

University Guidelines on Duties Assigned to Research Postgraduate Students by Faculties/Departments

The following are the guidelines governing the assignment of duties for RPg studentship holders. Faculties/Schools (Faculties) should develop their internal guidelines to meet the unique needs of their respective disciplines and make the guidelines accessible to relevant stakeholders.

- a) Duties assigned by Faculties or Departments should normally contribute to the development of Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) and relevant Graduate Attributes.
- b) The duties should mainly be teaching and research-related but can include certain administrative duties to diversify the portfolio as an academic normally does.
- c) Provision of teaching opportunities is encouraged to develop students' teaching skills.
- d) Faculties or Departments shall follow the [Guidelines on Grading Assignments by Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistants](#) when prescribing grading duties to RPg students. These students shall meet the eligibility and training requirements as stipulated in the guidelines.
- e) There should be parity for duties among RPg students and duties should be assigned according to students' specialty and academic interest.
- f) The notional duty hours for RPg students during their normal study period shall not be more than an average of 12 hours per week throughout the year. Faculties should provide teaching opportunities to students and specify the duration for such duties.
- g) Students in the final semester of their studies could be exempted from the duties to better prepare for their thesis.

March 2025

Guidelines on Grading Assignments by Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistants

(to be read in conjunction with the University Guidelines on Duties Assigned to Research Postgraduate Students by Faculties/Departments)

1. This document supplements the [University Guidelines on Duties Assigned to Research Postgraduate Students by Faculties/Departments](#) (hereinafter referred to as the “University Guidelines”) of Hong Kong Baptist University (hereinafter referred to as “the University”). It provides additional and specific guidelines for Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistants (RPgTAs) on conducting grading assignments. This document should be read alongside and interpreted in accordance with the University Guidelines.
2. The following sections outline the key principles, general guidelines for implementing the grading assignment mechanism for RPgTAs, and the proposed amendment to University Guidelines for relevant parties’ reference.
3. While Faculty/School/Department/Programme/course instructor/academic staff concerned shall follow the guidelines set out in this document, flexibility is given for Faculties/Schools to make further adjustment, where appropriate. However, it is important to maintain an overall alignment with the principles as set out in the University Guidelines and this document, as well as to adhere to the RPgTAs’ eligibility for conducting grading assignments.

Key Principles

Balancing RPg Studies and Teaching Duties

4. While grading tasks provide valuable teaching development opportunities for RPgTAs, they should not hinder RPg students’ academic progress and detract from the main goal of completing their RPg studies within the normal study period. The RPgTAs’ duties should therefore not take precedence over the requirements of their RPg programmes. A balance must be struck between their studies and their teaching-related duties.

Supervised Grading Responsibilities

5. RPgTAs must work under the supervision of course instructor/academic staff. They shall not be solely responsible for grading assignments and giving feedback to students. The course instructor/academic staff has the ultimate responsibility for grading assignments and the whole course concerned.

Ethical Practice

6. RPgTAs are expected to uphold high standards of professional ethics appropriate for any University’s staff member in all circumstances. They shall also comply with the relevant University’s policies and guidelines such as the [Policy for the Assessment of Student Learning](#).

Opportunities for Grading Assignment

7. Undertaking grading assignment is optional for RPgTAs, they are not obliged to do so even if they have taken up the RPgTA role. It is subject to the decision of respective academic unit and there is no

guarantee that all RPgTAs may be engaged in grading tasks, which are assigned based on their skills, capability, potential, and academic progress.

General Guidelines for Implementation

Establish and Maintain a Centralised Grading Assignment Mechanism for Quality Assurance

8. Faculty/School/Department shall:
 - i) establish and maintain the grading assignment mechanism for quality assurance by appointing an academic staff (e.g. Programme Director of RPg studies) to:
 - act as a gate keeper of the grading assignment mechanism at central-level;
 - oversee the grading assignment mechanism for quality assurance;
 - establish and oversee the Faculty/School/Department/Programme-specific grade assignment training;
 - oversee the supervision of RPgTAs performance and development at central-level;
 - oversee the evaluation or feedback system of grading assignments for RPgTAs at central-level; and
 - ensuring the training and mentoring/supervision of the RPgTAs are properly implemented and conduct regular review and evaluation with relevant parties, e.g. the RPgTA, Principal Supervisor and course instructor/ academic staff concerned.
 - ii) share the responsibilities for delivering not less than two-hour Faculty/Department/Programme-specific grade assignment training/orientation to the RPgTAs concerned either individually or collectively.

Eligibility for Conducting Grading Assignments

9. RPgTAs are research postgraduate (RPg) students at the University, who are prescribed with teaching-related responsibilities by their Faculties/Schools, Academies/Departments, Pls of a project or their supervisors.
10. RPgTAs must meet the two-tier eligibility system to grade assignments. To undertake grading assignment duties that involve basic academic judgment, knowledge or analytical skills, RPgTAs must have:
 - i) satisfactorily completed the [Mandatory Common Core Programme Teaching University Students \(MCCP6010\)](#);
 - ii) successfully fulfilled the English Language Proficiency requirements for RPg students;
 - iii) passed the Qualifying Examination, or met any department-specific requirements/assessments as approved by the respective Faculty Dean; and
 - iv) completed not less than two hours of Faculty/School/Department/Programme-specific training/orientation on conducting grading assignment.

To undertake grading assignments that involve advanced academic judgment, knowledge or analytical skills, RPgTAs must meet the following requirements in addition to those set outlined in paragraph 10(i)

– (iv):

- v) achieved at least satisfactory evaluations in two consecutive bi-annual progress reports.

Conduct Training and Orientation for RPgTAs

11. To ensure effective collaboration with RPgTAs, relevant parties, including course instructor/academic staff concerned, shall reach out to them as early as possible prior to the commencement of duties. A Faculty/School/Department/Programme-specific training/orientation that is no less than 2 hours shall be delivered to the RPgTAs to clearly communicate their roles, tasks, timelines, job expectations, and any other relevant or essential information. Sample inventories on the questions or items to be discussed or conducted with the RPgTAs are provided in **Annex I** for reference.
12. To ensure the quality and enhance the RPgTAs' learning experience, the course instructor/academic staff concerned is highly recommended to collaborate with RPgTAs to establish clear policies and guidelines for the grading rubrics at an early stage if possible. It is beneficial to conduct sample markings together with RPgTAs, ensuring both parties hold consistent views and approach to assign grades, feedback or comments as well as a clear understanding towards the grading rubrics.

Delineate the Scope of Responsibilities for RPgTAs in Grading Assignments

13. The number of hours that an RPgTA engaged in grading assignment shall be counted towards the notional duty hours stipulated in the University Guidelines. In other words, during the normal study period of RPgTAs, all duties assigned by Faculty/School/Department/Programme/course instructor/academic staff concerned, including grading assignments, shall not exceed an average of 12 notional hours per week throughout the year.
14. RPgTAs may assist in grading general assignments that involve basic academic judgement, knowledge and skills upon fulfilling the eligibility requirements as set out in paragraph 10. Grading assignments with advanced academic judgement, knowledge or analytical skills shall be limited to the topic area(s) that the RPgTAs are highly familiar with, which can only be performed upon seeking approval from the central-level academic staff who oversees the matters of grading assignment by RPgTAs (see paragraph 8) with the justifications provided by Principal Supervisors or the course instructor concerned.
15. To diversify RPgTAs teaching-related experience and their job profile, the teaching duties assigned by Faculty/School/Department/Programme/course instructor/academic staff concerned shall not be solely related to grading assignments or providing feedback to students. Similarly, they are strictly prohibited to make and/or take up the sole responsibility for any course matters and the final grade decisions of any assignments in all circumstances.
16. Subject to the professional academic judgement of the Faculty/School/Department/Programme/course instructor/academic staff concerned, RPgTAs may be assigned to evaluate specific aspects of general and/or advanced assignments (upon fulfilling the eligibility requirements as set out in paragraph 10), recommend final grades, and provide timely, constructive feedback to students under adequate supervision.
17. To ensure grading consistency and academic standard have been upheld, the course instructor/academic staff concerned shall:

- i) **Incorporate Calibration Sessions:** Before grading begins, conduct calibration sessions where all graders (including RPgTAs and course instructors) grade a few sample assignments together to align their grading standards;
- ii) **Conduct Direct Grading:** directly mark at least 30% of the total number of assignments and check for consistency and quality in the RPgTA's grading, making any necessary adjustments;
- iii) **Ensure consistency of Rubrics:** adopt the same grading rubrics among all graders if there is more than one grader for the same assignment;
- iv) **Conduct Regular Audits:** Implement periodic audits of RPgTA-graded assignments to ensure ongoing consistency and identify any discrepancies early;
- v) **Take Up Course Responsibility:** take up sole responsibility for the whole course concerned and be responsible for including, but not limited to, moderation, double marking, making the final grade decisions and handling any subsequent issues or disputes related to the grades, such as student appeals or grade distribution enquiries; and
- vi) **Maintain Detailed Feedback Mechanism:** Actively provide detailed and constructive feedback to RPgTAs' grading to foster their continuous improvement.

Implement a Regular Evaluation and Feedback System through Providing Direct Supervision and Monitoring

18. Faculty/School/Department shall establish and maintain a regular evaluation or feedback mechanism for course instructor/academic staff concerned to review RPgTAs performance regularly as part of the quality assurance measures. A sample of evaluation rubrics on RPgTAs' performance is set out in **Annex II** for reference.
19. Course instructor/academic staff concerned who engage RPgTAs in grading assignments have the responsibility to:
 - i) provide adequate and specific training in addition to the two-hour Faculty/School/Department/Programme-specific grade assignment training. They are also responsible for providing direct supervision and guidance to RPgTAs for their grading duties. The extent of training, supervision and guidance provided shall depend on the RPgTAs' knowledge of the course concerned, their prior teaching and grading experience, among other factors;
 - ii) schedule and conduct regular meetings with RPgTAs to discuss problems or matters related to their grading duties, including but not limited to their expectations and concerns, course and grading assignment, student feedback, and any other arising issues;
 - iii) provide timely feedback on the RPgTA's grading accuracy to enhance RPgTA's learning experience and consistency of grading assignments;
 - iv) conduct regular evaluations on RPgTAs' performance in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Faculty/School/Department concerned;
 - v) seek regular feedback from relevant teaching team members if necessary; and
 - vi) seek further advice from or report any irregularities to the central-level academic staff who oversees the matters of grading assignments as set out in paragraph 8.

Hong Kong Baptist University

Sample Inventory of Grading Assignment for Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistant (RPgTA)

This inventory serves as a reference for RPgTAs to communicate and establish clear expectations and guidelines on grading assignment with the Faculty/School/Department/Programme/course instructor/academic staff concerned. The list of sample questions is non-exhaustive, RPgTAs are encouraged to raise further concerns/questions at an early stage to facilitate the communications between all relevant parties, as well as to enhance mutual understanding and sufficient preparation on grading assignment.

Sample Question to be discussed	Notes by RPgTAs
What is the grading breakdown for the course and what is the grading/scoring system?	
Am I responsible for any specific portion of the course grade as a RPgTA? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do I need to assess participation in lectures or sections, and if so, how? Do I need to grade homework, essays, journals, or lab reports? Am I responsible for grading quizzes, midterms, exams, or final projects? Are there any specific formats or special instructions for the materials I will be grading? 	
If there are multiple RPgTAs for a specific course, is consistent grading expected across sections? If so, how will this be ensured?	
Will marking schemes, answer keys or rubrics be provided? Or should I create them with the course instructor/academic staff concerned? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When grading homework, should I focus on the student's approach to the problem or just the final answer? What constitutes an 'A' assignment, or a 'D' assignment? Are there general faculty or department guidelines available? 	
How are the grading responsibilities be delegated or divided between RPgTAs? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should the same instructor/RPgTAs always grade the same students/part of an assignment to track progress, or should instructors swap students after each assignment? 	
Can we discuss grading after I receive the first assignment?	
Who is responsible for recording the grades?	
How should I handle students' concerns about their grades or special cases e.g. late submission, academic dishonesty, re-grading requests?	
What is the feedback mechanism for grading assignment task? How can I provide and receive feedback to facilitate my continuous improvement on grading assignment and improve the grading process?	

Reference: Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, Imperial College London, University of Reading, University of Toronto, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Lingnan University

Hong Kong Baptist University
Sample Inventory of Grading Assignments by Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistant for
Faculty/School/Department /Programme/Course Instructor/Academic Staff concerned

This inventory shall be taken solely as a reference for Faculty/School/Department /Programme/course instructor/academic staff concerned to communicate and establish clear expectations, guidance and supervision mechanism on grading assignment with the RPgTA concerned. The list of sample items to be discussed or conducted with the RPgTAs is non-exhaustive, academic units concerned are encouraged to conduct discussion with RPgTAs and/or provide additional information at an early stage to facilitate the communications between all relevant parties, as well as to enhance mutual understanding and sufficient preparation on grading assignment.

Sample Items to be Discussed or Conducted	Notes by Faculty/School/Department /Programme/course instructor/academic staff concerned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule regular meeting with the RPgTA and discuss and agreed on preferred modes of and expectations for communication with RPgTA. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and set well-defined specific scope of grading responsibilities of both RPgTA and the course instructor/academic staff and any other issues or guidelines for RPgTA to follow. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise any other issues or guidelines for RPgTA to follow. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss course goals and objectives with RPgTA. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review syllabus, assignments, grading issues, policies and expectations with RPgTA. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear information about exams and assignments. Detail the nature and modes of assessment (e.g. exams, papers, final project, individual or group projects, participation) to RPgTA. Include the handling of varied assignments, late submission/extension. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate to develop or, if not feasible, provide clear grading guidelines or rubrics for each assignment that the RPgTA shall assist in. Then, conduct some sample markings together. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor or supervise the performance of the RPgTA closely to provide timely support and guidance. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular reviews with the RPgTA on expectations, work performance, grading performance and accuracy or any other related matters. Provide clear and constructive feedback on RPgTA's performance to enhance their professional development and learning experience. 	

Reference: Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania, Stanford University, Imperial College London, University of Reading, University of Toronto, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Lingnan University

Hong Kong Baptist University
Performance Rubric for the Grading Duties of Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistants

This Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistant (RPgTA) Performance Rubric serves two purposes:

1. provides feedback to the RPgTAs for their performance enhancement and professional development as future educators, and
2. where applicable, serves as a guide for the University/Faculties/Schools/Departments' decision on the extension of grading duties for the RPgTAs.

Notes:

1. Since RPgTAs may be at different stages of professional development, assignment of teaching or assistant tasks shall be commensurate with the students' individual developmental stage to facilitate their gradual advancement. Evaluation shall therefore take into account the TAs' different stages of development accordingly.
2. The course supervisor shall consider and discuss with the students their strengths and weaknesses before assigning teaching or assistant tasks and work out a plan for their advancement in teaching.
3. This Performance Rubric shall be made available to the RPgTAs at the beginning of grading duties assignment to facilitate their understanding of the standard and performance expectations as RPgTAs.

RESEARCH POSTGRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANT EVALUATION

Name of RPgTA:	Student No:
Department:	TA Appointment Effective Date:
Course Assigned (+course code):	Semester/Year:
Principal Supervisor:	

Research Postgraduate Teaching Assistant (RPgTA) Performance Rubrics

Domain 1: Planning, Preparation and Delivery of Service				
Knowledge of Relevant Subject Areas				
Relevant?	Below Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not display knowledge adequately	<input type="checkbox"/> Displays basic knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Displays sound knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/> Displays extensive knowledge
Language Proficiency and Communication				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Written language is difficult to comprehend. <input type="checkbox"/> Expressions are often imprecise or inappropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written language is comprehensible. <input type="checkbox"/> Expressions are generally precise but are at times inappropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written language is clear. <input type="checkbox"/> Expressions are precise and appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written language shows a high level of clarity and fluency. <input type="checkbox"/> Expressions are well chosen and enrich student learning.
Quality of Questions and Feedback				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Questions are low-level and only tap into surface knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Directions given to students are confusing. <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback is either not provided or is vague.	<input type="checkbox"/> Questions consist of critical concepts but also trivial information. <input type="checkbox"/> Directions given to students are generally clear but are in need of details. <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback is inconsistent in clarity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Most questions are high-level. <input type="checkbox"/> Directions given to students are clear with sufficient details. <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback is consistently clear.	<input type="checkbox"/> Questions are high-level and build meaningful knowledge. <input type="checkbox"/> Directions given to students are clear, with all the necessary details and are easy to follow. <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback is consistently clear and motivates student learning.
Non-instructional Duties (including preparation of teaching materials, grading and other administrative work)				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading is consistently not accurate, specific, or timely. <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative duties are consistently not well attended to.	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading is generally accurate, specific, or timely but shows inconsistency. <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative duties are attended to but not always in a timely manner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading is accurate, specific, and timely in most cases. <input type="checkbox"/> Most administrative duties are fulfilled in a timely manner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Grading is consistently accurate, specific and timely. <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative duties are attentively and promptly fulfilled.
Interaction with Students and Principal/Course Supervisor				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not show kindness, respect or thoughtfulness to students. <input type="checkbox"/> Interactions with supervisor are rare; class issues are often not reported in a timely manner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to create a positive relationship with students. <input type="checkbox"/> Interactions with supervisor are not regular; class issues are at times not reported in a timely manner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Creates a generally positive and respectful environment <input type="checkbox"/> Interactions with supervisor are regular; class issues are mostly reported in a timely manner.	<input type="checkbox"/> Creates a nurturing environment by showing kindness, respect and thoughtfulness toward individual students. <input type="checkbox"/> Interactions with supervisor are regular and proactive; class issues are consistently reported in a timely manner.
Additional Comments:				

Domain 2: Professionalism and Sense of Responsibilities

Self-reflection and Open to Suggestions

Relevant?	Below Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows a lack of self-reflection or is not open to suggestions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows a lack of self-reflection but is open to suggestions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows self-reflection and is open to suggestions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strive for continuous improvement by constant self-reflection and being open to suggestions.

Sense of Responsibilities

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely demonstrates responsible behavior towards attendance and work schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/> Requires occasional reminders or support concerning attendance and work schedule.	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates responsible behavior towards attendance and work schedule most of the time.	<input type="checkbox"/> Serves as a model in responsible behavior towards attendance and work schedule.
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Professionalism and Integrity

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Displays a lack of integrity or adherence to norms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Displays integrity but shows insufficient understanding of norms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Displays integrity and good understanding of norms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Serves as a model for integrity and consistent adherence to norms.
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Additional Comments:

Overall rating

The RPgTA is ☐ Below expectations ☐ Approaching expectations ☐ Meets expectations ☐ Exceeds expectations
 Any other overall comments, e.g. Are there any particular areas the student needs to improve?

 Research Postgraduate
 Teaching Assistant's signature

 Date

 Course Instructor/Academic
 Staff's signature

 Date