

THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS  
SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS  
Staff Teaching Development Sub-Committee  
**Policy on Training for Lecturers**  
(As approved by the Teaching and Learning Committee, September 2008)

## 1. Introduction

The University of Leeds requires the School of Mathematics to ensure that new members of academic staff undertake development and training which is “relevant to their responsibilities, timely, at an appropriate level, and takes into account knowledge, skills, prior experience and previous development”.

The Senate of the University has agreed that all newly appointed staff with a contract of 0.5 FTE and above who have a teaching role and are deemed new to teaching in higher education should be required to complete successfully all of the requirements of the University of Leeds Teaching Award: Professional Standard 2 (ULTA-2) course delivered by the Staff and Departmental Development Unit (SDDU), or an appropriate alternative. Exemption from ULTA-2 can only be granted as part of the appointment procedure at interview. Staff with contracts of less than 0.5 FTE may take the ULTA-2 provided that they have a broad enough range of teaching and assessment skills to fulfill the requirements of the course: this is decided in conjunction with the School and the course providers. The ULTA-2 course provides a systematic induction into the processes of teaching and managing student learning, and it raises awareness of the difficulties involved in teaching. It also provides an opportunity to meet people, and to learn about other parts of the University. It is hoped that the ULTA course will help to achieve a balance between formal training, both generic and subject-specific, and other methods of professional development. Further details of the ULTA-2 are available at: [www.leeds.ac.uk/sddu/lt/ulta/ulta2.html](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/sddu/lt/ulta/ulta2.html).

## 2. Induction

2.1. Teaching is an essential part of the job of a lecturer, and is not easy. New lecturers need to prepare themselves before beginning.

In addition to undertaking the ULTA-2 course, a lecturer, who is new to teaching, should, if possible, undertake an induction-to-teaching course (lasting typically one to three days) before, or soon after the teaching starts. A suitable induction course runs in Birmingham in September, see ([www.mathstore.ac.uk/index.php?pid=18](http://www.mathstore.ac.uk/index.php?pid=18)). In addition, the SDDU operates an induction day for new academic staff, giving them a chance to learn more about University, its facilities, and its wider aims which new staff may find useful.

2.2. A number of new lecturers have commented that they need to learn more Leeds-specific facts (THIS is how early you have to arrive in a particular lecture theatre, e.g. Roger Stevens, to avoid the crowds; THIS is the emergency phone number; THIS is how the audio-visual stuff works; PLEASE read your handbook for academic staff).

The first part of the ULTA-2 course is designed to answer questions such as above; in addition the Director of Undergraduate Studies should maintain a set of ‘Briefing Notes for Lecturers’ and a copy should be provided to all lecturers who are new to Leeds.

2.3. Because of the wide variation in standards and expectations at other institutions, new lecturers, even if already experienced in teaching, need careful instructions on what to expect from, and demand of, Leeds students:

All lecturers who are new to Leeds should be given a briefing by their Head of Department, in each of their first two semesters with lecturing duties, in relation to those duties.

## 3. Guidance

3.1. All new lecturers on probation are assigned an adviser (mentor) nominated by the Head of Department. In accordance with the University guidelines:

The adviser for a probationary lecturer should provide advice and reasonable assistance on issues related to the lecturer’s responsibilities. Moreover, they should attend and comment constructively on a sample of lectures (and possibly example classes and tutorials) given by the probationer.

3.2. Lecturers who are new to Leeds, but not on probation, may also need some help as they start teaching. If deemed necessary, such a lecturer should be offered by their Head of Department an adviser who will provide assistance similar to that offered on probation.

3.3. The preparation of examination papers is a difficult task for new lecturers. There is already in place a scheme by which examination papers for each module are assessed by another member of staff.

New lecturers should be given guidance in the preparation of their examination papers by the assessors for their modules.

3.4. Informal guidance is often available in the Staff Common Room at coffee time.

## 4. Self-improvement

4.1. All lecturers should maintain an active interest in the teaching of mathematics, and should be encouraged to develop their skills.

4.2. One of the best ways of learning to teach is to observe others. The University advises probationary lecturers to observe the teaching delivered by their colleagues:

The School of mathematics requires probationary lecturers to observe at least 4 lectures (or example classes or tutorials) given by colleagues, during each of the first two semesters in which they themselves are lecturing, and occasional lectures thereafter. They should agree which lectures to view with their advisers. It is recommended that the lectures to be observed cover a range of levels and programmes. Teaching sessions should only be viewed with the consent of the lecturer involved. The School of Mathematics fosters an atmosphere in which occasional informal observation of teaching sessions would be considered normal for all lecturers.

4.3. Lecturers are encouraged to use the latest published research and advice on teaching methods. Some possible resources include:

- *The Learning and Teaching Support for Maths, Stats & OR*, see (<http://ltsn.mathstore.ac.uk>).
- K.H.Ko and D.Arganbright (Editors) (2007) *Enhancing University Mathematics: Proceedings of the First KAIST International Symposium on Teaching*, AMS Bookstore.
- B.Baumslag (2000) *Fundamentals of Teaching Mathematics at University*, Imperial College Press, London.
- B.Cox (1994) *Practical Pointers for University Teachers*, Kogan Page, London.
- S.G.Krantz (1993) *How to Teach Mathematics. A Personal Perspective*, American Math. Soc.
- R.Hubbard (1991) *53 Interesting Ways to Teach Mathematics*, Technical and Educational Services Ltd., Bristol.

## 5. Further Training

5.1. Training is most useful if it is mathematics-specific, but there are rather few opportunities at present. Possibilities include:

- Staff Development Days, run occasionally by the School of Mathematics.
- Workshops organized by the Learning and Teaching Support Network for Maths, Stats & OR, see (<http://ltsn.mathstore.ac.uk>)

5.2. The Staff Teaching Development Sub-committee should organize an annual discussion on issues related to teaching, learning and assessment in which new lecturers, and a few experienced lecturers, can share experiences and ideas for practical aspects of teaching in the School of Mathematics.

5.3. New lecturers should inform themselves about the courses given by the SDDU, see (<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/sddu/top/courses.html>), with a view to attending any courses which they (in consultation with their adviser, if appropriate) consider may be relevant. No specific arrangements are necessary to provide extra time for training, as new lecturers in the School of Mathematics already have much reduced teaching loads.

5.4. If a probationary lecturer is deemed to have made unsatisfactory progress by their adviser, then their Head of Department may instruct them to take such further training as the Head considers appropriate.