

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

Framework for the Teaching Postgraduate Studentship Scheme Assistantship for RPg Students (With effect from Semester 2, 2020/21)

1. Purpose of the Assistantship

The main purpose of the Assistantship for Research Postgraduate (RPg) students under the Teaching Postgraduate Studentship (TPS) Scheme is twofold: (a) to grant, on merit basis, financial support to eligible full-time RPg students with a view to allowing them to fully focus on their studies; and (b) to provide more teaching experience and training opportunity to interested RPg students in order to widen their exposure for the development of their academic career.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Only full-time RPg students who are not receiving a stipend will be eligible for receiving assistantship under TPS. Holders of other scholarship awards may be considered for receiving assistantship under TPS provided that this does not violate the terms and conditions of the other awards.

2.2. To ensure the quality of teaching provided by TPS recipients, prospective students must successfully complete a training programme entitled “Becoming an Effective Teaching Assistant (BETA)” organised by the Educational Development Centre (EDC) and, where necessary and appropriate, other training on specific teaching skills (e.g. supervising laboratory work) arranged by the department before they may be allowed to take up the relevant teaching duties. Students who have already obtained a professional qualification in teaching, or can demonstrate that they have successfully completed a comparable training programme offered by EDC or other institutions before, may apply to the Vice President (Research and Innovation) [VP(RI)] for an exemption.

2.3. TPS recipients who are required to interact directly with students in English as a part of their duties in supporting teaching and learning must demonstrate their language competence to fulfill the intended duties to the satisfaction of the host department. All eligible students except those who are native English speakers or those who have already taken EDC’s BETA programme, will also be required to successfully complete a language training programme offered by the English Language Centre (ELC) before taking up their Teaching Assistant responsibilities. The host department might also require the student to complete other language training programme(s), for example, those organised by the Chinese Language Centre, as deemed necessary.

3. Terms and Conditions of the Assistantship

3.1. Selected students for receiving assistantship under the TPS will be appointed as part-time Teaching Assistants (TAs) at the University on terms and conditions in accordance with the University’s policies on part-time appointment.

- 3.2. TAs will be required to provide 17 hours of teaching or administrative support work per week in the host department, as assigned by the Head of Department/Dean of School (HoD/DoS) or the supervisor(s). The duties undertaken by a TA normally include:
- a) assistance with running of tutorials/seminars/workshops, and/or supervision of laboratory or practical work;
 - b) assistance with grading of tests, assignments and examination papers;
 - c) assistance with preparation of material and resources for supporting teaching and learning;
 - d) assistance with invigilation of University degree examinations; and assistance with other teaching and administrative duties, as deemed appropriate by the host department.
- 3.3. The duration of the Assistantship shall normally be twelve months but academic departments can choose to offer a nine-month Assistantship to a TA if needed.
- 3.4. The amount of the Assistantship being offered, with effect from 1 September 2020, is HK\$18,100 per month. The amount of Assistantship will be stated in each appointment letter and adjusted automatically in accordance with the RPg student stipend. Any adjustment to the amount of assistantship will be communicated to the awardee in writing.
- 3.5. All TAs employed under the TPS Scheme must be evaluated each semester of appointment for each of the subjects that they are assigned to support.
- 3.6. The provision of the TPS assistantship is conditional on the recipient's undertaking of full-time research postgraduate studies at the University. The TA will not be permitted to take up any other employment or remunerated work with the University or with other employers, without having received the prior approval of the Chair of the Departmental/School Research Committee (D/SRC), who will seek input from the Graduate School.
- 3.7. TPS assistantship recipients are employees of the University; the Assistantship to be received will be in the form of salary payment which is subject to tax. They are required to obtain approval of the Chief Supervisor and the HoD/DoS concerned before taking leave. Approval will be granted only if there is no interference with the teaching/administrative duties of the Assistantship awardees concerned. Unauthorised leave may result in the cancellation of the Assistantship.
- 3.8. TPS assistantship recipients who do not perform satisfactorily in their studies or duties may lose their Assistantship or have their Assistantship suspended for a prescribed period of time.
- 3.9. The Assistantship will automatically cease as soon as the awardee has completed his/her research degree programme at the University, or has ceased to be a full-time RPg student, or when his/her studies are terminated by the University.
- 3.10. Assistantship awardees under the TPS Scheme may relinquish the Assistantship with one month's notice or one month's salary in lieu.
- 3.11. The annual tuition fee for TPS assistantship recipients is HK\$84,200. TPS assistantship recipients providing 17 hours of work per week are normally awarded an annual tuition fee assistantship of HK\$42,100 from the University. The award of this tuition fee assistantship,

however, is subject to the student's successful completion of the nine-month employment as a part-time TA at the University. Failing this, the student will be required to return a pro-rated portion of the tuition fee assistantship to the University.

- 3.12. TPS assistantship awarded to a particular student can be renewed within his/her normal period of study at the University, subject to good study and work performance, and availability of funds.

4. Administration of TPS Assistantship

- 4.1. The granting of TPS assistantship is in the form of an appointment as a part-time TA at the University, and will be funded by the departmental one-line budget, funding receivable by the department concerned for offering the relevant subjects, or self-financed sources. The VP(RI) is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Scheme.
- 4.2. The number of TA positions to be created under TPS is to be proposed by the Department concerned and approved by the HoD/DoS, taking into consideration the teaching and administration needs of the Department and the funding available.
- 4.3. The recommendation of students for the TPS Assistantship will be made by D/SRC Chair in which the students are registered. Before passing such recommendations to the HoD/DoS for consideration and approval, inputs from Graduate School (GS) must be sought to ensure that selected students, who are holders of other scholarship awards, will not violate the terms and conditions of the other awards.
- 4.4. The Department concerned is responsible for monitoring the study performance of the TPS assistantship recipients and the quality of teaching and administrative support they provide, based on feedback collected from the subject leader/teachers and the supervisors. Where appropriate, Student Feedback Questionnaire (SFQ) can be administered to solicit student feedback on the teaching of the TPS assistantship recipients, who should be rated separately from the subject teacher.

5. Granting of TPS beyond the Normal Period of Study

- 5.1. Under exceptional circumstances, a student may be granted a TPS in the period beyond his/her normal period of study (but before the completion of the study), provided that the delay in the completion of the study is due to factors beyond the control of the student and/or the Chief Supervisor.
- 5.2. Recommendations for granting of TPS beyond the normal period of study are subject to approval of the HoD/DoS. The student or D/SRC Chair should provide sound justification and a detailed study plan for the consideration and decision of the HoD/DoS.

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