DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS & ASTRONOMY

Teaching and Learning:

Opportunities for Postgraduate Students and Postdoctoral Staff

Academic Session 2021-22

Contents

1 SUMMARY AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Postgraduate students and postdoctoral staff make an invaluable contribution to the Department's teaching and learning and are much appreciated by our undergraduate students. Contributing to the teaching and training of future scientists is a deeply rewarding experience: the questions posed by our undergraduates can cause you to think more deeply about all sorts of areas of science, particularly those that you thought you understood!

Applications are invited from postgraduate students and postdoctoral staff who wish to be considered for a range of teaching and learning opportunities within the Department of Physics & Astronomy at UCL. Typical activities are demonstrating in the undergraduate laboratories or computing sessions, and co-supervising projects or problem-solving tutorial classes. Training and guidance will be given by the course or activity organiser. If you have not already done so, you may be required to take a short (3 hour) introductory course (Arena Gateway) that is designed to introduce you to approaches to teaching and learning and prepare you for your teaching responsibilities. In addition, we strongly encourage all our teachers to take the follow-on course, UCL Arena One, which provides further guidance for best practices in teaching and that can lead to the qualification "Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy".

- **Although we anticipate relaxing of the covid-19 social distancing regulations for session 2021-22, some of our teaching activities will nevertheless take place on-line. Further details will be available on our [PHAS LTS Moodle](#) pages. Current details of UCLs covid-19 policies can be found on the [Coronavirus (Covid-19) information pages](#).**

- **Please note also the updated Post Graduate Teaching Assistant (PGTA) [Code of Practice](#).**

1.1 Postgraduate research (PhD) Students

Postgraduate research students are welcome to apply for our teaching and learning roles through our post graduate teaching assistant (PGTA) programme.

Students funded by UKRI should note the [UKRI Training Grant Guidelines](#), which state that: "*Students may undertake teaching or demonstrating work when this is compatible with their training and provided their supervisors approve. The total time spent (including preparation and marking) should not interfere with the progress of the PhD. The amount of time is at the RO [research organisation] and supervisor's discretion, but it is recommended that this is no more than six hours in any week. It must not be compulsory and must be paid for at the RO's usual rate and supported by appropriate training. Costs for demonstrating or teaching may not be taken from the TG*".

There is also some useful general guidance on the page [UCL HR Postgraduate Teaching Assistant Code of Practice](#). Please note that students cannot be employed on any programme or module on which they are currently registered as a student ([UCL Academic Manual](#)). If you have other questions, please consult with our

Departmental PGTA team, email: physast_pgta@ucl.ac.uk

1.2 Postdoctoral (PDRF) Staff

We usually ask that postdoctoral research fellows (PDRFs) in the Department undertake some teaching and/or demonstrating work, including associated training, preparatory, marking and examination duties.

This will typically be a commitment of around 60 hours per academic year, depending on your funding mechanism. This requirement is well below the upper limit of 6 hours per week, set by the research councils, and should therefore be workable within most PDRA's own timetable**.**

Please note that if you hold a Tier 2 visa there may well be restrictions on taking additional paid work. Please find additional information at the Skilled Worker Visa page at gov.uk.

Contractual enquiries for postdoctoral staff should be directed to our Senior HR Administrator, Bonita Carboo (b.carboo@ucl.ac.uk).

1.3 Application Procedures

If you wish to apply to be considered for one of our Teaching and Learning roles, please complete the following online form:

TO APPLY:	UCL Department of Physics & Astronomy: Teaching and Learning Opportunities for 2021/22.

Applications are welcome at any time throughout the year, but all applications received by 16 August 2021 will be treated equally. **Please note you cannot be considered for any paid employment within the Department until you have applied, been accepted and completed all the necessary paperwork to allow you to do so.**

Please see UCL Guidelines on Data Protection for details of our commitment to protecting the privacy of your data and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Further information:

a. **Right to Work** - Note that a Right to Work check will need to be carried out before you are able to commence work. You will not be able to carry out any work until we have seen and verified this. Please see UCL Right to Work Information and Guidance for further details.

b. **Contracts -** Successful applicants will usually be issued with a contract in line with Guidance on UCL Contracts of Employment.

c. **Students on Tier 4 visas –** You are able to apply for these roles but need to be aware of the working rights attached to their visa. Please see Student visas for further information.

Students on Tier 4 visas who are studying in the UK are able to undertake paid/unpaid work, but are limited to the number of hours (**20 hours maximum**) that they can work in a rolling 7-day period (Monday to Sunday).

While responsibility to ensure visa compliance lies primarily with the student worker, UCL as an employer also have a responsibility when allocating work to student workers on Tier 4 visas and in monitoring how much work is being undertaken.

It is vital that both our Tier 4 student workers and UCL can demonstrate compliance with the visa regulations set by UKVI. The consequences for anyone found to be breaching the working hour restrictions are severe (possible revocation of visa for the student worker, and fines for the Department up to £20,000).

To mitigate the risk of any student being allocated or working more than their allowed hours, UCL has developed timesheets to increase the ability of UCL to monitor compliance. Tier 4 students will therefore need to:

− Complete a weekly time sheet, detailing hours worked.

− This must be signed off by the coordinator who allocated the work to you to show that they confirm the hours worked

− This will then need to be submitted to our PGTA team (physast_pgta@ucl.ac.uk). These are then arranged through the UCL MyHR and you will be paid via the BACS system directly into your bank account.

− Please contact physast_pgta@ucl.ac.uk if you have any queries on this process.

d. **Payment -** Payment will be received as appropriate on an as and when basis for work carried out during the academic year. As with all UCL payroll payments, you will be paid retrospectively, i.e. you will receive payment the month after submission of a payroll request to pay you.

Note that the spine point and salary for demonstrating is usually at Grade 6, point 21 (£15.28 per hour, 2020/21).

Further details are available at UCL Salary Scales.

e. **How to ensure that you are paid -** Please note that you cannot commence work with the department until we have established your right to work and a contract has been set up for you. Please see Guide to Right to Work Checks for more information.

- If you have worked before the date your contract has commenced, you will not be paid for the work.

- In order for a contract to be set up for the current academic year (October 2021 – September 2022), you will need to provide the following:

  o **Passport**: We need to see your passport, to verify your right to work in the UK. It is anticipated that this will be in-person; however, in the case of further social distancing restrictions we may be able to do

this online via Microsoft Teams. More information is available at [UCL Coronavirus HR policies and guidance](). If you do not have a passport, other forms of ID are acceptable. Please see [Guide to Right to Work Checks]() for more information.

- o **Bank account details**: You will need to complete a Bank Account Details form. Note that you will need to do this even if you have submitted your bank account details on Portico as payroll uses an entirely different system to Portico where stipend payments are made.

- o **Tax exemption form**: If you wish to claim exemption from tax (because you will be earning less than the threshold of *circa* £4,500pa), you should complete the starter checklist: which can be found at [Starter checklist for PAYE at gov.uk.]() It is important that you complete it fully and provide your National Insurance Number . If you do not already have a National Insurance Number, details on how to obtain one are available at [Applying for a National Insurance Number at gov.uk.]()

2 PERSON SPECIFICATION

Please see details in the job description document.

3 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Prior teaching experience is not necessary.

- Before undertaking any teaching within the Department of Physics and Astronomy, post-holders must have:

  - o Completed the mandatory UCL [Diversity training package]() and [Safety induction]().

  - o Completed the [UCL Arena Gateway]() training.

  - o Attended the **Physics & Astronomy Teaching and Learning Day on Friday September 17th 2021.**

  - o Additional training as necessary.

- Additional mandatory module and task specific training will be provided to post-holders by the module or scheme coordinator.

- We encourage all PGTAs to complete the [UCL Arena One]() scheme, which is a development pathway for postgraduate students leading (optionally) to the submission of an application to become an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

4 JOB DESCRIPTIONS & CONTACTS

Please see the separate job description and person specification. We are likely to have teaching opportunities available on the following modules—you can view the UCL module catalogue for a description of the module and module leader contact details. Academic-related queries (as opposed to contract/finance related queries that should be sent to the PGTA team, physast_pgta@ucl.ac.uk) can be directed to the Deputy Director of Teaching, Steven Schofield.

Computing modules:
- Python-based computing modules (PHAS0007, PHAS0029, PHAS0020, PHAS0030, PHAS0056, PHAS0102)
- Mathematica-based computing modules (PHAS0012)
- C++ computing (PHAS0100)

PGTAs on these modules will typically be demonstrating in computing sessions, assisting and advising students, giving feedback, as well as engaging students with online resources.

Laboratory modules:
- Experimental Lab modules at Gower St (PHAS0007, PHAS0008, PHAS0011, PHAS0028, PHAS0029, PHAS0051)

PGTAs on these modules will typically be demonstrating in practical laboratory sessions, assisting and advising students, giving feedback, as well as engaging students with online resources.

Astronomy modules:
- Practical astronomy at the UCL Observatory (PHAS0003, PHAS0020, PHAS0043)

PGTAs on these modules will typically be demonstrating in practical astronomy sessions, assisting and advising students, giving feedback, as well as engaging students with online resources.

Communication Skills modules: (PHAS0017, PHAS0035)

PGTAs on these modules will typically be providing feedback to students as well as engaging students with online resources.

Lecture modules: (all other PHAS modules)

PGTAs on these modules will typically be running tutorials for groups of up to 35 students, assisting with the running and moderation of online synchronous sessions,

engaging with Moodle forum discussions, and providing feedback to students.

Ad Hoc Coursework Feedback and Assessment

There may be opportunities for additional feedback and marking not covered by the above.