

Teaching as an Instructor Candidate

Thank you for making the time to teach on RCS courses, we really appreciate you joining us. As you are teaching for the first time on this course, you are considered an 'Instructor Candidate'. We hope the following information will help you understand your role on the course.

Aims

The aims of teaching as an Instructor Candidate are:

1. To familiarise yourself with the course content through watching experienced faculty.
2. To engage gradually with participants and course material, under the guidance of experienced faculty.
3. To demonstrate that you have the knowledge and ability to be a full member of faculty.

How it works

Being an Instructor Candidate means you're teaching for the first time on a particular course, or teaching again after a long break. You may have watched the course before, as an observer, or even have taken the course as a participant.

You will teach for part of the course: how this is organised depends on the course director. For example, you may be asked to lead a small group discussion, or work with one or two participants on dissection activities. You should be supernumerary, so you don't have to interact with participants at every moment and can take time to watch more experienced faculty. You should take part in any assessments, although you should always be supported by an experienced member of faculty, who can discuss the scoring system with you and moderate your marking.

In addition to your individual teaching, try to reflect on some wider questions during the course, such as:

- How is the ethos of the course put across?
- What methods of teaching and learning are used? How do participants respond?
- What equipment is used for each session and where is everything placed within the room?
- What questions do participants commonly ask during each session? Are there set answers prescribed by the course?
- Did anything go wrong? How was it resolved and what did faculty do to help?
- Was there any assessment? What are the criteria and how was it organised? How do faculty work together to make sure assessment is fair?
- How are struggling participants dealt with?

Assessment

The course director or co-director will observe you teaching. They may ask other members of faculty for their opinions. At the end of the course, they will complete a form, noting down your areas of competence and any areas for development.

On occasion, a course director will decide you are not yet ready to act as faculty. They will give you advice on what you can do to improve, such as taking a teaching skills course or spending more time familiarising yourself with the course materials.

CPD points and certificates

You may be able to claim CPD points for preparing and teaching for the first time – please discuss with your supervisor. After the course, you will be able to download a certificate.

Some Dos and Don'ts

DO

- Get in touch with the course director beforehand. Make sure you know what they expect of you, in terms of activity and attitude.
- Familiarise yourself with the course materials and prepare any sessions you have been asked to lead. If you took the course as a participant, content may have changed since then.
- Make sure you fully understand the ethos and learning outcomes of the course.
- Attend faculty meetings and introduce yourself to everyone.
- During the course, take time out of teaching to watch experienced faculty and gather teaching tips.
- Chat to participants during break times – they love listening to faculty anecdotes, and this informal time with you adds real value to the course.

DON'T

- Contradict the techniques of other faculty members without explanation – this confuses participants. Some courses explicitly require you to teach certain techniques, but if you are free to teach your own, it's good to explain why you use a particular technique and not simply criticise another.
- Teach when you aren't sure what the key learning points are. Take a step back and watch the more experienced faculty.

We hope you enjoy teaching on the course and welcome your feedback. After the course you will be sent a link to an online evaluation and we would be grateful for your comments.