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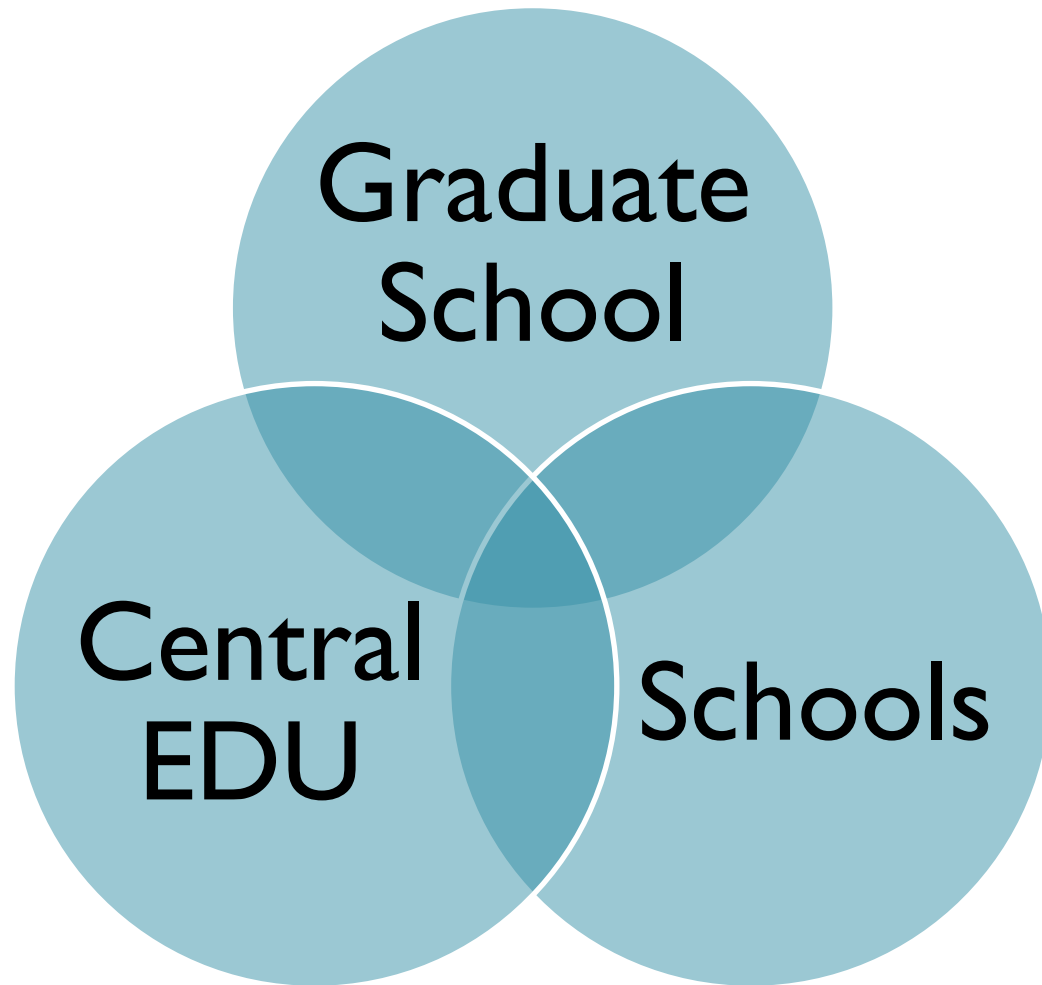
Supporting Graduate Teaching Assistants

Institutional structures and practices



Overview

- Institutional provision
- GTA roles and responsibilities
- Pitfalls and opportunities
- Key elements



Local context

- Team of four lecturers/Senior Lecturers in central EDU
- Three of us work with a specific Faculty and the Schools within them eg sit on L&T committees, joint projects with academic staff, CPD
- One of us sits on relevant Research committees and leads newly established Centre for the Study of Higher Education
- All have specific expertise/research interests, so work across institutional as necessary

Local context 2

- Some sort of teaching role is built into a lot of PG studentships
- Approx 200 currently on programme over two-year cycle, both probationers and GTAs
- But..... we cannot take everyone; not everyone is teaching immediately; some are demonstrating; some have little autonomy about what or how they teach

Institutional provision

Getting to Grips with HE Teaching

One-day workshops, repeated 3- 6 times per year

Interdisciplinary or subject-specific in conjunction with Schools

PG Cert in Higher Education

4 15-credit modules: GTAs take first two core modules (PTS1),
opportunity to progress to full PGCHE (PTS2)

Interdisciplinary with subject-specific input through mentoring

Variety of support mechanisms within Schools

(and they do vary!)

Pitfalls

- Where does the GTA fit into the life of their School? (if at all)
- Responsibilities/expectations are unclear or poorly communicated
- Interventions are haphazard or occur in response to difficulties of some kind

Most effective kinds of support

- Developmental, sustained, humane, boundaries understood
- Recognise the importance of the discipline in developing GTAs' sense of location and self-worth
- Involve active partnerships between the different parts of the institution with which the GTA interacts

Key elements

- Create and maintain close links with key staff eg mentors, Heads of School, Directors of Graduate Studies
- Enlist subject specialists routinely in centrally offered L&T-related events **and** contribute reciprocal expertise
- Ensure that up-to-date, quality information about what is available can be accessed from multiple entry points
- Create opportunities for GTAs to develop their own sense of community but also for them to be involved in broader academic communities
- Keep listening.....