

Supplementary Material 1 - COREQ (COnsolidated criteria for REporting Qualitative research) 32 item

Checklist

Topic	Item No.	Guide Questions/ Description	Notes	Reported on Page No.
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity				
<i>Personal characteristics</i>				
Interviewer/facilitator	1	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	One masters student conducted the interviews.	N/A
Credentials	2	What were the researcher's credentials? E.g. PhD, MD	3 PhD, 1 MSc. 1 undergraduate, and 1 undergraduate student undertaking a BSc.	Title page
Occupation	3	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	The lead author, third, and last author are Teaching Associates. The second was completing their masters, and fourth their BSc undergraduate course. The fifth had completed their undergraduate course.	N/A
Gender	4	Was the researcher male or female?	The research team consists of five female identifying researchers (1 of these was the interviewer) and one male identifying researcher.	N/A
Experience and training	5	What experience or training did the researcher have?	The analyser had previously conducted qualitative research and previously conducted a thematic analysis as part of the master's	N/A

			course. However, NDM gave a refresher session and is experienced in qualitative methods and thematic analysis. All authors have experience with qualitative research.	
<i>Relationship with participants</i>				
Relationship established	6	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	There was no relationship with the interviewer and participant that took part in the study.	N/A
Participant knowledge of the interviewer	7	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research	The interviewer introduced themselves to participants as an intern as part of their master's course, and once the internship was completed as a master's student continuing with their intern project. The interviewer described the purpose of the project, and answered any questions they had about the project.	N/A
Interviewer characteristics	8	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	The interviewer was a student conducting their internship for their course (8 interviews were conducted), however, they continued the project after completing the internship to increase the number of interviews to be analysed to 16.	N/A
Domain 2: Study Design				

<i>Theoretical framework</i>				
Methodological orientation and Theory	9	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis		[method]
<i>Participant selection</i>				
Sampling	10	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball		[method, participant section]
Method of approach	11	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email		[method]
Sample size	12	How many participants were in the study?	16	[method, participants]
Non-participation	13	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	No person responded directly to decline taking part, nor did anyone drop out once agreeing to take part.	N/A
<i>Setting</i>				
Setting of data collection	14	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	Online, TEAMS platform	[method, procedure]
Presence of nonparticipants	15	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers?	No	N/A

Description of sample	16	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	Information can be found in the method.	[method, participants]
<i>Data Collection</i>				
Interview guide	17	Were questions, prompts, guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	A pilot session was held by NDM, LP, GF with the interviewer (TO) to go through the interview guide, researchers pretended to be participants to explore the flow of the interview schedule. A semi-structured interview guide was used.	Supplementary Materials 2
Repeat interviews	18	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many?	No	N/A
Audio/visual recording	19	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed	[method]
Field notes	20	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	Yes, reflection notes were taken after the interviews regarding the nature of the interview and interviewer perceptions of the participant responses etc (e.g., how did the interviewer think the interview went?)	N/A
Duration	21	What was the duration of the interviews or focus group?	The average interview length was 32 minutes (minimum 17 minutes, maximum 53 minutes).	[method]
Data saturation	22	Was data saturation discussed?	Yes. No new codes came up in the last interview analysed.	N/A

Transcripts returned	23	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	No	N/A
Domain 3: analysis and findings				
<i>Data Analysis</i>				
Number of data coders	24	How many data coders coded the data?	One researcher (TO coded the data and described codes, and these were discussed with NDM every 3 interviews to discuss codes TO was unsure about)	N/A
Description of the coding tree	25	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	Themes and codes (with example extracts) are included in the supplementary material.	Supplementary Material 3
Derivation of themes	26	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	Themes were derived from the data.	Findings
Software	27	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	No software was used to manage the data, this was conducted by hand.	N/A
Participant checking	28	Did participants provide feedback on the findings?	No	N/A
<i>Reporting</i>				
Quotations presented	29	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified?	Yes, participant quotes were presented alongside their pseudonyms.	Findings
Data and findings consistent	30	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	Yes, consistency across data presented and findings exists.	Findings

Clarity of major themes	31	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	Yes, major themes are clearly presented in the findings.	Findings
Clarity of minor themes	32	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	There are no minor themes, only major themes are discussed.	n/a

Developed from: Tong, A., Sainsbury, P., & Craig, J. (2007) Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 19, (6), 349 – 357.

Once you have completed this checklist, please save a copy and upload it as part of your submission. DO NOT include this checklist as part of the main manuscript document. It must be uploaded as a separate file.

Supplementary material 2 – Table of Themes and Codes

Theme	Code	Example Data Extract
Theme 1 - “should have a title that perhaps reflects the job that we are required to do”: Unpacking the demonstrator label and the impact of Terminology on Identity and Role.	Dislike the title	<i>I don't like the name demonstrator, it's stupid. Doesn't mean anything. Don't like it. (Kim)</i>
	Like the title	<i>it's fine, I'm fine with it because it, because to call yourself a demonstrator sounds, sounds quite cool. (Paul)</i>
	Have not considered title	<i>I don't <u>really</u> care, but, I've never thought about it to be fair, until now. (Hellen)</i>
	Title does not matter	<i>I would say that I'm indifferent towards it. (Lana)</i>
Not previously familiar with title		<i>I've actually never heard of demonstrator, and this is me, I've worked in academia for maybe 8, 9 years before I did my PhD, I'd never heard of demonstrating beforehand. Even though looking back I'm aware that, for example, when I did my masters there were demonstrators, I just didn't know that's what they</i>

were, um, so I don't think it's a title that's really well understood.
(Gaby)

Title is not used

I don't think students ever refer to us as demonstrators, I don't think staff really refer - I think it's more of a paper thing, or you know like when the adverts go out, you know, this is a demonstratorship. (David)

Title is unclear/inaccurate

it's weird because when I, when I talk to other people, I'm like ohh I'm, I'm, I'm going to go do teaching now and it's, but it's not actually called teaching and I think, when you say demonstrating to people, they don't always know what that means. ... Like I don't know whether it fully encompasses what you actually do. So, I don't know if something like teaching related would have, would, would be better. (Abby)

Title overstates role

I think it bigs up the role a bit more than it should, because when you think demonstrator I would think lecturer, but that's not really what, what we are. We're just the assistant. (Paul)

Title undervalues role

I think it perpetuates this idea that we're less than, that we do less than other people. (Hellen)

Competence is questioned *like sometimes people are a little bit put off initially when they hear ((poor audio)) you're just a student yourself, if that makes sense ... I think sometimes if people hear that you're an existing student, they sort of almost don't take into account that you're a PhD student so it's a little bit different, um, you are, you know, qualified to teach the classes. (Sophia)*

Between students and staff *It just demonstrates that we are somewhere in-between full-time members of staff (Jane)*

Students do not understand *they know there's a difference between us and staff, but not role necessarily what that difference is. ... Sometimes you'll have students thinking that you're like a third-year undergrad and like maybe they don't understand what a PhD is. So, there's a bit of confusion there. (Anne)*

Issues with handling authority *it's kind of hard for me to know how to carry myself in that scenario ... in like real life, ... I would just be mates with these people. So then like having this weird like job where you're their teacher is like, I don't know, it's a bit of a head fuck really. (Kim)*

GTA is a worse title

I think I like that less. Just because, when I hear the word graduate like you could've finished your undergrad and you're a graduate. Umm, whereas many people who are doing a PhD have like a master's and like they might be three years into their PhD. So, I feel like, perhaps they're a bit higher than that ... so it kind of blurs the boundaries even more, I think. (Anne)

GTA is a better title

from like a purely like semantic point of view, Graduate Teaching Assistant means so much more than demonstrator. (David)

GTA concerns

I mean it's weird because obviously there are some master's classes as well, right? And they are also graduates. ... they might view you more as like on par, whereas like you should have a little bit more experience to be able to do the, the teaching. (Abby)

Theme 2 - Stress Factors impacting
demonstrators' enjoyment in their role.

It's really bizarre, you get periods ... and then all of a sudden, things just hit the roof and it's like all hands-on deck really, really intensely stressful couple of months. And then within a,

literally, within a couple of days things just nosedive back to nothing again. (John)

Takes time away from other responsibilities *obviously, all the deadlines have to come when they come, cause that's not decided by us, but I feel like they always just came at a time where your PhD deadlines were also happening, so it was always like competing demands and you know, how do I fit all this in? (Sophia)*

Work-life balance *I think it's also made me much stricter on, this is my weekend, I am not checking my e-mail and not dealing with those things. You know it's 5-5:30, that's the end of my day, I make myself very available for students throughout the day when I am at work, and therefore I feel justified in making those boundaries. (Lucy)*

Exhaustion *especially when the PhD really gets going, and, and, you're quite stressed, some days it is very hard to even if it's a subject you enjoy, to, to motivate yourself... it's a bit of a shame as well, because it's like, sometimes you're just feeling exhausted, and you've not got the energy and the class that you happen to have that day will not get your best. (John)*

Nervousness

I don't really like being the centre of attention, so if I stand in front of a crowd, then I'm going to panic no matter what. And then unless I'm very confident about what I'm doing it's very hard to make the stage mine, so yeah. I had to re-balance that over again. (Luis)

Time taken to prepare if we have to develop new lecture materials, we get given one hour's prep time. ... When you're delivering someone else's materials is not recognised material, you get given no prep time. But actually, the prep time it takes to deliver lectures is ridiculous. (Jane)

Marking is tedious

I think because when, when I was marking. Because it's not very fun ... you mark three an hour. Uhm, sometimes I couldn't motivate myself to mark so it would end up being I would, I would mark three in an hour and it would take me like a few hours to just like. Just relax after I've done that, so it would actually end up being like another two hours before I did some more marking. ... it would make it take much longer to get through the entire marking load. (Paul)

Lack of confidence when marking
I found it stressful around marking especially, that was probably the most stressful time for me, because I just struggled with, kind of, you know, being confident in my marking, and always felt a bit, yeah, a bit unsure about that to start with. (Grace)

Marking takes up all your time
so much marking at the moment and I'm on such a deadline for that marking, that I need to be dedicating every day to marking and I've already dedicated 2 weeks to marking. And now I'm going to have to dedicate another 2 weeks to marking. (John)

Lack of control in what they teach/disagreeing with content
with the first-year seminars, we have to teach content that we haven't made and sometimes I don't necessarily agree with the things that are on the slides or I come from it from like a different perspective. So, it can be kind of hard having to teach that to the plan. Even though I don't necessarily agree with it. (Anne)

Lack of variety
The repetitiveness of everything ... in second year you do the same modules, and, um, it's nice cause you don't have to, then, if you're working on the same thing it takes less preparation

time, so it's useful in that way, um, but it does kind of, you get a little bit bored. (Gaby)

Desire for more flexibility *like the amount of freedom we have like in the stuff that we could teach. It would be nice to have a bit more flexibility there rather than just being given sort of a template of exactly what we can do. (Anne)*

Theme 3 - Neglected Voices: Lack of practical training
Demonstrators' challenges with Support
and Recognition in their role. *there was no real prep, for how you should do it. You just arrive as a PhD student and they're like, you're gonna demonstrate on this. Here's the module content. (Kim)*

Having to learn from experience *I think it's just really learning on the job. (Grace)*

Training they would have wanted *would be quite helpful is - before someone becomes a demonstrator for the first time, if they had like, a completely general session ... how to structure your support to students or how to offer the best kind of support ... you're not really told the level of detail you should give to students, like how much you should let them figure out on their own and how much you should actually detail to them. ... I feel like that level of training*

is something that wasn't really covered ... but actually how to be an effective teacher training would be useful. (Sophia)

Desire for practical tips

So, for example, I work on like a Mac, a Mac computer. So then sometimes when we're doing things in labs and people ask me how to do it on a Windows, I don't know how to do it, so I feel like training on that kind of aspect would have been quite good, because then I can answer more questions than just the software that I'm used to. (Anne)

Structured training given

at the beginning of a new year what they would always do is like a meeting, ... to sort of set our expectations, tell us exactly what they expected us to do, what support they can offer us and also sort of explaining exactly where to find any information we might need. ... before every lab report and set of marking came in, we would get like a guidance sheet of exactly what to look for ... top tips as well as like the rubric and sometimes we would have a meeting as well to go through that ... the conveners can really make sure we're on the same page. (Sophia)

Hidden responsibilities

I know that the marking they say that it is included in that, I just don't think it covers it, especially if you don't get training and

you're having to spend more time on it ... things like if you have to go to academic concern meetings, ... that's not covered in it. Additional meetings like we're required to go to general meetings we've never been paid for those, and they can be two hours, you know, two hours or more a month but, then it starts to add up ... We were told that we had to attend two-hour meetings a month with the Postgraduate Research team ... I think there's just a lot of hidden stuff that's not always even connected to teaching ... I just think if something's mandatory then you should be told about that from the beginning. (Hellen)

Poor communication

being in the loop about things, a lot of the staff have like their own staff channels on like teams and things like that and communication can be quite bad between the staff and the demonstrators. So, we kind of don't get key information. Late last week, my lab leader wasn't in, but I didn't know this, so they'd like merge my class with another class and like everyone, the students and the staff all knew this, and I didn't. So, then I just felt like I had no idea what was going on ... improving the communication between the two would be a really big improvement. (Anne)

Instability of role	<i>with the zero-hour contracts with how that's distributed it causes your wages to fluctuate very, very wildly. ... We've got this like 3- or 4-month period where you're just not getting a wage at all. (John)</i>
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Treated as an afterthought	<i>because you're on a casual contract, you're an afterthought. And you're often treated as such all the way through. (Kim)</i>
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Having to pick up the slack	<i>they're put under pressure to do the work that you know, not other people don't want, the, the work that's kind of, they get lumped with because of sickness and emergencies, that kind of thing. (Lucy)</i>
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Not respected by other staff members	<i>some members of staff still see us as erm, I guess bottom of the barrel ... it's not members of staff who are kind of higher up that, I know that they value us and I know that my line manager ... values me a lot, erm but some staff ... feel like they've worked harder to get where they are than what I'm having to ... and they make it quite well known (Hellen).</i>
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Taken advantage of	<i>I had a couple of experiences where they'd be like, oh, I'm gonna be an hour late to the next session so you might just have to start</i>
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it. ... So, obviously I told like my peers, and they were like, you know, no, that's not okay, and it got sorted ... I had a couple of occasions where lecturers would try to push more work onto me than they should do really. So, it was difficult. (Grace)

Perceived low pay

I don't think the pay is really reflected in what we do, so for example if I took on a two-hour lecture, that's 100 pounds, which sounds great, but then that's, if I include the prep time before that lecture, which I wouldn't get paid for cause the lecture's already like, um, done, I just have to familiarise myself with the, like the PowerPoints and that, it's actually like maybe 5 or 6 hours of prep the day before, the morning before or whatever, um, so in reality that's what, ten, fifteen pounds an hour that I'm getting paid, so I don't think it really reflects what we're actually getting paid at all. (Gaby)

Pay is not bad but can be problematic

But then again you know, I'm a single fella, living on his own doesn't have a family. I can understand why it would be a problem, say for someone who is married. (John)

Unreasonable expectations

I had something ridiculous like 180 things to mark at once and I don't have time for that. I physically cannot mark that much ...

*I had to give some of it away, because I was just at capacity.
(Jane)*

Pressure to take on too much *I guess they're more at an institutional level in terms of the whole work culture ... I don't think it's just an issue that GTA's or demonstrators face. I think it's anyone who's, who feels like they're casualised ... you feel like you have to say yes to things. ... you kind of make people feel like you need to be there. And I think that can be a really negative working culture. ... particularly if you're saying yes to lots and lots of stuff that could impact on your own studies ... I was just saying yes to everything just because I wanted you know to, to look good.
(Hellen)*

Doing more work than necessary *15 and a half hours is what should have taken. But I definitely ended up doing more like 20 ... Because ... I always feel bad. Like I want to give the feedback that I, I feel like students really would appreciate and need. So, I always feel like I, I try and stick to the time limit, but I always end up going over. (Abby)*

Theme 4 - Thriving in Academia: Improved confidence
Embracing Enrichment, Flexibility,

when I first started, I was like very nervous. Whereas this year, I feel a lot more like I know what I'm talking about. I can deliver

Community Bonds, and other positives
for demonstrators.

presentations. ... I think it makes sense to the students. ... I'd say I'm fairly confident now. (Abby)

Enjoyment of
interaction

student*the most enjoyment I get out of it is the interaction with the students because I feel like PhD can be quite, uh, an isolated role, um, it could definitely be lonely at times ... I definitely enjoyed the interaction with the students and also just the feeling that you're, like, contributing to someone else's learning. (Sophia)*

Contributing to
development

student*I really like it when I('ve) sort of built a rapport with the students and I feel like I genuinely am helping them. Umm, so, I guess the interaction between myself and the students and feeling like I'm actually, you know, contributing to their studies and they are progressing. ... I think that's probably my favourite part. (Abby)*

Improved skills
knowledge

and*learnt a lot as well, particularly cause I'm a qualitative psychologist, I'm not at all a statistician, but I was doing a lot of demonstrating on stats modules ... was having to sort of teach myself everything from scratch again, and I think doing the demonstrating really sort of taught me a lot ... having that role*

... enabled me to ... refresh on a lot of those skills that I'd sort of felt like I'd lost a little bit. (David)

Being mentored

I think what really helped was being trained to come out of your comfort zone so, like, at the beginning of the semester, there was one particular lecturer who I was working with ... she said to me, right, ok look through the list ... and they said right, okay, so on that session, I will introduce the session, but then it's up to you, to deliver the session, and er so I'm wanting you to prepare for that, I don't want you to just be a demonstrator, I want to kind of push you. (John)

Benefits of working closely with staff

you can kind of observe different teaching styles which is nice. (Grace)

Helpful feedback

And they did also do, the instructors watching you teach and giving you feedback and stuff like that, so that was really helpful. (Lucy)

Demonstrating as a break from the PhD

workload is pretty high with the PhD, and teaching obviously adds to that to that but it's also a nice distraction sometimes as

well ... I find it a welcome distraction from writing ... it's just something different, different outlet. (Sophia)

Community

it was nice to have that community as well, when I was demonstrating, because obviously I was in the PhD office and stuff. So, that was a nice environment, it was very - sometimes it was productive, sometimes it was a bit more chatty ... but it was a nice environment, a nice space to work in, so that was really good. (Grace)

Demonstrating is low
responsibility/low pressure

you don't have the pressure of being the lead, and if they don't understand and if they have any questions, you can always fall back on the lecturer cause it's their responsibility. (Grace)

Role is flexible

because the seminars are already set in stone, and you have a particular time that you're teaching each week or every two weeks. It's easy to sort of fit other PhD stuff around that. (Louise)

