.
- The ability to take instruction and work collegially.
- Time-management skills, dependability, and integrity.

2.3 *The selection process*

It is important that the selection process is transparent. The department should designate a person or persons, if at all possible independent of paper coordinators, to assess expressions of interest in the light of the criteria, and in respect of applicants' eligibility for employment (see University policy). After initial assessment, the designated assessor should

- ask the Head of Department to inform all applicants in writing either that they have been accepted onto the department's tutor/demonstrator list (which, at this stage, does not necessarily guarantee employment), or that they have not. Unsuccessful candidates should be able to contact the selector to receive feedback.
- meet with the department(s)' graduate committee chair or other appropriate staff to determine the availability of students to undertake tutoring/demonstrating in relation to their commitment to completing research; in this respect special care should be taken if 400-level Honours students have applied to be tutors/demonstrators;
- contact paper co-ordinators to determine the best match of potential tutor/demonstrator with paper content (it may be appropriate for those on the tutor/demonstrator list also to meet with paper co-ordinators at this point);
- liaise with course co-ordinators and the Department Administrator to develop an employment plan for each tutor/demonstrator, for approval by the HoD (or nominee);
- following this, to provide to the Department administrator a list of tutors/demonstrators and their responsibilities so that appropriate employment contracts can be prepared. A template could be prepared.

Formal letters of appointment, together with employment contracts, should be sent to tutors/demonstrators over the signature of the Head of Department.

A possible timetable framework

October: call for expressions of interest/applications

November: processing of applications, notification to applicants

November/December: HEDC generic training for potential tutors

February: call for second round; processing; notifications

Late February: departmental training/briefings for tutors

May/June: call for applications for second semester tutors, of necessary, followed by notification and training as necessary

2.4 *Guidebook for tutors*

Each department should make available to tutors a guidebook which includes University, Divisional and Departmental policies, rules and regulations relevant to the task of tutoring or demonstrating. The Department Administrator should explain this to the tutor/demonstrator at the same time the employment contract is explained and discussed. Generic Divisional information for this guidebook will be supplied by the Division.

3 The basis for employment as a tutor/demonstrator

It is essential that, in every case, the duties of a tutor or demonstrator are clearly laid out. These may include any of the following

- *Leading tutorials*
Normally, the content of the tutorials and appropriate materials will be determined and supplied by the lecturer, as part of the overall design of the paper, although in some cases a tutor/demonstrator may be invited to contribute to this. Where this happens, the lecturer must approve the content, and any extra time required of the student must be properly remunerated.
- *Facilitating tutorial discussions*
In some departments, programmes or papers, student attendance at tutorials is a requirement. This is appropriate where tutorials or laboratories are used for the acquisition of professional competencies. In other cases attendance at tutorials should be voluntary. In some papers a percentage of the marks is allocated to participation in tutorial discussions.
- *Attending lectures*
Tutors/demonstrators need to be familiar with the material shared in lectures. In many cases they will attend the lectures on the papers they are tutoring or demonstrating, and will be paid to do so. Where the tutor/demonstrator has taught the paper before, this may not be necessary, but it is important for the lecturer to ensure that the tutor/demonstrator is aware of the latest version of any lectures given, and of any matters that have arisen in a lecture that require further discussion between tutors/demonstrators and students.
- *Attending meetings*
It is expected that tutors/demonstrators will meet regularly (probably weekly) with the lecturer/course co-ordinator. Where a paper has many tutors/demonstrators the meeting may be a longer one. Where the lecturer is the tutor's or demonstrator's postgraduate supervisor, it is advisable not to mix meetings which have different purposes.
- *Marking*
Recognizing tutors/demonstrators role as supporting teachers, no more than 40% of any student's marks should be provided by them. All tutor/demonstrator marking should be overseen by the lecturer, who takes responsibility for the grades and marks awarded.
 - *Marking assignments*
Where tutors/demonstrators are required to mark assignments it is essential that they are provided with the marking criteria and understand exactly what the lecturer expects. If the tuto/demonstrator has no prior experience of marking the assignments should also be marked by the lecturer and the tutor/demonstrator be mentored. Even where the tutor/demonstrator has prior experience the marks should be moderated by the lecturer. In large classes with many tutors/demonstrators a cross-moderation scheme should be put in place to ensure uniformity of standards.
 - *Marking examination scripts*
Because of the 40% rule outlined above, tutors/demonstrators will not normally be required, expected or invited to mark examination scripts.

- *Giving lectures*
Occasionally a postgraduate student who is also a tutor/demonstrator may be invited to give a lecture on the course he or she is tutoring/demonstrating. This should not be done within the framework of tutoring/demonstrating, but a separate employment contract should be used. (If there is an examination question on the topic of the lecture it may be appropriate for the student to mark it, but, again, this should be covered by a separate contract, and the scripts should be moderated by the course co-ordinator.)
- *Co-ordinating the work of a group of tutors*
In some large classes it may be necessary for the work of tutors/demonstrators to be co-ordinated. As noted above, academic co-ordination is the responsibility of the lecturer or course co-ordinator. Where some administrative co-ordination is required, a tutor/demonstrator may be paid separately to undertake this.
- *Being available for consultation by students*
Where this is a requirement, it is essential that the hours are clearly defined, and that tutors/demonstrators understand the correct procedure: if a student seeks advice outside 'office hours' the tutor/demonstrator must refer them to the office hours or to another available tutor/demonstrator. If a department requires tutors/demonstrators to be available at certain times, space must be made available in the department for this, and it must be possible for the tutor/demonstrator to spend the time usefully in this environment if no students come to call.

4 Preparing an employment contract

The normal employment model is the Set Hours contract. It is customary in most departments to use a formula to calculate actual hours of work, for instance, multiplying contact hours by a factor to cover preparation and marking. This method is unsatisfactory for several reasons.

- It lacks transparency, which can cause concern amongst students. The tutor/demonstrator may find it difficult to determine how many hours should be spent on what task at any particular time. It should be remembered that tutors/demonstrators are usually inexperienced in academic teaching.
- The system is open to abuse, when, for example, a lecturer may suggest that extra work could be included in the overall time allocation and without extra payment.

Departments should continue to use the Set Hours contract wherever possible, but should abandon factoring and instead, in each case, specify as exactly as possible how many hours are to be worked and paid for. The list of tasks supplied above provides a basis for this. In this way tutors/demonstrators can see exactly what is required of them before signing the contract, and can if necessary negotiate the terms. If extra duties are required, above and beyond those specified in the contract, then extra payment will be due (and, if necessary, the tutor/demonstrator can decline to accept the extra duties without prejudice).

In determining payment for marking, it is reasonable to calculate on the basis of marking 3,000 words per hour.

5 Pay

Normally, Rate A will not apply in the Division of Humanities. Rate B should apply to 400-level Honours students as well as to Postgraduate Diploma students, and to others who show they have completed the equivalent of a three-year degree. Rates B, C and D should be regarded as the base rate for payment. Payment at a higher rate than this may be appropriate in certain circumstances, such as when a tutor/demonstrator has many years of experience, or has additional relevant qualifications (for example a teaching qualification). Job content or complexity should only rarely be used to determine a higher rate; it is preferable to define the extra hours required and pay for those.

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