WARWICK LAW SCHOOL
GTA MANUAL
TIPS AND TRICKS 2023

CONTENTS

WELCOME

The handbook was first conceptualised as a part of the Warwick Postgraduate Teaching Community (WPTC). In 2022, WPTC introduced a series of monthly knowledge-sharing "Tips and Tricks" workshops, which provided an opportunity for current and prospective GTAs to come together, ask questions, share ideas and get to know each other. During these sessions, the PGR community submitted questions and the hosts answered them based on our own experiences as GTAs, and the experiences of their peers.
These questions and answers were collated into this handbook, in the hope that it is a useful reference point for you, wherever you are in your teaching journey. Any suggestions or recommendations we make are purely based on our own lived experiences of teaching at the University of Warwick, but we hope that our insight proves useful. This handbook has been further personalised and adapted for specific queries and situations that you may face at the Law School by Cherisse Francis, Senior Graduate Teaching Assistant and Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) and supported by Dr. Laura Lammasniemi, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Staff Development, as a part of an IATL Project Support funded Project.

Welcome to your GTA Journey!
Cherisse, Sophie, and the rest of the Warwick PTC

THINKING ABOUT TEACHING

THINKING ABOUT TEACHING

1 Which year of PhD Is the best to start teaching?

There's no right or wrong answer here – some people may feel they're not quite confident / ready to begin in their first year and will wait until their second. Others might feel ready from the get-go – the department will specify on the available vacancies if they have any conditions for the role (i.e., must be in certain year of study).

When you feel comfortable and confident to apply, you should! You will likely be teaching texts/materials outside of your immediate expertise anyway, so it's not necessarily a question of time = experience.

In our experience, second year is a good time to start – you should have a bit more time having got to grips with your PhD in your first year but are not yet in a full writing up stage. This also means you can get the teaching experience under your belt and decide if you enjoy it! You may want to carry on in your third / fourth year, alongside your writing up.

2 I don't have any teaching experience. Can I still become a GTA?

Nearly all PGR teachers will come to the role with minimal / no teaching experience and is often the first step in becoming a teacher / lecturer within Higher Education.
You don't need to have prior teaching experience, and the most important thing is enthusiasm/willingness to learn.

3 I want to be a GTA. Where do I start?

The Law School also sends emails to all PGRs when they are advertising vacancies (usually early in the summer term) so that you can see the courses where they need assistance. Once you have identified the position(s) you are interested in, the next thing to do is apply! More information about the application process is discussed elsewhere in this handbook, but at this stage focus on why you want to teach and let your passion for your subject come through in your application.

4 What do I need to prepare to teach?

The Academic Development Centre (ADC) runs a Moodle course called Prepare to Teach which you will be invited to do before teaching starts.

In terms of your subject, the Module Convenor will give you the information you need, as well as access to the Moodle pages and other online resources that will also be used by the students, so you can remain on the same page as them.

All you need is positivity, confidence in your own abilities, and the dedication to work hard in preparing weekly seminars.

Trust in yourself!

5 What are the main responsibilities of a GTA?

GTA responsibilities fall into three main categories: Supporting Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Feedback and Administration. For GTAs in the Law School the duties are usually divided as follows:

▶ Supporting Teaching and Learning
▶ Leading seminars
  ‣ Providing support to module leaders
  ‣ Explaining/clarifying concepts or key ideas

▶ Assessment and Feedback
  ‣ Direct face-to-face feedback on seminar questions in class
  ‣ Written feedback and comments to formative and/or summative assessments against a rubric/mark scheme

▶ Administration
  ‣ Monitoring attendance on Moodle or Tabula after each seminar
  ‣ Providing office hours for students to discuss any questions with you

You may not have to do all these duties for every module you teach, as it varies.

FRIENDLY TIP:
 Discuss expectations with the module leader/convenor at the start of your contract.

BECOMING A GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT

6 Where can we find GTA jobs?

Currently, GTA jobs are advertised here:
https://atsv7.wcn.co.uk/search_engine/jobs.
cgi?owner=5062452&posting_code=838&ownertype=fair

The GTA job search page looks like Figure 1. From this page, you can filter based on the department you are interested in, but remember you are not limited to only applying to your home department! You can also set up search alerts, which will let you know if jobs have been posted, even if the information is not circulated within the department by other means. The Law School will have more information about internal job vacancies – if you have not heard anything, reach out to your PGR Director of GTA Mentor (contact details at the end of the handbook).
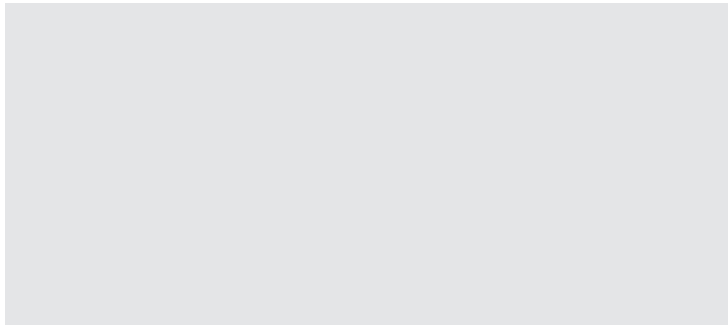

Figure 1: GTA Job Search webpage

7 How are GTA applications assessed?

GTA Applications can be assessed in several ways – by application form, test/exercise, interview, or presentation. The job advert will list essential and desirable criteria, and also tell you how criteria are assessed. An example GTA Advert from a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) department is shown in Figure 2, and the person specification tells you how the position is assessed – application form, interview etc.

If you look at the example advert, you'll see that previous teaching experience is desirable but not essential! The advert also says

teaching or student support experience is essential, so if you have other relevant experience – coaching a sports team, being a Student Representative etc., this experience all counts!

Person Specification	
	The Person Specification focuses on the knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications required to undertake the role effectively. This is measured by (a) Application Form, (b) Test/Exercise, (c) Interview, (d) Presentation.
Essential Criteria 1	Good honours degree or equivalent (in a relevant area). (A)
Essential Criteria 2	Sufficient breadth and depth of knowledge of subject to deal with issues or queries raised by students. (A)
Essential Criteria 3	Interpersonal and communication skills, notably an ability to explain and communicate problems, ideas and concepts clearly and accessibly to students. (A)
Essential Criteria 4	An aptitude for applying teaching methods and techniques, and encouraging student participation in discussions. (A)
Essential Criteria 5	Understanding of equal opportunity issues as they may impact on areas of teaching. (A)
Essential Criteria 6	An ability to work within H&S compliance guidelines within relevant teaching environments. (A)
Desirable Criteria 1	Previous teaching, or student support, experience. (A)
Desirable Criteria 2	Ability to instruct others in the effective and responsible use of instruments. (A)

Figure 2: Example person specification for GTA advert

In the Law School you typically submit an application form and then go through an interview where a panel will ask you questions about your experiences, desire to become a GTA and classroom management e.g. what would you do if a student was being disruptive in a seminar?

8 Can GTA positions be done remotely?

Most GTA contracts within the Law School specify that your roles must be discharged from within the United Kingdom. Following the height of the pandemic University policy has returned to in-person teaching and teaching takes place on campus. For data protection reasons marking usually has to be conducted from within the United Kingdom as well.

There may be other ways to get involved remotely, for example some SSLCs (Student Staff Liaison Committee) still meet online – SSLCs are not teaching-related (or paid, unfortunately) but develops related skills.

Another teaching-related possibility is The Brilliant Club – an educational charity where PGRs can teach or tutor in UK schools, but some programmes are run online: https://thebrilliantclub.org/our-programmes/

9 How competitive is the application process?

It varies across departments. Some research-focused departments have very few GTA positions, if any, and so there will be more competition for those. In other teaching-heavy departments, there will be more opportunities available – for example in one STEM department, there were ~130 PGRs in total, and 70 GTA contracts available in one academic year. Not all PGRs choose to teach, so you can see that in that instance the odds are in your favour! The Law School has a relatively high rate of acceptance for GTAs but it does vary depending on the need of the department at the time. Remember, you are not limited to applying to just your department.

10 What should I include in my CV and cover letter?

There are a few key things to include in your CV:

▶ Do you have any relevant work experience?
  ‣ Have you taught before? Provide details of this
  ‣ If you haven't, can you provide examples where you have led groups or taught people something – have you trained people on how to use equipment etc?

▶ How does your education background match the position?
  ‣ Did you take similar modules during your own undergraduate or masters?
  ‣ If you got a particularly good grade in any of the relevant modules, you could mention this

▶ What key skills do you have that would be useful for the position?
  ‣ If the advert says communication is essential, try and mention specific examples where you have communicated with others. Have you been involved in committees? Have you presented your work at meetings? These can all show you can communicate with others and explain your ideas/thoughts.
  Your cover letter is a chance to showcase you as a person, and address or highlight any particular details.

▶ State which module you are interested in, but also if you would consider any others

▶ Emphasise why you are interested in that specific module – does it relate to your research? Does it match to your background?

▶ State any key skills relating to the module –e.g. If the module is about criminal law, mention that you have practiced as a criminal barrister or have worked as a paralegal. You can also discuss soft

skills e.g. A large part of GTA work is effective communication so mention in your interview if you have done public speaking or trained children at a summer camp for example.

Your CV/cover letter may get screened first by HR/admin before it gets seen by the academic, so make sure it is clear to both a specialist and non-specialist audience why you are suited to that module.

11 Do Graduate Teaching Assistants get to choose which subjects they engage with?

To an extent – in the application form you normally specify which modules you are interested in, but it is not guaranteed that you will be allocated (if any). Make sure you state clearly which module you are interested in, but it would be useful to mention if you are open to others, or to mention them by name.

GTA ADMIN

12. How do we get paid for teaching?

You can log your hours for teaching on the Teaching Hours website. Once you have been issued with a contract from HR, you can access the 'Track my Time' system. Some screenshots are shown below, to demonstrate how to complete a timesheet.

Figure 3: Screenshot of HR webpage. Click "Submit a worklog" to access the timesheet system

The Track my Time system homepage is shown below. To claim your hours, you need to click on "Complete my Work Log". The "View my Contract Information" button can also show you details of your contract – total hours worked, hours claimed so far, and (sometimes) a breakdown of how your hours are distributed (marking, prep, face-to-face time, office hours etc.)
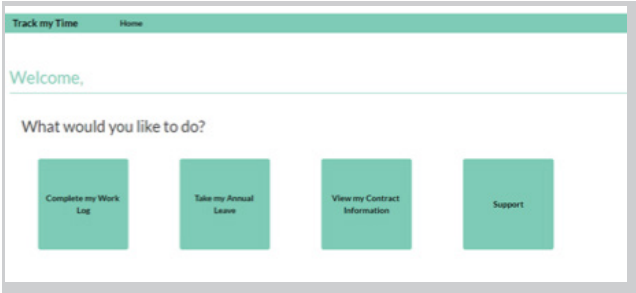

Figure 4: Track my time system

From this page, you select the role, the week you are claiming and the module. If you worked on multiple modules in one week, you log your hours separately for each.

Figure 5: Timesheet system. Select the role and week claiming for here

You can then log how many hours you worked on each day. If you have prep/teaching/marking all in one week, it can be useful to log in the "Additional information" section the breakdown of those hours. Also, if you worked more in one week than previously expected (e.g., if you were given another session to run at the last minute), you can note that here too.

Figure 6: Claim the number of hours worked on each day

You can then log how many hours you worked on each day. If you have prep/teaching/marking all in one week, it can be useful to log in the "Additional

13 What is holiday pay?

When you get your GTA contract, you will likely see the following (the rate of pay will vary):

Role name: Graduate Teaching Assistant (17)
Pay details: £ **12.37** basic pay + £ **2.18** holiday pay

Figure 7: Figure 7: Screenshot from contract email, stating rate of pay and holiday pay

For every hour you work (and claim), you also get holiday pay. This holiday pay is the equivalent (pro rata) of 28 days per year. Once you have claimed your teaching hours, you can click the "Take my Annual Leave" button to claim your holiday pay.

> FRIENDLY TIP:
> Claim your holiday pay before September 30 every year as it will expire then and return back to the University if unclaimed.
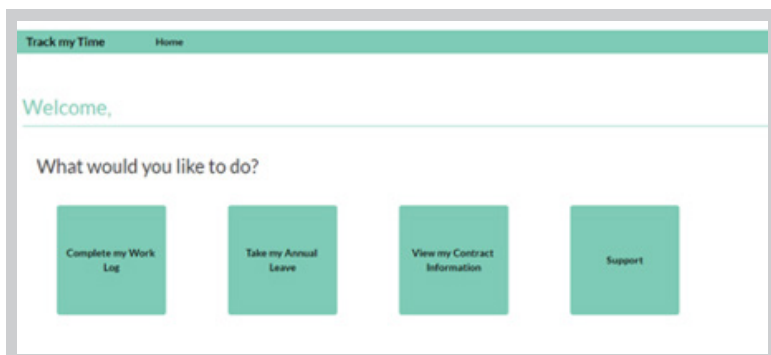
Figure 8: Select "Take my Annual Leave" to claim holiday pay

14 Do I get taxed as a GTA?

If you are an international student then you have an annual tax free allowance £12,570 for 2023/24. This should automatically be picked up by HMRC and you should not be taxed as long as you remain below the monthly threshold. However, if you are working both as a GTA and on the Unitemps pay roll you will need to call HMRC and have them split your tax-free allowance between these two payrolls.

HMRC will assign you two tax codes and you will need to calculate approximately how much you earn per month on each pay roll (GTA and Unitemps) based on this you can tell them what quantity to attach to each pay toll.

e.g. International students can only work up to 20 hours a week. If your GTA contract stipulates that you work 14 hours a week as a GTA then you can assign 6 hours a week to the Unitemps pay roll.

Multiply your hourly pay by the number of hours you work on each payroll and then multiply it by 4 to approximate your monthly salary. You can then determine how much you wish to have 'tax-free' on each payroll for the year.

FRIENDLY TIP:
Prepare these calculations before calling HMRC and have your tax number and NI number on hand. They will request details from you.

15 Do I get a staff IT account?

As a GTA you should have a staff email address/IT account that is slightly different from your student account. This is important because:

▶ This is the account you have to use to communicate with your students

▶ This is the account where central university will send you any staff-related emails (information about pensions, unions, strikes etc.)

▶ This account should be attached to a separate Tabula where you can see your seminar groups and take attendance.

▶ You can get a staff profile set up in the website where you can list your research interests, publications, etc. This is important for visibility and networking.

Using this staff account, the way you see the Warwick website may be different, as you may be able to see more of the back end of the website. This is also the account that you should be using to download your payslips on SuccessFactors.

16 How do I get a separate Staff ID card?

As GTAs are considered staff, you can access a separate ID card for your teaching. This would allow you to have a different library account, and access to various parts of departments that your student ID might not. These cards are only produced on demand and therefore you should follow the process on the website for this.

The process is quick and straightforward just make sure that your Staff IT account is set up, a photo uploaded on the portal and that you know your staff ID number.

MANAGING TEACHING

SESSION PLANNING

17 How can I prepare for my seminars?

An important first step is discussing the seminar with the module leader/convenor - what do they expect from the seminar? What do they want the students to take away? What do they expect you to cover? Once you know this, you can prepare accordingly.

Regardless of the guidance from the module convenor, it is useful to know where your students are in the course. What have they covered? What have the previous lectures covered? What is on their reading list? There is no expectation that you will cover all of this (and you likely won't have time to!) but having an idea of where your students are up to means you can set your own expectations accordingly.

Some weeks you may be able to cover all the material, some weeks you won't. This is normal.

> FRIENDLY TIP:
> You also only ever really need to be one week ahead of your students.

18 How should I structure a session or a seminar?

There is no one way to structure a session. You may be given a lesson plan by the module convenor, or you may be left to your own devices. Either way, make sure to cover the set content – you should be told what this is, but if in doubt, get in touch with the module convenor. In the Law School, students will have seminar questions that they are expected to answer. Make sure you have some prepared responses to the questions. It is also a good idea to have one or two backup questions in case the students cover the content fast!

Think of what tools you will use to facilitate their discussions and responses e.g., debates, small group work, individual responses, games etc. There are examples of tools and strategies on the PTC Moodle space: https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=43709

Remember - you are not there to tell students all the answers, but rather the facilitate and guide their discussions.

When planning a session, try to bear in mind all these things. To give you some inspiration, an example seminar outline from History (which also works for Law) is shown in Figure 9. It breaks down the hour-long session into five components, from the welcome all the way to rounding up the session.
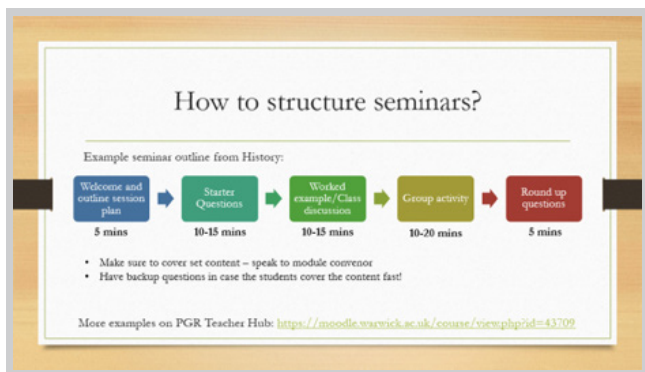

Figure 9: Outline of a seminar from History

RUNNING SESSIONS

19 Any good suggestions for the "intro" session of a class to not be super awkward? I feel nervous about trying to get a good atmosphere going from the start!

Introduce yourself, let them know a little about your background, maybe share one or two of your interests outside teaching and why you are teaching the course. Be yourself and that will create a good atmosphere. Students tend to teach of their teachers as 'intelligent, unreachable beings'; if they know a little about you, they will be more comfortable around you.

Also, allow them to introduce themselves. You might want to at the beginning of the first class, ask each student to share their name, where they are from and 'why they are here'. Students interpret that 'why are you here' question very differently and you can get a mix of why they are at university, why are they in this class, why they are on the earth which diffuses some awkwardness. You may also want to do an ice breaker and explain any rules you have for the class e.g. one person speak at the time, be respectful of different opinions, always come prepared.

20 I don't know the answer to one of the student's questions – what do I do?

Be honest! Do not lie to them. There are a couple of approaches you can take. Open it up to the rest of the class and ask what they think – this will create a more extended discussion around it. Ask the student to go away and find out the answer for themselves and report back to class. Tell the student you will find out the answer and get back to them.

21 How to keep a balance between ensuring the students freely express their opinions and making the discussion efficient and productive?

There are a number of ways you can do this:

▶ State the objectives of the session very clearly at the beginning.

▶ Assigning small group work for a limited time (15 mins) then asking them to bring their responses back and share with the group can help to create a balance.

▶ When planning your session, mentally allow some time for opinions and off-topic discussions.

▶ Close the session with a recap (or ask a student to recap).

22 I am not a native English speaker. In the discussion, how can I deal with the challenges?

Try to speak slowly and pace yourself; this gives your brain time to think about the right word and gives students time to understand.

Be honest with students from the beginning that you are not a native English speaker and quite often they will be understanding. In fact, many of the faculty and GTAs are not native English speakers and the students are used to being taught by people with different accents and teaching styles. You can also talk to other GTAs who are non-native English speakers to get a sense of how they handle teaching.

23 Any tips for getting students to engage more energetically with discussions, perhaps in an early morning session or after a few have had a heavy night before?!

This will be something we all encounter – and there's no one-size-fits-all solution – but good planning and positivity can go a long way.

▶ Start an informal interaction with them before the class starts e.g., ask how they are – this will get them comfortable and chatting

▶ Hopefully, students will become more confident over time, but I found it helpful to stress to them that there is no stupid answer. I tend to start a class with a simple question that anyone (who had watched the lecture) would be able to answer. An example might be 'what is criminal law?'

▶ Small group work also helps them to build confidence in their answers.

▶ Ensuring you have small, manageable tasks for the students to complete (subject-dependent) rather than simply giving them an hour.

24 What kinds of tools can be used to teach the sessions?

There are lots of different tools and strategies that you can use in seminars. Some examples are listed on the PGR Teacher Moodle page, which can be found at: https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=43709. Some other useful tools to consider when structuring your sessions involve debates, essay/idea relays or brainstorming.

You can also embed technology within your lessons and make the most of technology-enhanced learning. There are several tools licensed by Warwick to do this – Vevox is useful for polling or Q&As, and Padlet is useful for creating discussion boards. Guides to both can be found below:

▶ Vevox:
https://warwick.ac.uk/services/academictechnology/support/guides/vevox-guides/vvx-11/

▶ Padlet:
https://warwick.ac.uk/services/academictechnology/support/guides/padlet-guides/pdl-01/

25 How to deal with silence?

Silence from students is a part of any teaching experience so it is to be expected. Know that this is not always an indication of your ability or lack of understanding but sometimes students are silent because they are processing, or because they shy or maybe because speaking in front of a group gives them anxiety.

One of my professional mentors said to me during a teaching observation that I need to be careful not to fill the silence and give students all the answers. Eventually, some student will speak up when they feel awkward enough. Another approach if no one speaks is to say, okay, I won't be giving you the answer to this so do some research and we will discuss it in the next session or send me an email.

26 How can we make theories accessible?

One way to do this would be to use videos which explain things simply or use pop culture references e.g. In my practice of teaching criminal law, I have shown a 5-minute clip from TV show 'How to get away with murder' that was linked to the example I was making.

Another part of making theories accessible especially in social sciences is about applying them to life. What examples can you think of from life that explain the concepts. If all else fails, YouTube!

TIME MANAGEMENT

27 Any tips for preparing in the allocated time-limit and keeping boundaries?

It is easy to spend more time preparing than you are contracted for. Remember that you don't need to prepare everything – focus on the key examples you are going to discuss in the session or that students will be working through and prioritise how you will spend your prep time. You should always read the required reading for the seminars and you might want to skim read recommended reading bit do not have to.

If you find that you are still going over your allocated time, there are a few strategies you can take to manage this – there's no one correct approach, but these are some approaches current GTAs have taken:

▶ Some GTAs choose to only prepare at the last minute so that they physically cannot go over the allocated prep time.

▶ Many GTAs teach the same module year after year and know that in later years less preparation time is needed. Some GTAs choose to work over their hours in the first year and claim the time back in Years 2/3!

28 Can I request specific days/times for my seminars?

The timetabling is done centrally to avoid clashes with other
modules, so you are unlikely to have a significant amount of say.
You may be asked if you have a preference, for example if you have
caring responsibilities, but there is no guarantee they are able to
accommodate your requests.

It's worth remembering that you cannot take time off during the term.
It's virtually impossible to reschedule seminars during the term as all
the rooms are booked. If there are specific dates you can't do, let the
module leader/HR know – you may be able to swap with another GTA
or sessional tutor for that session. Sometimes the emails offering you
the contract state that you cannot miss a session or swap. It is worth
still speaking to the module leader and those within your module
team about this informally – there may still be scope to do so.

29 How to keep on track and stay organized as a GTA?

I find it helpful to block out time in my calendar for research activities
and for teaching.

As soon as you know your class timetable, put it into your calendar
so you can plan other work around it, and work backwards from that
date to factor in any prep time. An example of this is in Figure 10.
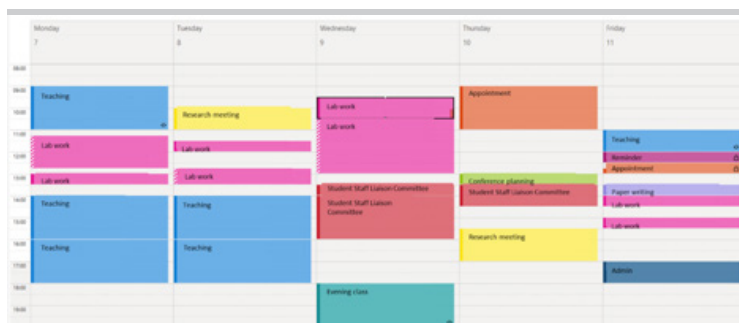

Figure 10: Calendar, with scheduled teaching and research time

I also make a note of everything I want to cover before/during my teaching session so that I don't forget anything. Another thing to be aware of are upcoming deadlines – if you are marking it is useful to have a sense in advance of when the work is coming!

Keep a folder (physical or on your computer) of all the materials for the class, so that you can find it easily – this takes some of the stress out of it. This is how I keep my class registers and individual class notes separate. Dividers within the folder are also helpful.
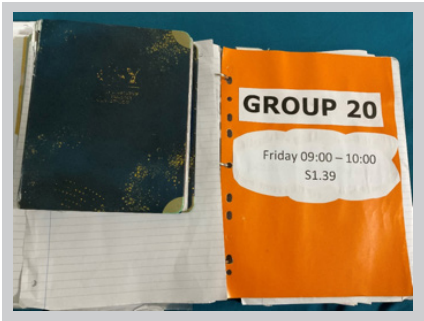
Figure 11: Seminar note organisation

For each seminar I prepare detailed notes to answer each of the questions. This allows me to be confident in my abilities but also to be able to explain concepts to students easily.
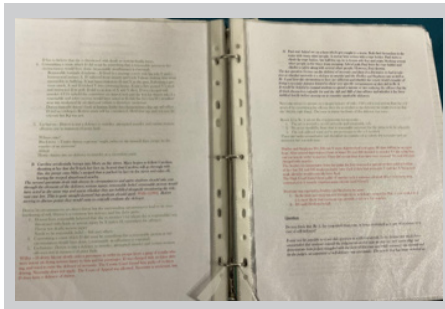
Figure 12: Example seminar prep

Figure 13: Class schedule

I use a colour coded class schedule to keep me up to date on the times of each seminar, which group I will have and where the class will be located.

30 How do you balance the GTA position with your own research, both in terms of time management and whether it augments your own research?

Balancing the two can be a challenge! The maximum number of hours any GTA can work in a week is 20, but this is a maximum, not the standard number of hours. Also, not every week is the same – some weeks you might have several sessions to run, other weeks you may have none – it all depends on the timetable. That means that in busier teaching weeks, you may make less progress with your research, but in quieter weeks you can focus more on your research.

Also, outside of teaching terms you are unlikely to have any teaching responsibilities (other than some marking), so make the most of your quiet time!

If the module you are teaching is related to your research, the time spent teaching can also directly augment your research – in having to explain and articulate the core concepts, you are reinforcing your own understanding, and making sure it can be explained clearly.

31 I'm in my final year - how do I manage teaching and preparing my thesis?

The final stages of preparing your doctoral thesis are so important. It can be useful to have a schedule when writing up. Teaching can help give you that schedule – if you know that you have a seminar to run on a Tuesday morning, you can dedicate the whole of Tuesday afternoon to writing etc. Setting aside key blocks of time that are only for teaching and only for research and only for writing etc will help give that structure.

The Library also runs writing sessions (Write Here Write Now) which are focused sessions if it is useful for you to write with others: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/pghub/skills/writeherewritenow/

MARKING, ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

32 Is it possible to only take on teaching responsibilities and not marking?

This varies based on your contract and the demand in the department but generally some marking is expected.

If you have a particular reason for not being able to/not wanting to undertake marking, you may want to discuss this before or after your interview, before signing any contracts. You may even have the opportunity to mark assessments on courses that you are not teaching if you have some background knowledge or specialised experience and there is a heavy demand.

33 How much time should be spent on marking?

Marking deadlines/contracted hours should be agreed in advance. This will give an idea of how much time you are expected to spend per submission (on average).

Marking timetables are very strict and entirely out of the hands of your module convenor. There is an expectation that you should return your scripts within a period agreed with your module convenor. It is important to see that we have some very tight turn-around times with marking. The University imposes a 20 working day period to return feedback, but the convenor needs to second mark your work, so it is likely that you will get little more than two weeks to mark coursework.

With exams, it is sometimes even less time, because it depends on the exam timetable and when the exam board happens. Exams need to be second marked and sent to an external examiner before the exam board. Two examples, from different disciplines, are shown below.

STEM Example	Social Science Example
• Contract: 30 hours • Number of assignments: 100 • Average time per assignment = 18 minutes	• Contract: 1 hour per script • Number of questions per script: 3 • Average time per question = 20 minutes

Figure 14: Example breakdown of marking time from two subjects

34 How do we mark assessments and provide feedback?

You are normally provided with a mark scheme/rubric. Discuss this mark scheme with module lead/convenor, and discuss edge cases, e.g., what mark is appropriate if the assessment is lacking in X, but the student has gone above and beyond in Y?

If you are marking with another GTA/alongside the module lead, try and both mark the first few, discuss the marks you gave, and come to a consensus as to what corresponds to a first, 2:1, 2:2 etc.

One thing that may be useful is making a spreadsheet of all the grades. Include a column for each assessment point, as well as a column for feedback. You can then note down good points and areas of improvements as you mark each assignment. Having the grades listed for each assessment objective means that you can then look back at the breakdown of marks. If the overall mark is being pulled down by a certain criteria/issue, include that in your feedback.

35 How to make sure you mark consistently?

Most modules will provide marking guidance as well as moderating a sample of your scripts for consistency. You will also typically be provided with a rubric.

There are a few things you can do to check you are marking consistently, before sending your assessments to moderation:

▶ Try to co-mark the first few (5 or 10) with the convenor or a senior colleague to agree on expectations

▶ Make a grading spreadsheet and note down the mark for each criterion as you go. Did the first assessments marked score consistently lower/higher on a criterion than the last?

▶ If you have time, try self-moderating at the end. Look over the assessments you marked first. What mark would you give it now? Are the grades similar? If not, why?

36 What is good feedback?

Feedback is very important when marking assessed work. Feedback on assessments has at least three main functions;

▶ To engage with and respond to a student's work

▶ To identify how a student can improve their work

▶ To explain how a mark has been reached

When marking course work, please adopt the following approach:

(1) Feedback should be provided along clearly structured lines. Modules adopt a variety of approaches. Make sure you understand what is expected of you by your Module Convenor. Whichever format is used, students should receive written feedback that accords with (2) and (3) requirements below.

(2) However, the feedback is delivered, it must give, first, general comments and second refer specifically to the Marking Criteria headings for the assessment; it should also explain the final mark arrived at by reference to the Criteria.

(3) We do not want to be too prescriptive as to the quantity but as a guide 6-8 lines of text of general and specific comments and 6-8 lines of text under 'areas for improvement' would be reasonable. Giving specific examples of good practice or areas for improvement would be expected. University advice on writing feedback includes:

▸ Provide a brief summary of your view of the assignment
▸ Balance negative with positive comments maintaining respectful language throughout
▸ Use constructive criticism to provide positive suggestions for improvement
▸ Ask questions which encourage reflection about the work
▸ Explain all comments
▸ Suggest follow-up work and references if appropriate (or refer to general feedback advice)
▸ Suggest specific ways to improve the assignment
▸ Explain the mark or the grade and explaining why it is not better or worse
▸ Offer help with specific problems
▸ Offer the opportunity to discuss the assignment and your comments.

(4) Double check comments adequately explain the mark awarded is in accordance with the marking criteria – students will pick up on any inconsistency.

(5) Take into account reasonable adjustments where notice has been given that these are applicable for a student – they should not be penalised for errors made due to their Specific Learning Difference.

(6) If the moderation process alters a mark, the feedback must be modified to reflect the revised mark. Moderators may also suggest changes to feedback. Please note that this should be done via email between the moderator and marker with any changes made to the feedback form by the moderator on Tabula.

(7) Students should be offered the opportunity of a verbal consultation with the marker in their Advice and Feedback Hours. This is an opportunity to gain additional verbal feedback and for students to clarify anything they may not have understood in the written feedback. Your module convenor will inform you whether you will need to offer these feedback opportunities. They should also advise how to approach such meetings. If there are any problems from the student then you should immediately refer the matter to the Module Convenor.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

37 Should GTAs encourage the use of gender-neutral pronouns? Respect students' identity is the golden rule.

Depending on how many students you have you may be able to ask them what pronouns they prefer and utilise them. However, one way that this can be handled and respectful is simply to use the student's name rather than any pronoun at all.

I have encountered circumstances where the name that the student signs the register with is not the official name that the University holds for them. In that situation I spoke to the student individually, clarified what name they preferred and used that in class while signing off their official name for attendance purposes.

38 How do I make sure my teaching is inclusive?

There is no one way to do this but it is a skill that can be developed. You can only be inclusive when you are aware, doing courses such as APP PGR can make you more aware of certain circumstances. Once you are aware then you can take steps towards this: For example:

▶ If showing a video try to have closed captions/subtitles on.

▶ Be mindful of students who may have anxiety that is worsened by being singled out and include small group work in your teaching.

▶ Try to have a variety of visual, auditory, and tactile or engaging activities for students who learn in different ways.

▶ Think about the alignment of your written work.

▶ When marking be conscious of looking at whether there is a disability disclosure that you might need to account for.

▶ Be aware of your own biases and try to address them.

▶ Learn to pronounce students' names.

▶ Be kind.

39 How important is it for GTAs to be involved in decolonizing?

At the moment this is a personal and individual choice; because GTAs are not usually involved in creating course content or deciding what course content/readings students are assigned it can be difficult to do this. However, any GTAs who want to become involved can certainly seek opportunities for this.

40 Handling student disclosures

Equip yourself with information. You can access the University's

Report and Support scheme here: https://reportandsupport.warwick.ac.uk/

It is important to listen to the student without judgement and try to signpost them to relevant resources as appropriate. Try to ensure that you are also taking care of your own mental health and have someone to talk to.

41 How important is it to foster the spirit of equity over equality in our work toward encouraging students to feel a greater sense of belonging, active participation and improve pedagogy?

This again is a very personal query. However, from my limited teaching experience I think it is very important to foster a sense of equity.

Courses like APP PGR encourage teachers to think about students as individuals and there has been research which has shown that students are more motivated to learn when they feel as though they are being cared for on an individual level with their identities respected.

GTA WELLBEING

42 Are there any support/accommodations for disabled PGRs for their teaching responsibilities?

At the moment, we are not aware of any support specifically for disabled GTAs. This is something WPTC members are looking into, along with the Academic Development Centre, and hopefully this gap in provision can be addressed in the future.

43 What can GTAs do if they are struggling with their mental health?

As GTAs we also have to take care of our own welfare. Here are some services that could help:

Wellbeing Support Services https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss/
Staff Wellbeing Hub: https://warwick.ac.uk/services/wss/staff-wellbeing
Warwick Nightline: https://warwick.nightline.ac.uk/
Warwick Mind: https://cwmind.org.uk/

44 Any tips for looking after mental health as a GTA?

Make sure to take breaks. It can be very easy to overwork as a GTA, so try to be strict with yourself and not work too hard for too long – try to avoid burning out!

Find spaces away from teaching and research to relax:

▶ Library runs Research Refresh on Thursday mornings https://warwick.ac.uk/services/library/pghub/social/research_refresh/

▶ WPTC runs a monthly session called The Staff Room, which is an informal session where you can meet other GTAs, connect and unwind: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/pgrteachers/networking/staffroom/

45 What can we do if we experience harassment while being a GTA?

Unfortunately, these situations can arise in the classroom and it may be context specific. The best advice is.

If you are experiencing harassment from students report this to your module convenor and seek their advice on the best course of action.

If you are experiencing harassment from the module convenor speak to the PGR Director or GTA mentor. In the instance that you do not feel safe with either party perhaps ask your PhD supervisor for their advice.

OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES

46 Are GTAs expected to contribute to course and seminar design? Would it be seen as stepping on toes to offer contributions or will we be seen as unmotivated if we don't?

Every course is different! Course design is generally the role of module convenor, but some module convenors might invite you to get involved. This may be on a formal or informal basis, but there is no real expectation for contributions.

At a seminar level, in the Law School you have control (to an extent) over structuring your seminars as long as you meet the stated objectives and facilitate answering the seminar questions.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

47 What is the difference between 'teaching' and 'lecturing'?

Lecturing generally refers to presenting to very large groups of students, usually with a one-way transmission of information. Teaching in the sense of seminar leading or demonstrating (like what you will be doing) generally involves working with smaller groups of students, engaging in discussion, and answering any questions students might have.

48 How to deal with stage fright when public speaking?

Prepare a PowerPoint to remind you of what you want to say and keep you on track when doing lectures or public speaking. If you are nervous, stand behind or sit behind the podium as much as possible for stability.

Remember that you are the expert in the room!
Review your material before hand, if you are confident in your material the actual delivery becomes easier.

Finally, remember to be yourself (whatever that means)!

49 What is the efficient teaching technique in social sciences?

There is no one effective 'teaching technique' for Law or even for a single module. Teaching and learning is a very individualised experience on both the part of the student and the learner.

However, there are different levels of learning that require different actions by the teacher. If you want to know more about this, you can read on Blooms Learning Taxonomy as a starting point.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ NEXT STEPS

50 What professional development opportunities are available to GTAs at Warwick?

There are lots of professional development opportunities that GTAs can engage with at Warwick. Some key ones are listed below:

▶ APP PGR – completing the course gets you AFHEA (Associate Fellow of the HEA) status (6 months)
  ▸ https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/app/pgr/
▶ PGA in TLHE (another 6 months)
  ▸ https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/app/pgr/postgraduateaward/
▶ Writing about pedagogy (Journal of PGR Pedagogic Practice)
  ▸ https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/pgrteachers/jppp/
▶ Teaching for Learning Online (self-paced Moodle course)
  ▸ https://moodle.warwick.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=41836
▶ Cultivate (Teams workshops open to all teaching-related staff, not just GTAs)
▶ https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/cultivate/

51 How can I use occasional, non-regular (guest) teaching experience in job interviews when applying for academic teaching jobs?

A few details you can include:
▶ What level were you teaching? Foundation year, undergraduate, postgraduate?
▶ Were you teaching small or large groups?
▶ Leading seminars or giving lectures?

One thing that is looked for in academic teaching jobs is a commitment to professional standards/professional development.

One way to show this is through AFHEA status. If you have enough teaching hours, even if they are irregular, you can do the APP PGR course.

A guide to applying for academic jobs (both teaching-focused and non-teaching) can be found here: https://www.jobs.ac.uk/media/pdf/careers/resources/how-to-apply-for-an-academic-job-ebook.pdf

52 Are there opportunities to continue our professional development after being a GTA?

The Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning at Warwick (IATL, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/) runs an Early Career Teaching Fellowship scheme annually: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/news/working_with_iatl/ectf/. As part of this scheme, fellows work with Warwick's Institutes for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) and Advanced Study (IAS) to develop interdisciplinary pedagogy. The ECTF programme provides full-time support for Warwick doctoral candidates in the transition to their postdoctoral career.

The Institute of Advanced Study (IAS, https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/ias/) also offers Early Career Fellowships: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/ias/funding/earlycareer/ecf/. This scheme aims to supports completing Warwick doctoral candidates in the transition phase between their doctoral and independent postdoctoral research careers. IAS welcomes applications twice per year.

TEACHING QUALIFICATIONS

53 Is a PGCE needed to teach higher level academic subjects?

No, you don't need a PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) to teach in Higher Education. A PGCE is only necessary for teaching in state schools. As an interesting side note for those of you thinking about secondary teaching, independent schools do not require a PCGE for you to teach (though a PhD can be helpful / necessary in lieu).

54 What teaching qualifications are available?

I would recommend APP PGR. If you complete it and pass you will achieve Associate Fellowship with the HEA (Higher Education Academy), which is a national membership body. You can then go on to do the Postgrad Award in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

A prerequisite for these courses (and teaching at Warwick) is the 'Preparing to Teach in Higher Education' Moodle course – you should have to do this anyway but it's helpful to spend time with this and reflect on the sort of teacher you want to be / if you have role models for teaching. Otherwise, look over the course material and start to think about how you would approach it.

LAW SCHOOL GTA CONTACTS IN 2023/2024

NAME	POSITION AT LAW SCHOOL AND HELP	EMAIL ADDRESS
Andrew Williams	Head of School	A.T.Williams@warwick.ac.uk
Laura Lammasniemi	Associate Professor (GTA Director)	laura.lammasniemi@warwick.ac.uk
Rose le Breton Bagley	HR Coordinator (Contract Queries)	R.A.le-Breton@warwick.ac.uk
Lara Walker	Associate Professor (Workload Allocation)	Lara.Walker@warwick.ac.uk
Christian Twigg-Flesner	Deputy Head and Director of Learning and Teaching (Scheduling Changes e.g. request for absence or switching seminar)	C.Twigg-Flesner@warwick.ac.uk
Maggie O'Brien	Director of Undergraduate Studies (Timetable issues e.g. missed filling in timetable or difficulties filling time table)	Maggie.O-Brien@warwick.ac.uk
Law Reception	Booking a room for student office hours or queries about room allocation for seminars	lawreception@warwick.ac.uk

FYI

If you are interested in getting involved in the Postgraduate Teaching Community outside the department here are a few things you might want to consider:

Warwick Postgraduate Teaching Community (WPTC)

WPTC is a cross-department and cross-faculty community of GTAs just like yourselves who share their experiences and practices in various ways while seeking to investigate the needs of PGRs who teach. Over the last few years the WPTC has also been involved in creating resources and opportunities for PGRs who teach. Contact or follow them to find out how you can get involved.

Webpage: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/pgrteachers/
Twitter: @WarwickPTC

WATEs (Warwick Awards for Teaching Excellence)

Every year the University acknowledges those in the teaching community who have been considered by their peers and/or students as deserving of recognition. For the last three years at least the Law School has had staff members and PGRs who teach making the short lists (and even some winners).
As a part of this community now you can be nominated in the future or nominate one of your colleagues. To find out more visit their webpage: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/wate/about/ .

NOTES

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