

Continuing Education / Humanities Division mentored teaching scheme for doctoral students

Guidance for Students

Summary

The Humanities Division and the Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE) invite applications from doctoral students in the Humanities, who have little or no prior teaching experience, for the opportunity to co-teach Continuing Education students alongside an experienced tutor. The scheme was offered for the first time in 2013–14 and this year we are able to offer places for to up to 20 students. The deadline for applications this year is Monday, 24 June 2019.

The main purpose of the scheme is as a development opportunity for those who are seeking a well supported introduction to teaching. We are, however, also pleased to offer participants a fee of £35 per hour for the teaching that they undertake.

Background

Within the Humanities Division, while the availability and distribution of teaching opportunities varies considerably, there is, in general, a shortage of teaching opportunities for doctoral students. The Department for Continuing Education (OUDCE) runs a large and successful portfolio of Open Access courses spanning many disciplines, but with a focus on Humanities subjects, within which it can offer opportunities for teaching experience.

This scheme aims to increase the number of mentored teaching opportunities available to doctoral students within the Humanities and to expand the types of teaching and learning environments that they experience. It will also provide OUDCE with a source of potential tutors who might later be recruited to devise and deliver teaching independently.

What kind of teaching takes place at OUDCE?

The Department for Continuing Education offers a range of courses, both at undergraduate and graduate level (see <https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/>). The largest numbers of enrolments are within its Open Access portfolio, which includes weekly classes, day and weekend schools, summer schools, and online courses. All open access courses are at FHEQ Level 4, the level of the first year of an undergraduate course. Courses cover nearly all the disciplines of the Humanities Division, and the Department also has courses in some Social Science and Natural Science disciplines. It is mainly within the Open Access portfolio that the teaching experience placements will be made, but there may also be placements on the Foundation Certificate courses in English Literature and History, which are award-bearing courses at first year undergraduate level.

How does this co-teaching scheme fit with existing teaching training provision?

In brief:

The co-teaching scheme offers participants some preliminary training to introduce them to teaching adults in a Continuing Education context. There are then opportunities for up to two hours of co-teaching, for which the Department will pay a fee of £35 per hour, and the guidance of a mentor. The scheme contributes towards the requirements for teaching to enable participants to complete the [Developing Learning and Teaching](#) portfolio (accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association).

In more detail:

Current teaching-training provision

All Humanities faculties offer a workshop to introduce postgraduate researchers to teaching at Oxford: **Preparation for Learning and Teaching at Oxford (PLTO)**. Those who complete the PLTO may subsequently pursue the **Developing Learning and Teaching (DLT)** scheme. This involves mentored teaching (arranged by the PGR or their faculty); attendance at six teaching seminars over the course of one term; and the completion of a portfolio (accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association).

The key requirements of the SEDA accreditation offered through the DLT scheme are:

- Experience of either two different teaching settings (i.e. a lecture and a class; a tutorial and undergraduate dissertation supervision) **or** a more extended experience in one setting (e.g. a series of tutorials or classes or lectures spread over one or more terms)
- A written portfolio of 2,500–5,000 words, comprising documents such as: lecture notes, course documentation, and student evaluations.

Co-teaching is encouraged, although participants must be actively involved in some part of the teaching.

The OUDCE/Humanities scheme

This co-teaching scheme seeks to complement rather than replace the existing faculty and divisional training. It offers participants a two-hour training session organised and delivered by OUDCE academics. This covers teaching in the continuing education context, including course design, teaching mature students, managing a class, different methods of assessment, marking, providing feedback, etc. A short reading list of texts on adult education is provided, and Powerpoint slides of the session are available.

Each shortlisted participant is offered up to two hours of teaching experience on a Continuing Education Open Access course, under the guidance of a teaching mentor from OUDCE. This contributes towards the teaching experience required for completion of the Humanities DLT portfolio.

The co-teaching experience

The main placement opportunities will be in the Department's Weekly Class Programme, although there may also be placements on online, summer school, day/weekend or Foundation Certificate courses. The first placements for co-teaching experience will be in Michaelmas Term 2019. A variety of different approaches is possible, and it is expected that the pattern of teaching will be determined between the student and the mentor on an individual basis. The most likely approach is for the student to give part of two or more of the typical two-hour sessions of a weekly class, or to offer a session as a speaker in a day or weekend school. Other possibilities might include multi-tutor classes, with a group of postgraduates each giving a short session. Tutoring online courses would be another option – the Department provides an online course on effective online tutoring, one module of which is offered free.

Engagement with a variety of different teaching activities will be possible, including presenting, designing group work, chairing discussions, identifying useful resources, setting exercises, etc. Opportunities to engage in assessment, as part of the preliminary training session offered in September, will be available.

Mentoring

Each participant will be assigned a mentor who will be the tutor of the individual course on which the doctoral student is to have his or her teaching experience. Mentors will attend a briefing session to make sure that they understand what is involved, and to consider appropriate formats for the teaching experience on their course. They will arrange for the doctoral student to observe at least one course session prior to undertaking their experience. They will discuss with the doctoral student his or her proposed teaching sessions, ensuring that the student appreciates the various aspects of course delivery, including planning and preparation as well as the actual teaching. After the teaching has taken place, the mentor will provide feedback to the student on their experience.

Eligibility

Humanities doctoral research students wishing to participate in the scheme must have successfully undertaken their faculty PLTO training. They must have successfully completed their Transfer of Status assessment at the point of application. They are also required to have sought their supervisor's approval to participate in this scheme (please note that the supervisors of those who are shortlisted will be contacted and asked for an endorsing statement on the student's suitability for the scheme). Successful applicants are strongly encouraged to participate in the Humanities Developing Learning and Teaching scheme alongside their participation in the mentored teaching scheme.

Application and Selection Process

An essential part of the scheme is the matching of potential participants to the open access courses that will be on offer during the academic year. To enable this, students should apply by 24

June 2019 by completing the attached application form. Applicants should explicitly state their area of expertise and also the parameters within which they are confident to teach.

ODCE will then seek to match students' research interests with the programme of courses (and with tutors who deliver those courses who are themselves willing to participate). It is not necessary, nor even desirable, that students gain teaching experience in the precise field of their research, but a broad match will help to ensure a satisfactory experience for both the student tutor and for those taking the course. Only those for whom a suitable match is found will be accepted onto the scheme. As indicated above, DPhil supervisors will be asked to confirm that they are happy for shortlisted candidates to participate.

All applicants will be notified by Friday, 5 July 2019 about whether or not they have been offered a place on this scheme. Successful applicants will be advised about the course on which they will be teaching (with a link to the webpage giving details of the course) and the name and contact details of their ODCE mentor. They will be expected to make initial contact with their mentor at that stage, and to attend the ODCE training session which will take place on Monday, 23 September 2019.

Outcomes

By participating in the scheme, postgraduates will gain some of the necessary teaching experience to enable them to complete the Developing Learning and Teaching portfolio which, if successful, leads towards accreditation from the Staff and Educational Development Association. Participants will also have gained a broader experience of teaching at higher education level. Subject to obtaining SEDA accreditation, participants may apply to be accepted by ODCE onto its panel of external tutors. This would permit them to put forward proposals for future open access courses, typically involving 20 contact hours over the course of ten weeks, for which the Department's standard rates of remuneration would apply.

Enquiries

Any questions about the scheme should be addressed to Caroline Thurston, Humanities Training Officer (training@humanities.ox.ac.uk).