A. DISCIPLINARY AUTHORITY

1. The University regards a Head of Unit as the individual responsible for defining and maintaining acceptable standards of behaviour within their Unit.

2. The Head of Unit must make clear who has authority to act for him/her in maintaining discipline within specific areas of the Unit e.g. a computer cluster.

3. The responsibilities of the Head of Unit are to maintain good order within the Unit so allowing smooth operation of the University’s teaching and research functions, to take due note of security and safety requirements, and to ensure that the premises, equipment and overall environment conform to the University’s stated policies.

4. During normal daytime operation of the University all members of staff are responsible for good order within areas of the University for which they are responsible at that time, such as lecture theatres or laboratories.

5. Outside normal working hours individuals in charge of specific facilities, such as a computer cluster, are responsible for deciding what action must be taken in the event of a disruptive or potentially disruptive situation developing.

B. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR

1. If an individual behaves in a manner unacceptable to the Head of Unit or nominee within his/her area of responsibility, the following procedures shall apply:

   (i) The Head of Unit or nominee shall decide whether it is appropriate and safe to approach the disruptive individual.

   (ii) If approaching the disruptive individual is deemed unacceptable or unsafe, the Head of Unit or nominee shall contact the University Security and proceed as in (v) below.

   (iii) If an approach is deemed acceptable, the Head of Unit or nominee shall at his or her discretion request the individual concerned to cease the disruptive activities.

   (iv) If the individual concerned refuses to alter their behaviour to the satisfaction of the Head of Unit or nominee they shall be asked to leave University property with immediate effect.

   (v) If the individual refuses, the Head of Unit or nominee should seek the assistance of the University Security by telephoning the emergencies number through the 24-hour security desk (extension 6817).
The University Security will, as a first step, reiterate the request that the disruptive individual behave reasonably and if required request the individual to leave the premises immediately.

In cases where unacceptable behaviour continues or if it is clear that the individual should be asked to leave immediately the University Security will attempt to persuade the individual to leave quietly.

If the undesirable behaviour continues and/or the person refuses to leave the Head of Unit or nominee and the University Security will attempt to obtain the individual’s name and address and determine whether or not they are a student or a member of staff of the University: this will lead to an appropriate report through the Estates Security Manager to the Head of Unit who will decide on disciplinary action according to existing regulations.

In the case of:-

(a) a breach of the peace or criminal act;
(b) risk of physical injury to themselves or others;
(c) damage to University property;
(d) disruption continuing at an unacceptable level;

the University Security may, with the agreement of the Head of Unit or nominee if appropriate, request assistance from Northumbria Police.

Upon arrival Northumbria Police will automatically take charge of the disruptive situation and take whatever action they deem necessary to resolve the matter.

Any member of the University staff who is concerned about an actual or potential security hazard, including the presence of an undesirable individual within a University building, should contact the Head of Unit or nominee or the University Security. Undesirable persons in this context include those with no connection and therefore no business with the University as well as those who may have a legitimate contact with the University but may be rendered temporarily undesirable possibly by drink or substance abuse.

If a member of the University observes criminal damage in progress, e.g. the destruction of University equipment, violence against the person or serious theft, the normal emergency services should be contacted by dialling 999. The University Security should also be called.

The University recognises that decisions by the Head of Unit or nominee regarding unacceptable behaviour are likely to be taken quickly and sometimes in difficult circumstances and accepts that on occasions the decisions of staff who have acted in good faith to fulfil their responsibilities to the institution might result in later complaint. In such cases the University will fully support the actions of the member of staff provided these have been fair and reasonable under the prevailing circumstances.