Introduction by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Welcome to Newcastle University.

As one of the UK’s leading research universities we regard research students as a particularly important part of our academic community. The graduate culture, its development and enhancement, is a key priority in our Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy. Your performance as a Postgraduate Research Student can significantly impact on the research reputation of the University. In the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) students contributed positively through their publications and timely completion and submission of their theses.

Newcastle University is fully committed to the education and training of its research students. We recognise the essential purpose of a research degree programme is training in research and generation of an original piece of work. In addition we are also aware of the importance of providing our postgraduate research students with opportunities to develop skills beyond those of an effective researcher, including personal, professional and career management skills.

Each Faculty has a Dean, responsible for postgraduate students, who ensures that arrangements are in place to support each student’s progress through his or her research degree. In addition to the opportunities within your subject area to work with other researchers, you will be able to meet and interact with researchers from other disciplines in your Academic Unit and Faculty.

This Handbook for Research Students contains a wealth of information about the nature and level of support you may expect to receive during your study. You are strongly encouraged to use it, and use the University’s facilities, advice and support services during your studies to enhance your period of study as a research student.

I wish you the very best success with your studies.

[Signature]

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching
Section One - University Information

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<td>Monday 25 September 2017</td>
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<td>Spring term</td>
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<td>Monday 09 January 2017</td>
<td>Monday 08 January 2018</td>
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<td>Friday 24 March 2017</td>
<td>Friday 16 March 2018</td>
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<td>Summer term</td>
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<td>Monday 24 April 2017</td>
<td>Monday 16 April 2018</td>
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<td>Friday 16 June 2017</td>
<td>Friday 15 June 2018</td>
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<td>Monday 25 September 2017</td>
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<td>Friday 27 January 2017</td>
<td>Friday 26 January 2018</td>
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<td>Monday 29 January 2018</td>
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<td>Friday 16 June 2017</td>
<td>Friday 15 June 2018</td>
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Registration and Progression

Every student at Newcastle University is required to register with the University at the start of his or her programme of study and normally at the beginning of each subsequent academic year that he or she remains a student. Registering confers on each person who undertakes the process an official status as a student of the University.

Information about how and when to register is sent to all new and returning students before the beginning of each academic year. If you require details on registration, you should use the Research Student Support contact information listed on Page vii. Details are also available at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/pre-arrival.

Research students who are not in Newcastle during the main registration period should still register in the normal way using the self-service registration system and then contact the relevant Graduate School Administrator to inform them of your circumstances.
All research students must register for each year of their research programme, as specified in the regulations for the relevant degree, until submission of the thesis for examination.

All registered research students must comply with the University’s requirements for progression on their research programme, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2016.html

- Within the first month registering sign the learning agreement with their supervisor/s;
- Within three months, submit project proposals for approval by independent school panels;
- Attend the University as frequently and at such intervals as the supervisory team requires, having regular contact with supervisor/s, as well as maintaining a record of personal development;
- Students should submit reports and evidence of achievement on an annual basis, as directed by their school. This will be considered as part of an annual submission along with reports from supervisor/s by an independent school progress panel each year. For further information see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/progression.htm

The University normally expects candidates to complete their candidature in a single continuous period, i.e. continuously registered until the submission of the thesis. However sympathetic consideration will be given to requests for interruption arising due to unforeseen mitigating circumstances.

All research programmes have a minimum period for registration. At the end of this period, students who have not submitted their work for examination may be permitted to register for a further year as a ‘pending submission’ candidate to complete the write up of their thesis. ‘Pending submission’ candidates are required to register with the University and pay the appropriate tuition fee, www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/fees/.

Candidates must submit at the end of the ‘pending submission’ year which is deemed the maximum candidature. However, in exceptional cases, an extension of time for submission may be granted by the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, subject to the candidate providing a strong justification for an extension, supported by the supervisory team. Candidates granted extensions of time in accordance with this provision will be required to register as ‘extended submission’ candidates and pay tuition fees as stipulated in the University’s fee schedule, www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/fees/.
As part of registration you are required to collect your SMART CARD. All students need a Smart Card in order to use University facilities such as; the University Library; Sports Centre; Computing (ISS) facilities and the Students' Union. Your Smart Card will contain a digital photograph and brief details including your name, programme of study and card expiry date. Once you have obtained your Smart Card, you will keep it for the duration of your studies, although you will need to go through the process of Registration at the start of each new academic year for the card to remain active.

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Useful Contacts

The most important contacts are the three Graduate School Administrators and their staff. Contact details are as follows.

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Mrs Michelle Davison  
Research Student Support Team  
King's Gate  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 7RU  
Telephone: +44 (0) 191 208 6206  
E-mail: rssteam@ncl.ac.uk

**Faculty of Medical Sciences**

Mrs Barbara Sumner  
Graduate School  
Framlington Place  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE2 4HH  
Telephone: +44 (0) 191 208 7002  
E-mail: medpg-enquiries@ncl.ac.uk

**Faculty of Science, Agriculture & Engineering**

Mrs Elaine Urwin  
Research Student Support Team  
King's Gate  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 7RU  
Telephone: + 44 (0) 191 208 5463  
E-mail: rssteam@ncl.ac.uk
Other Contacts:

All telephone numbers are prefixed by 0191

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<th>Telephone</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>Accommodation Service</td>
<td>208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="Http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation">Http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Careers Service</td>
<td>208 7748</td>
<td><a href="mailto:careers@ncl.ac.uk">careers@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaplaincy</td>
<td>208 6341</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chaplaincy@ncl.ac.uk">chaplaincy@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/chaplaincy">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/chaplaincy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childrens Loan Equipment (BESS)</td>
<td>239 3979</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bess.union@ncl.ac.uk">bess.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.nusu.co.uk/support/bess/">http://www.nusu.co.uk/support/bess/</a></td>
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<td>Counselling</td>
<td>208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/support/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/support/</a></td>
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<td>Disability Support</td>
<td>208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/disability-support/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/disability-support/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Office (Cashiers)</td>
<td>208 5215</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cash@ncl.ac.uk">cash@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Office (Tuition Fees)</td>
<td>208 5520</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tuition-fees@ncl.ac.uk">tuition-fees@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm</a></td>
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<td>Financial Assistance</td>
<td>208 3333</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance</a></td>
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<td>NTO Newcastle</td>
<td>208 7535</td>
<td><a href="mailto:into@newcastle.ac.uk">into@newcastle.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/insurance/about/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/insurance/about/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Access Centre</td>
<td>208 7490</td>
<td><a href="mailto:open.access@ncl.ac.uk">open.access@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen/</a></td>
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<td>Occupational Health</td>
<td>208 7344</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/occupationalhealth/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/occupationalhealth/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Advice Centre</td>
<td>239 3979</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Sac.reception@ncl.ac.uk">Sac.reception@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.nusu.co.uk/support/sac/">http://www.nusu.co.uk/support/sac/</a></td>
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<td>Student Progress Service</td>
<td>208 6587</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/student-progress/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/student-progress/</a></td>
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<td>Students’ Union (The Union Society)</td>
<td>Reception:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Union.society@ncl.ac.uk">Union.society@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.nusu.co.uk/support/sac/">http://www.nusu.co.uk/support/sac/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Library (Liaison Librarians named in Part Two)</td>
<td>208 7662</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Lib-readerservices@ncl.ac.uk">Lib-readerservices@ncl.ac.uk</a> Or <a href="mailto:Lib-waltonrs@ncl.ac.uk">Lib-waltonrs@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>University Computing Service</td>
<td>208 8039</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ISS.Reception@ncl.ac.uk">ISS.Reception@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Safety Office Radiation Protection</td>
<td>208 6274</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Safety-Office@ncl.ac.uk">Safety-Office@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/</a> (Separate sections for Radiation, and all other general safety services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Sports Centre</td>
<td>208 7225 / 7474</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sport@ncl.ac.uk">sport@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sport/">http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sport/</a></td>
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PART TWO

Financial Matters, Facilities and Services

It is important that supervisors and students are aware of regulations regarding payment of fees to the University and also of sources of financial help, should they ever be required.

There are many services available to staff and students in the University. Included here is a list of the main services, each with a description of what you can expect and how you access them. Some are essential in fulfilling your studies here, others pertain to leisure activities. You are recommended to spend some time making yourself aware of what is available should the need for further information arise.

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Tuition Fees

Fees payable by postgraduate students are set out in the University Fees Schedule available from Level 2 King’s Gate, your Graduate School Administrator or the University’s website at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/fees/

Students whose tuition fees are to be paid by a sponsor or funding body are asked to provide official letters of sponsorship/funding as evidence that their fees will be paid, either during or prior to Registration. A new letter maybe required annually at registration depending on your sponsor. Letters from family members and friends cannot be accepted as sponsorship/funding letters for fees purposes.

If you are responsible for payment of your own tuition fees (or part payment) and you wish to pay your fees in full before or at the time of registration, you will be entitled to a 2% discount on the proportion of your tuition fees for which you are personally liable.

If you do not take advantage of the 2% discount you will need to pay your fees in two equal instalments, the first instalment being when you complete your registration and the second at the end of January 2017.

Payment Methods

Card payments can be made online at: https://payments.ncl.ac.uk/open/ and via the Financial Details screen on S3P. Alternatively you can arrange to pay by credit/debit card, cheque, travellers’ cheques and direct debit at the Finance Helpdesk in King’s Road Centre during the Arrival, Welcome and Registration period. Outside of this period you can go to Student Services, King’s Gate. For security reasons you should not bring cash to pay your fees.

EU/International students

If it is more convenient, you may pay your tuition fees by electronic transfer before you come to Newcastle. Newcastle University has teamed up with Western Union Business Solutions who provide a simple and low cost method of paying your tuition fees in your local currency. This helps to eliminate problems caused by fluctuating exchange rates and expensive or unforeseen bank charges.

Using this service ensures that Newcastle University receives 100% of your payment and your enrolment will be processed quickly.
Western Union Business Solutions guarantees you an exchange rate for 72 hours to give you time to make the payment via your own personal online or telephone banking, or at your local bank. You will be sent an email confirmation as soon as your payment is received.

To pay your fees via Western Union Business Solutions please go to the web page below and follow the link:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/pre-arrival/arrival/complete/tuition-fees/

If you have any questions regarding this service or your payment you can contact Western Union’s dedicated student support helpline on +44 (0)1733 871871 or email education@westernunion.com

Financial Support

A. Student Financial Support Fund (UK Students only)
The University’s Student Financial Support Fund provides discretionary financial assistance to UK students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties. Postgraduate students must show that their hardship is unforeseen and not the result of having commenced their courses without sufficient funding to cover course fees and living costs. Funding cannot be awarded to assist students with the payment of tuition fees. Successful applicants may receive either a non-repayable award or a repayable loan, depending upon circumstances.

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/ukstudents/hardship/

B. Financial Assistance Fund (International and non-UK EU Students only)
The University’s Financial Assistance Fund (FAF) provides discretionary financial assistance to International and non-UK EU students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties due to circumstances outside of their control. Students must demonstrate that they originally had adequate funds to cover all tuition fees and living expenses for their whole period of study. FAF cannot act as a main source of funding and cannot be used to assist with the payment of tuition fees. Successful applicants may receive either a non-repayable award or a repayable loan depending upon circumstances.

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/nonukstudents/hardship/

Application forms for the Student Financial Support Fund and the Financial Assistance Fund can be obtained from King’s Gate, Level 2 Reception or through the above web links.

C. Short-term Emergency Loans
Short-term emergency loans are available on a discretionary basis to assist registered students experiencing delays in funding or suffering from an immediate financial crisis. Usually only a small sum will be loaned to cover essential living costs but the loans are interest free.

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/ukstudents/hardship/emergencyloan.htm
Due to the discretionary nature of all these funds there is no guarantee of funding or any automatic right or entitlement to receive funding.

D. Research Council and other Public Funding
There are limited government funded research grants, studentships or fellowships available for postgraduate study. Not all postgraduate research attracts studentships and not all students undertaking eligible research receive funding. Studentships may be funded by the University, a charity, a commercial organizations or a UK research council. The university, which supervises the PhD studentship, advertises and manages applications. PhD studentships at Newcastle are advertised on our website: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/

Faculties / schools may also offer other studentships and bursaries – please refer to your faculty or school section in this Handbook, if appropriate.

E. International Scholarships, Bursaries and Discounts
Newcastle University is committed to offering support to the very best international students aiming to pursue a research programme. We are pleased to offer both University and externally funded awards for outstanding international students from outside the EU who apply to commence PhD studies. These include:

- Newcastle University Overseas Research Scholarships
- Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships
- Alumni Tuition Fee Discount

University Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic merit so students must possess, or expect to receive, excellent results. The above awards are available only to applicants and are offered during the admissions process. Students holding these awards will receive confirmation of their awards from the University prior to the start of their studies.

Additional funding opportunities are listed in our postgraduate funding database to help students to identify sources of funding for which they may be eligible. For further information visit: www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/

For further information about postgraduate international scholarships contact: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/nonukstudents/scholarships/

F. Student Finance Advisers
The Student Finance Advisers provide information, advice and guidance to students at all stages of their University careers. Support includes help with budgeting and money management and information about sources of university and external funding. One-to-one appointments can be arranged and weekly drop-in sessions are available.

The Student Finance Advisers do not offer debt management advice or advice about benefits. If you require help managing debts or information about benefit entitlement you should contact the Student Advice Centre in the Students’ Union.
Council Tax

Most students are entitled to some form of exemption or discount, but this depends on individual circumstances. Students who are exempt from paying Council Tax must submit a Student Exemption application form to their local council as well as a Student Certificate providing details about their course. Students living within the Newcastle City Council area can complete an online exemption/discount form at: www.newcastle.gov.uk/benefits-and-council-tax

Contact Newcastle City Council Tel: 0191 278 7878

For more information see: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/advice/counciltax.htm

Students can print off a Student Council Tax exemption certificate from S3P, the Student Self-Service Portal or they can be issued by the Research Student Support Team at King’s Gate Level 2 Reception (If you need a CT exemption certificate, request one at least a week before your deadline, as it may take several days to produce the certificates during busy periods.)

Overseas Business Travel Insurance

The University normally provides automatic and free travel insurance to current registered Newcastle University postgraduate students travelling overseas on official University business.

Full details of the procedure and cover are available at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/insurance/cover/travel_pg.htm

However, there are occasions where the University may not be able to provide travel insurance, even if a student is travelling on official University business. Full details can be found in the Policy for Postgraduate (including Research) Student Travel and Outside Study (off-campus and abroad) provides full details: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGStudent-Travel-Outside-Study-PolicyJuly15.pdf

For further details, contact: Insurance, Finance Office, and King’s Gate. Telephone 0191 208 6520 or 0191 208 3913; email: Insurance@ncl.ac.uk;

Website: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/insurance
Student Wellbeing Service

The Student Wellbeing Services provides information, advice and guidance to postgraduates on a wide range of student support issues:

- [Help with finances]
- Support for disabled students
- Specialist learning support
- Support for students with long-term mental health conditions
- Counselling and therapeutic support including one-to-one sessions, group work and signposting to specialist services, as needed

(In addition to the address below, please see part two of this handbook for individual contact details)

Student Wellbeing Services
Newcastle University
King’s Gate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU
Tel: + 44 (0) 191 208 3333

Web: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing

We are closed on bank holidays and during the University Christmas closure. The service we provide is without charge, confidential and available to all students throughout the year and at any time during their University career.

Disability and Specialist Learning Support

Advice, information and guidance are available to all disabled applicants and students at all stages of their university career. The definition of disability can include specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia; Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD); ADHD; long-term medical conditions such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Crohn’s disease, Cancer, Heart problems and Mobility difficulties; as well as Mental Health difficulties, such as Depression, OCD, Eating Disorders and Psychosis

Although Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA) may only be available to UK students, the Disability/Specialist Learning teams work with home, EU and international students and where individualized adjustments are needed students will be provided access to an assessment where decisions about support are made on a case by case basis. Please contact these teams to discuss individual circumstances.
Postgraduate students may be eligible to apply for DSAs if they study a recognised taught or research postgraduate course (including a distance-learning course) and meet the personal eligibility conditions (UK Students only). All postgraduate courses should last at least one year and lead to a master's degree, doctorate, postgraduate diploma or certificate, for which the entry requirement is at least a first degree or equivalent. Where the funding body is a Research Council, applications for DSAs are normally dealt with by the research organisation i.e., Universities on behalf of the Research Council. Applicants / students should contact the Student Wellbeing Service at the University for advice on how to apply for DSAs. The Student Wellbeing Service has close links with UCAN (University Centre for Assessments at Newcastle) which can carry out assessments of study support requirements for applicants and students across the UK.

For students with dyslexia, or another specific learning difficulty, the service offers advice on diagnostic assessment including help to arrange further assessment, if appropriate. Advice and support is also available for students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Asperger’s syndrome. Students can be referred to specialist tutors who offer one-to-one study skills support. These sessions can include strategies to improve organizational / time management skills, as well as techniques to improve essay writing, reading and revision.

Please note that there is a high demand for one-to-one support and although every effort is made to allocate students to tutors as quickly as possible, there may be a waiting list. Tel: 0191 208 3333

Website: [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/)

### Counselling & Mental Health Support

Initial appointments can be made by phone, by e mail or by calling into Kings Gate, Level 2 Helpdesk. During these half-hour appointments we will discuss what kind of support might best suit the student’s particular needs. Students should arrive 15 minutes early to complete the necessary forms and it is important to arrive on time. Students will not be able to be seen on that day if they arrive late.

Talking to a therapist can help with a variety of problems from the past or present (e.g. loss, depression, anxiety, eating distress and relationship difficulties). The therapists do not give advice but the therapeutic process can enable students to have an increased understanding of themselves and the choices that they have. The therapists provide a wide range of interventions and support for students experiencing mental health problems, including access to self-help resources, group work and individual sessions delivered either online or face-to-face. We offer up to six individual sessions.

Groups are provided in order to help students develop strategies and skills to cope with various difficulties including anxiety, depression and work block. Sessions such as ‘beating exam stress’ and ‘how to be assertive’ are also provided throughout the University.

More information about the different types of therapeutic support is available at [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing)
Staff Training and Consultancy
The Student Wellbeing Service offers a range of training to staff which can be accessed via the Staff Development Unit. We also welcome individual requests to tailor events specifically to service/department needs Consultancy is an advice and signposting service, operated by qualified professionals, for those who are concerned about the mental health of a Newcastle University student. The service is available to all parents, family members and friends of Newcastle University students.

Medical Matters

Medical Care
Students are required by the University Regulations to register with a General Practitioner (GP). There are many NHS medical practices in Newcastle, the names and addresses of which are available from Newcastle Health Authority. To find your nearest GP go to the following website and put in your postcode. It will give you the name and address of your nearest GP’s and also some key information about the GP practice:

http://www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories/Pages/ServiceSearch.aspx

Before registering with a GP, students are advised to ensure that a GP will be available to carry out a home visit to their address if necessary.

For a detailed explanation of how NHS services work please look at the Medical Services for International Students booklet under health information on the Student Wellbeing Service website:

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/about/student/

Dental Care
It is advisable for students to register with a dental practice. There are many NHS dental practices in Newcastle, the names and addresses of which are available from the Newcastle Health Authority. To find your nearest dentist go to the following website and put in your postcode. It will give you the name and address of your nearest dentists’ and also some key information about the dental surgeries:

http://www.nhs.uk/servicedirectories/Pages/ServiceSearch.aspx

Procedure in the case of illness
The following advice applies to most students in the University. Students on some programmes of study (e.g. medical and dental students) may be required to follow slightly different rules about notifying relevant staff of illness, and will be provided with the necessary information by their schools or faculties.
If illness prevents you from studying at any time whilst you are a student at the University, you should inform your tutor or supervisor immediately. If you are absent from the University through illness for more than three working days, you must complete a Student Notice of Absence form available on the University’s website. If illness prevents you from studying for more than seven working days, you must obtain a medical certificate from your GP and forward it to your School/Institute as soon as possible, in addition to completing the Student Notice of Absence form. Further information is available at: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/Attendance/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/Attendance/)

It is also advisable, if you have to miss an examination as a result of illness, that you see your GP whilst you are ill and obtain a medical certificate as evidence of the illness.

In cases where you believe that illness has affected your academic performance, for example in examinations, you should inform your tutor/supervisor (or degree programme director if the former are unavailable) of the circumstances. In such cases, in addition to providing a Self-Certification of Illness form or medical certificate from your GP, you should also fill in the *Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC)* form available at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/). If you are unsure at any stage about the possible consequences of illness on your academic progress, you should consult your tutor/supervisor for advice.

**Chaplaincy**

Chaplains of different world faiths are based on and around campus and we currently have several chaplains of Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, and Muslim faiths.

There are a number of prayer rooms on campus, these include;

- The University Muslim Prayer Facility, which is in King George VI Building  
  Telephone: 0191-208-5658.
- The Catholic chaplaincy, which is situated on Windsor Terrace.
- The Anglican Church of St Thomas is opposite King’s Gate and open each day between 10.30 am & 4.00 pm (the University’s co-ordinating chaplain, Catherine Lack is also vicar there).

Other religious groups also meet regularly on campus, these include Buddhists, Christians, Ismailis and Quakers.
We are here to support students of all faith and none. We can meet with you to listen, chat and if you have a faith, find a suitable worship community, be it church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. We keep in touch with all the major faith communities in Newcastle and with a number of other voluntary organisations. Even if we can’t help, we can always point you in the right direction. The chaplaincy – the people and the place – is here for you.

For more details please see our website:

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/chaplaincy/

Health and Safety

Newcastle University offers our post-graduate students the opportunity to study and/or research in wide range of subjects across many disciplines. The activities entailed can generate a diverse spread of hazards and some of these can pose significant dangers. In order to facilitate these activities and avoid serious accidents, it is critical that these hazards are effectively controlled. The University does this through a variety of policy and other arrangements. The following sections provide a brief guide of the key areas that have specific health and safety requirements.

You are encouraged to liaise closely with your Academic Supervisor, your School or Institute Safety Officer, other local staff or Advisers from the central University support team in Occupational Health and Safety Service (OHSS) who can help to advise you further, if required.

Health & Safety Policy and Other Arrangements

The University, its staff and students have legal and ethical duties to ensure that the University operates in a safe and healthy manner. The University Health & Safety Policy is the top tier document that defines the University’s arrangements for health & safety. A variety of other documents define more specific arrangements. These include University level Health & Safety Management Standards (i.e. topic policies), Guidance documents and templates (e.g. those for risk assessment).

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ohss/safety/management/
In addition, there are a range of documents at Faculty and School or Institute level that define the local arrangements. These include H&S Policies, SOPs (standard operating procedures), local safety rules (e.g. for specific laboratories) and other documents. These are important sources of information and you should familiarise yourself with the relevant documents. If you need further assistance you should speak to your Academic Supervisor. Your School or Institute Safety Officer is also an invaluable source of local advice.

**Risk Assessments**

The University is legally required to carry out risk assessments for all its work activities. A risk assessment is a careful examination of each work activity to decide what could cause harm and to decide if the current precautions are sufficient. Students may be asked to complete a risk assessment for an individual project or work activity as part of their academic studies. Standard operating procedures are also sometimes used in conjunction with risk assessments to give step by step guides to carrying out work activities safely. There are a number of different risk assessment forms for example:

- **General risk assessment form** - used for most work activities
- **COSHH risk assessment** (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations) - used for assessing the risks from chemicals
- **Manual handling risk assessment** for moving loads using bodily force.

Make sure you have read and understood all risk assessments relevant to your work.

**Health and Safety Training**

Each Faculty will provide a health and safety induction and training for students. The precise format and number of safety courses will be decided by each Faculty.

Post graduate students are entitled to attend most health and safety courses provided by OHSS. There are 28 courses which are split into general health and safety which includes risk assessment, manual handling and travel abroad and specialist training which includes chemical safety, biological and genetically modified substances training, gas safety, laser and radiation training.

Students should discuss their training needs with their supervising academic and are expected to attend any health and safety training they need having regard to their work activities. Students may not be allowed to carry out certain high risk work activities until they have been trained, e.g. work with ionising and non-ionising radiation.

**Biological and Chemical Hazards**

*Biological Agents and Genetic Modification*
If your work involves biological agents (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites or prions) or materials that may contain them (e.g. cell lines, clinical samples, environmental samples) a BioCOSHH risk assessment is required. Hazard group 2 and 3 biological agents, pathogens and toxins listed on Schedule 5 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 and certain animal or plant pathogens must be notified to OHSS using the Pathogen and Toxin registration form before the work begins.

If your work involves genetically modified (GM) organisms a GM risk assessment is required and approval from the University Biosafety Committee must be sought before you can start work. If a new GM risk assessment is required for your work please allow extra time in your project plan for the completion of the approval process.

Chemicals
Where your work involves the use of chemicals then a COSHH risk assessment is required. Sometimes an additional DSEAR risk assessment (Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres) is needed if your experiment or process is at risk of fire, explosion or energetic event.

Radiation
Work with ionising radiation (e.g. X-ray generators or open or closed radiation sources) or non-ionising radiation (e.g. UV light or lasers) is strictly controlled. Every School and Institute that uses radiation has a Radiation Protection Supervisor who can assist you. Nobody is permitted to work with radiation until they have been suitably trained and approved by one of the Radiation Protection Advisers based in OHSS. There are specific requirements in place for the ordering, receipt, distribution, handling, storage and disposal of radio-isotopes that you must comply with. Your Academic Supervisor should tell you what you need to do. Further advice can be obtained from your local Radiation Protection Supervisor or OHSS.

Fire
The University invests significant resources for fire prevention and protection. This is achieved, in part, by the robust design, construction and maintenance of our buildings, and, in part, through our fire evacuation arrangements. The local arrangements for fire safety should be included in the induction given by your Academic Supervisor. This should include what action to take if you discover a fire and what to do if the fire alarm sounds in your building. If any students (e.g. those with a disability) require assistance in a fire evacuation then a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) should be completed.

If you come across any defects or problems with fire alarms, fire doors, fire stopping etc. then please complete the fire form which will log the job and bring the issue to the attention of the safety team.
Travel Abroad
Travel is a common part of many projects whether it is student returning to their home country or to another country. The University has a duty of care to keep students safe whilst they are studying on University business abroad. The University has a travel abroad policy and guidance and allows travel in accordance with the classifications provided by the UK Government Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice service. Students are required to complete a travel risk assessment to plan and prepare for any foreseeable hazards and take sensible precautions to ensure you or anyone else associated with the trip is not harmed. Your supervising academic will authorise any travel associated with your studies.

Occupational Health
The Occupational Health team provides advice to post graduate students and supervising academics on work related health problems that can affect your studies. The team can help with advice (pregnancy, stress), treatment (counselling, immunisation, physiotherapy) and information (travel abroad, general health).

Reporting Accidents and Near Misses
Things sometimes go wrong whilst studying. Any accidents or near misses must be reported as soon as possible to your supervising academic who will report the incident to OHSS. We will not blame individuals, please do not try to hide mistakes or cover up when things go wrong. We want you to report accidents and near misses so that we can all learn from our mistakes and take steps to make sure they do not happen again.

Emergencies and Defect Reporting
In an emergency please contact the Security team 24 hours a day on 0191 208 6666 or for none emergencies on 0191 208 6817 or security@ncl.ac.uk If you see any physical defect on campus these can be reported to the Estates Support Service helpdesk on 0191 208 7171 or ess-helpdesk@ncl.ac.uk

The Library
The University Library Service provides access to a wide range of resources, services and study spaces as well as professional expertise to help you to be successful in your research. The Philip Robinson Library is open 24 hours a day during term-time and the Marjorie Robinson Library Rooms, Walton and Law libraries are open until late.
Subject Information
The libraries offer over 1 million print books, subscribe to over 26,000 journals and provide access to more than 6 million ebooks. Library Search (libsearch.ncl.ac.uk) can be used to locate books, journal articles and a lot more information using a single search. Online subject guides have been published to bring together all the key resources for your subject together with a variety of guides on topics such as referencing http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/subject-support/

The Philip Robinson Library also houses Special Collections (www.ncl.ac.uk/library/specialcollections) which consists of rare and historic books, manuscripts, maps and illustrations.

Being an Informed Researcher
The Informed Researcher webpages: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/research-support/informed-researcher/ bring together all the information you will need to help you to develop your skills as a researcher.

Liaison Team
Your Faculty Liaison team will help you make best use of the services and resources provided by the Library. They run a series of workshops as part of your postgraduate researcher development programme. These classes are designed to help you save time and make your research more effective. You can also book an individual, personalised one-to-one consultation with them using the link on your Subject Guide or via Library Help. Individual contact details can be found online: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/contact/liaison-librarians/.

More general help is available through Library Help via phone, text, email, web form and live chat: http://libhelp.ncl.ac.uk

Writing Development Centre
Location: Level 2, Robinson Library
Website: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/subject-support/wdc/index.php
E-mail: wdc@newcastle.ac.uk
Twitter: @NCL_WDC

The Writing Development Centre’s role is to help you become a confident and successful independent learner. Our team of tutors particularly in issues around writing for assessment and associated topics, including:

- Critical thinking, critiquing and reviewing literature
- Planning and structuring writing (incl. paragraphing)
- Academic writing style (incl fundamentals of grammar)
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Managing time, work and writing (incl. writers block and procrastination)
- Presentations and posters
We work closely with colleagues in other services such as the Library, Student Wellbeing and INTO who can also help you develop your academic skills.

Our approach is developmental – we don’t ‘check’, proofread or correct work for you, but we do help you identify and develop effective strategies which will suit your subject and your own study preferences, and help upgrade your academic performance.

We run a programme of lectures, workshops and other group sessions throughout the academic year on core academic skills topics, which are open to all students. We are also invited by Schools and Faculties to run subject-specific sessions as part of degree courses. We offer one to one tutorials based in the Writing Development Centre which focus in depth on a specific issue you want to work on. Tutorials with us are centered on your individual academic development and are non-judgmental, supportive and strictly confidential. Appointments should be made online via our website. We also maintain a range of online resources on academic skills and writing.

To make an appointment or book a workshop, please see our website http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/subject-support/wdc/index.php

Newcastle University IT Services

Many postgraduate research students have access to a PC in their place of work. There’s also 3000+ PCs in cluster rooms across campus (some rooms are open 24/7). All PCs feature a wide range of software; some have extra specialist software, like CAD programs. See www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/clusters

If you need specialist software, contact your local IT Support Officer for advice. Free or reduced price software is also available for your own PC; see the latest deals at www.ncl.ac.uk/studentsoftware. Access to some University software is also available off campus via ras.ncl.ac.uk

All cluster rooms have black and white A4 printers; larger rooms also have colour and A3 printers. Photocopying is available in the University Libraries. You can print to cluster printers from your own device at nuprint.ncl.ac.uk

Wi-Fi is widely available across campus. Select the newcastle-university network and enter your username and password to connect. There’s a free connection clinic to help you get online; visit the Old Library cluster, Monday - Friday, 09:00 - 16:00. See www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/connect
You'll have a personal Newcastle University email account. To access your email or link your account to your mobile see [www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/email](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/email). You're also given secure file storage space known as your Home Folder or Documents; you can access your files from any campus PC or from your own device at [filr.ncl.ac.uk](http://filr.ncl.ac.uk).

Download the free ‘Newcastle University’ app to find the nearest available PCs, access library services and check out the latest news and events.

We offer advice to help researchers gain the most from University IT services, along with tools to aid communication and collaboration within research projects. Visit [www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/research](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/research).

You can log and track requests for IT support online at [nuservice.ncl.ac.uk](http://nuservice.ncl.ac.uk) or contact the IT Service Desk on 0191 208 5999. Staffed IT support is available in the Old Library, Robinson Library and Marjorie Robinson Library Rooms.

Visit [www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice) for details of all central University IT services.

**Careers Service**

Newcastle University's award-winning Careers Service offers an extensive range of resources and opportunities for postgraduate research students and graduates for up to three years after graduation. Whether you want to stay in academia, work for a global corporation, a small company, the public or voluntary sector or start your own business, we are here to support you.

**Individual Advice & Guidance**

Our Information Officers, Careers Advisers and CV Advisers are here to offer one-to-one advice, guidance and the information you may need to explore your existing plans or generate new ideas if you’re not sure what you want to do. You can drop in any weekday, 11am – 4:30pm (11am-3pm in vacations), no appointment necessary. Each PGR Faculty has a dedicated Careers Adviser. In SAgE this is Karen Parkhouse. [Karen.Parkhouse@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Karen.Parkhouse@ncl.ac.uk)

**On line Information**

Our website offers lots of useful links to key resources for postgraduate research students including our dedicated researchers’ blog [https://newcastleresearchers.wordpress.com/](https://newcastleresearchers.wordpress.com/). You can make use of specialist publications and reference materials in the Careers Service. [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/)
Enterprise and entrepreneurial development
Based in the Career Service, the Rise Up team offer support in developing your enterprising and entrepreneurial skills. Whether you are interested in understanding how your research could be a commercial venture, or you have your own business idea that you wish to develop and explore, the Rise Up team can support you with this.
The Rise Up team also inputs into your faculty postgraduate researcher development programme so please check for session dates and further details. For further information on the support Rise Up offers see: 
www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/riseup/

Career development skills & experience
We offer a programme of careers-related sessions and events tailored to the needs of postgraduate research students in the Faculty Training Programme. The Careers Service also provides a variety of work related opportunities to develop and broaden your practical experience, including work experience with local SMEs, personal development and business pitching opportunities, and workshops on enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability.
Check your faculty postgraduate researcher development programme for details of current opportunities and visit www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/

Building networks
Networking may appear daunting or just unappealing but it can give you a head start when it comes to landing a job, developing your business idea or deciding what to do next. The Careers Service can help you make contacts:
‘Graduate Connections’ is an online database with about 700 contacts, including PhD graduates. You can read their profiles or even contact them directly to get first-hand information and advice on working in a specific sector, making effective applications, their career path and what they do on a day-to-day basis. http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/makingcontacts/graduateconnections/

Graduates from a range of sectors and careers regularly visit the University to give presentations and take part in expert panel discussions. They offer an insight into specific sectors and career paths.
Networking events run throughout the year and provide an opportunity to meet with new and established business entrepreneurs. For dates, times and details see our website http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/events/

Access to employers and vacancies
Regional, national and international employers visit the University throughout the year to deliver presentations and attend recruitment fairs. These events offer an excellent opportunity for you to talk informally to employers and recent graduates and gain a real insight into their organisation and sector, the nature of the work they offer and how to apply successfully
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/events/
Vacancies online
Through our online vacancy site ‘Vacancies Online’ we advertise work experience and part-time jobs that you can fit around your research commitments. We also advertise graduate jobs, internships and voluntary work.

Vacancies are regularly updated and include opportunities for postgraduate researchers. You can also register to receive email alerts of opportunities that match your preferences. Check out our current vacancies by visiting: https://careers.ncl.ac.uk/vacsonline/

Making applications
We deliver specialist sessions on marketing your research experience through the faculty postgraduate researcher development programmes and central workshops throughout the year which cover all aspects of applying for jobs, from writing your CV to participating in assessment centres and delivering a presentation. We also offer individual advice and feedback on your CV, Linked-In profile, job application forms and application statements, covering letters, interviews and business-related applications.
Web: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/
Careers Service, Level 1, King’s Gate.
Open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm (except Wed 10am – 5pm)
Drop-in 1:1 support available 11am-4.30pm (11am-3pm in vacations).

Research Student Support Teams
Within Student Services, it is the Student Progress Service whose work is directly concerned with students, from first arrival to graduation. Each Faculty has a Graduate School Administrator who leads a Research Student Support Team (or Graduate School in the Faculty of Medical Sciences). Please see Part One, page vii for contact details.
Examples of the issues that the Graduate School Administrator and Research Student Support Teams deal with are:
- Student Registration;
- Student Progress (including MPhil/PhD upgrades, confirmation of candidature, interruption of study, extensions to thesis submission dates, academic concessions, appointment of examiners, dealing with thesis submissions and examiners' reports, pass lists);
- Research Students' annual progression;
- Advice on University and programme regulations;
- Complaints, academic appeals, student discipline, assessment irregularities;

Relevant Information and forms for these processes can be found at;
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/
Accommodation Service

University Accommodation

If you have a query regarding your University accommodation, you should contact a member of staff in the University Allocations Team: Lynn Shaughnessy, Jane Ormrod, Lisa Barron, Rebecca Dickinson, Sharon Bushby.

If you require information about individual sites, you can access a copy of the Student Accommodation (2016 - 2017) brochure at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation/about/accommodationbrochures.htm

All postgraduate students are welcome to apply for University accommodation, and offers are made as soon as you have met all the conditions of the Accommodation Guarantee
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation/new-students/guarantee/#covered

Accommodation Contract

If you take up a place in University owned accommodation, your contract will usually be for 50 weeks, meaning you will be able to stay in your room until early September 2017. If you are offered a shorter contract, alternative accommodation will be made available over the summer period. Tenancies are terminated only in the event of the tenant ceasing to be a registered student of Newcastle University. If you withdraw from University or fail to register you will still be required to pay the full rent due for the termly billing period in which you leave, that is, 07.01.2017, 22.04.2017 17.06.2017 or 04.09.2017. Those who leave University accommodation for non-University accommodation remain responsible for the rent until the end of the tenancy agreement or until the room is re-let to another student who is not, at that time, paying rent to the University.

If you are a Postgraduate research student i.e. studying towards a PhD or MPhil, you can give 28 days formal notice to end the tenancy early prior to the end of your period of registered study at Newcastle or if you intend to leave the University for research purposes, and the liability to pay rent terminates after the 28 day notice period. You must provide an official letter of support from your school before the notice can be accepted.

Changing Your Accommodation

If you find your accommodation unsatisfactory in some way, you may apply for a transfer to more suitable University accommodation. If you wish to change your room at any time, you should contact the Accommodation Service which will assist you as much as possible with your request, but a move cannot be guaranteed. A fee of £25 will be charged for second and subsequent moves in all University accommodation.

University Accommodation After Your First Year

With expanding student numbers we usually need all of our accommodation
for the new intake of students each academic year. You will be unable to continue living in our accommodation after your first year, but there is sufficient accommodation available for students within the city.

**NUstudenthomes Private Sector**

NUstudenthomes, the private sector arm of the Accommodation Service, is here to assist new students who do not require University accommodation and returning students who move out of University accommodation after their first year of study. We offer information and advice on all aspects of the private sector, including advertising available properties, many of which are directly managed by the NUstudenthomes team. We provide details on popular student areas; rent levels and facilities to expect in a property. To help you secure accommodation we have our very own property search facility at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation/private/search](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation/private/search) here you can view properties suitable for groups, as well as single rooms in properties sharing with other students. If you have a query regarding private accommodation, you should contact a member of staff in NUstudenthomes Team: Alison Clemett, Pamela Bonner, Alec Hughes or Grant Jackson.

If you are an International student, we strongly encourage you to apply for University accommodation during your first year in Newcastle; since not only are you eligible for this type of accommodation, but we believe this will help you integrate with your fellow students and make new friends. However, if you choose to live in the private-rented sector, we strongly recommend you spend a few days in Newcastle during the summer vacation to familiarise yourself with the various residential areas and to view several properties before making a decision. We can provide details of hotel accommodation for your stay.

If you are an EU or UK postgraduate not covered by the University guarantee, and you would prefer to live in non-purpose built accommodation NUstudenthomes provides a professional service whereby we allocate you accommodation exclusively with other postgraduate students in selected properties that the University directly manages. This service provides the following benefits:

- access to good-quality, affordable accommodation in popular student areas
- peace of mind that the University is acting as your landlord
- no additional administration fees
- water rates and personal belongings insurance are included in the rent
- flexible rent payments
- quick and effective repairs service

This is a specialist service that we have been successfully operating for a number of years and has always proved very popular with students in the past. We manage a range of competitively priced two-to-six-bedroom properties in popular student areas of the city. To apply visit our website at: [https://accommodation.ncl.ac.uk/apply](https://accommodation.ncl.ac.uk/apply). However, while we do have a number
of properties available, we have to advise that accommodation is always subject to availability. For further information contact Grant Jackson

The Accommodation Service is situated in King’s Gate
Telephone: 0191 208 3333

In-Sessional English Programme
The In-Sessional English Programme provides a range of English Language support courses and advice for international students whose first language is not English. The provision includes English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) courses, English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses, Interactive Lectures, online learning and one-to-one writing tutorials. Full details are available on the In-Sessional Programme website: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/insessional/

The In-Sessional is run by INTO Newcastle University. All the classes are free of charge to registered students and are a key part of Newcastle University’s In-Sessional English Language provision. INTO Newcastle University also provides a range of full time, intensive academic preparation programmes leading to undergraduate and postgraduate study at universities in the UK.

The University English Language Assessment (UELA)
Before Registration, all students whose first language is not English must take the University English Language Assessment (UELA), (separate information on the test can be found in the Pre-Arrival Information booklet sent to new students and on the In-Sessional website). Advice is then provided on the most suitable form of support.

You may be advised, for example, to attend some of our classes in academic reading and writing, listening, speaking and seminar skills or grammar and pronunciation, which run throughout term time.

INTO Newcastle University
Reception, INTO Building, Percy Street
email: into@newcastle.ac.uk
Telephone: 0191 208 7535  fax: 0191 208 5239
Monday to Friday 8.30 am to 7 pm

Language Resource Centre

Languages in your own time
Even if you do not study a language as part of your degree, there are excellent language learning resources and facilities for all students at the University’s award-winning Language Resource Centre.
Language Resource Centre (LRC)
Our centre is fully equipped with computer-aided learning programmes, DVD films, CDs, satellite TV (twenty four channels in seventeen languages) and online programs for the independent study of over 150 languages. Students can attend weekly conversation groups or participate in our popular Tandem Learning scheme. Advisers are also available by appointment to help with independent language learning.
Membership is free to Newcastle University students and staff. Just present your smartcard at reception to register for use of the facilities.

The Language Resource Centre is located at no. 26 on the Campus Map, Level 2, Old Library Building (entrance opposite the Armstrong Building).

For more information contact: language.resource@ncl.ac.uk or 0191 208 7490 /http://www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen/

Term opening times:
Mon - Thurs 9.00am to 7.15pm
Friday 9.00am to 4.45pm

Vacation opening times:
Monday to Friday 9.00am to 4.45pm.

Newcastle University Students' Union (NUSU)
Newcastle University Students’ Union is run by students, and led by students and offers a range of services and opportunities aimed at making your student experience the best it can possibly be. The services listed below are a guide to what the Students’ Union offers; further information is available through our Students’ Union Reception on 0191 239 3900 or at www.nusu.co.uk.

Learner Voice
NUSU is led by elected student officers. Officers give support on a range of issues and represent every sector of the student community. They can represent you at the highest levels within the University.

Full-time sabbatical officers:

President
Tel: 0191 239 3916
Email: president.union@ncl.ac.uk

Athletic Union Officer
Tel: 0191 239 3923
Email: au.union@ncl.ac.uk

Welfare & Equality Officer
Tel: 0191 239 3917
Email: welfare.union@ncl.ac.uk

Activities Officer
Tel: 0191 239 3964
Email: activities.union@ncl.ac.uk

Education Officer
Tel: 0191 239 3963
Email: education.union@ncl.ac.uk

Editor of the Courier
Tel: 0191 239 3940
Email: editor.union@ncl.ac.uk
Part-time officers:
For all part time officers, telephone 0191 239 3900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:swd.union@ncl.ac.uk">swd.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Equality Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ar.union@ncl.ac.uk">ar.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Students Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:international.union@ncl.ac.uk">international.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Students with Faith or Belief Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:disc.union@ncl.ac.uk">disc.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair of Union Council</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chair.union@ncl.ac.uk">chair.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalised Genders Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gender.union@ncl.ac.uk">gender.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual + (LGBT+) Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lgbt.union@ncl.ac.uk">lgbt.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshener’s Week Organisers</td>
<td><a href="mailto:freshers.week@ncl.ac.uk">freshers.week@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Parent, Guardians and Carers Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:carers.union@ncl.ac.uk">carers.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrutiny Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:disc.union@ncl.ac.uk">disc.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaigns Officer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:campaigns.union@ncl.ac.uk">campaigns.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSR Station Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nsr.stationmanager@ncl.ac.uk">nsr.stationmanager@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Courier TV (TCTV) Station Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tctv.stationmanager@ncl.ac.uk">tctv.stationmanager@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
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Representatives

| Officer                                           | Email                        |
| Ethics & Environment Officer                      | environment.union@ncl.ac.uk   |
| NSR Station Manager                               | nsr.stationmanager@ncl.ac.uk  |

Your Wellbeing
NUSU runs a number of welfare related services which complement those of the University.

Student Advice Centre (SAC) TERM TME HOURS
Mon 9am – 5pm,
Tues 9am-5pm
Wed 12 noon – 6pm
Thurs 9am-5pm
Friday 9am-5pm
Please check website for drop in times and opening hours during vacation.
Tel: 0191 239 3979
Email: student-advice-centre@ncl.ac.uk

Always check our website for accurate up to date details on opening hours as the above can alter. Our website will also indicate the more limited opening hours during vacation periods.

At some point during your studies, you may need to seek independent advice or assistance. The Student Advice Centre is a free, confidential and professional service to the Students’ Union. The service offers specialist
advice, representation and assistance on a range of issues, including: finance, consumer, housing, academic and personal matters. The SAC can also refer to other specialist services. The SAC service is independent of the University, and strictly confidential.

The Student Advice Centre (Level 0 of the Students Union) runs a Baby Equipment Services for Students (BESS) which is a low cost, baby equipment loan service for all registered students of Newcastle University. For a one off registration fee of £10 and yearly rental fee of £5 or £10 (depending on the size of the item) you can rent a range of high quality baby equipment items. We offer: Cots, Travel Cots, Pushchairs (including double and Tandem), Buggy Boards, High Chairs, Bouncing Cradles, Baby Monitors, Sterilisers and more. To look at a catalogue of equipment and request to see items visit our website http://www.nusu.co.uk/welfare/bess/ or contact us to find out more bess.union@ncl.ac.uk or 0191 239 3979

Nightline is a confidential, nonjudgmental telephone service for students who need some information, advice or just a chat. It runs from 8.00pm to 8.00am on 0191 261 2905 during term time. The number is printed on the back of each student smartcard.

Your Opportunities
NUSU looks to maximize the number of available opportunities for students to participate in activities that enhance personal development and life skills. These include: our Athletic Union which offers a spectrum of sporting opportunities and supports over 60 different sports clubs; our 180 different Societies which give members the chance to pursue their own interests, be they political, cultural or social

Post Graduate Welcome events are held by NUSU during the first few weeks of term. There are low costs to students and offer activities such as Power Yoga, City Tours, Theatre, speed networking and tours of our student led micro-brewery.

Go Volunteer Not surprisingly as the name suggests we are here to help you volunteer. Whether it's English language teaching, beekeeping, mentoring or children's art classes you're interested in, we'll help you get started. Choose from over 150 opportunities with various charities, not-for-profit organisations and projects, and take in the expertise of our project workers. Not interested? Then why not start your own project with our grants scheme; we can support and fund your ideas.

We know you're busy. University is hard and there are lots of distractions in Newcastle, but volunteering is a great addition to your to do list and CV. It doesn't need to take up hours of your time, we can work around your timetable and help you build your graduate skills. Contact us to find out more govolunteer.union@ncl.ac.uk

Give It a Go – NUSU runs a comprehensive programme of trips and activities with anything from sausage making to trampolining. See www.nusu.co.uk/getinvolved/giveitago for the full timetable.
Courier Newspaper, Newcastle Student Radio and Newcastle University TV offer opportunities to develop skills in media. We also need volunteers to help run Fresher’s Week and RAG Week to become School, Course and Hall Reps, and sit on our Students’ Union Council.

Your Community
The newly developed Students’ Union is located at the heart of the University campus community. The iconic building provides a range of services aimed at delivering the perfect place for social interaction of any kind, through the provision of free activity space, state of the art meeting rooms and entertainment.

The Students’ Union is a beautifully refurbished building providing a variety of services including food and bar outlets plus some new offerings such as Subway and Domino’s Pizza as well as a Print Shop and computer support service. The Union Shop sells everything from lipstick to pens and paper as well as a wide range of food items, newspapers, wines and spirits, clothing and household products. Open early throughout the week we pride ourselves on delivering a first class convenient service.

Sport and Physical Wellbeing at Newcastle University
Newcastle University has a reputation as one of the top universities for sport in the country. The Centre for Physical Recreation and Sport and the Athletic Union (AU) provide excellent facilities and an extensive programme of competitive and recreational sporting activities for students of all abilities, whether you wish to take up a sport for the first time or are participating for fun, fitness or serious competition.

Sports Clubs
All students at the University are eligible to become members of the Athletic Union and are able to join any of its 60+ student run sports clubs. These range from traditional sports such as hockey, rugby and football, to more adventurous activities such as mountain biking, parachuting and sub-aqua. If we do not have a sport for you, you have the opportunity to set up your own club.
Performance Sport and Sports Scholarships
University representative teams compete under the banner of ‘Team Newcastle’ in the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) competitions where Newcastle has achieved a top 10 BUCS ranking for five of the past nine years. Our student clubs also compete in regional and local leagues. For high-performing athletes the Centre for Physical Recreation and Sport awards significant numbers of sports scholarships and provides a range of professional support aimed at ensuring that our athletes fulfill both their academic and sporting potential.

Health & Fitness and Recreational Activities
Want to keep fit, have fun and try new sports? We run over 1,500 exercise classes / year with highly qualified tutors who provide a range of classes. These include; high energy classes to improve fitness; mind and body classes to reduce stress and Dance classes to improve co-ordination and flexibility. The ‘Go Play’ programme, run by NUSU, is a no experience sports taster programme of up to 30 sports / term where no sports membership, no previous experience and no commitment are required to take part.

Semi Competitive Sport
If you want to play sport in a fun but competitive environment, there are lots of opportunities at Newcastle to join a team and play in regular fixtures with your friends. Intra Mural Sport welcomes over 3,000 students of all sporting abilities to take part in a programme of annual league and cup fixtures in a range of sports including; football (11, 7 and 5 a-side), rugby union (15, 10 and 7 a-side), netball, basketball, futsal, indoor cricket and mixed hockey.

Sports Facilities
Indoor sports are catered for at the University Sports Centre which houses a 125-station health and fitness suite, a strength & conditioning room, a dance studio, a main sports hall and two multi-functional rooms. Outdoor sports facilities are available at Cochrane Park, Heaton and Longbenton providing facilities for archery, cricket, football, lacrosse, netball, rifle shooting, rugby (union and league), tennis and ultimate frisbee. At Longbenton, the main venue for all our major team sports, there are two floodlit all-weather pitches providing facilities for hockey and football. Newburn Water Sports Centre hosts our Canoe and Boat clubs with the river Tyne providing the ideal training resource for these sports.

For full details on sport at Newcastle University visit:-
www.ncl.ac.uk/sport
www.nusu.co.uk/au
PART THREE

Personal Matters

The following sections are related to you as individuals and refer to a range of aspects of your life here, from advice about studying and making progress to advice on protecting yourself and your property.

International students will find a wide range of information tailored to their needs whilst living and studying here.

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Sources of Advice and Assistance for Postgraduate Research Students

Your main supervisor should be the first person you turn to for help and advice on a personal basis, for example if you are encountering any difficulties in your study or in things which affect your study. Most difficulties can be easily resolved through your supervisor, though he or she may sometimes suggest that you contact one of the services described in Part Two of this Handbook for specialised information or support.

It is recognised that occasionally a research student may not feel able to approach a supervisor about a particular matter. If you are in such a position, you should discuss the matter with your head of school. If for some reason you do not feel able to discuss the difficulties with your supervisor or head of school, there are several sources of advice within the University including school (e.g. school postgraduate tutor), faculty (e.g. dean of postgraduate studies or graduate school administrator) and University services (e.g. the Student Counselling Service, the Student Progress Service and the Union Society's Student Advice Centre, all described in Part Two of this Handbook). Details about school and faculty support mechanisms are provided in Section Two and Section Three of this Handbook.

Each faculty has a postgraduate tutor who has considerable experience of postgraduate matters and who can offer impartial and confidential advice. The postgraduate tutor is independent of the structures within the faculty that deal with the academic progress of research students and can be consulted in confidence at any stage of your research.

The postgraduate tutors are:

- **Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering**
  Dr Nick Walker

- **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**
  Professor Robin Humphrey
  Dr Laura Leonardo

- **Faculty of Medical Sciences**
  Dr Alison Tyson-Capper

If you wish to make an appointment to see a postgraduate tutor, you should telephone the relevant graduate school administrator (details in Part One). If the advice you require is gender sensitive, please contact the relevant postgraduate tutor from any of those listed above.
Alternatively, contact the Student Progress Service (details in Part One). See also the faculty or school handbook for more sources of help and advice.
Study Skills

University study requires each individual student to take significant responsibility for organizing their own work. Information and advice about study skills are available from a number of sources around the University. Some of these may prove helpful to you:

- In particular, you should attend what is offered on your faculty research training programme (see the relevant Faculty webpage) as this has been compiled to provide generic skills expected of researchers in your field of study;
- The Robinson Library has a Study Skills section on Level 4. The section includes books about improving your skills. More information and links to useful websites on Study Skills can be found on ‘Stan: Study Skills at Newcastle’ web pages at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/teaching/stan/
- The Education Unit within the Union Society offers advice and occasional training sessions aimed at specific groups of students;
- Specialist Learning Advisers in the Student Wellbeing Service (based in King’s Gate) can assist students with dyslexia and related difficulties;
- The Language Centre (see Part Two) offers support with writing skills;
- Finally, Part Five of this Handbook offers comprehensive Guidelines for Research Students which include a range of suggestions for study.

Crime Prevention and Personal Safety

Newcastle upon Tyne is renowned as a safe city to live in, and has one of the lowest rates in Britain of students experiencing crime. It’s easy to become frightened of crime when you read the newspapers and hear stories from other students, but these often paint a worse picture than is true. However, as in any city, you must take care to keep yourself and your possessions safe. Newcastle University does have a dedicated Police Officer attached to the University for anyone who wants to talk with the police, they can be contacted through security on 6817 (0191 208 6817).

The following are a few tips on staying safe.

**Keeping yourself safe:**

- Try not to walk around alone late in the evening or when it is very dark. If you are going to be out alone, stick to well-lit, busy streets and consider carrying a personal alarm (these are available from the
Welfare Officer in the Union Society). Let somebody know where you are going and what time you expect to be back;

- Use expensive electrical equipment discretely. Try not to draw attention to your laptop, mobile phone, ipod.
- If you are going to be working in the University late, make sure that you let one of your colleagues know. As there are no longer porters working in buildings, you should also advise the University Security on extension 6817 (0191 208 6817 from a mobile/payphone). You'll need to let them know when you leave too.

Keeping your home and possessions safe:

- Lock all doors and windows every time you leave the house. Make sure that everyone you live with has their own set of keys and locks up too;
- Don't leave computers, stereos or anything expensive near windows so that they can be seen from the street;
- If you have a burglar alarm fitted on your house, use it!
- If you live in University halls or flats, don't allow people you don’t recognise to follow you into the building, even if they say they are visiting a friend. If they are genuine, their friends will let them into the building;
- If you are going to be away from your property for a while, try to avoid it looking empty. Use timer switches on lights (these are available from the Union Society) and let your landlord know that you'll be away so he/she can check on the property.

Bicycle owners:
If you own a bike, make sure you have the frame number written down, in case of theft. When parking your bike always lock both the frame and a wheel to a bike rack, preferably the front one. Use a rack that is well lit and in a public place (there are plenty around campus). Use a D-lock or heavy cable lock with a key. U-shaped tubular bicycle racks are far more secure than ‘butterfly’ racks. Lock your bike as low down on the frame as you can. Remove anything detachable and carry it with you (eg lights, the seat etc.). Consider joining the University’s Bicycle Users Group (BUG), whose web pages can be seen at [http://www.societies.ncl.ac.uk/bug/](http://www.societies.ncl.ac.uk/bug/) BUG members can find you a bicycle ‘buddy’, advise on safe cycling routes around town, tell you where to purchase a second-hand bike and can offer other useful tips.

For more information on staying safe:
The personal safety DVD is available on the University Security website at [http://wwwstage.ncl.ac.uk/estates/services/security](http://wwwstage.ncl.ac.uk/estates/services/security)

To Lets Ville is a website set up by the City Council, Northumbria Police and the University especially to advise students living in the city. [http://www.knowurstuff.co.uk](http://www.knowurstuff.co.uk)

If you would like to report a crime, you can contact the University Security on 6817 (0191 208 6817) or the Northumbria Police on 101. In an emergency use 0191 208 6666 for the University Security or 999 for Northumbria Police.

If you have experienced a racially motivated crime or harassment, you can also contact ARCH (agencies against racial crime and harassment) on 0191 277...
7833. You can contact ARCH anonymously – you will not be made to report the crime to the police. ARCH can also arrange support for you if you wish.

Please note: you DO NOT have to be the victim of a crime to report it to the police.

If you are concerned about crime and would like to speak to someone in more detail, please contact the Student Wellbeing Service by calling 0191 208 3333 or by emailing student.wellbeing@ncl.ac.uk.

If you have been affected by a crime, either directly or indirectly, please contact our Student Counselling Service on 0191 208 3333. The counsellors are available Monday – Friday during working hours.

You can also contact Nightline, the student listening service, on 0191 261 2905 – this service is available from 8 pm to 8 am every night of term time.

The University has a dedicated police liaison officer who is available and operates out of the Security Control/Information centre at Barass Building on Main Campus. Security is resident there and is available 24/7/365

Visa Support
Visa support is provided within the Student Progress Service in King’s Gate. The Visa Team is authorised to provide free, impartial and confidential immigration information and advice for International students on a wide range of visa and immigration enquiries. The types of visa and immigration advice available from this service include:

• Tier 4 applications within the UK
• Tier 4 and Short Term Study entry clearance procedures
• Issues relating to dependant visas
• Police registration requirements
• Working during and after studies
• Travelling within the Schengen space

For further details see: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/visa

As immigration policy can change regularly, you should check the latest official immigration guidance for students on the following Government websites.

For immigration guidance on making an immigration application refer to the Home Office web guidance for students: http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration

The UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) provides regular news bulletins and reliable immigration guidance at http://www.ukcisa.org.uk
Postgraduate Teaching and Demonstrating

General Policy

Payments for Postgraduate Teaching and Demonstrating (PGD) duties are governed by the need for such teaching and the availability of funds in the relevant budget for that purpose. Normally only full time registered postgraduate students are eligible for these duties. Part time postgraduate students are only used for teaching and demonstrating where full time students are not available. Payments to other persons not normally eligible are subject to Faculty or Executive Board approval.

Students should make themselves familiar with the University's Policy on Postgraduate Who Teach – see Part Five of this handbook.

Procedures

The Academic/Service Unit will advise the student when they are added to the register and will give a copy of the Statement of Arrangements to the PGD which confirms that they have been added to the register and outlines the terms and conditions.

Academic/Service Units must inform the student of the specific duties to be undertaken for each assignment, including the total hours they will be expected to work, taking full account of realistic time for preparation and for marking, where required. Note that preparation time is included in the higher rate of pay.

Full-time postgraduate students may undertake paid duties in the University provided their supervisors are consulted about the time devoted to such duties and that they do not contravene the terms of their studentships. Students from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) can only be appointed to the register for up to 12 months; their appointment can be renewed annually thereafter, requiring a fresh document check. Non-EEA students should also note that they may not work more than 20 hours per week, in total, during term-time. Non-compliance may jeopardize their right to study and work in the UK.

Rates of Pay

The rates of pay for PGD duties, along with further information, can be found on the HR website at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/recruitment/demonstrators.php.

The rates of pay are reviewed on an annual basis and approved by the Chair of Staff Committee.
PART FOUR

Academic Matters

University Guidelines and Policies for Research

Here you will find Guidelines and Best Practice advice for research supervisors and research students. In addition to providing what is hoped to be comprehensive guidance, each section ends with an opportunity for Reviewing Practice for those who feel they may benefit from it.

All the Guidelines featured here are important and you are encouraged to look carefully at them.

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Newcastle University Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

Introduction

1. Newcastle University is a leading research-intensive university with a distinguished record of advancing knowledge and understanding through the pursuit of research and scholarship. As part of its commitment to research it provides, through its three faculty structure, a range of research programmes designed to enable postgraduate students to undertake research training and to make their own contribution to knowledge and understanding in their subject.

2. The purpose of this Code of Practice is to set out the University’s standards for its research programmes.

3. This Code of Practice will be used by PhDs, MPhils, MDs and the thesis element of any doctorate level programme including Integrated PhDs and Professional Doctorates. Any doctoral programme wishing to be exempt will require ULTSEC approval. (Please see the addendum at the end of the code for clarification on standards relating to research masters’ programmes).

The Research Environment

4. The University will only permit research programmes to be offered where it is confident that students can be trained and supported within an environment which is supportive of research.

5. It defines such an environment as where a subject School/Institute:
   - Is able to demonstrate significant international research excellence as demonstrated by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)/ Research Excellence Framework (REF)
   - Has a critical mass of staff to act as suitable supervisors
   - Satisfies the requirements of the University Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework including acceptable submission and completion rates that meet the requirements for the Research Council in that subject area.
   - Provides appropriate facilities.

6. The University defines provision of facilities to meet the appropriate standard as follows:

   - **Working Space**
     Doctoral students can expect working space in appropriate shared office/open-plan/hot-desk accommodation, with adequate access, heating, ventilation and security arrangements. Students should be given reasonable space for the secure and safe storage of essential books, consumables, personal belongings and research data. In addition, students undertaking laboratory/studio based research projects can expect access to bench/studio space and associated facilities (see below). If there is disruption to students’ working space, as a consequence, for example, of maintenance or construction work, then students can expect to be advised by their School/Institute regarding the impact on their study, and can expect reasonable steps to be taken to minimise any such disruption including, if necessary, provision of alternative accommodation.
- **Access to Laboratory/Studio Space etc (where relevant)**
  Doctoral students can expect to be given bench space and facilities to conduct their approved research project, including any laboratory consumables and access to equipment and facilities agreed by the project approval panel to be necessary and within the budget for that project. Equipment approved for the research project will be provided in a timely manner and maintained in good working order throughout the project. Students will receive proper health and safety training in the use of the necessary equipment and consumables, and should receive an induction into the required conduct and working practices of the laboratory/studio.

- **Consumables**
  Doctoral students can expect to be provided with:
  - Appropriate supply of normal office consumables, including paper for black and white printing on campus.
  - Access to reasonable black and white photocopying, as agreed with their supervisor in connection with their doctoral study.
  - Where the student is using a computer work station, it shall comply with the schedule to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations.
  - Lab/day books as needed.
  - Access to a telephone, with reasonable telephone calls in connection with their research, which may be logged.

- **IT Equipment**
  Doctoral students can expect access to a networked PC and printer. They should have access to a scanner, if and when needed. Where the research project so requires, a doctoral student can expect to have access to a more powerful PC capable, for example, of handling complex, large-set data analysis, or set up with specialist software in line with their approved project.

- **ePortfolio**
  All students should have access to ePortfolio and are required to maintain and record formal supervisions, training, project approval and progress.

- **Funding for Conference Attendance and Travel**
  Doctoral students should have a reasonable opportunity to attend and/or participate in a conference, with the agreement of their supervisor and subject to available funding. Schools/Institutes should have a budget for travel and conference attendance and a fair and equitable scheme for the distribution of this funding. This may be devolved to a subject/research group. A record of attendance should be kept on ePortfolio. Schools/Institutes may also make grants available for attendance at training events held outside Newcastle.

- **Social Facilities**
  To facilitate social interaction, doctoral students can expect to have access to common room facilities, which may combine with staff common rooms if this is agreed by the School/Institute.

7. In the case of Schools/Institutes or research groupings which for any reason do not meet the normal criterion the University may, on the advice of the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, authorise the offering of research degrees where there is evidence that research of at least national standing is being
undertaken in the applicant’s specific subject and that the other conditions set out above have been or will be met.

**Pre-Entry Information**

8. In order to enable students to make an informed choice, the University requires that units offering research degrees provide clear, accurate and comprehensive pre-entry information to potential applicants. This should inform them as fully as possible about the relevant programme including research opportunities, training, resources, completion times, expectations and demands upon research students (including financial ones), entry requirements, the admissions process, information about scholarships, and appropriate contacts. Pre-entry information should also give relevant information for potential applicants with disabilities and a contact in the Student Wellbeing Service.

**Entry Standards and Applications**

9. The University defines the minimum standard for admission to research programmes as normally an Upper Second Class Honours degree in a relevant subject or a relevant Master’s degree. Any subject-specific qualification requirements should be identified to applicants via the University’s prospectus or School/Institute research grouping information.

10. In addition, for applicants whose first language is not English, the University requires evidence of acceptable competence in the language to be submitted at the time of application.

11. All applicants are required to submit the names of two recent academic referees or one academic and a professional employer who can comment knowledgeably upon their suitability for research in the relevant field.

**Selection of Research Students**

12. In order to assist the match between student, research project, supervisor(s) and institution the University requires that there should be rigorous selection policies and procedures.

13. The University requires that selection policies and procedures should be put in writing. These should normally include:

- a policy of involving at least two experienced and research-active academics in the selection process, normally one of whom will form part of the supervisory team and one will act on behalf of the Head of School/Institute to approve the offer of a place:

- who have been informed about selection of research students;
- who are fully cognisant with University and statutory policies on equal opportunities;
- who are aware of the support infrastructure for students with special needs.
- a policy of interviewing shortlisted applicants for doctoral degrees, where practical;
- a policy of taking up two references and, if one or more of these is not available at the time of offer, making the latter conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory references
- clear selection procedures;
- making decisions on applications promptly and keeping applicants informed during the admissions process.
Letters of Offer

14. Once it has been decided to accept an applicant, a formal offer has to be made. The letter of offer should be accompanied by: information on fees and any other charges; the broad research topic and the length of study; arrangements for their supervision; and should direct applicants to requirements upon them (including attendance, progress reports, contact, enrolment and registration); expectations in terms of academic and social conduct and performance, and requirements; the availability of research training; and direction to other relevant information, e.g. the institutional policy on IPR. Applicants should assure themselves that they have sufficient financial support to complete the degree.

Induction into the University and the Faculty

15. The University requires Faculties to provide students with an appropriate induction programme within three months of registration to enable them to acquire an understanding of the academic and social environment within which they will be working.

16. The induction programme should include:

- an introduction to the University including
  - its history and development
  - relevant regulations, policies and procedures relating to research degrees.

- induction into matters relating to students’ relationship with the institution including:
  - the University’s expectations of research students;
  - the challenges typically faced by research students;
  - institutional facilities available to students including the learning support infrastructure;
  - institutional provision for student welfare and other support arrangements;
  - complaints and appeals procedures.

- induction into matters relating to students’ progress administered by the Graduate School Administrator and research student support staff including:
  - nominated contacts for support and advice outside the supervisory team;
  - the specific facilities/training opportunities available to students within the Faculty;

- provision within the University for student welfare and other support arrangements.

- information about the opportunities to meet other research students and staff and about opportunities to broaden their knowledge through seminars, conferences, forums etc.

17. The University requires that the Faculty annually review the induction programme.
Induction into the Programme

18. The University requires that Schools/Institutes make appropriate arrangements for induction into the student’s programme of study. These should actively involve the designated academic supervisor and include inducting students into:

- the academic standards of the programme;
- the intended learning outcomes;
- the curriculum including the skills training programme and the research element of the individual project;
- methods of teaching and learning;
- assessment;
- regulations governing progression;
- subject-related research codes and ethics;
- programme-related health and safety requirements.

Learning Agreements

19. The University requires Schools/Institutes ensure that research students have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of their research programme. The latter should be set out in a formal Learning Agreement, which should be signed by the student and by the supervisor/s on behalf of the University within one month of starting the programme. Schools should ensure that a copy of the signed Learning Agreement is forwarded to the relevant Graduate School Administrator so that completion can be recorded on the student record. A discussion on a student’s training needs should also be undertaken at this stage.

20. The student and supervisor should also discuss whether the signing of a confidentiality agreement is required and if so, this should be forwarded to the relevant Graduate School Administrator, along with the Learning Agreement.

The Development of Relevant Knowledge and Skills

21. The University requires that Faculties should ensure that research training programmes offer students the opportunity to develop a relevant range of knowledge and skills, including skills for employment. It requires that the learning outcomes of such programmes are consistent with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework.

22. The University requires that, for individual research students, Schools/Institutes should make appropriate arrangements:

- to identify their training needs;
- to identify gaps;
- to provide opportunities for development;
- to record the development of skills in ePortfolio;
- to ensure that students are introduced to relevant academic networks;
- to advise them on opportunities to attend and/or participate in seminars, and conferences;
- to encourage them to present papers;
- where appropriate, to encourage them to publish;

- to support career development.

23. The University requires that there should be appropriate access to formal research training programmes and to individual advice and support for all students, including those who are part-time, have special needs, or who are remote from the institution.

**Research Students**

24. The University requires that research students should inform their supervisors and the Graduate School Administrator about any sponsorship they have received for their research projects and obligations in terms of reporting to sponsors on progress.

25. The University requires that research students should attend induction programmes.

26. The University requires that research students should complete the research training programme and any prescribed taught courses, and successfully complete any assessments and/or examinations.

27. The University requires that research students, in conjunction with the supervisory team, agree a personal skills development programme. This should take into account their prior learning and experience, their needs in terms of study skills, the needs of their research project, and employment related skills. It requires that doctoral students actively seek to acquire relevant skills. This should be reviewed annually with the supervisory team, and the student should maintain an up-to-date Research Training ePortfolio.

28. It requires that research students maintain regular contact with supervisors. As a minimum, students should have regular contact with one member of their supervisory team at least ten times a year, approximately monthly with no more than an eight week gap between meetings, while they are in candidature. At least three of these meetings each year should include the full supervisory team. In cases where the student is not able to meet these requirements because they are studying outside the University, e.g. in another organisation as part of a CASE studentship or undertaking fieldwork, the student is required to agree an equivalent schedule of contacts with the academic supervisor, using for example E-mail and video-conferencing. Part-time students and those students engaged in distance learning should agree the frequency of the formal interactions with their supervisor equivalent to full-time students on a pro-rata basis as part of their Learning Agreement. The University requires that research students record and confirm the outcomes of meetings on ePortfolio.

29. In addition, students who are Tier 4 visa holders should continue to record and confirm the outcomes of their regular supervisory meetings, via ePortfolio while under examination through to completion of their studies, as a condition of their visa sponsorship. These meeting records and outcomes may be requested by the Home Office, as part of the University’s sponsorship duties.

30. Project proposals must be approved by an Independent School/Institute Panel and Head of School/Institute, before being submitted for approval by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The panel should consist of at least two independent University members of academic staff (one of which can be an Honorary member of staff) with relevant skills and knowledge. All students should submit project proposals on ePortfolio within three months of starting their programme, even where a student’s project proposal has already been reviewed and approved by external peer review.
31. The University requires that research students take responsibility for listening to, understanding, and accepting feedback from the supervisory team and the panel.

32. The University requires that research students take responsibility for keeping their research project on track so that it is completed within the normal time-scale prescribed by their candidature.

33. It requires that academic problems with the research project should be promptly brought to the attention of the academic supervisor or the supervisory team so that they can provide support. It requires that non-academic problems with a bearing on the progress of the research (e.g. financial, social, domestic, or health problems) should be brought promptly to the attention of the academic supervisor or supervisory team.

34. The University requires that, each year, research students submit a progress report on the research project to a progress panel until submission of their thesis for examination. In addition, research students may be asked to provide one or more of the following as specified by their School/Institute:
   - submission of a piece of work/lab book;
   - give a presentation on their research
   - undergo a viva or interview
   - evidence of research training

35. It requires that research students contribute to the research environment by attending appropriate internal and external events, and give normally one formal presentation per year on their work. The University requires that these events are recorded in the student’s Research Training ePortfolio.

36. The University requires that research students be responsible for helping to improve research provision by providing feedback and through representation on relevant committees and decision-making bodies.

37. The University requires that research students abide by this Code of Practice. Where a research student does not abide by this Code of Practice the issue will be addressed under the Unsatisfactory Progress regulations by a Progress Panel.

**Supervisory Arrangements**

38. The University requires that supervision should normally be undertaken by a team consisting of at least two members (normally two members of Newcastle staff) with the appropriate research skills and knowledge, who should be registered on an approved list of supervisors held by the Faculty and therefore demonstrably research active. Where for any reason this is not practical, for example where one supervisor is based outside the University, one supervisor from the approved supervisory list is acceptable provided that they also discharge the responsibilities of the academic supervisor outlined below. Where External Supervisors form part of the supervisory team, the Principles for External Supervision Arrangements should be consulted at: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/assets/documents/qsh-externalsupervisionarrangements.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/assets/documents/qsh-externalsupervisionarrangements.pdf)

39. Staff who have not previously supervised research students are required to undertake appropriate initial training and development, while experienced supervisors are normally expected to undertake continuing professional development relevant to the supervisory role, for example participate in Faculty
supervisory updating sessions.

40. There are different models of supervisory team within the University. In joint supervision, the supervisory responsibilities are shared equally between members of the supervisory team. In other styles of supervision, different members of the supervisory team may have different roles. There may be, for example, a lead supervisor and a co-supervisor responsible for a smaller element of the planned research; or a lead supervisor and an advisor responsible for, and able to deal with, general and pastoral responsibilities. Since arrangements may vary, the supervisory team must agree a clear distribution of responsibilities at the outset of the research and update this if arrangements change. In all instances, one supervisor must be nominated as academic supervisor and this person is ultimately responsible for the quality assurance of the research programme. The academic supervisor:

- must be a member of the staff of the University;
- must have gained a doctoral degree or have equivalent experience of research;
- be demonstrably research-active;
- should normally have had previous experience of at least one successful supervision, whether as academic or co-supervisor, defined as taking the student all the way through to a research degree award.

In cases where the academic supervisor does not have such experience, the supervisory team must include another member who is a demonstrably active researcher with experience of at least two successful supervisions.

41. The academic supervisor is responsible for:

- being aware of the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degrees and other relevant University regulations
- completing a Learning Agreement, Training Needs Analysis and any appropriate risk assessments with the student, and ensuring Project Approval is undertaken
- providing the supervisory input to Annual Progress Review
- determining if an Intellectual Property Rights or a Confidentiality agreement is required
- promoting awareness of ethical and professional requirements for the conduct of research and ensuring that ethical approval is obtained for the research, where appropriate
- being the first point of contact in the supervisory team for the University and ensuring that any relevant paperwork relating to the student e.g. extensions, interruptions is properly processed and recorded providing pastoral support and guidance to the student and acting as a signpost to University central services
- offering support to students in their personal and career development
- arranging together with the Head of School/Institute or nominee a replacement supervisor where one of the supervisory team is absent
- arranging and co-ordinating the final examination

42. In many instances the academic supervisor will also be lead supervisor who will also be responsible for:
- introducing the student to the School/Institute, its facilities and procedures
- being the first point of contact in the supervisory team for the student
- agreeing with the student a suitable research field of enquiry
- research project management including arranging a timetable of regular meetings in line with the Code of Practice, requiring the student to keep a record of meetings and agreeing the outcome of meetings with them on ePortfolio
- arranging a realistic timetable for submission and completion in line with any Research Council requirements and the University’s maximum candidature
- requesting written work according to an agreed schedule and returning work with constructive criticism in a reasonable time, as agreed at the outset of the research with the student
- chairing formal supervisory meetings
- encouraging students to attend research training sessions within the University and where relevant externally, attend and present at conferences and seminars and signposting central services such as careers

43. Where there is a lead supervisor a co-supervisor supervisor should:
- be acquainted with the progress of the student’s work and attend formal supervisory meetings at least 3 times per year or additionally as required by the student or lead supervisor
- comment on the student’s work where required by the lead supervisor
- provide additional advice where required e.g. supervise specific elements of data collection, data analysis and thesis preparation
- assume the lead supervisor’s responsibilities if the original lead supervisor is unable to continue (e.g. through illness or departure)
- act as mentor or arbitrator if the student has any problems that cannot be resolved by the lead supervisor

44. Where supervisors share responsibilities more equally than outlined above (joint supervision) they should collectively agree the allocation of tasks while ensuring that one supervisor acts as academic supervisor. The responsibilities of different supervisors should be recorded on the project approval form and any changes communicated to the Graduate School Administrator. Supervisors of research students do not automatically have ownership of the research project undertaken. If an Intellectual Property Rights agreement is required, it is the responsibility of the academic supervisor to determine this.

45. The University requires that Faculties maintain an up to date register of staff who are qualified to engage in research supervision from information provided by the Head of School/Institute and this is maintained by the relevant Graduate School Administrator.

46. The University requires that there are regular structured interactions made available to the student to meet with at least one member of the supervisory team at least ten times per year, approximately monthly, with no more than an eight week gap between meetings. The University requires that at least three of these meetings each year should include the full supervisory team. to report,
discuss, and agree academic and personal progress (for full-time students). In cases where the student is not able to meet these requirements for any reason, the supervisory team should agree an equivalent schedule of contacts with the student, using for example E-mail and videoconferencing. For part-time students or those studying their programme by distance learning, regular structured interactions should be on a pro-rata basis. Students who are registered as ‘pending submission’, ‘extended submission’ and ‘under examination’ should expect to receive normal supervision. The University requires that the formal interactions outlined above, between student and supervisor, are recorded and the outcomes confirmed, in the student’s ePortfolio.

47. The University requires that students who are Tier 4 visa holders should continue to record and confirm the outcomes of their regular supervisory meetings, via ePortfolio, while under examination through to completion of their studies, as a condition of their visa sponsorship. These meeting records and outcomes may be requested by the Home Office as part of the University’s sponsorship duties.

48. The University requires that the maximum period of absence for any member of the supervisory team should not exceed three months, following which appropriate alternative arrangements should be made by the School/Institute and reported to the Graduate School Administrator to ensure continuity of supervision.

49. In order to ensure that individual supervisors are not overloaded, the University requires appropriate limits on the numbers of research students who may be supervised by an individual supervisor, subject to a normal maximum of six full-time equivalent students. Where Heads of Schools/Institutes allow supervisors to take responsibility for more than six full-time equivalent students, the University requires them to make arrangements to ensure that there will be adequate contact between student and supervisor and that the latter is not overburdened. The Head of School/Institute is responsible for ensuring that the overall workload of supervisory staff, including secondary supervisions, is at a level that will allow supervisors to deliver the relevant aspects of the Code of Practice for their students.

50. The University requires that the supervisory performance of individual staff is reviewed annually as part of performance development and review.

51. The University requires that all students have access to confidential advice and support from a nominated contact outside the supervisory team. It requires that Faculties should designate such contacts, which should include the Faculty Postgraduate Tutor and others at School/Institute and/or programme level as appropriate, and make this information available to students. The relevant Graduate School Administrator is also available to provide advice and guidance to students.

52. It also requires that all supervisors have access to confidential advice and support from a nominated contact, particularly where they have concerns about a student’s ability or application to the programme. It requires that Schools/Institutes should designate such a contact, who would normally be the Director of Postgraduate studies, or equivalent, and make this information available to supervisors.

53. Declaration of personal interest: all members of staff are required to declare
any personal relationships with any student they are asked to supervise, or are already supervising. A supervisor who declares such a personal relationship prior to appointment as supervisor for the student in question shall not be permitted to undertake supervision of that student. A supervisor who declares such a relationship after having been appointed as a member of the supervisory team for the student in question, subject to the permission of the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, may continue, but shall not be responsible for, or be involved in, any reports affecting the student’s progress and/or assessment.

54. The University requires that all research supervisors adhere to this Code of Practice. Where a supervisor does not adhere to this Code of Practice, the Dean of Postgraduate Studies in consultation with the Head of School/Institute has the power to remove the member of staff from the list of approved research supervisors and make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the student. Where the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Head of School/Institute are unable to resolve the supervision the PVC of the Faculty will be consulted on the matter.

Support for Research Students

55. A thesis demonstrates the ability of a student to undertake original research. It follows that written documents produced as part of a PhD (or other doctoral degree) or MPhil must solely be the student’s own work. Candidates are examined in the oral examination to demonstrate that the research has been carried out by them; test their ability to defend their thesis, and establish whether the candidate has satisfactory knowledge of the wider field in which the research is placed. It is crucial that the research must be an intellectual project that is conducted and owned by the student, and where the theoretical perspective, methodological approach, interpretation of the data generated and the conclusions drawn are all those of the student.

56. Given these considerations it is important that students are aware of the degree of support that is acceptable when conducting research. This guidance outlines good professional practice during the conduct of research and indicates the support that students can expect from their supervisor. Where a student contravenes this guidance it may be considered an assessment irregularity: see the Assessment Irregularities Procedure at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/assessment.htm

Supervisory Support

57. The Guidelines on Good Practice in Research Supervision and the Guidelines for Research Students (Handbook for Research Students and Research Supervisors (part four)) cover in detail the relationship between the student and supervisor. Over the course of the research the relationship between the student and their supervisor will change. In the early stages of the research the supervisor will induct the student into the research field and acquaint them with the research conducted within it. As the research progresses the student will gradually develop greater independence and by the final stages of the research they will be able to operate as an independent researcher capable of actively engaging in their field. In general terms supervisory support can include:

- Assistance with the choice of topic;
- Critical and constructive feedback on the work produced;
- Advice on the sources or literature used;
• Guidance on the methodology or techniques used and the approach to data collection;
• Discussion of evidence and results;
• Reading drafts and commenting on issues of substance.

Supervisors will not:
• Undertake the actual research itself;
• Write or significantly redraft papers or chapters;
• Conduct a detailed proof read of the thesis.

Changes to Supervisory Teams
58. Occasionally it may be necessary to make changes to supervisory teams where, for example, the academic focus of the PhD has altered, where supervisory responsibilities have changed, or where members of the supervisory team have left the employment of the University. If this is the result of a temporary absence of a member of staff, other members of the supervisory team will continue the supervision with responsibilities being adjusted accordingly. Where the members of the supervisory team are permanently changed, research students should normally be consulted in advance. The University will take all reasonable steps to replace supervisors with suitable alternatives and may extraordinarily include arrangements for supervisors to be from a different academic unit or even from outside the University. However, particularly where it is the student’s choice to effect a change in their project or supervisory staff, it may not always be possible to provide suitable alternatives due to the specialist nature of doctoral study.

59. On rare occasions supervisory relations may break down. In such circumstances, in the first instance, students should consult with another member of the supervisory team. If it is not possible to resolve the problems in this manner, the student and/or a member of the supervisory team should report difficulties to the Head of School/Institute or their nominee, such as the Director of Postgraduate Study. They may refer the matter, if necessary, to the relevant Graduate School Administrator or Dean of Postgraduate Studies for advice and mediation. However, students may consult directly with the Graduate School Administrator or Dean of Postgraduate Studies in confidence. Where possible, prompt action should be taken to resolve the conflict, and where necessary, a student or a supervisor may request a change of supervisor from the Head of School/Institute or nominee. In making any changes to the supervisory team, due consideration must be given to the need to provide supervisory expertise that is appropriate to the project, in line with the Code of Practice.

60. All supervisory changes must be notified to the relevant Graduate School Administrator and be approved by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

Third Parties
61. This guidance applies where a third party such as a professional copy editor or a proof reading company has been employed to provide assistance, or where students receive help from other parties such as fellow students. Where a professional third party has been employed to assist the student this should be made clear on the PhD itself and a statement included indicating the nature of the contribution and by whom.
62. A third party may provide:
   • Assistance with spelling, punctuation and grammar, and
   • Improve the format or layout of the work including editing sentences and paragraphs.

63. Third parties must not make significant adjustments to the work, and this includes:
   • Changing, clarifying or developing the argument of the thesis;
   • Adding to the references used;
   • Correcting factual information;
   • Translating significant amounts of work that are integral to the thesis;
   • Significantly reducing the length or substantially altering the organisation of the thesis.

The Development and Approval of Research Project Proposals

64. Research project proposals may be developed prior to the recruitment of a student for purposes of obtaining funding or subsequently by the student following registration or the successful completion of the taught part of the programme.

65. Project proposals must be approved by an independent School/Institute Panel and Head of School/Institute, before being submitted for approval by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies. All students should submit project proposals on ePortfolio within three months of starting the programme, even where a student’s project proposal has already been reviewed and approved by external peer review.

66. Where the research proposal is developed following registration, the University requires that the supervisory team supports the student in the development of the research project proposal. In particular, the team needs to ensure that the project is achievable within the time-scale of the programme, and to confirm that sufficient resources will be available to support it. The University requires that all research project proposals are approved by an independent School/Institute panel. It requires that the panel should consist of at least two independent University members of academic staff (one of which can be an Honorary members of staff) with relevant skills and knowledge, at least one of whom should be demonstrably research-active and at least one of whom should have experience of successful supervision.

67. The University requires the panel to evaluate research proposals against the criteria:
   - that the project has clear aims and objectives;
   - that the student has (or can acquire) the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes to complete the project successfully;
   - that the proposed supervisory team has, or will be able to acquire, the skills, knowledge and aptitudes necessary to supervise the project to a successful conclusion;
   - that the project is suitable for the programme of study and for the award;
   - that it can be completed within the time-scale for the programme;
   - that sufficient resources will be available to complete the project;
- whether ethical approval is required;
- in cases where the project involves extended absence from the University on fieldwork or work in collaborating organisations, that appropriate arrangements will be made to support and monitor the progress of the student.

68. In order to evaluate these matters, the panel will need evidence in the forms of:
- a research proposal;
- a research plan;
- a supporting statement by the supervisory team.

69. The panel should consider the evidence and make a written report on the proposals, which should be made available to the student and to the supervisory team once their recommendation has been confirmed by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. In the event of concerns, the report should indicate the steps necessary to address them. The University requires that Faculties should establish maximum times for the re-submission of proposals, not exceeding three months.

70. When the panel is satisfied on the above matters, it then recommends the research project for approval to the Head of School /Institute or nominee and the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The research project and the supervisory arrangements are then reported to the Graduate School Administrator.

71. If the panel does not approve the research project and/or the supervisory arrangements following reassessment of the project approval it will be the annual Progress Panel that will be required to consider the situation in full and recommend on the outcome for the student.

**Progression and Monitoring**

72. The University requires that supervisory teams should formally monitor the progress of students on research programmes through annual reports to the Progress Panel, on ePortfolio. Where appropriate, reports on progress should be made to sponsors and copied to the Graduate School Administrator.

73. However, if, at any point during the course of the programme, the supervisory team have concerns about progress, they should inform the student in writing prior to a meeting. At the meeting, the written comments of the team, including any additional work that the supervisors feel are required, should be discussed with the student, and be agreed along with a review date. If progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the student should be informed in writing that this will be referred to the Progress Panel for consideration. The letter should be copied to the Graduate School Administrator.

74. The University requires that the progress of the student should be formally reviewed annually by the same (or equivalent) panel that approved the research project and the supervisory arrangements. Such reviews are completed in ePortfolio and involve a written progress report by both the student and supervisory team and possibly include one or more of the following, as specified by their School/Institute;
- submission of a piece of work;
- a presentation on their research
- undergo a viva or interview
- evidence of research training
75. Panels should consider the evidence, including annual reports by supervisory teams, and determine whether progress indicates that the research project will meet the standards for the award.

76. If this criterion is met, the panel should recommend that he or she should have their conditional candidature confirmed at the end of the first year, or that their registration should be continued.

77. If this criterion is not met, the panel should indicate what the student and, where appropriate, the supervisory team must do to put the research project back on track. It should set a date for further review within a period prescribed by the Faculty, normally within two months (four months for part-time students).

78. Panels should complete a written report on ePortfolio to be approved by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, which will then be shared with the research student and the supervisory team, on ePortfolio. In the event of the panel being unable to make a recommendation to progress, the student and the supervisory team should determine an action plan to ensure that the research project will meet the standards of the award by the date set for further review.

79. If necessary, the panel should re-convene on the date set and consider whether progress has been such that the research project will meet the standards for the award. Where the evidence has demonstrated this, the panel should recommend confirmation of candidature or continuation as appropriate.

80. Where the evidence does not demonstrate that the research project will meet the standards for the award, the panel’s recommendations will depend upon its judgement of the reasons in terms of the potential of the student to achieve the standards and the adequacy and appropriateness of supervisory arrangements. Any reassessment should be recorded in ePortfolio.

81. Where the panel is not satisfied that supervisory arrangements are adequate and appropriate, but considers that the student would otherwise be able to achieve the standards of the award, it may seek the approval of the Head of School/Institute to make a recommendation to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies for the replacement of all or part of the supervisory team.

82. Where it is satisfied that supervisory arrangements are adequate and appropriate but that the student is unlikely to be able to achieve the standards for the award, it may recommend that the student be registered for a lower degree where he or she is likely to be able to achieve the standards or, if students cannot meet the standards for those awards, that their registration be terminated.

83. Although the final decision with respect to any recommendation made by the School/Institute is taken by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, a School/Institute may give provisional feedback to the students after the annual Progress Panel have met.

**Appointment of Examiners**

84. The regulations of the University require that all research degrees are examined by two examiners, at least one of whom must be external. For staff candidates the examination shall normally be conducted by two external examiners for each candidate although for junior members of staff, at the discretion of the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, one external and one internal may be appointed.

85. All Examiners should be willing to complete the process of examination normally within ten weeks of submission of the thesis.
86. In nominating Examiners, Heads of School/Institute should, in consultation with supervisors, take account of points 87 to 92.

**External Examiners**

87. External Examiners are a recognised authority in their field and provide an important external oversight of the examination process. It is recommended that external examiners should normally be appointed from research-intensive universities, to ensure standards and consistency across all Faculties.

External Examiners MUST:

- Have significant experience and knowledge of research in the subject area within which the candidate is working.
- Be independent and have no obvious conflict of interest.
- Have a research degree or equivalent academic or professional experience.
- Be research active and will normally have published in recognised outlets in the discipline in the last two years.
- Have a clear understanding of the examination process normally based on experience of examining doctoral degrees at other institutions.

External Examiners MUST NOT:

- Be a former member of Newcastle University or a former postgraduate unless more than five years have elapsed since that person left the University.
- Be appointed on a regular basis such that their familiarity with the School/Institute might influence their judgment.
- Have a close relationship with the postgraduate student or supervisory team eg. have published with or worked directly with them to a significant degree within the last five years.
- Be an honorary member of Newcastle University.
- Normally be a retired member of staff from another University unless they demonstrably meet all the criteria outlined above.

**Internal Examiners**

88. The Internal Examiner is normally responsible for ensuring that the University’s examination practices are followed and that the Joint Report Form is forwarded to the Graduate School Administrator.

To be eligible, Internal Examiners MUST:

- Have a contract of employment at Newcastle University and be registered on the approved list of supervisors held by the Faculty.
- Have expertise in the broad field of the thesis under examination.
- Be familiar with the University procedures for the examination of doctoral degrees (where examiners have not conducted an examination at Newcastle they must be briefed by the School/Institute and an Independent Chair must be appointed – see below).

Internal Examiners MUST NOT:

- Have had any direct involvement with the research project under examination.
• Be members of the supervisory team that have supported the work of the student.
• Be a postgraduate student.
• Be a visiting member of Newcastle University.

**An Independent Chair**

89. An Independent Chair makes sure the University’s procedures with regard to the examination of research degrees are followed. They take no part in the assessment process, but ensure that the examination process is conducted fairly and equitably. Graduate School Administrators maintain a list of approved Independent Chairs who can be appointed by Deans of Postgraduate Study, when required.

90. The Independent Chair will be present for the duration of the oral examination, normally also including the pre-meeting and post oral discussions between examiners. An Independent Chair will not be required to take notes of the meeting for the external examiners, but will be required to provide a summary report on proceedings to the Graduate School Administrator following the oral examination.

An Independent Chair MUST be appointed in the following circumstances:

- Where two External Examiners are appointed.
- Where the Internal examiner has no previous experience of examining a doctoral degree.

An Independent Chair MAY be appointed in the following circumstances:

- Where the Examiners of the thesis require the assistance of an independent authority to conduct the examination process.
- Where the Internal examiner has no previous experience of examining doctoral degrees at Newcastle University. When the Dean of Postgraduate Studies deems an independent authority is needed to ensure the examination process is conducted fairly.

An Independent Chair shall:

- Normally be an academic member of staff at the University, normally at Senior Lecturer / Reader level or above.
- Be familiar with Newcastle University examination processes for research degrees.
- Have substantial experience of postgraduate research and examination.

An Independent Chair MUST NOT:

- Be a member of the supervisory team, or have played any part in the research under examination.
- Normally be from the student and/or supervisor’s home School/Institute.
Responsibilities and Conflicts of Interest

91. It is the responsibility of the proposed External or Internal Examiners to declare if they have a conflict of interest such as a personal or professional relationship with the student, supervisor or alternative Examiner. Once the Examiners have been appointed it is the responsibility of the supervisory team to communicate to the Graduate School Administrator any health or personal circumstances that may affect the conduct of the oral examination. The supervisors have no further involvement in the examination process once the examiners have been appointed other than to ensure that the administrative arrangements for the oral examination are in place.

92. It is the role of the Dean of Postgraduate Studies to comment critically on the proposed Examiners and if there is a perceived conflict of interests, the Dean of Postgraduate Studies has the final decision in the appointment of Examiners.

Personal Extenuating Circumstances

93. The University has established procedures for dealing with personal extenuating circumstances affecting research students throughout the duration of their studies. A research student can apply for an interruption of studies, a change of candidature or an extension to their submission deadline, if personal circumstances are impacting on their studies.

94. Following submission of a thesis, if a candidate is aware of any circumstances that may stop them from attending the oral examination, these should be brought to the attention of their Supervisor and the Graduate School Administrator, to determine if it is necessary to delay the oral examination.

95. A candidate should also contact their Supervisor and the Graduate School Administrator, if there are personal circumstances they believe could impact on their performance at the oral examination. This information will then be provided to the examiners, in advance of the oral examination, to determine if any reasonable adjustments are required.

96. Irrespective of personal circumstances, examiners will be expected to assess the candidate against the assessment criteria for the relevant research degree. However, examiners might wish to take personal circumstances into account when considering the recommendations open to them.

97. By attending an oral examination, a candidate is declaring that they are fit to attend the examination, and as such, it is unlikely that a student would be able to submit a later claim that their performance was affected by personal circumstances.

Examination

98. The University requires that Heads of Schools/Institutes should be responsible for the nomination of examiners for research degrees, in accordance with the criteria for appointment set out above. Heads of Schools/Institutes should consult the supervisory team about possible nominees, and the supervisory team should offer the student the chance to comment.

99. Nominations should be made to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, on ePortfolio, who should check that the examiners meet the requirements set out above and, if so, approve them on behalf of Senate.

100. Once nominations have been approved, the Graduate School
Administrator will send a letter of appointment along with relevant information including the University’s Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees with institutional assessment criteria for the award.  

101. Where an Independent Chair is required, the Graduate School Administrator will consult the list of approved Independent Chairs and provide details of the Independent Chair to the examiners, supervisors and candidate.  

102. The supervisor should agree in writing the date, time and place with the examiners, candidate and where appropriate the Independent Chair and should then notify the Graduate School Administrator. Candidates should be asked whether or not they wish to have a supervisor present in the oral examination as a non-contributing observer (unless asked to contribute by the chair). If not present, the academic supervisor should be available for consultation.  

103. Under no circumstances should the arrangements for the oral examination be delegated to the candidate. There should also normally be no direct contact between the candidate and the examiners prior to and following the oral examination.  

104. The University requires the supervisory team to advise the candidate on preparation for the oral examination and where practical to offer at least one practice session.  

105. The University requires that, prior to the oral examination, examiners make preliminary written independent reports on the thesis, which should be sent to the Graduate School Administrator.  

106. The University requires that examiners should not consult with each other before both independent preliminary reports have been submitted to the Graduate School Administrator, normally two weeks in advance of the oral examination.  

107. The University requires that oral examinations should be chaired by the external examiner and conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees. In an oral examination where an Independent Chair is appointed, it will be the Independent Chair who will chair the oral examination.  

108. Following the oral examination the University requires that examiners write a joint report (except in cases where they disagree when they should write separate reports) and make an appropriate recommendation in respect of the award. Where the recommendation is re-submission, the report should include a statement of the work to be done to achieve the award within the period allowed under the University’s regulations.  

109. As well as reporting on the thesis and the candidate, examiners should be requested to provide comments on the broader issues of the research training skills and the research environment.  

110. The examiners’ joint report should be sent to the Graduate School Administrator for approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The Graduate School Administrator will send copies of the final report, along with the statement of any required corrections/revisions, to the student, supervisory team and the Head of School/Institute (or nominee).  

**Criteria for the Doctorate**  
111. Doctoral degrees at Newcastle University meet in full the doctoral qualification descriptor contained in The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2008), and are aligned with the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area:
Doctoral degrees are awarded to candidates who demonstrate:

- The ability to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship;
- A systematic understanding of an existing body of knowledge that is at the forefront of an academic field;
- The ability to explore critically, evaluate and test their ideas, and those of others, and to relate them to a wider body of knowledge;
- A good understanding of the research techniques, methods or approaches adopted and applied in a field of enquiry;
- The ability to conceive and implement a project which demonstrates an understanding of how to conduct research at the forefront of a field;
- An ability to produce research material worthy of publication.

Criteria for the MPhil Programme

112. The Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is awarded to candidates displaying convincing evidence of the capacity to pursue research and scholarship and represent original work. On successful completion of an MPhil candidates will have attained Level 7, as defined in The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2008).

For the award of an MPhil degree the University requires:

- A systematic understanding of knowledge that is informed by work at the forefront of an academic field;
- An ability to evaluate and critically appraise current research and advanced scholarship, and some evidence of originality in the application of this work;
- An understanding and critical appreciation of the research techniques, methods or approaches adopted and applied in a field of enquiry;
- An ability to conceive and implement a research project, which demonstrates an understanding of how to conduct research in a field.

113. Normally an MPhil thesis will be more focused or limited in scope than a doctoral degree. A doctoral degree will demonstrate greater depth of critical enquiry than the MPhil. Relative to the doctoral degree, the MPhil will have less emphasis on original work and it need not be worthy of publication.

All Research Degrees

114. For all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination should be:

115. **Authentic**: The submission should be the candidate’s own work and not be plagiarised from the work of others, published or unpublished. All sources used should be appropriately acknowledged using a recognised form of referencing.

116. **Scholarly**: The thesis should conform to the normal canons of scholarship, studying a topic in-depth, and displaying critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinion of others. Sources should be cited accurately, consistently, and correctly in the text and in the bibliography.

117. **Professional**: The thesis should demonstrate the author has acquired the
skills of a professional researcher capable of conducting research in accordance with the ethical practices of their field, and that they possess a good understanding of their role in the wider research process. The author should also demonstrate the ability to exercise personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional research environments.

118. Well-structured, written, and presented: The thesis should demonstrate skill in writing and presenting research similar to scholarly work in their field. It should be clearly structured and orderly in arrangement, and well-written and presented. Similarly, any composition, exhibition, artefact(s) or other products of practice arising from the research should be arranged and presented in an orderly and coherent way.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework

119. All research programmes are reviewed under the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework, which provides an opportunity to reflect on current practice in relation to Research Degree Programmes and provides a forum to consider the enhancement of the student experience through the sharing of good practice and feedback from external sources and students.

120. The process is carried out in two ways; firstly an Annual Review of Research Degree Programmes is undertaken, which provides Schools/Institutes with a formal opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of research degree provision focusing on aspects of this Code of Practice.

121. The Annual Review reports are supplemented by an Audit Visit; within each Faculty two visits to Schools/Institutes take place per year. The audit visits are undertaken by a small panel who explore in more detail the evidence provided by the annual review process to evaluate its efficacy, ask questions of the School/Institute under review and meet students.

122. The results of the Review and the Audit Visits are reported annually by Graduate School Committees to the Postgraduate Research Sub-Committee of the University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

123. The Framework is applicable to all elements of research programmes, including any taught components. Full details of the policy and process are available at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/resources/research/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/resources/research/)

Feedback Mechanisms

124. The University requires that confidential mechanisms are established for research students to feedback on the quality of their learning experiences. Such mechanisms should include: questionnaires focused on recruitment, admission and induction procedures; questionnaire evaluations of the research skills training programme; survey questionnaires, focus groups or interviews covering the totality of the learning experience.

125. Any feedback received from other stakeholders, including supervisory teams, review panels, examiners, funders, collaborative organisations, employers and alumni should also be reviewed.

126. Feedback from these should be considered by Graduate School Committees and, where appropriate, acted upon.
Complaints and Resolution

127. The University has established procedures for complaints about a service, member of staff, or another student. A complaint may be made by any student, including a research student. Details of the complaints and resolution procedure are set out in the Handbook for Research Supervisors and Students given to all research students and on the University’s Web site (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/handbook.htm). 128. The University provides a clear three-stage procedure for students to complain about the level of service or treatment which may have fallen short of what might reasonably be expected. At Level 1 (informal stage for resolution), complainants are expected to make every effort to resolve informally a problem with the individual(s) concerned or to seek help/advice in writing from the complainant’s tutor/supervisor/Head of School, or appropriate Head of Service.

129. Only when the steps taken under Level 1 of the procedure have failed, or when the complainant considers that their complaint has not been resolved may Level 2 of the procedure be invoked by submission of the Complaints Form, together with full details of the complaint and any supporting evidence.

130. Level 3 is the formal review of the Level 2 outcome, where the complainant requests a review of the outcome of their complaint at the Level 2 stage.

Academic Appeals and Query

131. The University has established procedures for appeal against a recommendation by a progression panel and examiners of research degrees. Details of the academic appeals and query procedure are set out in the Handbook for Research Supervisors and Students and on the University Web site (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/handbook.htm).

132. The University provides a clear three-stage procedure for students making Academic Queries and Appeals requesting reconsideration of Board of Examiners/ Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) and/or Degree Programme Director (DPD) / Progress Decisions.

133. Level 1 is the informal stage for querying academic decisions. Appellants are expected to make every effort to raise their assessment/progress query, in writing, with the School/Faculty directly concerned in the first instance. Graduate School Administrators are the nominated contact for Research Degree programmes/students at Level 1.

134. Only when the steps taken under Level 1 of the procedure have failed, or when the Appellant considers that their query has not been resolved, may Level 2 of the Academic Queries & Appeals Procedure be invoked by submission of the Academic Appeal Form together with full details of the formal appeal and any supporting evidence.

135. Level 3 is the formal review of the Level 2 outcome, where the Appellant requests a review of the outcome of their academic appeal at the Level 2 stage.
Addendum to the Code of Practice for Research Masters’ Degree Programmes

Introduction
i. The purpose of this Addendum to the Code of Practice is to set out the University’s standards for its research masters’ programmes. This refers in particular to MLitt, MRes, as well as some MMus and LLM programmes
ii. This addendum to the Code of Practice is supplementary to aid staff in interpretation for the University’s research masters’ programmes and should be read in conjunction with the full Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

Selection of Research Students
iii. The University requires that there should be rigorous selection policies and procedures for Postgraduate Admissions and, where appropriate, School/Institute or subject levels.
iv. The University requires that selection procedures should be rigorous and involve the following;
   - involve at least the Degree Programme Director or PGR Director in the selection process, who will act on behalf of the Head of School /Institute to approve the offer of a place.
   - interviewing applicants, where it is deemed appropriate and possible.
   - taking up two references and, if one or more of these is not available at the time of offer, making the latter conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory references.

Learning Agreements
v. Students need to have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of their research programme. This should be set out in a formal Learning Agreement, which should be signed by the student and by the Supervisor or Degree Programme Director on behalf of the University.

The Development of Relevant Knowledge and Skills
vi. The University requires the research programme should offer students the opportunity to develop a relevant range of research knowledge and skills, appropriate to the programme.

Research Students
vii. It is required that research students maintain regular attendance on the programme. During the research project/dissertation stage full-time students should undertake regular structured interaction and meet with their allocated supervisor at least monthly. The University requires that research students should record and confirm the outcomes of meetings, normally on ePortfolio.
Supervisory Arrangements

viii. The University requires that individual supervisors are appointed for the research project/dissertation element of the programme. This should normally be undertaken by a member of academic staff, who should be demonstrably research active and on the approved research supervisors’ list for the school/institute or faculty. Students should always have a second named person acting as advisor, either an additional disciplinary expert or the Degree Programme Director or School Director of Postgraduate Studies.

The Development and Approval of Research Project Proposals

ix. Research project/dissertation proposals should be developed prior to the commencement of the research element of the programme and approved by the Degree Programme Director or PGR Director in conjunction with the research supervisor.

x. The University requires the Degree Programme Director to evaluate research proposals against the criteria:

- that the project has clear aims and objectives;
- that the student has (or can acquire) the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes to successfully complete the project;
- that the proposed supervisor has, or will be able to acquire, the skills, knowledge and aptitudes necessary to supervise the project to a successful conclusion;
- that the project is suitable for the programme of study and for the award;
- that it can be completed within the time-scale for the programme;
- that sufficient resources will be available to complete the project.

Progression and Monitoring

xi. The University requires that the Degree Programme Director or PGR Director and supervisor should formally monitor the progress of students on research masters’ programmes. Formal monitoring will include review of progress following any taught components of the programme.

xii. But if, at any point during the course of the programme, the Degree Programme Director, PGR Director or supervisor has concerns about progress, they should inform the student in writing prior to a meeting. At the meeting, the written comments of the team should be discussed with the student, and a plan of action should be agreed along with a review date. If progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the student should be informed in writing of the reasons and of the possible consequences in terms of being unable to progress, suspension, or termination of registration. The letter should be copied to the Graduate School Administrator.

xiii. The University requires that the progress of the student should be formally reviewed after the taught element of the programme.

Examination

xiv. The regulations of the University require that all research degree projects/dissertations are examined by two examiners, one internal and one external. For staff candidates the examination shall normally be conducted by two external examiners for each candidate although for junior members of staff, at the discretion of the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, one external and one internal may be appointed.
xv. The University requires that examiners should be demonstrably research-active in relevant fields. Examiners should be independent of the project and otherwise meet the criteria set out in the criteria for appointment of examiners set out for doctoral degrees above. Supervisors are explicitly excluded from acting as examiners for the research project/dissertation.

xvi. The University requires that the Head of School or Degree Programme Director should be responsible for the nomination of examiners for the research project/dissertation.

xvii. Nominations of examiners should be made on ePortfolio, to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, who should check that the examiners meet the requirements set out above and, if so, approve them on behalf of Senate.

xviii. Once nominations have been approved, examiners should be sent a letter of appointment and relevant information including assessment criteria for the award and profile of marks from the modules studied prior to the research project/dissertation.

xix. Following assessment of the research project/dissertation the examiners should write separate reports and make an appropriate recommendation in respect of the award. Where the recommendation is re-submission, the report should include a statement of the work to be done to achieve the award within the period allowed under the University’s regulations.

xx. If the examiners determine that an oral examination is required, this should be chaired by an external examiner and conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees.

Postgraduate Research ePortfolio

https://portfolio.ncl.ac.uk/

Research degrees are highly regarded by employers and academics. The essential purpose of a research programme is a period of training in research and the generation of an original piece of work. During your studies you will develop a range of personal and professional skills. These skills will prove invaluable for the transition onto your next career.

The purpose of the Postgraduate Research ePortfolio is to provide a record of your personal development at Newcastle University. The portfolio is designed to assist you to get the most from your postgraduate experience, helping you to plan and reflect upon your research and how it will relate to future aspirations. It will help you to identify areas of strength and those areas you feel need more attention. By completing your portfolio you will be able to build on the learning and results you achieve, which will provide an ongoing record that can contribute towards your personal growth and career planning. The portfolio is intended to help you understand how your learning can be applied to a wide range of subjects and activities. It will help to improve your research and generic skills and identify opportunities for personal development.
Your portfolio will include relevant information on the following:

- Research Programme
- Personal Development Plan (PDP)

This portfolio is a means of planning/developing and recording both research and generic skills and should be viewed as an important tool for your Continuing Professional Development (CPD). You will be responsible for the generation and maintenance of your portfolio, for which you will be expected to show commitment, planning, action and evaluation/reflection.

1. **Why keep a portfolio?**

The introduction of personal development portfolios for CPD has had a positive effect on research performance and all members of staff and students are encouraged to maintain one, primarily because it allows individuals to be ‘in charge’ of their own development. The portfolio will also:

- Provide a record of your personal and academic development
- Record the acquisition of skills and self-development, which will be useful for CV preparation
- Help you to understand and learn from ‘life’ experiences and how these can contribute towards your future prospects by providing examples of skill developments
- Allow opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation on your progress and future needs
- Introduce the concept of continuous professional development
- Help you to demonstrate and be aware of that ‘something extra’ which future employers value

2. **Research Degree Programme**

This aspect of your ePortfolio will include a research proposal and plan, and records of your supervisory meetings and Annual Progress Reviews. It is also important that you are aware of regulations and formalities regarding your research degree programme.

2.1 **Research Proposal**

In your first couple of months on your research programme you will need to work on the development of a research proposal with guidance from your appointed supervisors. If your research proposal has already been developed prior to your recruitment and has been agreed and/or funded by a research sponsor/funding body, then it may not require much further development. However, as an approved project is one of the requirements for confirmation of candidature and progression on the research programme, approval for all research projects needs to take place as soon as possible after starting at the University and within 3 months of initial registration.

The Research Project Approval form is available for use on your ePortfolio. Section One should be completed by you with the following evidence submitted in order that the project can be considered.

- a research proposal;
- a research plan;

*These can be attached as documents or can be completed on the form.*

You must also indicate whether your project requires Ethical Approval.
The University Ethics form is available at: https://newcastle-ethics.limequery.com/index.php/survey/index/sid/865378/newtest/Y/lang/en. The form works in two parts. You must answer ‘Part 1 – Preliminary Questions’ to establish if your project requires further ethical approval. If you do require further ethical review from a Newcastle committee, you will be asked to complete and provide further information in ‘Part 2 – Further Details’. Once Section one has been completed on the form, the academic supervisor will identify an appropriate supervisory team, provide a supporting statement and pass the proposal to a school panel.

It should be noted that, where a project proposal has already been reviewed and approved by external peer review, a project plan and supervisory team list must still be submitted to the panel for approval before being submitted for approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. This is to ensure that the project is achievable within the time-scales allowed and to confirm that sufficient resources are available within your school/institute. If there are any modifications to your proposal, please keep a record of these changes. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have an approved research proposal.

2.2 Research Plan and Supervisory Meetings

Your research plan should be updated on a regular basis as discussed and agreed with your supervisory team. It is your responsibility to ensure that your research project is completed on time. Regular structured contact with your supervisory team to discuss academic and personal progress will help you to meet your targets. (The University requires that you meet with at least one member of the supervisory team at least ten times per year, approximately monthly, with no more than an eight week gap between meetings. At least three of these meetings each year should include the full supervisory team.) Throughout your studies, you will be monitored by your supervisory team; and you will be required to keep a record of formal supervisory meetings on ePortfolio.

Keep a record of your research plan with progress updates and supervisory meetings in your ePortfolio.

2.3. Annual Progress Reviews

Each student will have a formal annual assessment/review by a Progress Panel, who will submit a progress report to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies for approval. Timescales for annual progress reviews will vary depending on your Faculty; but will follow a similar format described later (section 3.3). Assessments will involve one or more of the following: a written progress report, a project presentation and viva by the panel, or an open presentation with critical feedback. Please consult your School/Institute Handbook on the requirements for your Annual Progress Reviews. The Progress Panel will assess evidence and decide whether suitable progress indicates your research project will meet the standards of the award in the time allowed. If necessary, action may be taken and another review date set.

Your annual progress report must be made on ePortfolio with all evidence electronically attached. Keep a record of your research programme assessment presentations, formal meetings and feedback in your Portfolio.
3. **Personal Development Plan (PDP)**

The Learning and Teaching Support Network defines personal development planning (PDP) as ‘a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development’.

The PDP will help to highlight areas of strengths and areas for improvement by mapping your current skills against the Researcher Development Framework developed by Vitae: [https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework-planner](https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework-planner)

This can be achieved by completing the self-assessment audit on ePortfolio and development needs agreed in conjunction with your supervisory team. The Annual Progress Review Assessors will want to see evidence that this has been done.

Each student is responsible for their own Research Training ePortfolio and should ensure it is up-to-date. The portfolio should include a description of the skills developed and the corresponding skill/technique within the Researcher Development Framework. Records can be kept in the form of a diary, learning log, journal or whichever means is most convenient. The professional standard for recording your skills development is set out on ePortfolio. The following is a list of ‘essentials’ that should be recorded in your ePortfolio:

- Lab meetings, seminars, conferences attended (including questions asked). *N.B. Postgraduate researchers are required to contribute to the research environment by attending appropriate internal and external events.*
- Training courses attended including faculty training courses (IT, library, safety, etc.)
- Abstracts presented at local, national and international meetings with other relevant information (poster, oral presentation, presenting author etc). *N.B. You are required to give at least one formal presentation per year on your work.*
- Publications, including manuscripts in press and abstracts where published.
- Work experience and other information relevant to your future career (teaching/demonstrating, work placements with industry/business etc, time spent within other academic institutions.)

### 3.1 What Skills?

The following is a summary of the skills defined by the Researcher Development Framework, that you are expected to develop over your research degree. Some of the skills areas will overlap:

The RDF descriptors are structured in four domains and twelve sub-domains which encompass what researchers need to be effective in their approach to research, when working with others and in contributing to the wider society and environment:

A: Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities  
B: Personal effectiveness  
C: Research Governance and Organisation  
D: Engagement, influence and Impact
In conjunction with the skills above, the University encourages you to: develop relevant academic networks, attend seminars and conferences, present papers, publish papers, support your own career development, and contribute to your research environment by attending appropriate internal and external events.

### 3.2 Creating a PDP

To create a PDP you will need to assess your skills abilities, following this identify your specific needs/ skills gaps and then decide what form of training can be used to meet these needs. Training can be both formal (courses/ workshops) and informal (supervisors / research colleagues) and can include aspects of your research i.e. attending seminars, conferences etc. At appropriate stages during your studies, you will be expected to audit your skills and update your PDP. Your RTP should be continually updated with information on seminars attended etc. By setting goals and targets in your PDP it can keep you focussed on developing your skills. Continual reviewing and reflection will help you to determine whether you are effectively meeting these goals when used in the RTP process.

1. **Identify goals** – Completing your research degree and meeting the training requirements of the Researcher Development Framework.
2. **Determine the skills required** - Assess your skills according to statements in APPENDIX E and note areas where you need to develop or learn a new skill/ technique
3. **Plan to achieve development goals** - Set targets for your development and seek opportunities to develop your skills (create a PDP)
4. **Record Training** - Build a record of your skills achievement and skills profile
5. **Evaluate and Review** – At each stage of your research determine whether you are making progress towards your goals and re-evaluate
your skills

3.3 **Timescales: When to use your RTP**

Your role is to reflect on and evaluate your progress, therefore it will be important that you maintain and keep appropriate records. The PDP should be started at the beginning of your research, building on the information, experience and results you gain within each stage. Each researcher will have their RTP assessed annually by a panel during their research studies, which will normally coincide with your research programme assessments. *Please remember the generic/transferable skills aspect of your ePortfolio is not a test – it is your assessment of your development.*

4. **Feedback**

To assist and improve the provision and quality of your training it is important to provide feedback on your experiences. *A feedback form will be provided after sessions on your Faculty Research Training Programme.* At each formal assessment the panel will also discuss barriers/recommendations for self-development and training.

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**Guidelines for Research Students**

**Introduction**

The purpose of these guidelines including: a Summary of Newcastle Practice; and Good Practice for Research Students, is to outline Newcastle’s practice and expectations of Research Degree Students, and provide a more general indication of good practice for student’s on managing their doctoral studies.

**Summary of Newcastle Practice**

1. These Guidelines describe the essential elements of student/supervisor, student/University relationships and detail the minimum requirements that a student will be expected to comply with during his/her programme of work.

2. At the commencement of your proposed programme of work, you must have a detailed discussion with your supervisors. You need to have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of your research programme. Following this discussion a formal Learning Agreement should be signed by the student and by the academic supervisor or supervisors. The Learning Agreement can be found at the following web site:
A copy of the signed Learning Agreement must be sent to your Graduate School Administrator within one month of registering on your programme, so that completion can be recorded on your student record. You should ensure that the meeting takes place and that following points are covered in the discussion:

(a) the scope of your proposed programme of work and an initial definition of the subject of study with particular emphasis on:
   (i) the importance of completing the programme in the time available;
   (ii) the standard of work that will be expected from you (you would be well advised to read successful theses available in the Library as a guide to what is expected);

This should form the basis of your project proposal, which will need to be approved before your Candidature is confirmed.

(b) the overall timetable for the planning and completion of your programme of work, including any period of preliminary reading and the writing of the thesis. This should be recorded in the Personal Development Plan (PDP) within your ePortfolio;

(c) any programme of training and guidance in research methods, again recorded in your ePortfolio;

(d) guidance about the use of literature, other sources of information, including other members of staff, and about attendance at appropriate courses and meetings of learned societies;

(e) good practice in relation to the storage and retention of research data;

(f) constraints, other than time, which may affect your programme of work, such as costs and the need to design and build equipment and any ethical concerns;

(g) an initial consideration of potential issues of confidentiality or intellectual property;

(h) a programme of regular meetings with your lead supervisor and supervisory team to monitor your progress and to review the details of the overall timetable for the programme of work;

(i) the submission of written work and/or the presentation of seminar papers while your research is in progress and the possibility of presenting work at meetings of learned societies and/or of submitting it for publication directly.

(j) If your studentship has any formal sponsorship you must discuss with your supervisors the terms and conditions relating to such sponsorship, and ensure that you understand them.

3. You will be expected to maintain regular contact with your supervisors, to seek their advice on the planning of your work and other matters including the use of suitable techniques. You will also be required to present written work as appropriate. It will also be your responsibility to raise any problems and difficulties you think should be drawn to the attention of your supervisors. This includes any factors – domestic, social, financial or health factors – which you believe may have an effect upon your progress.
4. Your progress on the programme will be formally monitored through annual reports (note that programmes with an initial taught component (e.g. Integrated PhD, Professional Doctorates) will have alternative monitoring arrangements, at least initially). Supervisory teams will monitor progress and report to an independent school progress panel, which will use evidence from a variety of sources to determine whether each individual student's progress is satisfactory for the award in the time available.

5. Approximately once a month you will have a formal meeting with your supervisors to review progress. You are required to record and maintain records of these supervisory meetings in your ePortfolio.

6. Students should also submit a project proposal for approval on ePortfolio and this should also address the practicality of any fieldwork and whether there are any constraints, dangers or ethical concerns. Progression on the programme will be dependent upon acceptance of the project proposal by an independent school panel. Please note that before any field work or study abroad is conducted an Outside Study Form must be completed which is available at:
   
   http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/OutsideStudy.htm

7. Candidates registered for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will have their registration for a doctoral award confirmed, provided that satisfactory progress is made and confirmed through Annual Progress Review, usually during the first year of study for those students studying full-time and during the second year for those students studying part-time. See University Regulations at:
   
   http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2016.html

8. Each year your supervisors will be required to submit an annual report on the progress of your work. This report will take into account the review requirements as detailed by your school/institute.

9. Each year you will also be required to submit an annual report on your progress and evidence of achievement as specified by your school. You will be asked to complete your progress form on ePortfolio. Information on progression can be found on the following webpage;
   
   http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/KeyActsAPR.htm

As part of this process you will be required to produce at least one substantial piece of work (e.g. literature review, experimental write-up), in order to help assess your ability to proceed successfully through your programme. You may be required to make a presentation of this work to other staff and/or students.

10. The report form you submit will be forwarded to a school progress panel, which will consider the evidence, including the annual report from your supervisory team, and determine whether progress indicates that the research project will meet the standards for the award. The Progress Panel will make a report on ePortfolio, and further progress on the programme of study is subject to approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. In addition to detailed feedback that the Progress Panel may wish to provide to you and the supervisory team, the Progress Panel will make one of the following recommendations:

   1. That the candidate’s performance is satisfactory and that the candidate can proceed to the next stage. If the candidate is a stage
1 student the candidature to study for the Doctor of Philosophy is confirmed;

2. That notwithstanding some concerns, which the candidate and supervisory team should note, the candidate’s overall performance is satisfactory and that the candidate can proceed to the next stage. If the candidate is a stage 1 student the candidature to study for the Doctor of Philosophy is confirmed;

3. That the candidate’s performance is unsatisfactory and that a further assessment should be held within two months to determine whether progress on the programme will be recommended;

4. That the candidate’s performance is unsatisfactory and that a submission for a Master of Philosophy examination is recommended instead of a submission for a Doctor of Philosophy examination;

5. That the candidate’s performance is unsatisfactory and that no submission for a Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy examination is recommended, and that the student's candidature be terminated.

11. If at any stage throughout the period of study you feel that the standard of supervision that you are receiving is inadequate or that you are unable to establish an effective working relationship with one of your supervisors, and it has not proved possible to resolve these difficulties in discussion with your Supervisors, School Director of Postgraduate Studies/ Tutor or Head of School. You should inform the relevant Graduate School Administrator or Dean of Postgraduate Studies for advice and mediation. You may also consult directly with the Graduate School Administrator, your Faculty’s Postgraduate Tutor or Dean of Postgraduate Studies in confidence, without delay. The annual progress review, also provides you with an opportunity for you to raise any issues. If there are any issue you wish to discuss, but you do wish to put this information in to your progression report, you should consult with the relevant Graduate School Administrator in confidence for advice.

12. You are required to maintain high standards of academic conduct and, in particular, to avoid conduct amounting to the fabrication of research results or plagiarism. (See the Standard of Academic Conduct and the Code of Good Practice in Research, later in this part of the Handbook. Additional guidance is provided on the right-cite web page http://www.ncl.ac.uk/right-cite)

(a) The fabrication of research results includes: claims, which cannot reasonably be justified, to have obtained specific or general results; false claims in relation to experiments, interviews, procedures or any other research activity; and the omission of statements in relation to data, results, experiments, interviews or procedures, where such omission cannot reasonably be justified.

(b) Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas, words or work. At one extreme, plagiarism is simply a form of cheating, such as where the whole or a significant part of work submitted towards an examination or degree is the unacknowledged work of another, copied slavishly from a book, research paper or electronic sources such as the internet. At the other extreme, plagiarism may occur accidentally, through poor standards of scholarship, or may concern insignificant parts of submitted work.

(c) You may be unclear as to what use may be made of the work of others in the field without raising concerns about plagiarism. If you are in doubt on
this matter, you should consult your supervisors. In most cases, the adoption of appropriate standards of scholarship will avoid such concerns. The following general guidelines may assist you (further guidance is provided on the right-cite web page http://www.ncl.ac.uk/right-cite):

(i) passages copied verbatim from the work of another must be enclosed in quotation marks. A full reference to the original source must be provided. The substitution of a few words in an otherwise verbatim passage will not obviate the need to use quotation marks and to provide a full reference;

(ii) you must always give due acknowledgment to the sources of ideas or data which are not yours and are not truly in the public domain (for example, because they are novel or controversial) or are not widely accepted or widely recognized;

(iii) ideas and data which are your own or are truly in the public domain may be included without attribution, but should be expressed in your own words;

(iv) you must take care to distinguish between your own ideas or work and those of others. Any ambiguity in such a distinction could give rise to a suspicion of plagiarism;

(v) where your work is the result of collaborative research, you must take care to acknowledge the source of data, analysis or procedures which are not your own.

13. The retention of accurate and contemporaneous records of primary experimental data and results is of the utmost importance for the progress of academic enquiry. You should maintain these records in a form that will provide clear and unambiguous answers to questions concerning the validity of the data or the conduct of your work that might arise at a later date. Such questions can arise during the course of subsequent investigations by you, your colleagues, and others; accurate contemporaneous records are invaluable when this happens. In addition, errors detected following publication of experimental or other research results could be mistaken for misconduct if you cannot provide an accurate record of the primary data. It is important that you and your work should be protected from such misunderstanding.

The following guidelines will assist you in this regard:

(a) Records of primary experimental data and results should always be made using indelible materials. Pencils or other easily erasable materials must not be used. Where primary research data and results are recorded on audio or video tape (e.g. interviews), the tape housing should be labeled as set out in (d) below.

(b) Complete and accurate records of experimental data and results should be made on the day they are obtained and the date should be indicated clearly in the record. When possible, records should be made in a hard-backed, bound notebook in which the pages have been numbered consecutively.

(c) Pages should never be removed from notebooks containing records of research data. If any alterations are made to records at a later date, they should be noted clearly as such and the date of the alteration should be indicated.
(d) Machine printouts, photographs, tapes and other such records should always be labeled with the date and with an identifying reference number. This reference number should be clearly recorded in the notebook referred to above, along with other relevant details, on the day the record is obtained. If possible, printouts, photographs, tapes and other such record should be affixed to the notebook. When this is not possible (eg for reasons of size or bulk), such records should be maintained in a secure location in the University for future reference. When a ‘hard copy’ of computer-generated primary data is not practicable, the data should be maintained in two separate locations within the University, on disk, tape or other format.

(e) When photographs and other such records have been affixed to the notebook, their removal at a later date for the purpose of preparing copies or figures for a thesis or other publication should be avoided. If likely to be needed, two copies of such records should be made on the day the record is generated. If this is not practicable, then the reason for removing the original copy and the date on which this is done should be recorded in the notebook, together with a replacement copy or the original if this can be re-affixed to the notebook.

(f) Custody of all original records of primary research data must be retained by the principal investigator, who will normally be the supervisor of the research group, laboratory or other forum in which the research is conducted. An investigator may make copies of the primary records for his or her own use, but the original records should not be removed from the custody of the principal investigator. The principal investigator is responsible for the preservation of these records for as long as there is any reasonable need to refer to them, and in any event for a minimum period of 10 years.

14. Your supervisors will advise you on the manuscript of your thesis in general and on content, presentation and organization. However, they will not act as proofreader. While they may read all or part of the first draft of the manuscript and offer advice, thereafter it is your responsibility to revise the manuscript and to decide when to submit the thesis.

Good Practice for Research Students

Introduction

While the knowledge and skills that you gained as an undergraduate and/or in studying for a taught Master’s degree have given you a background in your subject and perhaps some experience of and insight into the process of research, they may not necessarily have equipped you to successfully study for a research degree. As Salmon (1992: 51) has put it:

‘Unlike a certificate, a diploma, a Bachelor’s or a [taught] Master’s degree, a [research degree] does not merely entail the consideration of already existing work within a pre-arranged structure but demands the creation of a personal project. To undertake [a research degree] is therefore to define oneself as having a contribution to make to the understanding of the area concerned.’

In seeking to make that contribution, you will have the advice, encouragement and support of your supervisors, of academic colleagues in the field, and of your fellow postgraduates, but ultimately the responsibility is yours. You may have to create the project; you will certainly have to undertake the research; you have
to write it up as a dissertation or thesis; you have to complete on time and submit; possibly in the case of a Master's degree and certainly in the case of a Doctorate, you will have to defend your work in an oral examination; and if you do all of these things to the satisfaction of your examiners, you will be awarded the degree.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist you to reflect on good practice in studying for a research degree. The Guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive, just to indicate what has been identified in the literature and elsewhere as good practice. But a number of the matters covered do relate to the University’s requirements of its research students, which are formally set out in its Guidelines for Research Students - Summary of Newcastle Practice section, and it is essential that students read the latter as well.

The Guidelines attempt to set out good practice in:

1. establishing and maintaining a good relationship with your supervisors
2. approaching a research degree
3. preparing for research
4. where appropriate, choosing a topic
5. producing an initial research proposal and plan
6. writing regularly
7. dealing with academic problems
8. dealing with non-academic problems
9. reviewing the progress of the research
10. framing your thesis
11. writing your thesis
12. preparing for examination
13. publishing, networking, and developing your career.

1. Establishing and Maintaining a Good Relationship with Your Supervisors

Your relationship with your supervisors is crucial to the success of the research project, and you need to start it off well and maintain it over time. As Cryer (2001 p58) has put it:

‘The relationship between a research student and a supervisor can be a precious thing. Supervisors and research students work closely together over a number of years. Mutual trust and respect should develop, along with a working relationship that can continue, as between equals, long after the completion of the research degree. It is in your own interests as a research student to develop and nurture this relationship. At the very least, only a highly unusual student successfully completes a research degree if the relationship with the supervisor is poor.’

Starting off well involves, firstly, making an early appointment to see your supervisors in the first few days after your arrival; secondly, being clear about your respective roles and responsibilities; and thirdly establishing ground rules to govern your future relationship.

Until you have met with your supervisors, it is not possible to even begin the preliminary work on the project. While it can sometimes seem that, with one, two, or three years stretching ahead, the matter is not urgent, in reality, the time
soon passes and it is vital to meet with your supervisors as soon as possible.

At the meeting, your supervisors will welcome you and, in many cases, devote at least some time to discussing your respective roles in the relationship so that you both know what to expect of each other. This is vital because, as Delamont et al. (1997, p 14) have put it:

'Relationships [between supervisors and students] have to be worked at and discussed, because most of the later problems stem from a failure to set out the expectations that both parties have for the relationship.'

In general terms, supervisory support can include:

♦ Assistance with the choice of topic;
♦ Critical and constructive feedback on the work produced;
♦ Advice on the sources or literature used;
♦ Guidance on the methodology or techniques used and the approach to data collection;
♦ Discussion of evidence and results;
♦ Reading drafts and commenting on issues of substance.

Supervisors will not:
♦ undertake the actual research itself
♦ write or significantly re-draft papers or chapters
♦ conduct a detailed proof read of the thesis

In pointing out that it is up to you to do these things, supervisors are not being difficult, but realistic; a research degree is an award for successfully completing a personal research project, and for that to be the case you have to do the research, write it up, and make sure that the spelling, grammar, and punctuation are correct.

There are different models of supervisory team within the University. In joint supervision, the supervisory responsibilities are shared equally between members of the supervisory team. In other styles of supervision, different members of the supervisory team may have different roles. There may be, for example, a lead supervisor and a co-supervisor responsible for a smaller element of the planned research; or a lead supervisor and an advisor responsible for, and able to deal with, general and pastoral responsibilities. Since arrangements may vary the supervisory team must agree a clear distribution of responsibilities at the outset of the research and update this if arrangements change. It is important for the student to be aware of who will 'lead' on which aspects of the research project.

As well as having clear expectations about your respective roles, it is also important that you and your supervisors discuss ground rules for working together. These might be as below:
You agree to:
- turn up on time for supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations
- be properly prepared for your supervisions
- write regularly and share the draft materials
- maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, as set out in paragraph 12 of the University's Guidelines for Research Students
- maintain contact with your supervisor(s), particularly when studying outside the University
- undertake the tasks agreed to the best of your ability within the allotted time

Your research supervisors agree to:
- hold regular supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations
- read work submitted promptly
- give written feedback.

All of you agree to:
- treat supervision in a business-like way with an agenda
- keep records of supervisions detailing what was discussed, what targets were agreed, and when they were to be achieved by.

Of course, as with any relationship, that with your supervisors has to be worked at and maintained over time. In the early days you are likely to be heavily dependent upon your supervisors as you begin to find your feet in research. Once you have found your feet, your supervisors will expect you to become more independent, and your relationship should develop into a dialogue in which you engage in academic debate on a basis of increasing equality. By the time you are nearing completion, you will come to know more about the work than your supervisors, but will still be dependent upon his or her expertise to advise whether the research project has reached the stage at which it should be submitted for the degree or whether further research and/or re-writing is required.

It happens that, occasionally, what should be the natural transition from dependence to relative independence does not transpire, either because the student remains over-dependent upon the supervisors or the latter is unwilling to 'let go'. Because of these possibilities, it is useful, over the course of a research degree, for you and your supervisors to discuss your evolving relationship at regular intervals. This gives the supervisors a chance to flag to you that they think that you are more than ready to spread your wings and fly alone, or you the chance to ask for more space to take the research in your preferred direction.

Very rarely, research students find that they are unable to work effectively with their supervisors, and the relationship is in danger of breaking down. Procedures for dealing with this eventuality are set out in Paragraph 11 of this
section of the University's *Guidelines for Research Students Summary of Newcastle Practice*.

### Reviewing Practice

Are you clear about what you can expect of your supervisors and what they can expect from you? Have you established ground rules for your future professional relationship? Do you have arrangements for regularly reviewing your relationship with your supervisors?

2. **Approaching a Research Degree**

In order to be awarded a research degree, you have to satisfy the examiners that you have fulfilled the requirements for that degree as laid down in the University's regulations and as applied in your own subject. It is vital that, at the very start of your studentship, you are aware of what those requirements are to avoid latter errors. As one of the research students interviewed by Delamont et al. (1997 p 16) in their study of PhD students put the matter:

‘A lot of mistakes I've made are the result of not asking questions and people not putting me right. They presume I must know...I didn't know the PhD was meant to be an argument... [that] it's meant to say something. I thought it was one of those old-fashioned monographs, a collection of information. When I was an undergraduate I used to think a PhD was one of those articles you read in the journals, a 10,000 word article, I used to think they were PhDs.’

Clearly, if the student had clearly understood from the start what a PhD was, then these mistakes could have been avoided.

It is therefore worth spending some time looking at what will be the end product of your studies. Your starting point should be to unpack the University's and, where appropriate, the individual research degree's formal requirements for whatever research degree you are registered, these can be found in the University and degree programme regulations

[http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/doks/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/doks/) You should read these carefully and, preferably, discuss them with your supervisors so that you have a clear idea of what they mean.

While all research degrees have to meet the University and, where appropriate, the individual research degree programme requirements, they do this in very different ways, depending upon the discipline in which they are undertaken. It is therefore vital that you also have a clear understanding of what the relevant research dissertation or thesis in your discipline is like at the start of your studies. Your supervisors should recommend you to go and look at a couple of theses in the same or in cognate areas to your own, and you would be well advised to do this and discuss key issues – for example in the case of PhD theses what made them original or how much of the thesis was publishable – in a supervision.

3. **Preparing for Research**

Most new research students naturally perceive research to be as it is written up
in articles and books, which portray it as a seamless unrolling of (for example),
to theory, hypothesis, method, data collection, data analysis, results, and
conclusions. But the published account is only the visible part of the iceberg;
beneath it lies the nine-tenths of blood, sweat, toil, and tears, including the ideas
that were discarded, the investigations that ended up in blind alleys, the
 correlations that were in the wrong direction, the experiments that gave negative
results, and sometimes the sheer fluke that led to the substantive advance.
Research can, for much of the time, be a messy, difficult, and frustrating process
as any researcher, including your supervisors, will tell you.

But you can minimize, if not eliminate, the frustrations of research by thorough
preparation at the start of your studentship. In particular, you can ensure that
you are familiar with the resources available to support your project, that you
are familiar with the processes of research in your discipline and that you are
personally organized to undertake the project.

You need to be familiar with the resources available to support your research,
both material and human. The former includes the library, centrally and locally-
provided computing facilities, and any specialized equipment needed for your
project; the latter includes academic staff and fellow researchers and research
students in your school. You will be provided with opportunities to attend
induction sessions relating to all of these resources, and it is vital that you take
advantage and make sure that you know what is available, how to access them,
and how to use them in ways that are conducive to the health, safety, and
welfare both of yourself and others. In the latter context, you should read about
the University's Health and Safety Policy referred to in Part Two of this
Handbook and the relevant school health and safety policy and, if appropriate
discuss this with your supervisors.

You also need to be familiar with what is involved in the research process and
with good practice in doing research in your field, including the ethical issues
that should be addressed. You must find out about the research training
programme and attend; this is your opportunity to be informed about what is
involved in research in your discipline by academic staff who are not only
knowledgeable about the processes of research but also about the practice. As
well as attending faculty events and, where appropriate, school training
programmes, you will also find it helpful to read through one or more of the
general texts about research (see for example Cryer 2000; Leonard 2001;
Phillips and Pugh 2000; Wisker 2001) or ones relating to specific disciplines
where your supervisors may be able to help with references.

As well as being familiar with the resources and the research process, you also
need to be well-organized personally in terms of time, working conditions, and
research materials.

With regard to time, as a full-time postgraduate research student you probably
have more control over how you spend your time than at any other period in
your working life. While this can be exhilarating, it can also, as Welsh (1979 p
33) has put it, 'be all too easy for the postgraduate to spend his [her] time
pottering about' and fall behind in meeting what are tight deadlines to complete
the project. If, for this reason, time management is vital to full-time students, this
is even more the case with part-time ones who may well be combining a job
and/or a family with their research. For this reason it is well-worth adopting
explicit time management techniques (see for example Cryer 2000 pp 91-106,
Graham and Grant 1997 pp 42-45).

With regard to working conditions, the demands of research are, or can be, very intense, and you need an appropriate working environment in which you can read, reflect, think, evaluate, and write. You need to establish what facilities are available in your school or, if you undertake work at home, create a suitable space.

With regard to research materials, this covers both data and results generated in the course of the research and sources such as books, articles, papers, and other theses. In terms of data and results, particularly in experimental research, it is of the utmost importance that these are recorded and maintained in such a way that they can vouch for the accuracy and authenticity of your research. You must read, and follow to the letter, the University's requirements for the retention and storage of data as set out in Section 11 of its Guidelines for Research Students.

In terms of other sources, it is important that you index and store them so that they are immediately accessible when needed – there is nothing more frustrating than being in full flow writing up a piece of work and then being unable to find the source for that seminal point which, you have just realized, will tie the chapter together. You should assume that anything that you read may well find its way into the dissertation or thesis, take full details of the reference (preferably in a database organized in terms of whichever referencing system you will use for the final work), and put any materials into a filing system with an index which makes it easy to retrieve.

Last, but not least, there is the obvious point that, where data and or sources are stored electronically, they must be backed up with a second copy kept in another place. Research can be frustrating enough without losing weeks or sometimes months of work through failure to back up a file.

### Reflecting on Practice

Are you fully aware of the range of resources available to support your research project? Have you developed the skills to use them effectively? Are you aware of health, safety and welfare policies? Do you understand from your faculty and or school training programme what is entailed in the research process in your subject? Are you managing your time effectively? Do you have adequate facilities for your research? Do your arrangements for retaining and storing data meet the University’s requirements? Have you organized your references and sources so that you can access them quickly? Do you regularly back up your work? Do you keep the copies in another place?

### 4. Choosing a Topic

In many cases, and particularly in engineering and the sciences, students are often recruited to research a particular topic which has been pre-defined by the supervisors. But, occasionally in these fields and frequently in others, students are recruited on the basis of their interest in working in a broadly defined area of the subject, which has to be narrowed down sooner or later to a specific topic.

This can be a very difficult time for research students; as one of the research students interviewed by Delamont et al. (1997 p 27) said about their search for
a topic:

‘…the whole thing seemed very daunting, you don’t know where your niche is, or even if there is one for you.’

So, you can spend valuable time searching for a niche and then, when you think that you have found one, the topic turns out to be far too ambitious. So you find yourself thrashing around in a seeming intellectual vacuum again, and so it goes on.

It is important to remember that this is by no means abnormal and that you should receive strong support at this stage from your supervisors. What they might do (or what you can do yourself) is to take an apparently promising project and subject it to the six key tests; (i) is it worth doing?; (ii) in principle, could it be done?; (iii) could it be done within the time available?; (iv) do you have, or could you acquire, the knowledge and skills to do it within that time?; (v) would it sustain your interest?; and (vi), if you did complete it successfully, would it meet the requirements for the research degree?

It may take several iterations before both you and your supervisors are confident that you have a topic which will meet these key tests, and which will give you a starting point for your research. It should, however, be noted that it is only a starting point; as the research develops it may change, and the final topic may be different from that with which you started out. This is by no means abnormal, but it is important, in consultation with your supervisors, to keep track of the evolution of the topic and ensure that the result will still pass the six tests.

Reflecting on Practice

Does your topic fulfil the six tests set out above? Have you discussed this with your supervisors? If it has changed, does the revised topic still meet the tests?

5. Producing your Research Proposal and Plan for Project Approval

It is a requirement of the University (Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and Guidelines for Research Students, Section 2) that research students should, in conjunction with their supervisors, produce and agree their research proposal and plan for formal project approval within the first three months of registering on your research degree programme. The project proposal, plan and supervisory team will be considered by a school panel, and then the Head of School or nominee prior to formal approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

In some cases, the research proposal may have been pre-approved (e.g. in a Research Council application), but it should still be submitted together with a project plan and a supervisory team list to the project approval panel to ensure that the project is achievable within the time-scales allowed and to confirm that sufficient resources are available within your school/institute.

At their simplest, research proposals and plans set out what research students are proposing to do in their research projects, and when they are proposing to do it by.

With regard to a research proposal, a simple guide to drafting one might be to try and address the eight key questions of:
In addition, there may be specific guidelines from your school and/or your supervisors which should be followed in writing a research proposal. The draft proposal should then be shown to, and discussed with, your supervisors and amended in accordance with his or her comments before submitting your research proposal and plan for formal Project Approval.

With regard to an initial research plan, this involves unpacking what the tasks will be and assigning target time values to them which will enable you to complete on time. So, for example, for a three-year PhD in the social sciences, the initial research plan could be as below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Research tasks</th>
<th>Writing tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reading around the research topic</td>
<td>Mini-reports on aspects of the research topic – identify a possible academic contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Narrowing down the research questions</td>
<td>Short-list of questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Obtain Project Approval</td>
<td>Outline research proposal and plan/timetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>More detailed scoping and reviewing of literature</td>
<td>Literature evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reading on concepts, methods and techniques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Finalising concepts, methods and techniques to be applied</td>
<td>Full research design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Preparation of pilot study (if relevant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once you have an initial research plan, then it is important to discuss it with your supervisors, check that it is realistic in terms of the allocation of time to task, and if necessary, amend it.

It should be stressed that, as with the topic, both the initial research proposal and the plan may well be subject to change over the course of the research as the focus perhaps changes as do activities and in consequence the timings. This is normal and not, in itself, a cause for concern – the proposal and the plan are intended as a flexible framework and not as a cage. But it is important that, at regular intervals during the research project, you and your supervisors review the proposal and the plan and update them to reflect the evolution of the research project. This should help you to keep track of where the project has been and where it is going and, most crucially, whether you may need to step up a gear to keep the project to time.

Reflecting on Practice

Have you, in conjunction with your supervisors, agreed an initial research proposal and a research plan? Do you review them regularly with a view to updating them and keeping the research project on track?

6. Writing Regularly

As you begin to make progress with your research, you should put pen to paper as soon as possible, for four reasons. Firstly, it enables you to keep a record of what you have done from the start to serve as a basis for later work. Secondly, it encourages you to reflect on what you have done so far and think about where you will go from here. Thirdly, it gives your supervisors the chance to see what has been done, and to advise you about how to proceed. This is crucial, and it is in fact a University requirement (Guidelines for Research Students, Para 4) that research students following programmes that will take more than one year of study should produce at least one substantial piece of written work in their first year. Fourthly, it gets you into the discipline of academic writing at an early stage rather than leaving it until later when it is more difficult to acquire.

But, in some cases, students are reluctant to produce written work. Research (see for example Graham and Grant 1997, Delamont et al. 1997; Murray 2002) suggests that there are two major factors which constrain research students from writing. One relates primarily to lack of experience of writing regularly at all, of producing longish pieces of work, or of producing academic writing with its demands of precision, clarity, organization and explicit structure. The other factor is confidence. Whereas, as undergraduates or postgraduates, students...
outlined and discussed the work of other people, as research students their writing becomes, or should become, a presentation of their own views, ideas, thoughts, etc. This can leave students feeling very exposed and, particularly if their standard is published work, very dissatisfied with what they have achieved. For these reasons, they may be psychologically reluctant to write.

One way of ensuring that you write regularly is, as Blaxter et al. (1996* pp 5-59) have suggested, to keep a research diary on a daily basis recording what you have done, time spent on it, analysis, and speculation. This gets you into the habit of writing regularly, recording, and reflecting, and can provide a useful basis upon which to construct longer pieces of work.

In constructing longer pieces, you can make what may seem a Herculean task more manageable by breaking it up into smaller ones. So, initially, you might write a one-page abstract of the chapter setting out its aim (purpose), content (what it would cover), and possible conclusions (what it would add). With that thought through and discussed, the next stage would be to write a synopsis fleshing out the abstract and setting out headings and sub-headings to be used. Then, with a framework established, you can to fill it in piece by piece until you have a draft chapter.

In order to improve your academic writing, you can read books on the subject (for example: Dunleavy 2003; Murray 2002), ask your supervisors for examples of such writing from the literature in the field, or even pair up with another research student who will undertake to read drafts and suggest improvements in return for similar support from you for their efforts.

In terms of overcoming psychological reluctance to write, you can, as Murray (2002) has suggested, ‘free-write’, i.e. write it down as it comes without any attempt to structure or present it for an academic audience. This takes the pressure off you and although, at the time, you may feel that it is worthless, you can be surprised to return to it later and find that it does take you forward.

Additionally, and provided that you warn him or her beforehand that it is a free-written draft, it can be useful to show it to your supervisors and gain some feedback. Supervisors are aware from their own experiences that virtually all research starts-off very rough-hewn and will allow for this, and of course most would prefer a ‘messy’ draft of a chapter from one of their research students rather than nothing at all.

It may be noted that, while writing is a necessary task for all research students, it is inherently a more difficult one for students whose first language is not English and who have perhaps been educated within different styles of academic discourse. Your supervisors may be able to assist by discussing examples of writing with you, your faculty may offer a programme and in-sessional English language courses are available, which can provide support with your academic writing in English.

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/insessional/

### Reviewing Practice

Have you started writing as early as possible in the research project? Are you writing regularly? Are you showing your written work to your supervisors? Would you find it useful to have some assistance with academic writing in English?
7. **Dealing with Academic Problems**

While you can be well prepared for research, it is frequently the case that, at some point during the project, you experience academic problems of one kind or another. Common ones include:

♦ **Drifting from the topic**
   As the research progresses, highways and byways of new exploration open up which just have to be investigated because they could be vital. So you become lost in the maze of possibilities and unable to establish where you should be at that stage of the project.

♦ **Difficulties with the methodology/methods**
   Particularly in the arts and humanities and social science, the section of your thesis on methodology/methods can require you to grapple with a whole range of unfamiliar philosophical, theoretical, empirical and experimental problems, and it can be frustrating to try and identify, tackle, and resolve these, particularly when you want to undertake the substantive research.

♦ **Problems with the substantive research**
   You can expect a range of problems to occur as you undertake the substantive research – evidence that you can't obtain as easily as you hoped, experiments that don't work, apparently promising lines of enquiry which turn out to be dead ends, simulations which don't run properly – the list is endless.

♦ **Drowning in data**
   You collect masses and masses of data, start playing around with them, and find all sorts of interesting things that can be investigated in and around the topic and then even outside it. As a result, you are unable to discriminate between what to concentrate upon in your research project and what to leave out.

♦ **Unexpected results**
   With the substantive research accomplished, you find results which you did not expect – the evidence which is contradictory, the experiments which yield negative results, the cast-iron assumptions which are apparently falsified, the simulation results which defy predictions, variables which behave badly etc. etc.

If you hit problems of these kinds or others, it is important that you are not afraid to admit, not least to yourself, that you are in difficulties. Research students tend to have previously sailed easily through undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes and it can, to say the least, be a shock to be brought shuddering to a halt while engaging in research. Students may find it hard to admit this for reasons which Atkins (1996* p 2) has termed ‘Top Gun’ syndrome whereby:

‘...students are seen...as the best and the brightest. Significant academic achievement has led them to their current place. They are thus unable to admit faults or shortcomings for fear of ‘showing themselves up’ in
If you have problems, you should acknowledge them secure in the recognition that this happens at one time or another to all researchers as well, i.e. it is all part and parcel of doing research.

In terms of resolving problems, you might start by trying to think through how you can overcome them yourself. If you feel that you are drifting aimlessly in terms of the topic, you might re-visit your research proposal and plan and re-assert the initial focus of the research; if methodology is a problem, look at other books or theses in the area for models of how to proceed; if one avenue of the substantive research has been blocked off, look for another; if you are drowning in data again go back to the research proposal and plan to re-focus the analysis; for unexpected results, see if there is a substantive explanation – many important contributions to knowledge have come from the explanation of apparent inconsistencies.

You may also wish to consider sharing the problem with a fellow-research student, particularly perhaps one who is further on in his or her studies and who may be able to offer advice on the basis of their own experience. Some schools/institutes encourage such a collective approach to problem solving by pairing research students so that they can support each other. Alternatively, if you are part of a research group, it may be that one of your colleagues can assist.

You should, of course, ask for assistance from your supervisors. As an experienced researcher, he or she will be familiar with the problems of research both generally and in the specific subject area and should at least be able to help you to think through the problem and to suggest ways in which you might go about resolving it.

### Reflecting on Practice

What academic problems might you expect to meet in the course of your research project?

How would you go about resolving them?

What sources of support are available to help you resolve academic difficulties?

## 8. Dealing with Non-Academic Problems

As well as experiencing academic problems of one kind or another, research students may also experience a range of non-academic problems arising from their situation. Three common ones are self-doubt, isolation, and boredom.

You may, particularly in the early stages of a research degree, experience bouts of self-doubt. These can arise from the situation of a research student; as one of the respondents to Delamont et al’s (1997: p 27) survey put the matter:

‘…you are suspended between a student who just absorbs things and an academic who produces [them], and that [leads to] all kinds of paranoias or neuroses.’
Self-doubt often takes the form of anxiety about whether you will be able to successfully make the transition from being primarily an absorber of to being a contributor to knowledge, and it can be associated with a reluctance to write or at least to submit written work to your supervisors in case it is 'not good enough'.

It is worth noting that such self-doubt is not uncommon, and that dealing with it is part and parcel of the experience of being a research student. In terms of how to deal with it, the key thing is to write – no matter how mundane you think that the piece or chapter is – and show the work to your supervisors. While you are, of course, bound up in the research, and are often unable to judge the contribution that you are making – in time even the most original insights come to seem commonplace to their creators – your supervisors have a greater degree of objectivity. He or she is far better placed to ascertain how you are progressing, and to offer guidance and support for your work.

As well as self-doubt, one of the most consistent findings of the literature on research students over the past three decades (see for example: Becher 1994 143; Cryer 2000; Delamont et al. 1997; Leonard 2001; Phillips and Pugh 2000; Rudd 1975; Rudd 1985) is that research students can feel isolated.

At school and as undergraduates or postgraduates on taught programmes, you study a common syllabus in the company of your peers. But, as a postgraduate research student, unless you are working on a group project or in a large and active research school, you find yourself working on your own project and often without the company of others. This can lead to intellectual isolation – you are the only one in the world working on this topic – and social isolation at the workplace as you plod away on your own in the library or the laboratory. Here, Cryer’s (2000 p 41) advice is pertinent:

‘...you should put effort into warding off isolation. You need to be on the constant lookout for people who both know enough about your field to be able to discuss it meaningfully and have the time to do so.

You may find such people in your family, your social group, or in your department... However, if you have to go outside into a national or an international arena, so be it. Overcoming isolation or potential isolation must be a major objective for all research students.’

A third common feature of the life of the postgraduate student which has been identified in the literature (see Phillips and Pugh, 2000, pp 77-78) is the tendency towards boredom. This tends to happen when you are well into your research, and have reached a stage where, as Cryer (2000 p171) puts it, ‘your work genuinely is excessively routine and monotonous’. So, you’re churning it out day after day, and you become bored with the whole thing and ripe for distractions which will take your mind.

There is no simple neat solution to this problem – if you want to complete you have to continue the research – but it can be beneficial to either do something else (write or re-write an earlier chapter) or even, with the approval of your supervisors, take a short break.

While these, of course, are non-academic problems arising out of being a research student, you may encounter other difficulties of a personal, social, and financial character that have a bearing upon your research. You should certainly alert your academic supervisor, who is your personal tutor, to any such
difficulties that you may be experiencing, or if you feel this is inappropriate, then you also have access to the full range of School and University support services outlined in Part Two of this Handbook.

9. Reviewing the Progress of the Research

One of the key tasks of research students is to review the progress of their research. This involves variously self-review, formal reviews with supervisors, and participating in school and University review procedures.

Research students are under considerable pressure variously from sponsors, bank managers, the University, and Schools to complete their degrees within the allotted time. Your chances of completing on time or as near as possible will be significantly enhanced if you treat the research as a project and actively manage it to meet the deadline. The skills that you need to do this may well be imparted in your research training programme or, if not, you can consult one of the texts, e.g. (Cryer 2000; Graham and Grant 1997; Phillips and Pugh 2000).

Either way, you should find that one of the critical recommendations is that you should treat your research plan not as an exercise to be completed at the start of the studentship and then filed away, but as a 'live' document to be reviewed and updated frequently and regularly over the duration of the project. You should, then, consult it regularly; update it in the light of your progress to date; consider the implications for the completion of the research; and, as far as possible, act to keep the project on track. It may be noted that such self-review will not only help you to finish your research degree as soon as possible, but also enhance your project management skills and your attractiveness to employers (see Part Two).

As well as self-reviewing, the University requires (Guidelines for Research Students, Para 5) that you also formally review your progress with your supervisors at least once per term, i.e. three times per year. It is important that you treat these supervisions in a professional way as an opportunity to discuss the progress of your research with your supervisors and that you keep a record of what was discussed and what action points were identified.

As well as student and supervisors review, School Progress Panels will also have formal procedures, usually involving the submission and/or presentation of pieces of work for annual progress review. It is worth noting that, while these review procedures are intended to assure the faculty that your progress is satisfactory, they are also intended to be helpful to you. They give you the opportunity to gain feedback on your work from senior researchers in your school.

Reflecting on Practice

Do you have a strategy for personally reviewing the progress of your research project at regular intervals? Do you approach supervisions to review your progress in a business-like way?

10. Framing Your Thesis

After spending the best part of one, two or three years of your life training to do research and then undertaking the actual research for your project, you are then faced with what is the last major task of producing your thesis. This task is
absolutely crucial because, as Cryer (2000 p177) has put it:

'The thesis is the culmination of [the] research student's entire research programme, and it is on the thesis that he or she will be examined and judged.'

This, of course, raises the question of 'what is a thesis?' While there is no objective definition of a thesis and there are variations between what is expected in different disciplines, one common factor is, as Barnes cited Blaxter et al. (1996* p 27) has put it, that:

'A [thesis] is far more than a passive record of your research and generally involves presenting an argument or point of view. In other words, it must say something and be substantiated with reasoned argument and evidence.'

So, producing your thesis involves more than throwing everything you have done into the pot and hoping for the best; it has to involve a case or point of view and be substantiated with reasoned argument and evidence.

This can be difficult to do because, to put it at its simplest, often we cannot see the wood (the thesis) for the trees (the mass of writings and materials we have accumulated over the course of the research). So, in order to produce a thesis, we need to know the shape of the wood, i.e. a framework for our thesis.

There are many ways of developing a framework for your thesis, and it is worth consulting your supervisors about suitable approaches. One possibility suggested in the literature (see for example Cryer 2000; Taylor 2002) is for you to think of yourself as an explorer who has undertaken a journey and who is writing a guidebook. As the author of the guidebook, you need to explain:

- where you started from
- what other guidebooks you read
- why you decided to undertake the journey
- how you decided to approach the journey
- the route you decided to follow
- for the Doctoral degrees, the original discoveries you made on the way
- where you arrived at the end of the journey
- how it differed from the starting point
- where you would go from here in future.

You can literally map this on a couple of sides of paper, and then re-trace the journey. At each stage you need to ask the questions; What is it vital to say to take the reader on to the next stage?; What it is important but not vital?; What is neither important nor vital? By this process, if necessary repeated several times, you should be able to distil the essence of the thesis (the vital) and separate it from the important and the relatively unimportant.

With, hopefully, a stripped-down and clear route, you can then begin to fill in each stage of the journey in terms of key topics which you have to address, which you use to flesh out your map. You can then apply the same tests as above - are they vital, important, or neither - and go through a similar iterative process. Then, within the topics, this can be repeated with sub-topics until, eventually, you have a complete map of the thesis.
Such an approach has a number of advantages. Firstly, it gives you an overall framework for your thesis; secondly, it divides the writing into manageable tasks; thirdly, and vitally, it can be discussed with your supervisors before writing up; fourthly it highlights the key things you need to bring out in terms of discoveries (originality), added knowledge and understanding (the differences between the start and end point), and future research in the area (where we go from here); and finally may translate into the structure for a thesis. So, for example, in the case of many PhDs, the translation is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>'Journey'</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting point</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidebooks</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons</td>
<td>Trigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route and discoveries</td>
<td>Substantive research chapters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrival</td>
<td>Analysis and results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td>Added knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future</td>
<td>Directions of research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Writing Your Thesis

Once you have established a basic framework, you still, of course, have to write the thesis. Here the three key issues to consider are; who am I writing for? (audience); how do I actually go about writing it? (drafting); how do I make sure that it reads well? (presentation).

A research thesis, like any other piece of writing, is a form of communication, and it is necessary to consider in advance the audience that you are addressing and how you might meet their needs. Here, Cryer (2000 p 178) has some good advice:

‘The crucially important audience for theses are external examiners. Think of them as individuals who are exceptionally busy and grossly underpaid and who therefore have to read theses quickly. They will expect them to be well-structured and to be argued coherently to make the case for certain solutions to specific research problems. Irrelevancies will irritate, as will having to tease out meaning that research students should have extracted themselves. Think of them also as individuals who are very able and experienced in the general area, which means that the background material should be as concise as is consistent with showing that it is known. ‘However, no external examiner can be an expert in your work. By the time you finalise your thesis, you and you alone are the world’s expert. So the aspects that make your work significant and original and worthy of a PhD…need to be argued coherently; each step needs to be spelled out, the outcomes must be stated unambiguously, and all their implications identified and discussed in depth.’

So, for your examiners, the thesis needs to be (i) well-structured (ii) argued coherently (iii) relevant (iv) concise in the literature review (v) expansive and detailed on areas in which the thesis makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge. Clearly (i) to (iv) above apply to all research degrees, while (v) applies particularly to the Doctoral degrees.
(i) and (iii) above clearly have a bearing on what you write; (ii) has a bearing on what you include when you write, and (iv) and (v) have a bearing on the proportion of the thesis taken up by each heading. So, for example for Doctoral degrees, you should certainly not aim for half of your thesis to be taken up by the literature review, a further quarter by the methodology, and only a quarter for the original scholarship.

What it can be useful to do is to produce a rough distribution of how much should be devoted to what part of the thesis. Such a distribution, produced by the University of Warwick as a guideline for PhD students (cited Blaxter et al. 1996* p 217) are set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the percentages may vary in different cases, it is crucial to plan them with the needs of the audience in mind.

With the needs of your audience in mind, it is then possible to proceed to drafting. One of the (few) common factors in the research degree experience is that it almost always takes far longer to write up the thesis than had been planned. The reason for this is that, when we finally write up, we have finished the substance of the project and now have, or should have, the benefit of hindsight, which leads us to change, amend, and modify the draft. While this is an entirely legitimate and valuable part of a research degree – it is in fact learning from what we have done – it can result in considerable delays in producing a first rough draft.

You should then review this yourself. Here it can be very useful to look at the Handbook for the Examiners of Research Degrees – the part of this Handbook which sets out the criteria which they will apply to your thesis. You should apply these then, if necessary, re-draft the thesis and ask your supervisors for comments. Following that, you should re-draft in the light of their comments, review it again yourself, and so the cycle continues until a final draft emerges.

As well as meeting requirements for the substance of the research degree, it is also vital that the draft is well-presented, for two reasons. Firstly, while good presentation cannot rescue a poor thesis, it may help a marginal one, i.e. the examiners may be inclined to take a more charitable view if the thesis is easily readable and, as far as possible, error-free. Secondly, inadequacies in expression and errors in spelling and grammar are one of the most common reasons for the referral of theses, i.e. for these being accepted subject to minor corrections. It can be extremely galling to have to spend a month or two correcting elementary mistakes and errors, not just to you but to your internal examiner who will be landed with the task of checking that your errors have
been corrected before the degree can be awarded.

It is important that you get this right before you go further.

You should:

- ensure that you have expressed yourself as clearly and concisely as possible (reading out loud can often help to identify over-long sentences and unnecessary padding)
- check the grammar and the spelling (it is your responsibility to do this and not that of your supervisors)
- check that you have the right words (spell checkers can tell you whether the word is spelled correctly but not if it is the right word in the first place)
- check the footnotes/endnotes, quotations, citations etc. both in the text and in the bibliography (remember, your examiners will check a sample)

Given that many of us can be blind to our own deficiencies and errors, it can be very helpful to ask a friend with some expertise in the area to comment on the comprehensibility of the draft and to also ask him or her to check it for errors.

With this done, it is back to your supervisors for a final re-read and, hopefully, the green light to go ahead and submit the thesis for examination. If your supervisors still have reservations, you can still submit – ultimately it is your decision – but you would be well advised to consider this very carefully for fear of falling at the final fence.

In preparation for submission you should check the University’s regulations about submission (Research Student Handbook, Part 4 ‘What to do when your research nears completion …’ provides guidance).

### Reviewing Practice

Are you clear about the audience for which you are writing? Have you decided upon an appropriate balance between the lengths of the various parts of the thesis? Have you reviewed your thesis using the Handbook for Examiners? Has your lead supervisor seen the draft? Have you taken their comments on board? Have you asked their advice about submission? Have you checked the University’s requirements in terms of the submission of theses?

### 12. Preparing for Examination

Following submission of the final title of the thesis, examiners are appointed, normally one internal and one external examiner. In the case of Master’s research degrees, the process of examination normally involves the assessment of the dissertation or thesis by the examiners but, in the case of the MPhil may involve an oral examination. In the case of the Doctoral degrees, University regulations require an oral examination, i.e. a viva.

Oral examinations are comparatively rare in undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes; in most Universities they are only held if there is some doubt about the class of degree to be awarded, although in some they are mandatory for the award of a First.

But, of course, oral examinations are compulsory for the award of the Doctoral degrees. The implication of this is, of course, that candidates starting PhDs/MDs
often have little or no experience of oral examinations. While they gain some by defending their work at progress reviews, this is still a far cry from the full rigour of a formal oral examination.

This might be of little consequence if, as in many other European countries, the oral examination was a public affair and they could go along and experience what happened. However, the British oral examination rarely gives access to people other than the examiners. Again, this might not matter if there were published guidelines for the oral examination, but this is not always the case. So, as Burnhan (1997 p 30) has put it ‘...what occurs in the lengthy “judgely huddle” from which postgraduates emerge either victorious or distraught is a mystery’.

In consequence, as Delamont et al. (1997 p 148) have written:

‘The [PhD] student may well fear and dread the [viva] examination.

Even when the student is outstandingly competent, and however excellent the thesis may be, the process of examination is a stressful one...most [candidates] feel worried by the indeterminacy of [the viva]’.

However you can prepare for your viva in six main ways.

Firstly, it is important to understand what oral examinations are about, i.e. their purposes, procedures, and outcomes. These are explained in detail in the University’s Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees which is set out in this part of this Handbook. You will find it helpful to discuss these with your supervisors.

Secondly, you need, of course, to be thoroughly familiar with your thesis. While this may seem strange since you wrote it, it is amazing how quickly you can forget what you have written, and you do need to re-read it. Often, you will find typos and other errors you have missed earlier – if so, list them and take them with you to the oral examination to show your examiners that you are aware of them.

Thirdly, you need to keep up to date with the literature in your area in the hiatus between submission and the oral examination. If a key paper comes out during that period, your examiners may ask you about it and about any implications for your work, and it obviously creates a good impression if you are aware of it.

Fourthly, as well as being prepared for questions concerning new literature, it can also be useful to anticipate the sorts of questions you might be asked and at least think about how you will answer them. There are some fairly obvious general ones (e.g. 'Why did you do this topic?' 'Why did you study here?' 'What would have done differently if you were doing the research now?' 'What do you think the implications of your work are for the field?') for which you can prepare.

Fifthly, you can ask your supervisors to arrange a mock oral examination in which colleagues who are experienced in examining question you on key parts of the thesis and afterwards give you feedback upon your performance. Such an opportunity, which a number of faculties provide as part of their progress monitoring procedures, is invaluable in enabling students to prepare themselves both intellectually and psychologically for what is to come.

Finally, on the day itself, you need to be prepared for the experience. You should go to the oral examination as well-rested and fed as possible, and
appropriately attired – it is a formal occasion so you need to be well-dressed but as you will be sitting down for a couple of hours and possibly more you need to feel comfortable as well. You should take with you:

- a copy of your thesis (preferably loose-bound so you can find pages quickly)
- pen and paper if you need to jot questions down or possibly draw diagrams
- where appropriate, a list of corrections
- copies of any original results, print-outs, or raw data which may be helpful in substantiating key points made in the thesis

Following Cryer (2000 p 197), you should:

- be composed when you enter the room
- sit squarely on the chair, not on the edge
- ask for anything not to your liking in the room to be changed, e.g. your seat moved out of sunlight
- wait for questions to be asked of you by the examiners
- show that you are listening attentively
- ask for clarification if questions are unclear
- take whatever time you need to answer them
- defend your thesis without becoming wholly defensive, i.e. be prepared if necessary to concede points
- be scholarly in your approach, i.e. give answers weighing the pros and cons before reaching balanced conclusions

When the examiners have finished their questions, they may well ask if there is anything you wish to say; this is an opportunity for you to clarify or expand upon any answer which you felt did not do you justice, or raise any other matters concerning the examination.

At the end of the oral examination, the Chair should ask you to leave while the examiners deliberate, and afterwards you will normally be called back in to be informed of the examiners’ recommendation.

In many cases, the recommendation will be to award the degree subject to making minor corrections (usually spelling and grammar) to the satisfaction of your internal examiner. In others, it will be award subject to making minor revisions within six months, and in a few making major ones within twelve months. While these recommendations may be disappointing, it is important to remember that the examiners’ expectation is still that you will eventually pass, and they are required to specify what you need to do to make the grade. Other outcomes, i.e. the award of a lower research degree or a fail, are mercifully rare. But, if this does happen and you have reason to believe that this relates to unfairness in the examination procedure, you have a right to appeal, and details of the University's appeals procedure are set out in Part Five of this Handbook. But, in the vast majority of cases, you should only need to do one thing after the oral examination - celebrate.

13. Publishing, Networking, and Developing Your Career

There are three other areas of good practice for research students, namely publishing, networking, and developing your career.
If at all possible, you should try and publish work during your studentship; this can help to mark out your academic territory, bring you into contact with others in the field, boost your self-esteem — it is a coup to be published when still a graduate student — and provide a better platform for employment, particularly in the research field inside or outside the universities. Your supervisors should be able to advise you about whether your work should be published and, if so, how to go about it.

Also, you should consciously network within the academic and/or professional community relating to your field. Academia is heavily dependent upon networking informally and formally, in the latter case through professional associations and conferences. You should try and establish your own informal networks, and participate in the professional ones, e.g. the postgraduate sections of professional associations. Such networking will bring you into contact with others in the same field, help to prevent isolation, offer you opportunities to attend conferences and give papers, and finally enable you to acquire skills which will stand you in good stead in your career, inside or outside academia (see for example Blaxter et al. 1998* pp 55-77). Again, your supervisors can help with contacts and advise on professional association memberships, etc.

Last, but by no means least, you should, from the beginning of your research studentship, be conscious of the need to develop skills and plan for your future career. Your primary objective as a research student is, of course, to gain a research degree, and this will be valuable in seeking employment. But, in today's labour market, you also need to have the key – transferable – skills which are demanded by employers. You should use the Personal Development Plan (PDP) in your ePortfolio to highlight areas of strengths and areas for improvement by mapping your current skills against the Researcher Development Framework developed by Vitae.

https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework

You can learn about the skills demanded by employers by, as early as possible in your studentship, attending training and development events organized by the University's Careers Service see (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/)which can be used as a benchmark against which you can develop them over the course of your programme.

So, at the start of your programme, you should look at the list and see which skills you have acquired already and which you will need to acquire over the remainder of your studentship. You should then check out which of these skills you will acquire in the course of your research training programme — they should be listed in the programme handbook — and discuss with your supervisors the other skills that you will acquire by undertaking your research. You should then audit your skills and identify any gaps — a common one for research students particularly in the humanities and social sciences is teamwork — and make plans to fill them.

Your supervisors will be of assistance in this regard, as will the postgraduate adviser in the Careers Service.

While all of the key skills are important, it is worth highlighting the acquisition of one in particular, namely effective oral presentation skills. Such skills are vital in the academic context (a number of schools/institutes ask research students
to make oral presentations as part of their procedures for progression and of course you need them to make presentations to seminars and conferences) and for employment in virtually any field. You should take every opportunity to develop these skills through your faculty training programme, by reading the relevant literature (e.g. Cryer 2000) and by asking your supervisors or other colleagues to listen to a mini-presentation and give you feedback.

As well as actually acquiring skills for employment, you also need to be able to document their acquisition. This can be done on ePortfolio. Either way, if you can demonstrate to employers that you have acquired the appropriate skills, this will greatly enhance your chances of gaining the good job, which you deserve for all of the work and effort you have put in over the course of your research degree.

### Reviewing Practice

| Have you discussed possible opportunities for publications with your supervisors? | Have you taken steps to establish informal networks in your subject community? |
| Have you joined the relevant subject associations? | Have you attended Careers Service events on career planning and development? |
| Have you reviewed your skills against the University's template? | Have you made efforts to fill any gaps? |

### Conclusions

Research degrees are unique in so far as, rather than working within a pre-established framework, you have to often create and always undertake and manage a project to its conclusion. This is not an easy task but, in so far as your research will advance and/or contribute to the sum of knowledge and understanding in your subject, a worthwhile one. Hopefully these Guidelines have helped to unpack what you need to do to successfully gain a research degree, given you indicators of good practice, and assisted you to reflect upon your effectiveness as a research student.

### References

- Atkins, D. (1996*). *A Student Perspective, Supervision of Research Students:* Centre for Educational Development and Academic Methods, ANU.
Guidelines for Supervisors of Research Students

Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines: Summary of Newcastle Practice; and Good Practice guidance for the Supervisors of Research Student, is to provide an outline of Newcastle’s practice and expectations of supervisors of Research Students and a summary of more general good practice for supervisors supervising doctoral students.

Summary of Newcastle Practice

1. These Guidelines provide a summary of the practices for supervisors of research students expected by Newcastle University.

2. It is the responsibility of each Head of School or nominee (usually the school director of postgraduate studies/ tutor) in consultation with the proposed lead supervisor to decide whether to recommend the admission of an applicant to undertake postgraduate research in his or her school. In reaching this decision the Head of School or nominee should consider:

   (a) whether the candidate is appropriately qualified for the proposed subject of study and whether adequate academic references have been received;

   (b) whether the appropriate resources (e.g. library, computing, laboratory facilities, technical assistance) will be available;

   (c) whether, on the information available, the subject of study is suitable for the degree for which the candidate is to be registered;
(d) whether it can reasonably be expected that the subject of study will be completed within the timescale prescribed;
(e) whether proper supervision can be provided and maintained throughout the research period;
(f) whether an appropriate programme of training and guidance in research methods can be offered to the candidate.

3. At the commencement of the proposed research programme students will have a formal induction. Supervisors will have a detailed discussion with the student at the outset of their studies. The student needs to have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of the research programme. Following this discussion a formal Learning Agreement should be signed by the student and by the supervisors. The Learning Agreement can be found at the following web site:

   www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/KeyActsLA.htm

A copy of the signed Learning Agreement must be sent to your Graduate School Administrator so that completion can be recorded on the student’s record. The details of this discussion should be recorded by the supervisors and a copy given to the student. It should normally cover:

(a) the scope of the proposed programme of work and an initial definition of the subject of study with particular emphasis on:
   (i) the importance of completing the programme in the time available;
   (ii) the standard of work expected (students should be referred to successful theses in the Library as a guide as to what is expected of them);

   this should form the basis of the project proposal which will need to be submitted for approval within the first three months of the student’s studies.

(b) the overall timetable for the planning and completion of the programme of work including any programme of training and guidance in research methods, any period of preliminary reading, and the writing of the thesis. This should be recorded in the student’s Personal Development Plan (PDP) within their ePortfolio.

(c) guidance about the use of literature, other sources of information, including other members of staff, and about attendance at appropriate courses and meetings of learned societies. In particular, the student’s attention should be drawn to the statement in paragraph 12 of the Guidelines for Research Students – Summary of Newcastle Practice concerning standards of academic conduct. Appropriate guidance should be given to enable the student to avoid any possible concern about plagiarism or the fabrication of research results;

(d) good practice in relation to the storage and retention of research data;

(e) constraints, other than time, which may affect the programme of work, such as costs and the need to design and build equipment and deal with any ethical concerns; (f) an initial consideration of potential issues of confidentiality or intellectual property;

(g) a preliminary discussion should be held addressing the practicality of any field work and whether there are any constraints or dangers;

(h) a programme of regular meetings between the supervisors and the student to monitor progress on the research and if appropriate to review
the details of the overall timetable for the programme of work;

(i) the submission of written work and/or the presentation of seminar papers while the research is in progress and the possibility of presenting work at learned societies and/or submitting it for publication directly.

4. The supervisors should maintain regular contact with the student and should give advice on the planning of work and on other matters, including the use of suitable techniques. They should request written work as appropriate and make constructive comments on it. The supervisors should, during the year, require the student to produce at least one substantial piece of work (e.g., literature review, experimental write-up), in order to help assess his/her ability to proceed successfully through the subsequent years of his/her research programme. The student may be required to make a presentation of this work to other staff and/or students.

5. A record of the student’s progress should be kept in ePortfolio and approximately once a month formal meetings with the student should be held to review progress. There should normally be three meetings during the year with the full supervisory team. Students are required to record and maintain records of these formal supervisory meetings in their ePortfolio.

6. Students are required to submit a project proposal for approval by a school panel within the first three months of their studies. Progression on the programme will be dependent upon acceptance of the project proposal by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

7. Students registered for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will have their registration for a doctoral award confirmed provided satisfactory progress is made and confirmed through Annual Progress Review usually during the first year of study for those students studying full-time and during the second year for those students studying part-time, see University Regulations at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2016.html.

8. Each year the supervisors must submit an annual report on the progress of the student’s programme of work to the school progress panel. This report should take into account the review procedures detailed in paragraphs 4 to 5 above. This must be done on ePortfolio.

9. Each year the student shall also submit an annual report on his/her progress and evidence of achievement as specified by the school /Institute to a school progress panel on ePortfolio.

10. The Report Forms will be forwarded to a school progress panel which will consider the evidence and determine whether progress indicates that the research project will meet the standards for the award. The Progress Panel will make a report on ePortfolio, and further progress on the programme of study is subject to approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. In addition to detailed feedback that the Progress Panel may wish to provide the supervisory team and the student, the Progress Panel will make one of the following recommendations:

1 That the candidate’s performance is satisfactory and that the candidature to study for the Doctor of Philosophy is confirmed;

2 That notwithstanding some concerns which the candidate and supervisory team should note, the candidate’s overall performance is satisfactory and that the candidate should continue or upgrade to study for the Doctor of Philosophy;

3 That the candidate’s performance is unsatisfactory and that a further
assessment should be held within two months to determine whether progress on the programme will be recommended;

4 That the candidate’s performance is unsatisfactory and that a submission for a Master of Philosophy examination is recommended instead of a submission for a Doctor of Philosophy examination;

5 That the candidate’s performance is unsatisfactory and that no submission for a Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy examination is recommended, and that the student’s candidature be terminated.

11. If at any stage throughout the period of study the supervisors feel that the progress of the student is unsatisfactory or that the standard of work generally is below that expected, they should inform the student in writing of the reasons for this opinion and the student shall be given the opportunity of an interview with the supervisory team. Following this notice and any interview, the supervisory team may decide to monitor progress and/or attendance; additionally or alternatively, the supervisory team may require the submission of written work in addition to that already prescribed by their project proposal and plan. If the student’s progress has not improved within such a period as shall be specified in the written notice, the supervisory team shall notify the Head of School or nominee and submit a report for review by an independent Progress Panel. The Progress Panel will make a report to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies on ePortfolio. Alternatively, following the written notice and any interview, the Supervisory team may immediately notify the Head of School or nominee and submit a report for review by the Progress Panel.

12. From time to time it will be necessary to deal with supervisory changes where colleagues are no longer available, though normally staff on study leave will continue their supervisory duties. Where it becomes impossible for a school to continue to provide direct supervision – for example because of the departure of the only member of staff able to supervise a particular topic – the matter should be drawn to the attention of the Head of School or director of postgraduate studies/tutor. The student should be consulted about any changes, and alternative supervisory arrangements should be put in place in good time and the Graduate School Administrator informed so that formal approval may be sought from the appropriate Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

13. The supervisors should advise on the manuscript of the thesis in general and on content, presentation and organization. They should not act as a proof reader and should make this clear to the student. They should read all of the first draft and thereafter continue to offer advice. It must be made clear to the student that it is his/her responsibility to revise the thesis manuscript and to decide when it is ready for submission. The section on Supervisory Support in the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, provides clear guidance on what supervisory support can include and what it does not.

NOTE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that students under their supervision follow the agreed University and, where appropriate, School, safety policy and procedures. Full details of the University’s safety policy are available on the University’s Occupational Health and Safety Service (OHSS) webpages: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ohss/safety/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ohss/safety/) and from your School’s designated Safety Officer.
Good Practice in Research Supervision

Introduction
Research supervision has been characterized by Brown and Atkins (1988, p 115) as

'...probably the most complex and subtle form of teaching in which we engage. It is not enough for us to be competent researchers ourselves – although this is vital. We need to be able to reflect upon research practices and analyse the knowledge techniques and methods which make them effective. But there is a step even beyond this. We have to be skilled in enabling our research students to acquire those techniques and methods themselves without stultifying or warping their own intellectual development. In short, to be an effective research supervisor, you need to be an effective researcher and an effective supervisor.‘

As a member of the academic staff at Newcastle, you will be an effective researcher; the aim of these Guidelines is to assist you to reflect on good practice in supervising research students. The Guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive nor exhaustive, just to indicate what, within the literature, has been identified as good practice. But some of the matters covered do relate to University requirements, and this document should be read in conjunction with the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, and the Guidelines for the Supervisors of Research Students, which sets out the formal framework for research supervision.

The Guidelines attempt to set out good practice in relation to fifteen key components of research supervision, namely:

1. establishing and maintaining a professional relationship with the student
2. helping to induct them into research
3. where appropriate, assisting with the choice of a topic
4. where appropriate, helping them devise a research proposal and plan
5. supporting the initial stages of the research project
6. encouraging students to write
7. assisting with academic problems with the research
8. assisting with personal and social problems affecting the research
9. giving feedback and reviewing the progress of the research project
10. monitoring the progress of the research
11. advising on drafts of the thesis
12. advising on submission
13. assisting on preparation for examination
14. assisting with career development, networking, and publication
15. working with co-supervisors
1. Establishing and Maintaining a Professional Relationship with the Research Student

The relationship between a supervisor and a research student is a professional one, and it is vital that it is started off on an appropriate footing. As Delamont et al. (1997, p 14) have put it:

‘You need to sort out a good working relationship with your supervisee. Relationships have to be worked at and discussed, because most of the later problems stem from a failure to set out the expectations both parties have for the relationship. A few supervisions devoted to discussing the best ways to work together will not be wasted.'

Newcastle University approaches this by requiring supervisors and students to sign a learning agreement setting out the expectations of each other, as in the example below.

| The research student agrees to: |
| ♦ turn up on time for supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations |
| ♦ be properly prepared |
| ♦ write regularly and share the draft materials |
| ♦ maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, as set out in paragraph 12 of the University's Guidelines for Research Students - Summary of Newcastle Practice |
| ♦ maintain contact |
| ♦ undertake the tasks agreed to the best of their ability within the allotted time |

| The research supervisors agrees to: |
| ♦ hold regular supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations |
| ♦ read work submitted promptly |
| ♦ give written feedback. |

| Both agree to: |
| ♦ treat supervision in a business-like way with an agenda |
| ♦ keep records of supervisions detailing what was discussed, what targets were agreed, and when they were to be achieved by. |

In general terms supervisory support can include:

♦ Assistance with the choice of topic;
♦ Critical and constructive feedback on the work produced;
♦ Advice on the sources or literature used;
♦ Guidance on the methodology or techniques used and the approach to data collection;
♦ Discussion of evidence and results;
♦ Reading drafts and commenting on issues of substance.

Supervisors will not:

♦ Undertake the actual research itself;
♦ Write or significantly redraft papers or chapters;
♦ Conduct a detailed proof read the thesis.

At this stage also, you may wish to make it clear in what circumstances you would or would not expect credit to be given in any publications arising from the research.
While this process of establishing a professional relationship is important for all students, it may be particularly helpful to international students, who may have culturally defined notions of what they can expect from their supervisors. As Ryan (2000, p: 69) has put it:

‘...international students...are likely to expect a hierarchical relationship with their supervisor where the supervisor exercises tight control over the research. Many international students will expect their supervisor to take the initiative and adapt a role close to being a guide and/or parent. They may expect the supervisor to make major contributions towards the research and the thesis. They will be expecting clear direction and guidance from their supervisors, whom they will hold in great esteem, and they often have very high expectations of the relationship.’

In such cases, it can be useful to spend some time discussing student's expectations of the roles of the supervisors and of what you can offer in order to clarify the relationship. Such discussions should emphasise the additional support available to international students in the early stages of their research (see below), as well as the need for them to take the initiative in undertaking and completing the research project.

By these means, clear expectations should be established for what is to come at the start of the research. But, as with any relationship, the supervisor-supervisee one changes, or should change, over time. Ideally, it should start as a master/mistress-apprentice relationship and end up as almost equal colleagues.

Clearly, this implies a process of development over the course of the supervision from the supervisors playing a directive role and setting tasks for the student to do at the start towards encouraging the student to become an autonomous researcher and increasingly recognizing their capacity to make an independent contribution to knowledge and understanding in the subject. However, as Cryer (2000, pp 5-7) has pointed out, this does not happen automatically. Students may need to be weaned away from dependence upon their supervisors, while the latter may need to adjust to the idea of the student abandoning the nest and beginning to fly on their own. So, it is important for supervisors to periodically check where the balance lies, whether it is appropriate for this stage of the research, and if not what can be done to correct it.

Reflecting on Practice
What methods do you use to establish a professional relationship with the student at the start of the programme? What is the appropriate balance between dependence and independence over the course of the programme? How often do you review that balance? What can you do if it is wrong?

2. Inducting Students into Research
Many students coming through to research will have undertaken short research projects either as undergraduates or as postgraduates, and will be required to undertake training in research during their first year of study. There is also now a substantial literature on undertaking a research degree to which students can be directed; examples include Cryer (2000), Leonard (2001), Phillips and Pugh (2000), and Wisker (2001). However, while previous experience and the literature yield insights into research, they may not prepare students for it fully, in five respects.

Firstly, students are often still not fully aware of what they are letting themselves
in for, i.e. a research degree. Again, the point is well made by one of the PhD students interviewed by Delamont et al. (1997, p 16):

‘A lot of mistakes I've made are the result of not asking questions and people not putting me right. They presume I must know…I didn't know the PhD was meant to be an argument…[that] it's meant to say something. I thought it was one of those old-fashioned monographs, a collection of information. When I was an undergraduate I used to think a PhD was one of those articles you read in the journals, a 10,000 word article, I used to think they were PhDs.’

Clearly, if the student's supervisors have explained what a PhD was, pointed the student in the direction of a few successful theses (see University Guidelines for Supervisors of Research Students 3(a) (ii)), and discussed why they were successful, the mistakes which marred the student's experience could have been avoided.

The second way in which students may be unprepared for research stems from the way in which it is written up in books and papers in journals, namely as a seamless progression from initial idea to an addition to knowledge and understanding. But what is published is only the visible part of the iceberg; the other nine-tenths – the ideas that were discarded, the investigations that ended up in blind alleys, the correlations that were in the wrong direction, the experiments that gave negative results, the sheer fluke that led to the substantive advance – rarely see the light of day. So it is scarcely surprising that many students expect their research to progress without incident and, when it does not, blame themselves.

Here, the supervisors have a key role in forewarning and forearming. This may take the form of directing students towards accounts of research as it really happened, pairing them with students further down the line to discuss the problems they had experienced, or even self-disclosure by the supervisors. What can be useful is for supervisors to keep all of the materials relating to a particular research project from first scribbles to final paper, and take the student through the process, disasters as well as triumphs. Such exercises can prepare them for what is to come, and can have the added bonus of demonstrating how to go about problem-solving in your subject.

Thirdly, students may not be aware or fully aware of what is entailed in maintaining the highest standards of academic conduct in undertaking their research, in particular with regard to the fabrication of results or plagiarism. A few minutes spent discussing Section 12 of the University's Guidelines for Research Students-Summary of Newcastle University Practice with the student can be helpful, and it is recommended that this be done in the comparable Guidelines for Supervisors (3(c)).

Fourthly, the Guidelines for Supervisors (3(d)) also recommend that supervisors spend some time at the start of the project discussing the storage and retention of research data with their students. Failure to store and retain data can, at worst, mean that experiments etc have to be replicated, at best that progress is halted until missing data is eventually found. In this context, it can also be useful to encourage students right from the start to take full references for everything that they read in such a form that they can later be easily transferred to the text or the bibliography of their thesis. Again, this can save many hours hunting for page numbers etc. at the writing-up stage.
Fifthly, the University (Guidelines for Supervisors, p 3) makes supervisors responsible for ensuring that research students follow agreed University and, where appropriate, school health and safety policies and procedures, and these should also form part of the student's induction into research.

Again, on international students, it is worth quoting Ryan, (2000, p 73):

'A common problem is that supervisors assume too much of student's research knowledge. But some international students will have very little knowledge of how to conduct research....'

Supervisors might consider going through one of the texts described above (e.g. Cryer 2000) with international students, and devising mini-research projects that contribute to the PhD that are designed to enhance their experience of research.

Reflecting on Practice
Do you ascertain at the start of the programme what the student knows about the degree they are about to embark upon? How to you make them aware? How do you alert the student to the trials and tribulations of research? How can you ensure that international students have an adequate induction into research?

3. Assisting with the Choice of a Topic
In many cases, and particularly in engineering and the sciences, students are often recruited to research a particular topic which has been pre-defined by a supervisor (see e.g. Delamont et al. (2000), Becher et al. (1994)). But, particularly in the arts, humanities and social sciences, students are recruited on the basis of their interest in working in a broadly defined area of the subject, which has to be narrowed down sooner or later to a specific topic.

Bright students who have sailed through their previous careers with effortless brilliance may have unrealistic expectations of what they can achieve in their research degrees.

These can often be adjusted by asking them to look through the titles of MPhils or PhDs in their subjects which illustrate the narrowness of most (if not all) research topics. But even when they have abandoned seeking a cure for the common cold or a fundamental change in our interpretation of civilisation and adopted a more realistic project, they will still need help and guidance.

Moses (1992, pp 11-12) has characterized the process of selecting a topic as involving the five stages of (i) determining a general area of interest (ii) critically reviewing the literature (iii) identifying potential 'triggers' for projects (iv) evaluating their suitability, and (v) choosing at least a starting topic.

While the general area of interest should be known, supervisors can assist students by disclosure – talking through their own experiences – and/or exercises designed to model the rest of the process. Students can be asked to read (say) a review article (which can provide valuable training in critical evaluation) and asked to identify a couple of possible 'triggers' for research projects.

A supervision can then be devoted to discussing the key questions relating to suitability. Is this topic worth doing?; how, in principle, could it be done?; could it be done within the time available?; what additional knowledge and skills would be required to tackle it?; would it sustain interest?; if completed, how might it meet the requirements for the award? With, hopefully, an understanding of the criteria, students can then be asked to do this 'for real' and write brief reports, upon which supervisors can give oral or written feedback. Eventually, this iterative process should lead to the identification of a topic which will, at least,
form a focus for starting the research.

**Reflecting on Practice**
Do you provide students with a framework for choosing a topic? Would disclosure of your own experiences be helpful? Can you identify review papers in your subject which could be used to generate topics for exercises?

4. **Producing the Research Proposal and Plan for Project Approval**

It is a requirement of the University (*Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and *Guidelines for Research Students*, Section 2) that research students should, in conjunction with their supervisors, produce and agree their research proposal and plan for formal project approval within the first three months of their research degree studies. The project proposal, plan and supervisory team will be considered by a school panel, and then the Head of School or nominee prior to formal approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

In some cases, particularly in science and engineering, research students are recruited to implement research proposals which have already been planned and scheduled. Nevertheless, in such cases a project plan and supervisory team list must still be submitted to the project approval panel to ensure that the project is achievable within the time-scales allowed and to confirm that sufficient resources are available within the school/institute.

Where the project is not pre-determined and planned for them, students need to actively manage their research projects. Otherwise, they can drift for months during the first year of research, and this is a major cause of drop out and also of non-completion within three or four years. Given the financial pressures on students – particularly international ones funded only for the stated duration of the programme – and of course Research Council sanctions on subjects with low completion rates within three or four years (see e.g. Joint *et al.* 2002), it is vital that they are clear about what they are doing and when they should be aiming to do it by. For these reasons, the University’s Guidelines for Supervisors (3(a)) require supervisors should work with students to produce a research proposal and a plan.

With regard to developing the research proposal, supervisors can assist students by asking a fairly simple series of questions. For example: What is the topic?; Why is it important?; What have others written on it?; What would the research seek to add?; What method or methods would be useful in undertaking the research?; How could the research be designed?; How will data be collected?; How will it be analysed?; How, in principle, might results add to knowledge and understanding in this field? In addition, it is still useful to show students a good research proposal and take them through it step by step so that they have a clear exemplar to follow.

With regard to planning the research, in principle it seems simple enough to plot the tasks identified in the research proposal against time. In practice, of course, it is extremely difficult to predict in advance even approximately how long things are going to take, particularly if students have limited research experience, and the results can be over-optimistic to say the least.

Here, the supervisors should help students to appreciate the pitfalls of planning a research project. One method for doing this has been developed by Delamont *et al.* (1997). Students are given Gantt charts for research projects in their subject which deliberately over-represent the time to be allotted for some aspects of the research process and under-represent the time needed for others. They are then asked to consider the realism or otherwise of these
projections, to discuss them, and to re-plan the research. This technique can be extremely effective in stimulating students to think about the relationship between time and task and in enabling them to plan their own research.

Supervisors should also encourage students to frequently revisit and update both their research proposal and plan. Research topics can change markedly over the course of a project, and research plans need to be modified in response to this and other factors. Discussing and updating the research proposal and the research plan, will ensure that both supervisors and student are clear about where the research has got to, and what needs to be done to complete it.

**Reflecting on Practice**

Is there a good research proposal you could show to research students?  
Could you develop research plans for discussion with students?

5. Supporting the Initial Stages of the Research Project

Especially in disciplines where students have created their own research project, they are then faced with detailed preparatory work on the literature, the methodology, and the design of the research.

All of these can pose serious problems for students at the start of their projects. On the literature, students may need help in finding it if they are not familiar with the location of sources in the field, with learning how to read it critically, with note-taking, and with referencing. In some subjects, there are established and relatively less contested methodological approaches but in many subjects students are faced with a range of different potential approaches and may have to grapple with a range of difficult philosophical, theoretical, and empirical matters. In virtually all subjects, designing a major research project is a difficult exercise for the uninitiated, with each potential design associated with opportunities and limitations which can have profound implications for outcomes.

Such matters are dealt with in general through faculty research training programmes, and it is clearly important for supervisors to be aware of the content of these in ascertaining the support needs of their students. In addition, the supervisors still have a role to play in relating general features of literature evaluation, methodology, and research design to the student's topic. For example, setting an exercise for students to find a key reference in their field, produce a critical review, evidence it from their notes, and cite sources correctly, can help them to evaluate the literature; pointing students in the direction of good discussions of methodologies in books, theses and papers in their topic area can assist with the adoption of a methodology; and asking for short briefing papers on the advantages and disadvantages of different designs can provide a basis for discussion and clarification of the options.

By these means, students can be supported through what can be the very difficult initial stages of their research project. The avoidance of mistakes at this early stage, e.g. in the design of the research, can save much time and grief further down the line.

**Reflecting on Practice**

In what ways do the Faculty training programmes support students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in terms of evaluation of the literature, methodology and research design?  How can you assist the student to acquire these in the context of their project?
6. Encouraging Students to Write

As students begin to make progress with their projects, they need to be encouraged to write as soon as possible, for four reasons. Firstly, it enables them to keep records of what they have done from the start to serve as a basis for later work. Secondly, it encourages them to reflect on what they have done so far and think about where they will go from here. Thirdly, it gives the supervisors the chance to see what has been done, and to advise them about how to proceed. Fourthly, it gets students into the discipline of academic writing at an early stage rather than leaving it until later when it is more difficult to acquire.

But, as most experienced supervisors will testify, students are frequently extremely reluctant to produce written work. Research (see e.g. Murray 2002) suggests that there are two major factors which constrain research students from writing. One relates primarily to lack of experience of writing regularly at all, of producing longish pieces of work, or of producing academic writing with its demands of precision, clarity, organization and explicit structure. The other factor is confidence. Whereas, as undergraduates or postgraduates on taught programmes, students outlined and discussed the work of other people, as research students their writing becomes, or should become, a presentation of their own views, ideas, thoughts, etc. This can leave students feeling very exposed and, particularly if their standard is published work, very dissatisfied with what they have achieved. For these reasons, they may be psychologically reluctant to write.

Supervisors can help students overcome these problems in a number of ways. With regard to writing regularly, Blaxter et al. (1996, pp 59-57) suggest that students should be encouraged to keep a research diary on a daily basis recording what they have done, time spent on it, analysis, and speculation. This gets students into the habit of writing regularly, recording, and reflecting, and gives them a basis upon which to construct larger pieces of work.

With regard to writing longer pieces, supervisors can help students to make the task more manageable. So, initially, they might request a one-page abstract of the chapter setting out its aim (purpose), content (what it would cover), and possible conclusions (what it would say). With that thought through and discussed, the next stage would be to ask for a synopsis fleshing out the abstract and setting out headings and sub-headings to be used. Then students can be encouraged to fill in the framework piece by piece until they have a draft chapter.

With regard to academic writing, students can be variously referred to books on the subject (e.g. Dunleavy (2003), (Murray 2002)), given examples of such writing from the literature in their field, or even paired with a mentor in the form of a student further on with their research who will undertake to read drafts and suggest improvements. Supervisors can refer students to the University’s Writing Development Centre for further guidance and support http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc/

In terms of overcoming psychological reluctance to write, supervisors can, as (Murray 2002) has suggested, reduce anxiety levels by giving the student explicit permission to submit a ‘messy’ draft for comment on the understanding that it will be treated as a first stab and not as the definitive submission. Further, it can be worth pointing out to students that virtually all contributions to knowledge and understanding start off as fairly rough-hewn stones which are
then polished usually by several sets of hands before they become the perfect gems of publications. As suggested earlier, the message can be reinforced by showing students earlier drafts of supervisors' own papers.

Again, here it is worth considering the particular problems faced by non-native speakers of English. To quote Ryan (2000, p 74):

'Many international postgraduate students will have had very little experience in any kind of extended writing, and may have previously only been required to take lecture notes. They may therefore resort to an oral style, or may use writing styles that are favoured in their own country. [For example]...The use of proverbs, stories and literary illusions...are commonly used in Asian and African writing to demonstrate one's educational level and accomplishment, to win the reader over to the author's point of view, and to establish credibility. Classical sayings or poetic phrases will be used to make the writing look 'well-educated' and to establish empathy. The writing process takes a more circuitous approach, where the reader is gradually taken along a journey where the argument, or the main thesis, is only found at the very end. The thesis will begin by saying what the topic isn't before writing about what it is.'

This, of course, is the antithesis of academic writing as practised in the West, and here there is a particular need to help international students to appreciate what is involved and help them to adjust.

By these means, supervisors can try to fulfil one of their principal responsibilities, encouraging students to write early and often.

Reflecting on Practice
Are your students writing early enough? Are they writing regularly enough? If not, how can you assist them to overcome the barriers to writing? How can you assist non-native English speaking students to improve their writing?

7. Assisting with Academic Problems

Research is, as argued earlier, an inherently difficult activity and it can almost be guaranteed that, at some point, students will be faced with problems. Such problems may include, for example, exploring the highways and the byways of the topic and drifting too far away from the original focus of the research, setbacks in collecting data, inconsistencies in findings, problems with the status of results – the list is endless.

The nature of intervention in such situations is a matter of fine judgement, but supervisors should try to suggest ways in which the student can, by their own efforts, resolve the crisis.

Again, there is a good example of such thinking in Delamont et al. (1997, p 77), in this case covering the familiar scenario where a research student has collected a vast amount of data and is unable to organize in a coherent way, i.e. the student is 'drowning in data'. Rather than leaving them to flounder or going out with the lifeboat, Delamont et al suggest that the supervisors should arrange for the student to prepare a seminar paper or write a working paper re-stating the central questions of the research, establishing what needs to be evidenced to answer them, and re-evaluating the contribution that the thesis will make to knowledge and understanding. This, they argue, provides an opportunity for students to re-focus the research, discard extraneous material, and hopefully avoid writing the 'everything but the kitchen sink' thesis which might be referred because of inadequate discrimination of evidence.
8. Assisting with Non-Academic Problems

Research students can experience non-academic problems which can affect their research. At Newcastle, academic supervisors are also personal tutors to their graduate students, and hence the role can extend to assisting with personal and social problems as well. Supervisors thus need to be equipped to deal with problems in the same way as for undergraduate tutees although it is worth noting that there are a number of additional arrangements to support students including a postgraduate tutor in each faculty. Of course, there are also a range of University services for postgraduate research students with which supervisors need to be familiar, and which are set out elsewhere in this Handbook.

In addition to particular problems, it may be noted that one of the most consistent findings of the research literature on research students (see the summary in Delamont et al. 1997, p 96) is that they suffer, to a greater or lesser degree, from intellectual and social isolation. But, as the authors point out, while a degree of intellectual isolation is inherent in undertaking an original research project, ‘...there is no reason for this...to be accompanied by social or emotional loneliness’ and indeed this can be detrimental to the success of the research. So it is important for supervisors to ensure that there are opportunities for students to mix with others. These might include a regular postgraduate seminar, a postgraduate society, common development and training programmes, or participation in conferences or professional associations.

Again, in this context, it is worth stressing that particular consideration needs to be given to supporting international research students. They are more likely to feel socially and culturally isolated than home students, and they may find it more difficult for ask for support from supervisors or to make friends with fellow students. It is, as Ryan (2000 p 81) has argued, important to ensure that staff take an interest in the well-being of international students and assist them to join social networks. Also, where international students are accompanied by their families, consideration also needs to be given to involving spouses and children in social activities. They can feel marooned in an alien environment, and it is important to include them in school social activities and point them in the direction of relevant institutional societies and clubs.

9. Giving Feedback

Once students are writing and showing work in progress to you, you need to give them feedback. As Brown and Atkins (1988, pp 134-37) have pointed out, students need feedback for four main reasons, namely:

Reflecting on Practice

What additional support is available to research students in your school, the faculty, and the University? Do you actively seek to encourage your research students to mix with others? Do you pay particular attention to the needs of international students and, where appropriate, their families?
• to enable them to appreciate standards
Feedback gives the student a feeling for the standards against which their work will be judged. Students are unlikely at the start or in the early stages in particular to be fully aware of the standards that they are expected to attain (see Becher et al. 1994, p 134) and even reading successful theses in cognate areas may give them little indication of what to aim for at an intermediate stage of the research project. One of the key functions of the supervisors is to enable students to appreciate the standards which they are expected to attain. As Phillips and Pugh (2000, pp 23-24) have put it:

‘[Students] cannot get a PhD unless [they] know what the standards are...it is a vital responsibility of [the] supervisor to ensure that [they] are given every opportunity to become familiar with appropriate professional standards. It is only through this that [they] will be able to recognise and achieve them.’

Hopefully, as students learn from feedback, they should begin to internalize the standards and become able to critically assess their own work. This, of course, is part of becoming a successful researcher.

• to improve their skills
Feedback can also assist in developing students’ skills, including methodological skills (e.g. research design, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation) and writing skills. Students may or may not have the expertise to design and implement their research projects, and one of the functions of feedback is to advise on these matters and, in the case of shortfalls, assist the students to acquire relevant skills. Similarly, students’ skills in academic writing are likely to require development, and this is part of the function of feedback.

• to give them a sense of achievement
A further, and often neglected, reason for feedback is to give the student a sense of achievement. As Brown and Atkins (1988, p 136) have put it:

‘Students need to know that their work is valued and that their supervisors are genuinely interested in it.’

Being encouraged or praised is crucial to motivating students, particularly in the early stages of the project before (hopefully) success becomes apparent and becomes an internalized driver in itself.

• to deepen their understanding
The final reason is to assist students to deepen and develop their understanding of the problem or topic that they are researching through discussion at all of the stages from inception through to completed drafts.

But, if these objectives are to be achieved, feedback must be given in appropriate ways that will elicit a positive rather than a negative response from the student.

Suggestions include:

- thinking about an appropriate setting for the feedback
The setting for the feedback can have some bearing on how it is received. If you sit behind your desk with the student on the other side – particularly if they are on a lower level – then the signal is one of formal interaction between a superior and an inferior. If you are side by side in armchairs, the signal is more one of a discussion between colleagues.
- opening by setting out expectations for the session

It can be useful at the start to set out your expectations for the session. In particular, you should make it clear that the primary objective is to enable further progress in the research project (see Phillips and Pugh (2000, p 174)). It also can be helpful here to make it clear that, where appropriate, you will expect students to challenge your views and opinions, and that this is a normal and essential part of the process.

- summarizing your understanding of the material submitted

One of the most useful things that a supervisor can do is to summarize your understanding of the material that the student has submitted. ‘So it seems to me that the central thrust of what you are saying is....’

- checking your understanding with the student

Once you have summarized, it can be very useful just to check that your understanding is the same as that of the student – ‘Have I got that right?’ This not only reassures students that you are taking their work seriously, but offers an opportunity to correct any misapprehensions at the start of the session.

- identifying the strengths of the work

You can then identify what you saw as the strengths of the work submitted, which is an opportunity for praise. ‘What I thought was really interesting was... what I most enjoyed reading was...’

- identifying the areas for attention

You can identify the areas for attention in ways that are constructive and positive rather than destructive and negative, e.g. ‘why did you try to solve the problem using method X rather than method Y?’ rather than ‘Didn't you realise that you could have avoided these difficulties with method Y?’

- inviting the student to respond

Once you have identified the areas, then you can ask the student to respond. Here, it is very important that you allow the student to engage with the matters that you have raised, and in particular it must be recognized that they will need time to respond to queries about their work. You must also be prepared to listen carefully and check that the student has understood the point being made.

- summarizing the discussion

When the points have been exhausted, then it is important to summarise the discussion. You may try to draw the threads together and then check it with the student or, alternatively, you may ask the student to summarize.

- maintaining a record

Finally, for the benefit of both the student and yourself, there should be an agreed written record. Normally, this would be written by the student, copied to you, if necessary amended, and then agreed jointly.

By extending the work of Partington et al. (1993, p 78) to the case of supervisor feedback, it can be said that you should avoid acting:
• as an inquisitor
This supervisor behaves like a TV interviewer quizzing a politician during an election campaign, rapidly shooting out hostile questions, interrupting the answers, and generally trying to score points. Such an approach may intimidate the students so that he or she is unable to respond or anger them to the extent that the session becomes an adversarial confrontation.

- as a committee person
The committee person takes the student through the material page by page questioning each matter as it arises rather than synthesising points into key issues relating to the research.

- as a hobby horse rider
This supervisor has strong feelings or prejudices about one area of the submitted work and keeps returning to questions on this while neglecting other aspects of the research.

- as a kite flyer
The kite-flyer has identified a – usually fairly tenuous – link between the work submitted and another subject and persists in exploring this to the detriment of the substance of the research.

- a reminiscer
This supervisor continually regales the student with stories of their own research career to the detriment of feedback on the material submitted.

### Reflecting on Practice
What arrangements do you make for ensuring that feedback to research students is prompt? How do you ensure that feedback is constructive? Do you maintain written records of feedback given to research students?

### 10. Monitoring Progress
Clearly, one of the key tasks of a student’s supervisors is to monitor the progress of the research project formally in accordance with University requirements.

With regard to monitoring progress with the student, the University requires that the academic/lead supervisor should hold a formal meeting at least 10 times per year, approximately monthly, with the student to review their progress and that the details should be recorded by the student on ePortfolio (Guidelines for Supervisors, 5). At least 3 of these meetings each year should include the full supervisory team. All formal supervisions should be undertaken in a business-like way, with a date, time and agenda agreed with the student. Supervisors should ensure that, as far as possible, they should not be disturbed while they are meeting with the student.

In addition to monitoring progress formally with the student, supervisors must submit an annual report on the student's progress, as part of the student’s formal annual progress review on ePortfolio.

### Reflecting on Practice
Do you meet your research students approximately once per month to monitor their progress? Do you do this systematically? What school requirements are there for monitoring student progress? Do you meet the University's requirements for annual monitoring?
11. Assisting Students to Complete

After students have persevered through academic and possibly personal problems and completed the basic research, they then enter a new tunnel called 'writing up' their thesis. While students may have conscientiously written up draft sections and chapters as they have gone along, they now face the task of putting it together as a whole and creating a thesis.

This would be easy if it were just a matter of throwing together what has already been written and adding linking sections, but demand rather more. As Barnes (cited Blaxter et al. (1996, p27)) has pointed out, ‘...a thesis is far more than a passive record of [the] research and generally involves presenting an argument or point of view. In other words it must say something and be substantiated with reasoned argument and evidence’.

Students can find it difficult to translate their work into a thesis, and here the supervisor may be able to assist by giving them a framework within which to work. One suggestion (see e.g. Cryer 2000, Taylor 2002) is to ask students to think of themselves as explorers who have undertaken a journey and who are writing a guidebook for others to follow.

As guides, they need to explain where they started from, what other guides they read, why they decided to undertake the journey at all, why they went off in a particular direction, what their route was subsequently, what they discovered on the way, where they arrived at the end of the journey, how it differed from the start, and where they would go in the future. They can be asked to map this on a few sides of paper, thinking carefully about what information must be imparted to enable someone to follow, what should be imparted, and what may be interesting but not strictly necessary.

Supervisors can then give feedback on the map, both on the overall clarity of the guidebook and upon the priorities assigned to particular stages in the journey. By this means, students can begin to construct a coherent outline of the thesis.

Once the general lines are clear, students can then be asked to fill in more details of sections of the journey, and then sub-sections until they have a detailed guidebook. This can then be translated into the structure for a thesis, e.g. starting point (introduction), existing guidebooks (literature review), reasons (triggers for the research), direction (methodology), route and discoveries on the way (substantive research chapters), arrival (analysis and results), difference from the starting point (contribution to knowledge) and future (where research should go).

If, by these or other means, students can be assisted to establish a framework for their thesis, they then still have to write it. Here, supervisors can give guidance at least upon four key matters, namely communication, style, drafting, and managing the writing process.

A thesis is, of course, a form of communication, and it is necessary to consider in advance the audience to which it is addressed and how students might meet their needs. Here Cryer (2000, p 178) has some excellent advice which students can be given or pointed towards:

‘The crucially important audience for theses are external examiners. Think of them as individuals who are exceptionally busy and grossly under-paid and who therefore have to read theses quickly. They will expect them to be well-structured and to be argued coherently to make the case for certain
solutions to specific research problems. Irrelevancies will irritate, as will having to tease out meaning that research students should have extracted themselves. Think of them also as individuals who are very able and experienced in the general area, which means that the background material should be as concise as is consistent with showing that it is known. However, no external examiner can be an expert in your work. By the time you finalise your thesis, you and you alone are the world’s expert. So the aspects that make your work significant and original and worthy of a PhD…need to be argued coherently; each step needs to be spelled out, the outcomes must be stated unambiguously, and all their implications identified and discussed in depth.’

With regard to style, it will of course be expected that the thesis is written up in 'academic writing', and it has already been suggested that students should be pointed towards the literature and to exemplars of the style appropriate to their work.

In terms of drafting, even with a framework students can find this a daunting task. One way of assisting them is to encourage them to write their first draft 'as it comes', and then work with you to polish and re-polish it into its final form. Again, this can pose a dilemma for supervisors in so far as there can be a fine line between helping the student clarify what they want to say and writing it for them. There is no simple solution to this dilemma, although it can sometimes be avoided by directing students to look at other work in which similar problems have been overcome.

In the context of advising on drafts, it is worth noting that the University's Guidelines for research supervisors (paragraph 13) state that supervisors should not act as a proof reader and should make this clear to the student.

Last, but by no means least, students have to exercise a high degree of self-discipline to complete the thesis, particularly within a short period of time. It can be useful for supervisors to bring their students' attention to what Delamont et al. (1997, p 121) have described as the four 'golden rules' of writing, namely:

- the more they write, the easier it gets
- if they write every day, it becomes a habit
- tiny bits of writing add up to a lot of writing
- the longer they don’t write, the more difficult it is to get back in the habit.

Reflecting on Practice
How do you help your students to translate their research materials into a thesis? What constitutes helping as opposed to writing it for students? Are there exemplars you can point students towards to assist their writing up?

12. Advising on Submission
The completion of the first serious draft is usually an immense relief for students. But it can be a major headache for supervisors, who need to advise students whether what they have done has the potential to meet the standards for the award, and if not what needs to be done to bring it up to scratch. Giving such advice to students can be particularly difficult at the start of a supervisor’s career, when their own experience may only be as an examinee and they are
unsure about what is looked for by an examiner.
In such cases, the starting point for supervisors is to try to determine the criteria for success or failure. The assessment criteria for the relevant research degree are detailed in the University's regulations for research degree and, where appropriate, in the individual research degree programme regulations. Once the criteria are reasonably clear, a supervisor can then read the draft and try to identify the strengths of the thesis (the area where the criteria are clearly met) and the weaknesses (those where criteria are not met). The latter can then be divided into weaknesses which are minor, major, or which constitute potentially fatal flaws. Again here it is very useful to have a second opinion from other experienced colleagues on the supervisory team.

Once the diagnosis has been made and confirmed, then feedback can be given to students. It can be helpful to do this within the framework set out above – criteria, strengths, and weaknesses – before advising them how to proceed. If all has gone reasonably well earlier, there should not be fatal flaws (which would necessitate further research), but weaknesses to be corrected by re-drafting or textual amendments. Subject to these being made – and the supervisor should insist upon seeing successive drafts – the supervisor should be able to give the green light for submission.

Reflecting on Practice
Do you know the criteria for the award of a research degree in your subject? What, in your view, would constitute minor weaknesses, major ones, and fatal flaws in a thesis?

13. Advising on Examination
At least three months before submission, the process of arranging the examination begins. Supervisors will propose examiners, usually one internal and one external, for formal nomination by the Head of School or nominee. It is important to consult the student about the appointment of examiners. The identification of an appropriate external examiner in particular can, as various studies (see for example: McWilliam et al. (2002); Mullins and Kiley (2002)) have shown, involve some heart-searching by supervisors; should they suggest Professor X who is a leading authority in the field but is known to be fiercely critical of the offerings of lesser mortals, or Dr Y who is less distinguished but more likely to take a balanced approach to examining the student's work? The ideal is, of course, an external examiner who is distinguished and who will take a balanced approach, and if at all possible, supervisors should suggest the names of examiners of this ilk.

With examiners formally appointed by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and the thesis forwarded to them for scrutiny, the academic supervisor is responsible for arranging the date, time and place of the final examination, the viva.

Unless students have previously attended Universities in which their awards were conditional upon an oral examination, the chances are that the examination for their research degree will be their first experience of an oral examination. This might be of little consequence if, as in many other European countries, the viva was a public affair and they could go along and experience what happened. However, this is rare in the UK, and for most students what goes on in the viva has, historically, been a mystery, one which has only recently
become the subject of systematic research (see e.g. Tinkler and Jackson (2002)).

In the absence of hard information, tales of oral examinations being used to inflict unnaturally cruel punishment on research students abound with the result that, as Delamont et al. (1997, p.148) have put it:

'The student may well fear and dread the [viva] examination. Even when the student is outstandingly competent, and however excellent the thesis may be, the process of examination is a stressful one...most [candidates] feel worried by the indeterminacy of the viva'

Here, the supervisors can play a role, in three main ways.

♦ Firstly, by de-mystifying the oral examination through explaining its purposes, procedures, and outcomes. In the case of Newcastle, these are set out in the University's Handbook for the Examiners of Research Degrees and it can be helpful for supervisors to take students through the relevant parts.

♦ Secondly, by indicating what the student should do to prepare in terms of re-reading their thesis, keeping up to date with the literature, and preparing for questions.

♦ Thirdly, and perhaps most helpfully, supervisors can arrange for students to have a short mock oral examination in which colleagues who are experienced as examiners question them on a key part of their thesis and afterwards give feedback on their performance. Such an opportunity to 'taste' what is in store is invaluable in enabling students to prepare themselves both intellectually and psychologically for what is to come.

Reflecting on Practice
Do your research students have any previous experience of vivas? How do they feel about them? How can you help them to prepare?

14. Assisting with Career Development, Networking, and Publication

It is good practice for supervisors to assist students with career development, networking, and the publication of their work.

At one time, students undertaking a research degree, particularly a PhD, were destined predominantly for the groves of academe, and career development took the form of socializing them into the values and rituals of the relevant academic 'tribe' (see e.g. Delamont et al. (2000)). But it is no longer the case that successful research students necessarily become academics – a majority do not – and even those who do follow an academic career require a wider portfolio of skills. Part of the job of a supervisor is, from the very start of the studentship, to encourage the student to actively acquire the key skills necessary to give them an edge in the labour market.

While all skills are important, it is perhaps worth highlighting one, namely the need to encourage research students to acquire the skills to give effective oral presentations because such skills are vital in an academic context. It is important to ensure that students acquire the necessary training, either as part of the faculty research training programme, or through directing students’ attention towards the relevant literature (e.g. Cryer (2000)), and offering opportunities for students to give mini-presentations and receive feedback.
Under the heading of skills, supervisors also need to encourage students to record the skills that they acquire over the course of their research programme for later use as evidence to prospective employers. This can be done by the student in the ePortfolio record.

A second function of supervisors can be to encourage students to network within the subject community and to provide opportunities for them to do so. Academia is heavily dependent upon networking informally and formally, in the latter case through professional associations and conferences (see Blaxter et al. (1998, pp 55-77)). Students need to be encouraged to establish their own informal networks of academic colleagues in their subject areas, and to join in professional networks, e.g. the postgraduate sections of professional associations. This can be important for their research, as a counterweight to isolation, and in acquiring networking skills which will stand them in good stead in any career.

A third function of supervisors is, as soon as it is practical to do so, to encourage students to publish their work in scholarly journals. Publications, particularly those during the course of a research degree, can help variously to mark out their academic territory, bring them into contact with others working in the same field, boost their self-esteem, give them a better platform for applying for jobs and, last but not least, enhance school publication rates. But students do need guidance from their supervisors about how to write for publication, which journals or publishers to aim for, and how to go about submitting a paper or a book.

Research students’ writing for publications, of course, raises the issue of whose names should go on papers submitted to journals etc. Here, practice varies considerably between and within disciplines. In some the convention is that the supervisor’s name automatically goes on the paper as, if different, does the name of the person who has obtained the funding for the research. This can and does lead to friction if research students feel that they have done the vast majority of work for the paper but are effectively credited with an equal share of the authorship. This issue should be discussed openly with students, and one way around this which has been used in some subjects is to have a footnote indicating the relative contributions of the authors, say X the supervisor 20 per cent, and Y the research student 80 per cent.

Reflecting on Practice
Do you encourage students to think about career development at the start of their studentships? Do you encourage them to assemble an appropriate portfolio of skills for employment over the course of their studentship? Do you assist them to acquire effective presentation skills? Do you encourage students to network and provide opportunities for them to do so? Do you encourage students to publish? What is the relevant policy in your discipline for the attribution of authorship in publications?

15. Working with Supervisory Teams
The University adopts a team approach to supervision so you should expect to be part of supervisory teams of at least two members with the research skills and knowledge needed to supervise the research project. To become a member of such a supervisory team it is necessary to be on the approved supervisor list.
Different approaches may be adopted by the supervisory team. In joint supervision, the supervisory responsibilities are shared equally between members of the supervisory team. In other styles of supervision, members of the supervisory team may have different roles. There may be, for example, a lead supervisor and a co-supervisor responsible for a smaller element of the planned research; or a lead supervisor and an advisor responsible for, and able to deal with, general and pastoral responsibilities. In all instances one supervisor must be nominated as the academic supervisor and be responsible for the quality assurance aspects of the research degree e.g. sign off Project Approval and Annual Progress Review.

Members of supervisory teams are expected to discuss the role they adopt in the supervisory team. They should liaise regularly with each other and agree who will read and feedback on pieces of work supplied by the student. The research student is expected to stay in regular contact with both supervisors, and to discuss all aspects of their research with them. It is a requirement that the full supervisory team should meet with the student at least three times a year.

More detail on supervisory teams is provided in the University’s ‘Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes’:

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGRCoP.pdf

**Reflecting on Practice**

Do you discuss the requirements for a research degree with your co-supervisor(s) at the start of the studentship? Do you discuss ways of resolving inter-disciplinary differences and giving consistent advice to students? Have you and your co-supervisor(s) clear ideas of who is responsible for what in supervising the student?

**Conclusions**

Being an effective researcher is a necessary condition to be a research supervisor, but it is not a sufficient one; the latter requires being an effective supervisor as well. That, in turn, involves unpacking what is involved in effectively supervising a research student, reflecting on practice, and improving it. Hopefully these Guidelines will at least give food for thought in encouraging supervisors to review their effectiveness.

**References**


University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses

Introduction

The University is, of course, responsible for the quality and standards of postgraduate research awards made in its name. The function of examiners is to assist the University to discharge that responsibility by ensuring that the standards of postgraduate research awards at Newcastle are at least comparable to those in similar subjects in other Universities in the UK. The University expects that examiners will be rigorous and fair and that they will follow good practice. By undertaking their duties in this way, examiners not only maintain standards at Newcastle but, of course, also act as effective gatekeepers for the research community of which they are a part by ensuring candidates meet the academic criteria for membership. This Handbook covers Doctoral and Master of Philosophy research degrees i.e. the degrees of MPhil, MD and PhD etc and focuses on the examination of the thesis. Additional guidance is provided in the appendices at the end of the Handbook for the examination of the Integrated PhD programmes, and professional and practice-based Doctorates in the Arts and Humanities and Engineering.

For further information on the Research Degree Examination procedure and forms see: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/exam.htm

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D) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology
E) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Engineering Doctorate in the Schools of CEAM and CIVG
1. The Nomination and Appointment of Examiners

1.1 Nomination of Examiners

Candidates for postgraduate research degrees must complete the minimum period of registration required for the award and formally submit the exact title of their thesis for approval to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, normally not less than three months before they intend to submit it.

At the same time as the title is submitted, the Head of School/Institute in which the candidate is studying will nominate examiners for the thesis, via ePortfolio. Heads of School/Institute will consult supervisors about nominations. In the case of student candidates, heads should nominate one external and one internal examiner who is not the candidate’s supervisor. In exceptional cases where the University is unable to appoint an internal examiner, a second external examiner will be appointed.

When making nominations, Heads of School/Institute, in consultation with supervisors, will, take account of the criteria for the appointment of examiners in the University’s Code of Practice for Research Degree Students [link]

They will also present evidence that nominees fulfil these criteria. e.g. a short CV and a list of recent publications.

1.2 Independent Chair (where required)

Where two external examiners are appointed, or where the internal examiner has no previous experience of examining doctoral degrees, the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies will also appoint an independent member of University staff who will chair the oral examination.

Where the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies has determined that an independent chair is required, normally the independent chair should be from outside the candidate’s school/institute.

An Independent Chair makes sure the University’s procedures with regard to the examination of research degrees are followed. They take no part in the assessment process, but ensure that the examination process is conducted fairly and equitably.

The Independent Chair will be present for the duration of the oral examination, normally including the pre-meeting and post oral discussions between examiners. An Independent Chair will not be required to take notes of the meeting for the external examiners, but will be required to provide a summary report on the conduct of the oral examination to the Graduate School Administrator following the oral examination.

1.3 Appointment of Examiners

Examiners are appointed by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies on behalf of Senate. Following appointment examiners are sent:

♦ the terms and conditions of appointment, along with an abstract of the thesis to be examined
♦ the University’s Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees
♦ a copy of the work submitted by the candidate in fulfilment of the
requirements for the award
♦ a copy of the University’s Regulations and Examination Conventions governing the relevant research degree
♦ Information about the programme, if relevant
♦ examination report forms

2. Duties of Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses

The core duties of examiners for research degrees are:
♦ carefully to consider the written work submitted by candidates
♦ to arrive at an independent evaluation of whether the work submitted meets the standards of the award and, if not, in which aspects it is deficient
♦ to write an independent preliminary report and send it to the Graduate School Administrator for forwarding to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, in advance of the oral examination taking place (where one is required)
♦ to consult with the co-examiner and compare independent preliminary reports, after both independent reports have been submitted to the Graduate School Administrator
♦ in the case of the MPhil research degree where oral examinations are optional, to decide if it is appropriate to use this means of determining a candidate’s suitability for the award
♦ to agree with the supervisor a date and time for the oral examination
♦ to prepare for the oral examination in advance and compare independent preliminary reports with the co-examiner and agree an agenda for the examination
♦ to conduct the oral examination
♦ following examination of all written and, where appropriate, oral evidence, to decide whether the candidate has met the standards for the award
♦ to decide upon an appropriate recommendation to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies (the full list of recommendations allowed under University regulations is set out later in this document)
♦ to complete a joint report form with the co-examiner on the candidate’s performance and submit it to the Graduate School Administrator.
♦ in all cases where the recommendation is that the thesis be revised before award or re-submission for the original or a lesser degree, to agree with the co-examiner a written statement providing a full list of the changes to be made and/or work to be undertaken. This forms part of the Examiners’ Joint Report, which shall be formally forwarded to the candidate and the supervisory team by the relevant Graduate School Administrator.
♦ in the case of external examiners, to comment upon any aspects of a candidate’s experience or the examination process which they have judged to be particularly good or which have raised problems. This should be forwarded to the Graduate School Administrator for forwarding to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies.
In exceptional circumstances, and two or more weeks in advance of a scheduled oral examination, if the external examiner is unequivocally of the view that the thesis is not worthy of defence without significant rework, the external examiner should contact the Graduate School Administrator. The relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies shall then request independent preliminary reports from each examiner before determining whether it is appropriate for extraordinary arrangements to be put in place for the examiners to confer before the scheduled meeting. If approved by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, the examiners will be permitted to prepare a joint report giving the candidate the recommendation of resubmitting in twelve months, with an oral examination at that time.

3. Examination Criteria

Doctoral Programmes

Doctoral degrees at Newcastle University are awarded to candidates that demonstrate:

♦ The ability to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship;
♦ A systematic understanding of an existing body of knowledge that is at the forefront of an academic field;
♦ The ability to critically explore, evaluate and test their ideas, and those of others, and to relate them to a wider body of knowledge;
♦ A good understanding of the research techniques, methods or approaches adopted and applied in a field of enquiry;
♦ The ability to conceive and implement a project which demonstrates an understanding of how to conduct research at the forefront of a field;
♦ An ability to produce research material worthy of publication.

For examination of the Integrated PhD programmes, professional and practice-based Doctorates in the Arts and Humanities, please see the additional guidance at the end of the Handbook

MPhil programme

The Degree of Master of Philosophy (MPhil) is awarded to candidates displaying convincing evidence of the capacity to pursue research and scholarship and represent original work.

For the award of an MPhil degree the University requires:

• A systematic understanding of knowledge that is informed by work at the forefront of an academic field;
• An ability to evaluate and critically appraise current research and advanced scholarship, and some evidence of originality in the application of this work;
• An understanding and critical appreciation of the research techniques, methods or approaches adopted and applied in a field of enquiry;
• An ability to conceive and implement a research project which demonstrates an understanding of how to conduct research in a field.

Normally an MPhil thesis will be more focused or limited in scope than a doctoral degree, which will demonstrate greater depth of critical enquiry than the MPhil. Relative to the doctoral degree, the MPhil will have less emphasis on original work and it need not be worthy of publication.

All research degrees
For all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination should be:

- **Authentic**
The submission should be the candidate’s own work and not plagiarized from the work of others, published or unpublished. All sources used should be appropriately acknowledged using a recognized form of referencing.

- **Scholarly**
The thesis should conform to the normal canons of scholarship, studying a topic in-depth, and displaying critical discrimination and a sense of proportion in evaluating evidence and the opinion of others. Sources should be cited accurately, consistently, and correctly in the text and in the bibliography.

- **Professional**
The thesis should demonstrate the author has acquired the skills of a professional researcher capable of conducting research in accordance with the ethical practices of their field, and that they possess a good understanding of their role in the wider research process. The author should also demonstrate the ability to exercise personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional research environments.

- **Well-structured, written, and presented**
The thesis should demonstrate skill in writing and presenting research similar to scholarly work in their field. It should be clearly structured and orderly in arrangement, and well-written and presented. Similarly, any composition, exhibition, artefact(s) or other products of practice arising from the research should be arranged and presented in an orderly and coherent way.

4. **Good Practice in the Examination of Research Degrees by Theses**
The purpose of this section is to outline good practice in the examination of research degrees by thesis.

4.1 **Pre-examination**
Before reading the work submitted, examiners should consider the criteria against which to evaluate theses outlined in section 3. Such criteria are relevant to both individual chapters, and the thesis as a whole.
4.2 Relating the examination criteria to chapters of the work

While research degrees vary between individual subjects the following provides a general guide outlining what to consider.

- **The context**
  - that the research question(s) have been placed in their academic and, where appropriate, industrial or commercial contexts
  - that, in the case of a thesis undertaken as part of a team project, the relationship of the research to the overall project is set out along with the contribution of the candidate relative to that of other team members

- **The literature**
  - that the relevant literature or an appropriately justified section of it has been covered
  - that the literature is reviewed in ways which are critical and analytical and not just descriptive
  - that the thesis demonstrates clear mastery of the literature
  - that explicit links are made between the literature and the topic of the thesis
  - that there are explicit links between the literature and the design of the study
  - that there is a summary of the literature in so far as it relates to the thesis topic

- **Methodology/methods**
  - that there is an awareness of the range of methodologies/methods which have been or might be used to tackle the topic
  - that there is adequate justification of the methodology(ies)/methods adopted for the research
  - that the methodology/methods are related to the design of the research
  - that practical problems and issues are identified and discussed
  - where applicable, that ethical considerations are outlined and discussed
  - where applicable, that matters of reliability and validity are identified and discussed

- **Design of the study**
  - that the design of the study is appropriate to the topic
  - that there is awareness of the limitations of the design adopted

- **Substantive research**
  - that the research design has been properly implemented
  - that the relevant sources of evidence have been explored

- **Analysis**
  - that appropriate theoretical and, where applicable, empirical techniques are used to analyse evidence
  - that the level and form of analysis is appropriate to the evidence
- Outcomes/Results
  ♦ that the outcomes/results identified relate to the topic
  ♦ that the outcomes/results are justified on the basis of the analysis of the evidence
  ♦ that the outcomes/results are presented clearly
  ♦ where applicable, that patterns and trends in the outcomes/results are accurately identified and summarized

- Discussion
  ♦ that the main points emerging from the outcomes/results have been picked up for discussion
  ♦ that there is an awareness of the limitations of the outcomes/results

- Conclusions
  ♦ that the conclusions relate to the initial focus of the study
  ♦ that the conclusions drawn are justified by the study
  ♦ that the implications of the conclusions for the field of knowledge have been identified

4.3 Examination of Written Work

While it is good practice for all examiners to have the examination criteria in mind prior to reading the thesis, it is recognized that different examiners may adopt different approaches to reading the work. What follows below are suggestions which will assist those new to examining.

♦ Start by gaining an overall impression of the substance of the thesis or dissertation
  Examiners can start by reading the full title, the abstract, and the introduction and then turn to the final chapter(s) to see what conclusions were reached. This should enable them to gain an overall impression of what the thesis is about and what has come out of it.

♦ Reflect on and relate the examination criteria to sections of the thesis
  Examiners may then reflect and consider how the criteria relating to the thesis (section 3 above) might be applied to the topic in question, e.g. the literature the candidate might be expected to have read, which methods would be appropriate, etc. By the end of this examiners should have effectively translated the examination criteria into a set of clearly-defined questions to be asked of the specific piece of work before them. In addition, their reflection may have led to new questions about the research.

♦ Read and note
  Examiners can then carefully read each chapter of the thesis or dissertation with the relevant questions in mind. They can note where questions have been answered satisfactorily, where clarification is needed, and where answers are not satisfactory. As, in the course of reading, additional questions occur, these may be noted and views recorded on how well the candidate has answered them in the present chapter or in subsequent ones.
♦ Reflect and summarise
Examiners should now have a clear idea of how far each section of the thesis meets the relevant criteria. These may be summarized to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis and to highlight issues where clarification is required.

♦ Consider whether the thesis meets the general criteria
In the process of reading the thesis section by section, examiners will have begun to formulate an impression of how it meets the more general criteria concerning authenticity, scholarship, and structure, presentation and citation (section 3 above). They may now consider how far the work meets these criteria and note where the work does fulfil them, where there is doubt, and where they are not met. This may involve re-reading all or part of the thesis and would normally include checking a sample of citations.

♦ Consider whether the criteria for the award have been met
The last area for consideration is whether the thesis meets the award specific criteria. It can be helpful here for examiners to refresh their memory of the University's regulations, in particular in the case of the PhD to consider the definition of originality. Again examiners should note in what respects the thesis meets the criteria, where this is unclear, and where it does not meet them.

If examiners follow the above, they should have notes on the extent to which the criteria are met for sections of the thesis, the latter as a whole, and in relation to the award. These notes should form a basis for writing a preliminary report.

4.4 The Preliminary Report
Examiners should then independently write a preliminary report, which will indicate their provisional assessment of the thesis and of the issues to be explored in the oral examination. The University recognises that these reports will vary considerably depending upon the discipline and the subject matter of the thesis. It would normally expect that, if the criteria have clearly been fully met, the report will normally be very brief. On the other hand, if examiners have serious doubts or concerns about whether criteria have been met, a fuller account would be expected.

A copy of the preliminary report should be sent to the Graduate School Administrator in advance of the oral examination (normally two weeks) for forwarding to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The preliminary report should not be shown to the candidate or supervisor.

4.5 Oral Examination
The purpose of the oral examination is to gather further evidence from the candidate about their suitability for the award, in particular:
♦ to ask the candidate to clarify issues relating to meeting criteria relating to specific parts of the thesis, to the thesis as a whole, and to the award
♦ to ascertain that the thesis is the candidate’s own work, that he or she has developed research skills at this level, and that he or she understands the relationship of the thesis to the wider field of knowledge
in cases where the thesis and/or the candidate for the award clearly does not meet the criteria, to find out the reasons. These may include the abilities of the candidate or other factors affecting the research, e.g. deficiencies in research training, the quality of supervision, the availability of resources, disruptions to the research process, or personal circumstances.

4.6 Guidelines for an oral examination to be conducted by video link or equivalent audio visual service

It is expected that all oral examinations will take place with both the candidate and examiners present at the University unless specifically requested otherwise. Video link or an equivalent audio visual service may be used in exceptional circumstances where either the candidate or one of the examiners is not able to be present at the University.

In order for an oral examination to be conducted in this way approval must be sought from the dean of postgraduate studies and approval will only be given where the integrity of the examination can be guaranteed. The guidelines listed below must be adhered to.

- In all cases it should be voluntary for candidates to participate in oral examinations conducted in this way and written consent should be obtained from them (this consent could be in the form of an email).
- A member of the supervisory team or internal adviser is not normally expected to be present unless at the specific request of the candidate, but is expected to be available to be contacted by the examiners or candidate (after the examination) if required, for example by telephone.
- Any time difference between the two locations should be taken into account and the timing of the examination planned to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged in any way by it taking place at an inappropriate time.
- Guidance should be provided to those involved regarding how many hours both the facilities and the people involved (student, academic staff and technical staff) will be required for.
- Skype is not considered reliable enough or of high enough quality for use during an oral examination and high quality video conferencing facilities should be used. Advice on Videoconferencing facilities should be obtained from the IT Service (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/videoconferencing/). Oral examinations can last for an entire day and therefore the technology needs to be able to facilitate this if necessary.
- Wherever possible the distance location used should belong to a ‘trusted partner’ e.g. the British Council.
- An opportunity should be provided in advance for those involved to trial the technology ahead of the examination.
- The examination should not be recorded.
- The candidate and examiners must be able to see each other at all times during the examination.
- Any materials brought into the examination by the candidate must be declared and be visible to the examiners at all times.
- An Independent Chair should be appointed to ensure that all parties are given sufficient opportunity to speak.
- Technical support should be available to those involved at all times.
4.7 Preparing for the Oral Examination

It is normally the supervisor who arranges the date, time and place of the oral examination. The supervisor should normally be available for consultation if necessary prior to and after the oral examination although they are not normally present (except in cases where the student has requested their presence but they will make no contribution to the examination).

Examiners should have a meeting, in strictest confidence and out of range of the candidate or other students, normally a couple of hours before the oral examination, to exchange and discuss preliminary reports. Examiners should then, bearing in mind each other's comments upon the written work, jointly determine:

♦ the key issues to be raised with the candidate
These will be those identified in the initial reports where clarification is required or where criteria have not been met.

♦ the order within which they are to be raised
In order to encourage candidates to talk, it can be helpful to raise relatively uncontroversial/factual issues at the start and then proceed to ones which are likely to be more difficult/conceptual when he or she is in the swing of things.

♦ who will 'lead' on each issue
Examiners usually decide upon a division of labour based upon their expertise in the topic, with one leading on each issue and the other asking supplementary questions
Normally, the external examiner chairs the proceedings and has overall responsibility for conducting the oral examination, unless an independent chair has been appointed.

4.8 Good practice in conducting the oral examination:

In the oral examination it is important to:

♦ provide a quiet space for the candidate to prepare themselves for the oral examination
Candidates should be provided with a quiet space, out of range of any preliminary discussions between the examiners and/or supervisor.

♦ ensure that the room is appropriately laid-out
The oral examination is a formal occasion, and the room should be appropriately laid out.

♦ introduce the examiners to the candidate
It is courteous to the candidate for the chair of the examiners to introduce him- or herself and the other examiner(s) to the candidate.

♦ explain the purpose of the oral examination to the candidate
It can be useful to explain to candidates that the purpose of the oral examination is to provide them with the opportunity to defend their thesis in high-level debate with experts drawn from the relevant research community
• **explain the process of the oral examination to the candidate**

As many candidates will not have previously undertaken an oral examination, it is important to explain the process to them. This involves the examiners asking questions about their work and supplementary questions based upon their answers.

The chair should make it clear that the examiners have a duty to thoroughly explore both the work presented and the candidate’s knowledge and understanding of both it and the wider field and that persistent questioning is a normal and necessary part of the process.

If he or she wishes, the chair should also say that no information about recommendations will be given until the examiners have conferred after the end of the oral examination but make it clear that this again is part of the process and that no inferences should be drawn.

The candidate should also be told that he or she may, if they wish, consult with their copy of the thesis throughout the oral examination.

Where an independent chair has been appointed they should make it clear that their role is to chair the oral examination, and to ensure the University’s procedures with regard to the examination of research degrees are followed and that the examination process is conducted fairly and equitably. They take no part in the assessment process.

• **start the oral examination by commending the candidate**

Candidates can be extremely nervous, and it is important to try and settle them down at the start of the oral examination by saying something commendatory but non-committal, e.g. 'We found your thesis very interesting', 'we particularly enjoyed...'.

• **question the candidate**

Examiners should then start the questions. Normally, the external examiner begins the questions, and he or she should choose ones to start with which candidates should be able to answer without undue difficulty, e.g. why did you decide to do this topic?, what aspect of the work have you most enjoyed? Further questions should then be asked covering the key issues and in the order previously identified. In questioning the candidate, examiners should:

- **ask questions in a constructive and positive way**

  Examiners should try to ask questions in ways that are constructive and positive rather than destructive and negative, e.g. 'why did you try to solve the problem using method X rather than method Y?' rather than 'Didn’t you realise that you could have avoided these difficulties with method Y?'

- **use an appropriate range of questioning techniques**

  Questions may, as Murray (1998) has noted, be general ('How did you come to study this topic?'), open ('tell me about your methodology?') or closed ('why did you think that the confidence limits were unimportant in this case?).

  General or open ones are useful in encouraging the candidate to reflect upon their work, while closed ones lead to specific answers. Examiners
should try to tailor the type of question to the type of answer required and, if possible, aim for a mix of general and open questions (which are harder to answer but can reveal much more about the candidate) and closed ones (which may reveal less but are easier for the candidate to answer).

- recognize that candidates may need time to answer
  Particularly when general or open questions are asked, candidates may need some time to gather their thoughts together and produce a coherent answer. Examiners need to recognize this and encourage candidates to reflect, e.g. by telling them to 'take your time'
  - praise a good answer
    When candidates give a particularly incisive or interesting answer, it can be helpful to their morale to praise them
  - give candidates a chance to recover from a poor answer
    When candidates give a poor answer, this may be through misunderstanding or nerves. Rephrasing a question and asking it again gives the able candidate the opportunity to recover the position or may confirm the inability to respond of a weaker one.

♦ conclude the candidate’s oral examination
After you and your co-examiner are satisfied that you have gathered the relevant evidence, you should indicate this to the candidate, thank them for answering your questions, ask whether there are any concluding comments which they wish to make, explain again that the examiners will now consult about the outcome, and tell them how the recommendation will be communicated to them. While this may be done informally after the oral examination, candidates should be informed that formal notification of the result will be sent to them by the Graduate School Administrator.

♦ reach a decision
Following the conclusion of the oral examination, you should ask the candidate to leave the room while you and your co-examiner discuss and determine an agreed examination outcome in accordance with the recommendations permitted by the University regulations. The examiners discussions should be conducted in strictest confidence and out of range of the candidate or other students.

4.9 Poor practice in conducting the oral examination
According to Partington, Brown and Gordon (1993: p 78) poor practice when conducting an oral examination would be for an examiner to act throughout as:

♦ an inquisitor
  This examiner behaves like a TV interviewer quizzing a politician during an election campaign, rapidly shooting out hostile questions, interrupting the answers, and generally trying to score points. Such an approach may intimidate the candidate so that he or she is unable to respond or anger them to the extent that the oral examination becomes an adversarial confrontation.
♦ a proof reader
This examiner takes candidates line by line through their theses asking questions about errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. If these are exceptionally poor, instead of proof reading in the oral examination, examiners can make it a requirement that the thesis is re-typed or hand the candidate a list of corrections after the oral examination.

♦ a committee person
The committee person takes the candidate through the thesis page by page questioning each matter as it arises rather than synthesising points into key issues relating to the trigger for the study, the methodology, the design.

♦ a hobby horse rider
This examiner has strong feelings or prejudices about one area of the thesis and keeps returning to questions on this while neglecting other aspects of the research.

♦ a kite flyer
The kite-flyer has identified a – usually fairly tenuous – link between the thesis and another subject and persists in exploring this to the detriment of the examination of the topic as defined by the candidate, i.e. effectively examines a thesis which the student did not write.

♦ a reminiscer
This examiner continually regales the candidate with stories of their own research career to the detriment of the examination of the candidate’s work.

5. Recommendations open to Examiners

5.1 Doctoral candidates
Following the first submission and examination of a candidate, the examiners may make the following recommendations for doctoral candidates:

-The Candidate be admitted to the degree
(a)(i) That the candidate be admitted immediately to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor corrections of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor revisions being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

-The Candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree
(b)(i) That the candidate’s thesis be deemed to be of a satisfactory standard, but that the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners in the oral examination and that the candidate therefore be required to attend within six months either
for a second oral examination or for a written examination, as the examiners shall determine in their written report.

(b)(ii) That the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners in the thesis and the candidate be permitted to revise and re-submit the thesis within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners, without a further oral examination.

(b)(iii) That the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners in the thesis and the candidate be permitted to revise and re-submit the thesis within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be re-examined orally.

-The Candidate be recommended for a Master’s degree

(c)(i) That the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Master’s Degree and should immediately be awarded that degree instead.

(c)(ii) That the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Master’s Degree and should be awarded that degree instead subject to minor corrections of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(c)(iii) That the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Master’s Degree and should be awarded that degree instead subject to minor revisions being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

-The Candidate be permitted to resubmit for a Master’s degree

(d) That the candidate be permitted to revise and re-submit the thesis for the appropriate Master’s Degree within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be re-examined orally if the examiners so require by indication in their written report.

-The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners

(e) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be adjudged to have failed.

Recommendations for doctoral award ((a) above)

In cases where examiners are satisfied that all of the criteria for the doctoral award are fully met, they should recommend the award of the degree immediately or subject to making minor textual corrections or minor revisions to the satisfaction of the internal examiner.

Where the examination has been conducted by two external examiners, they should agree between themselves who will receive the revisions before the award is finally recommended.
Other recommendations ((b) to (e) above))

In cases in which examiners are not satisfied that all of the criteria are fully met and are unable to recommend award, then there is a range of other recommendations which can be made. A recommendation to revise a thesis for resubmission and re-examination should only be made if, in the judgement of the examiners, it has the potential to meet the standards for the original award submitted for or for another award. If it does not, then it should be failed.

Recommendations Following a Further Oral or Written Examination

In the cases of candidates subject to recommendations c(i), c(ii), c(iii) and (d) above, the only options open to the examiners when re-examining the thesis are:

- The Candidate be admitted to the degree
  (a)(i) That the candidate be admitted immediately to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
  a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor corrections of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.
  (a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor revisions being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

- The Candidate be recommended for a Master’s degree
  (b)(i) That the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree and should immediately be awarded that degree instead.
  (b)(ii) That the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree and should be awarded that degree instead subject to minor corrections of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

- The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners
  (c) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be adjudged to have failed.

5.2 Master of Philosophy candidates

Following the first submission and examination of a candidate, the examiners may make the following recommendations for Master of Philosophy candidates:

- The Candidate be admitted to the degree
  (a)(i) That the candidate be admitted immediately to the degree of Master of Philosophy.
(a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy subject to minor corrections of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy subject to minor revisions being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

- The Candidate be permitted to resubmit for the degree

(b)(i) That the candidate’s thesis be deemed to be of a satisfactory standard, but that the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners in the oral examination and that the candidate therefore be required to attend within six months either for a second oral examination or for a written examination, as the examiners shall determine in their written report.

(b)(ii) That the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners and the candidate be permitted to revise and resubmit the thesis within twelve months without a further oral examination.

(b)(iii) That the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners and the candidate be permitted to revise and resubmit the thesis within twelve months and be re-examined orally.

- The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners

(c) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be adjudged to have failed.

Recommendations for the Master of Philosophy award ((a) above)

In cases where examiners are satisfied that all of the criteria for the MPhil award are fully met, they should recommend the award of the degree immediately or subject to making minor textual corrections or minor revisions to the satisfaction of the internal examiner.

Where the examination has been conducted by two external examiners, they should agree between themselves who will receive the revisions before the award is finally recommended.

Other recommendations ((b) and (c) above))

In cases in which examiners are not satisfied that all of the criteria are fully met and are unable to recommend the MPhil award, then a recommendation to revise a thesis for resubmission and re-examination should only be made if, in the judgement of the examiners, it has the potential to meet the standards for the MPhil award. If it does not, then it should be failed.
Recommendations Following a Resubmission

In the cases of candidates subject to recommendations b(i), b(ii) and b(iii), the only options open to the examiners when re-examining the thesis are:

- **The Candidate be admitted to the degree**

  (a)(i) That the candidate be **admitted immediately** to the degree of Master of Philosophy.

  (a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

  (a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Master of Philosophy **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

- **The Candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners**

  (b) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be **adjudged to have failed**.

In deciding which of these recommendations to make in a given case, examiners should also take into account of the factors in 5.3 below.

### 5.3 Other factors to be considered in determining the outcome

- **the amount of work entailed in revising the thesis**

  It is possible to recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted within either six or twelve months, and examiners have to make a judgement about the amount of work entailed. If this is a re-writing of sections of the thesis, then normally up to six months is appropriate; if it is a complete re-write, then within twelve months would be appropriate. If further research is required, this should normally be secondary, e.g. discriminating data or recalculating statistics, and not primary, e.g. gathering new data.

- **external factors relating to the research**

  While, of course, external factors relating to the research must not generally be regarded as extenuating in the context of recommending award, examiners may wish to take into account the availability of equipment or facilities when considering the time within which a candidate should have the opportunity to revise and re-submit their thesis, subject to the maximum of twelve months.

- **the personal circumstances of the candidate**

  - The University has established procedures for dealing with personal extenuating circumstances affecting research students throughout the duration of their studies. A research student can apply for an interruption of studies, a change of candidature or an extension to their submission deadline, if personal circumstances are impacting on their studies.

  - Following submission of a thesis, if a candidate is aware of any
circumstances that may stop them from attending the oral examination, these should be brought to the attention of their Supervisor and the Graduate School Administrator, to determine if it is necessary to delay the oral examination.

♦ A candidate should also contact their Supervisor and the Graduate School Administrator, if there are personal circumstances they believe could impact on their performance at the oral examination. This information will then be provided to the examiners, in advance of the oral examination, to determine if any reasonable adjustments are required.

♦ Irrespective of personal circumstances, examiners will be expected to assess the candidate against the assessment criteria for the relevant research degree. Personal circumstances must not generally be regarded as extenuating in the context of recommending award. However, examiners might wish to take personal circumstances into account when considering the recommendations open to them and when specifying the time within which the candidate should have the opportunity to revise and re-submit, subject to the maximum of twelve months.

♦ Such personal circumstances may include illness, pregnancy, personal stress, linguistic or cultural difficulties in undertaking and writing up the research.

♦ By attending an oral examination, a candidate is declaring that they are fit to attend the examination, and as such, it is unlikely that a student would be able to submit a later claim that their performance was affected by personal circumstances.

♦ Additionally, in the rare cases of candidates whose thesis is satisfactory but who fail the oral examination, personal circumstances may be taken into account in considering whether to hold a second oral examination or to hold a written examination. So if, for example, there are medical reasons why the candidate will perform poorly in an oral examination or in cases where candidates are returning overseas and will find it difficult to return for a second oral examination, examiners may consider substituting a written test.

6. Writing the Final Report

After reading the thesis and, if appropriate, conducting the oral examination, examiners have to decide upon a recommendation, write a report on the examination, and decide what information should be given to candidates required to amend or re-submit theses or dissertations. External examiners are also invited to make comments on any aspect of candidate’s experiences which they have judged to be particularly good or which have raised problems.

Where an oral examination has been held, the final report should be written immediately following the oral examination or as soon as possible thereafter.

In the vast majority of cases, examiners independently arrive at the same verdict and concur in the recommendation. They should then jointly complete the supplied final report form. This involves completing a checklist of how far the criteria for the award have been met by the candidate and stating the
recommendation to Senate. Final reports should be sent to the Graduate School Administrator who will, subject to approval by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, forward them to the candidate and the candidate's supervisor.

In a few cases, examiners may be unable to agree upon a recommendation. In this case, they should complete the form indicating their recommendations and the grounds for disagreement, and forward it to the Graduate School Administrator. (This report will not be made available to the candidate but will, if the candidate should subsequently appeal, form part of the formal record of appeal). The University will then appoint a new external examiner who will re-examine the thesis, if necessary conduct a further oral examination, and make a recommendation which is final. The additional examiner shall be told that the previous examiners had failed to reach agreement but will not have sight of the report. On the occasion of the second oral examination the candidate's supervisory team (and where appropriate the Internal Examiner) shall be available to be consulted by the additional external examiner. The relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies shall appoint a member of University staff as an independent observer, who will report on the conduct of the oral examination. The main supervisor shall co-ordinate the arrangements for the oral examination. After the conclusion of the oral examination, the additional examiner shall make a recommendation which shall be final. He/she shall submit a final report to the relevant Graduate School Administrator who will, subject to the approval of the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies, forward it to the candidate and the candidate's supervisory team in the normal way.

6.1 Giving Information to Candidates Required to Revise or Resubmit Work

In cases where the recommendation is that changes need to be made to the thesis before resubmission, it is the responsibility of the examiners to provide a joint written statement providing full details of all changes and revisions required. This forms part of the Examiners’ Joint Report which shall be formally forwarded to the candidate and the supervisory team by the relevant Graduate School Administrator with formal written confirmation of the examination outcome. It should be noted that the presumption is that if the candidate makes these changes and revisions to the satisfaction of the designated examiner this will lead to a recommendation for award. Normally it is the internal examiner who examines any minor corrections or minor revisions required to the thesis for students, but where there are two external examiners, it should be agreed who will undertake the role to examine the minor correction or minor revisions. Where a resubmission is required, both examiners will examine the resubmitted thesis.

It is therefore important that, before they part after the oral examination, the examiners agree exactly what the student is required to do before revision or resubmission. Where the recommendation is that the degree be awarded subject to minor textual changes, this will simply consist of a list of the corrections required, but where the thesis is referred for minor revisions (within a period of up to six months) or resubmission (within twelve months), a more substantial list of changes/work to be done must be provided. It is vital that this is comprehensive – a student who has made all of the changes required by the examiners but who is then denied the award because of further deficiencies would have good grounds for appeal.
6.2 Commenting upon the Candidate's Experience

External examiners are invited to make any relevant comments upon aspects of a candidate's experience or the examination process which they feel have been particularly good or which have raised problems. These comments will be sent to the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies for consideration.

References

R. Murray, The Viva (University of Strathclyde: Centre for Academic Practice, 1998)


Appendices

A) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated)

Integrated PhD programmes consist of two components:

1. Taught Component (120 - 200 credits):

   This consists of taught modules including a choice of specialist modules and research methods modules. An individual programme of study is agreed between the student and the Degree Programme Director. All assignments are subject to moderation by an external examiner for the programme.

2. Research Component:

   Every student submits a thesis of approximately 50,000 words (or as set out in Faculty guidance in the Rules for Form of Theses: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/20RulesThesis.pdf). A formal written research proposal is approved by an independent school panel and supervisor(s) are allocated. There is a formal progression meeting to approve progression from the taught to the research element. An independent school panel makes a recommendation on progress on the research element of the programme annually.

   According to the University’s regulations: “Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) are required to demonstrate:

   (a) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;

   (b) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;

   (c) the general ability to conceptualize, design, implement and adjust a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline. Where appropriate, also to demonstrate the ability to formulate and test hypotheses and to generate alternative explanations for the data available;

   (d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
(e) a range of advanced professional and key skills related to their likely employment context including the ability to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

A doctoral thesis should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication.”

An acceptable Integrated PhD thesis will therefore meet the same criteria as those laid down by the University for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. The length of the thesis will be around two-thirds of the length of a traditional PhD thesis, approximately 50,000 words. It is therefore likely that the Integrated PhD thesis will be more tightly focused, the literature review less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of data collected less than might normally be expected for a traditional PhD. Nevertheless, the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

Students are encouraged to use their assignments from the taught element of the programme to help formulate their ideas, construct the methodology and explore the literature for their thesis. For many students, therefore, some of the work that might normally be found in a traditional PhD thesis will already have contributed to the assessed work for the taught component. These assignments are subject to external examination. They can however, be made available to both internal and external examiners of Integrated PhD theses prior to the oral examination should the examiners so require.

B) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of practice-based Doctoral degrees in Arts and Humanities

1. Fine Art and Digital Cultures practice-based PhD

In the field of Fine Art and Digital Cultures, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i) Research in creative Fine Art and Digital Cultures practice, leading to a final submission of a substantial body of creative art work which demonstrates coherence and originality and constitutes a recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary Fine Art and Digital Cultures practice.
ii) A critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this, the candidate will document and demonstrate in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project, a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes, and demonstrate a critical and informed understanding of the contexts in which the artwork has been made. It will explain how this field has been expanded or developed through the candidate’s research. This component of the submission will also include thorough visual documentation of the creative work.

2. Music practice-based PhD

In the field of music, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations may undertake one of the following:

i) submit a portfolio of original compositions in an agreed format

or

ii) carry out substantial research in creative practice, leading to a final submission that includes documented performance as supplementary material

The expression "in an agreed format" is intended to accommodate a broad definition of composition where innovative modes of presentation are given equal consideration to submissions in conventional formats.

In both categories above, the final submission should constitute a substantial body of work demonstrating originality informed by contemporary practice, and demonstrating cohesion, command of existing technique and a recognisable contribution to the development of the discipline. A self-critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 40,000 words should be submitted demonstrating an ability to situate the candidate’s creative practice within the broader context of the discipline. The submission should be supported by relevant audio and, if appropriate, audio-visual material.

3. Film Practice practice-based PhD

In the field of Film Practice, candidates whose area of research is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i. Research in creative Film practice leading to a final submission of substantial body of creative work which demonstrates coherence and originality and constitutes recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary Film practice. This research should be in an agreed format and may include a feature-length non-fiction/ documentary/ hybrid film, or a series of related short non-fiction/ documentary/ hybrid films. This information must be incorporated digitally in the hard copy of the thesis, but may also - by arrangement with the research supervisors – be presented in its original form in an exhibition or installation.

and

ii. A critical commentary between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this the candidate will document and demonstrate a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project. The commentary must frame the overall project, intellectually situating it in relation to relevant...
texts and practices within the broader disciplinary context. It will explain how the research field has been expanded or developed through the candidate’s research.

4. Theatre/Performance practice-based PhD

In the field of theatre/performance, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i) Research in creative theatre/performance practice, leading to the delivery of a substantial piece of creative work which demonstrates coherence and constitutes a recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary performance practice, and

ii) A critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this the candidate will document and demonstrate a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project, and present a critical and informed understanding of the contexts in which the performance has been made. It will explain how this field has been expanded or developed through the candidate’s research. This component of the submission will also include documentation of the creative work.

As with all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination in the field of theatre/performance should demonstrate the ability to create and interpret new knowledge through original research and advanced scholarship (for further details, see Section 3 ‘Examination Criteria’ in the Handbook for Examiners of Doctoral and Masters of Philosophy Research Degree Examiners Handbook).

5. PhD in Creative Writing

A PhD in Creative Writing is weighted 70:30, with 70% of the submission being the creative project. The most significant part of the PhD and its main focus is therefore a substantial, original piece of creative work written specifically for the degree: a novel or collection of short stories; a collection of poetry; a play script or screenplay. As indicated, we would expect this part to be equivalent to two thirds of an academic PhD thesis of 100,000 words. We do not set more precise word limits on the individual components of the work because of the different requirements of different genres, but the exact word length will be agreed upon in consultation with the supervisory team and the Assistant PG Director for Creative Writing.

The second part of the thesis should be a critical section of around 30,000 words, which explores a topic, genre, theme, writer or group of writers. It is expected that the topic chosen for this part of the thesis should have some evident relationship to the creative element. This relationship may be direct or more oblique, but it must be articulated in the critical section, perhaps as an introduction or conclusion. It is necessary to pass both elements to be awarded the degree.
Different approaches to the critical part are acceptable and it can include an essay, interview material, or a creative journal, in which a student may use their own creative process as subject, and reflect upon their own work. Key to this part of the PhD is a serious body of reading, careful and correct referencing, and a bibliography. The style and structure of the resulting submission needs to be as carefully thought about as any other literary thesis, and must be germane to the research question as established at the point of application and recorded in the Project Approval Form.

For all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination should be: authentic in the sense that the submission should be the candidate’s own work; scholarly, conforming to the normal canons of scholarship; professional, demonstrating that the author has acquired the skills of a professional researcher; and well-structured, well-written, and well-presented. (For further details, see Section 3 ‘Examination Criteria’ in the Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses.)

The critical section can also be thought of as requiring a third of the time spent on the thesis, i.e. a unit of twelve months, however this might be distributed across the period of study as a whole. It would be unreasonable to expect Creative Writing students to develop within a twelve-month period the same theoretical and methodological background as students in Literature, or to have formed the same historical or contextual perspective. The critical component of the research will be likely to be more tightly focused, the review of literature less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of any information collected less than might be expected of a PhD in English Literature. The more focused nature of the critical component means that the criteria of originality and publishability laid down for the traditional PhD are more likely to apply to the creative project than the critical part. We interpret ‘publishable’ as referring to literary quality rather than to marketability. Nevertheless, the rigour of the work and the quality of the analysis will match that of the PhD in English Literature.

Therefore, the critical part of the thesis should be judged against the following criteria:

- How far is it a piece of work which demonstrates a doctoral level of attainment in terms of its intellectual engagement, scope, planning and argument which might be possible to achieve in twelve months?
- How far does it demonstrate a doctoral level of research and reading which it might be possible to achieve in twelve months?
- How far is it scholarly and accurate in its presentation?
- How far does it support and contextualise the originality of the creative project?

6. Practice-based Research Degrees in Architecture, Planning and Landscape

PhD

In the fields of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations may undertake a PhD in Creative Practice.

This entails:

i) Carrying out substantial research in creative practice in Architecture, Planning or Landscape, leading to a final submission of a significant
body of creative work, which demonstrates originality, coherence and understanding and makes a recognisable contribution to the development of the discipline. The research should develop through creative and sophisticated engagement with appropriate media and technologies (drawings, models, photography, installations, digital media, etc.). This material must be incorporated in the hard copy thesis document (see paragraph ii) below), but may also – by arrangement with the research supervisors – be presented in its original form (e.g. digitally, in a portfolio, in an exhibition, by installation, etc.).

ii) The submission of a hard copy thesis document that records, curates and presents the research carried out by creative practice and contains a critical commentary on it of between 20,000 and 50,000 words. This must frame the overall project, intellectually situating it in relation to relevant texts and practices and providing an extended critical and reflective analysis which situates the student’s supporting research within the broader disciplinary context.

NB. As an alternative to the standard format, students undertaking research by creative practice may submit their hard copy thesis as a bound A3 document, with pages printed on both sides. The design of the thesis document is itself an important concern, which can work in concert with the research, and therefore theses do not have to observe the normal font and line-spacing requirements providing legibility is maintained.

**MPhil**

A thesis submitted for a practice-based MPhil in Creative Practice must incorporate an 8,000 - 20,000 word commentary together with full documentation of the practice-based research output. Formatting requirements correspond to those set out for the practice-based PhD in Architecture, Planning and Landscape.

7. Creative Practice PhD in Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies

In the field of Museum, Gallery and Heritage Studies, candidates whose submission is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i) Research in creative Museum, Gallery and Heritage practice leading to a final submission of a substantial body of creative work which demonstrates coherence and originality and constitutes a recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary Museum, Gallery and Heritage practice. This research should be in an agreed format and may include a curated exhibition, interpretation product(s), digital media and educational activities related to a museum/gallery/heritage context. This information must be incorporated digitally or in a portfolio in the hard copy of the thesis, but may also – by
arrangement with the research supervisors – be presented in its original form in an exhibition or installation.

and

iii) A critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this, the candidate will document and demonstrate a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project. The commentary must frame the overall project, intellectually situating it in relation to relevant texts and practices within the broader disciplinary context. It will explain how the research field has been expanded or developed through the candidate’s research.

iv) C). Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the joint Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) degree

The DBA awarded jointly by Grenoble Ecole de Management and Newcastle University is a professional practice doctorate, research-based and specifically designed to make a contribution to the enhancement of trans-disciplinary professional practice in management; as well as a contribution to novel knowledge production via the application and development of appropriate theoretical frameworks, methods, and techniques. This joint DBA is equal in quality and standing to the traditional PhD although it stems from the formulation of research questions informed by management practice and places emphasis on the novel application of theory, rather than the creation and testing of theory for its own sake. The programme is aimed at practicing managers who aspire to reach the highest academic qualification in Management and Business Studies. Its mode of delivery is through distance learning and a series of intensive residential workshops in the first two years of study.

An acceptable DBA thesis, based on original and individual research carried out throughout the DBA programme, should demonstrate a systematic acquisition and understanding of a body knowledge that is at the forefront of the academic disciplines that inform the candidate’s area of professional practice. In addition, it should contribute to that practice by creating knowledge through original research and demonstrating how such knowledge helps improve current practice within an organization or a field. The examiners should therefore pay particular attention in the discussion of implications to not only theory, but also policy and practice, in one or more organizational settings.
The DBA thesis will meet the main criteria for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. It will differ only in its emphasis on implications for management policy and practice. The length of the thesis will be approximately 60,000 to 80,000 words. The DBA thesis will be more tightly focused on the candidate’s work environment, the literature review as broad and deep in scope as in a traditional PhD; and the quantity and quality of data collected as well as the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

The joint DBA oral examination will be an ‘open door’ event, with the stipulation that only the internal and external examiners are allowed to ask questions of the candidate. The preliminary reports by the examiners will be confidential and there will be no opportunity to revise the thesis prior to the oral examination. The possible outcomes of a DBA oral examination mirror the ones for the PhD oral examination.

D) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Doctorate of Clinical Psychology

Taught Component:
This consists of teaching and workshops to cover the curriculum stipulated by the HCPC standards and those of the British Psychological Society accreditation standards. Topics covered include; assessment, formulation, interventions, personal and professional development, as well as research methods. A number of assignments are used to assess skills, and knowledge in these areas including essays, critical review, portfolios, and a clinical viva/oral examination. All assignments are subject to moderation according to the University procedures and are reviewed by an external examiner for the programme.

Clinical Component:
In accordance with BPS and HCPC requirements, approximately 50% of the time on the course is spent working in a clinical setting. These placements cover the four mandatory experience areas (adult, child and family, learning disabilities, and older adults), and in the final year a 10 month elective placement is available. Clinical competence is assessed via observation of practice by supervisors, assessment on a trainee competence checklist and from assessment of case studies. Case studies are subject to moderation according to the University procedures and all clinical materials are available for review by an external examiner for the programme.

Research Component:
Every student submits a thesis consisting of a literature review and an empirical paper. Each is approximately 5,000 to 8,000 words (excluding references and appendices). A project compendium outlines potential project
areas, and trainees work with supervisors to identify potential research questions. A formal written research proposal is approved by an independent school panel (consisting of University representatives, NHS clinicians, and recent graduates) in the first year. Progress on all elements of the course, including the research element of the programme is undertaken annually. Successful completion of all elements of the course is necessary to proceed to the next stage of the programme.

An acceptable DClin Psy thesis will meet the same criteria as those laid down by the University for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. The literature review and empirical study will reflect an ability to review the empirical literature critically and to conduct original investigations, to test ideas and to understand the relationship of the chosen topic to wider fields of knowledge in psychology and its application.

The length of the thesis is substantially less than that of a traditional PhD thesis. It is therefore likely that the DClin Psy thesis will be more tightly focused, the literature review less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of data collected less than might normally be expected for a traditional PhD. Nevertheless, the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

The overall Doctorate may be awarded with Distinction if the candidate’s empirical paper received a distinction grade and all other elements have received at least a pass grade (Regulations 19). A candidate will be awarded a Pass with Distinction in Research if the empirical paper is of distinction standard and performance in the oral examination demonstrates to the examiners that the written work is commensurate with the candidate’s performance.

If at the oral examination the dissertation has not met the required standard and is not capable of remediation, and if the candidate has reached the standard required in other areas of the course, it may be suitable for an appropriate Exit Award. Similarly, candidates who, following the requisite number of resit attempts, have failed to successfully complete all units of assessment in the final year of studies (maximum of one failed unit) may be awarded the MSc Clinical Applications of Psychology. This will not entitle registration with the HCPC.

The criteria for the award of marks following oral examination can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/psychology/assets/documents/VivaFeedbackGrid.docx
E) Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Engineering Doctorate in the Schools of Chemical Engineering and Advanced Materials (CEAM) and Civil Engineering and Geosciences (CIVG)

Engineering Doctorate (EngD) programmes consist of two components:

1. Taught Component (120-200 credits):
   This consists of taught modules including a choice of specialist modules and research methods modules. An individual programme of study is agreed between the student and the Degree Programme Director. All assignments are subject to moderation by an external examiner for the programme.

2. Research Component:
   Every student submits a thesis that takes the form of either a PhD thesis or a thesis by portfolio as appropriate to his or her research studies. According to the University’s regulations: Candidates for the degree of Engineering Doctorate are required to demonstrate:
   a) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
   b) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
   c) the general ability to conceptualize, design, implement and adjust a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline. Where appropriate, also to demonstrate the ability to formulate and test hypotheses and to generate alternative explanations for the data available;
   d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;
   e) a range of advanced professional and key skills related to their likely employment context including the ability to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

A doctoral thesis should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication.

For a thesis by portfolio, there is a requirement that a theme underpins the thesis and that each section is directly associated with said theme. The thesis must contain an Introduction that draws together the various sections and positions the research undertaken in the context of the overarching theme and places the work in the context of the current state-of-the-art in both academic and industrial research.
An acceptable Engineering Doctorate thesis will therefore meet the same criteria as those laid down by the University for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. The length of the thesis will be around two-thirds of the length of a traditional PhD thesis, approximately 50,000 words. It is therefore likely that the EngD thesis will be more tightly focused, the literature review less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of data collected less than might normally be expected for a traditional PhD. Nevertheless, the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

Standards of Academic Conduct

The University requires all students to maintain high standards of academic conduct and, in particular, to avoid conduct amounting to cheating in examinations, the fabrication of research results or plagiarism.

Cheating in examinations includes: copying from or conferring with other candidates; the possession or use of unauthorized material or equipment; and the impersonation of an examination candidate. Candidates who knowingly permit themselves to be impersonated, or their work to be copied, will be regarded as cheating. Any student suspected of having cheated in examinations will be dealt with under the University's Assessment Irregularities Procedure and may also be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Academic Registrar in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures approved by Council.

The fabrication of research results includes: claims, which cannot reasonably be justified, to have obtained specific or general results; false claims in relation to experiments, interviews, procedures or any other research activity; and the omission of statements in relation to data, results, experiments, interviews or procedures, where such omission cannot reasonably be justified. Any student who is suspected of having fabricated research results in relation to submitted and assessed work which contributes to an examination or degree result, will be dealt with under the University's Assessment Irregularities Procedure and may also be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Academic Registrar in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's ideas, words or work. At one extreme, plagiarism is simply a form of cheating, such as where the whole or a significant part of work submitted towards an examination or degree is the unacknowledged work of another, copied slavishly from a book or research paper. At the other extreme, plagiarism may occur accidentally, through poor standards of scholarship, or may concern insignificant parts of submitted work. Plagiarism may involve the use of material downloaded from electronic sources such as the Internet.
Students are sometimes unclear as to what use may be made of the work of others in the field without raising concerns about plagiarism. Any student who is in doubt on this matter should consult his or her tutor or supervisor. In most cases, the adoption of appropriate standards of scholarship will avoid any such concerns. The following general guidelines may assist:

1. Passages copied verbatim from the work of another must be enclosed in quotation marks. A full reference to the original source must be provided. The substitution of a few words in an otherwise verbatim passage will not obviate the need to use quotation marks and to provide a full reference.

2. Students must always give due acknowledgement to the sources of ideas or data which are not their own and are not truly in the public domain (for example, because they are novel or controversial) or are not widely held or widely recognized.

3. Ideas and data which are the student's own or are truly in the public domain may be included without attribution, but should be expressed in the student's own words.

4. Students must take care to distinguish between their own ideas or work and those of others. Any ambiguity in such a distinction could give rise to a suspicion of plagiarism. Further guidance can be found at the following web site: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/right-cite/

5. Where the student's work is the result of collaborative research, the student must take care to acknowledge the source of data, analysis or procedures which are not their own.

Students who are suspected of having made the unacknowledged use of another person's ideas, words or work in submitted and assessed work which contributes to an examination or degree result, will be dealt with under the University's Assessment Irregularities Procedure and may also be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Academic Registrar in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

Code of Good Practice in Research

The University expects all its staff and students to adhere to the highest standards of integrity in research. This statement addresses the issues involved in the proper conduct of research and provides guidance on the standards expected. It applies to all Researchers (defined here as all staff, honorary staff, students and visiting workers undertaking research within or on behalf of the University). Student research misconduct will be dealt with via the student disciplinary procedures, and staff research misconduct via the Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct.

Within this overarching framework there may be specific discipline requirements
in areas such as ethics, clinical governance, data protection, legal requirements, Home Office and other government requirements, in addition to health and safety and other good laboratory practice requirements. Some disciplines may also be subject to specific good practice requirements of external funding agencies or professional bodies.

The University has signed up to the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/concordat/index.php) which governs working practices, roles and responsibilities of research staff.

1 Integrity and honesty

1.1 Researchers should be honest and ethical in respect of their own actions in research and their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research work, including experimental design, generating and analysing data, acting as a reviewer or referee on grant applications or research papers etc, applying for funding, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

1.2 Plagiarism, deception or the fabrication or falsification of results, is regarded by the University as a serious disciplinary offence.

2 Research Misconduct

2.1 The University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct and has a written procedure for investigating and resolving such allegations.

2.2 Researchers are encouraged to report cases of research misconduct and to do so in a responsible and appropriate manner. (See University Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct. http://www.ncl.ac.uk/res/research/ethics_governance/governance/index.htm).

Staff and students should be aware that the University has a policy on Public Interest Disclosure (whistleblowing), which governs any instances of malpractice or impropriety:

https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/assets/documents/PolicyandProcedureonPublicInterestDisclosure.pdf

3 Leadership and co-operation in research groups

3.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deans of Research, Heads of Academic Units, Professorial and all other senior staff are responsible for creating a climate and capacity which ensures that research is conducted in accordance with good research practice.

3.2 Lead researchers have responsibility to ensure that a climate of mutual co-operation is created in which all members of the research team are encouraged to develop their skills and in which both the open exchange of ideas and supportive criticism are fostered.

3.3 Researchers should ensure that they have the necessary skills and resources to conduct their research & to access relevant training as appropriate (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/staffdev/ and https://internal.ncl.ac.uk/fundingtoolkit/ or contact the University Research Office & Staff Development Unit for
signposting to appropriate courses). Staff supervising other staff or students must ensure that appropriate direction of research and supervision is provided, as well as training and opportunities for development and the necessary resources to enable them to conduct their research to the required standards.

4 Openness

4.1 While recognising the need for researchers to protect their own and the University’s research interests in the process of planning their research, obtaining and publishing the results, and seeking to develop the outcome of their research into application (where relevant), the University encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers, and with the public. Research may be undertaken under conditions of confidentiality; however, these conditions should be as narrowly defined as appropriate to the research activity.

4.2 Once results have been published the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers on request, provided that this is consistent with any ethics approval and consents which cover the data and materials and any intellectual property rights in them and wherever possible disseminated via Open Access Forums.

4.3 Researchers must adhere to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/foi/staff/index.htm).

5 Guidance from professional bodies

5.1 Researchers are expected to observe the standards of research practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, scientific and learned societies and other relevant professional bodies.

5.2 All researchers should be aware of, and comply with, the legal requirements which regulate their work.

5.3 Researchers should be aware of the expectations of the University as a publicly funded institution, and should act accordingly. They should ensure that any research undertaken complies with any agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project, and allows for proper governance and transparency.

6 Ethical Approval

6.1 All research conducted in the University must be carried out in accordance with the University’s Ethics in Research - Policy and Procedure (which includes reference to the NHS requirements). ‘Part 1 – Preliminary Questions’ must be completed to establish if the project requires further ethical review. If this is required, then ‘Part 2 – Further Details’ must also be completed for review from a Newcastle Committee. 6.2 If material differences are made to the research protocol i.e. to research methodology, then further ethical approval should be sought where appropriate.

7 Safety

7.1 The University requires every member of staff to uphold high personal standards with regard to safety and to communicate these standards to all those involved in research, including but not limited to researchers, research subjects, patients, participants or others, in line with the University Safety Policy (www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/policies.aspx).
8 Documenting results and storing primary data

8.1 Researchers should ensure consideration is given to the retention of data and samples before any work commences. There should be clarity at the outset of the research programme as to the ownership of, where relevant:

- data and samples used or created in the course of the research; and
- the results of the research

8.2 Researchers should keep clear and accurate records of the procedure followed and the approvals granted during the research process, including records of the interim results obtained as well as the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained. These records should be dated and signed. Research involving patients should adhere to the Trust SOP on Data Archiving and all other relevant guidelines.

8.3 Research records should be retained and managed in order to:

- Demonstrate compliance with relevant legislation (e.g. Data Protection Act)
- Demonstrate effective and auditable process, ensuring compliance with requirements of external funders, professional bodies and auditors
- Demonstrate information is accurate, authentic and verifiable
- Protect members of the University from allegations of misconduct

8.4 Research records cover the research data and samples used or created in the course of the research, the research process including applications for regulatory approval, research outcomes such as reports and publications, and project management contracts, budgetary details etc. This data may be stored in multiple different systems managed by different people.

8.5 The Principal Investigator is ultimately responsible for managing research records - their accuracy, completeness and security. However research students, staff researchers and supervisors, support and administrative staff must also assume responsibility for their parts of and support for the process.

8.6 Research records should be retained for only as long as required. The duration should take into account legislative and regulatory requirements as well as subject specific, administrative and operational needs. For example this may be constrained to relatively short time periods for personal information subject to the Data Protection Act, ranging perhaps up to decades for long term longitudinal studies. For further advice contact the Information Security Team in ISS on rec-man@ncl.ac.uk

8.7 Information generated during the course of research should be kept securely, for the duration above; this includes ensuring that information is not lost, corrupted, or disclosed inappropriately, it may also need to ensure verifiable destruction of information at some point in time. The means and process for managing the information: storage environment, backup, access control etc. must be appropriate to needs – Information Systems and Services offer a range of storage and administrative services see: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/ . Also, see the Information Security Policy http://www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/policies/information-security-policy.pdf .
9 Publishing Results

9.1 Researchers should publish at the earliest possible time, taking into account the appropriate medium for the highest publication impact. Consideration should be given to the provisions of open access for research publications where appropriate. All outputs should be referenced in MyImpact, the University’s Institutional Repository and therefore linked to the e-prints open access repository.

9.2 Researchers should have regard for the many different routes for dissemination, implementation and commercialisation potential of their work and take appropriate steps to advise the University of any inventions and, where appropriate, take steps to protect any intellectual property prior to publication.

9.3 Whilst the publication of the results of research may need to be delayed for a reasonable period pending protection of intellectual property arising from research, such periods of delay in publication should be kept to a minimum.

9.4 Anyone listed as an author on a paper should accept responsibility for ensuring that he/she is familiar with the contents of the paper and can identify his/her contribution to it and must refer to being part of Newcastle University. The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable.

10 Media

Whilst the University encourages the communication of research to the wider public, normally statements to the media should be made only after consultation with the University Press Office. Any disclosure to the popular media should endeavour to place the research in its appropriate context and care should be taken not to exaggerate the impact of any findings. Appropriate training and guidance should be sought concerning dealings with the press and broadcasting media.

11 Use of Results

11.1 Researchers are expected to maximise the prospects of research being taken into practice through commercial and other exploitation routes by protecting intellectual property (IPR).

11.2 Researchers should ensure that all contracts and agreements are sent through the University’s Research and Enterprise Services to ensure that any contracts or agreements relating to their research contain a provision for IP ownership.

11.3 Where a commercial route is not appropriate then it is expected that researchers will take appropriate steps to ensure that research findings are transferred to relevant user communities.

12 Collaborators and other participants

12.1 The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the work should be properly acknowledged.

12.2 Researchers should be satisfied that standards and procedures at the organisations with which they are collaborating are suitable for the conduct of the research. Checks should be made with the Director of Research and Enterprise Services.
13 Managing Research Projects

13.1 Research Directors/centre Directors/research Group Leaders are responsible for ensuring the promulgation of the Code of Good Practice to individuals in their Units. The PI is the lead researcher with regard to the project and is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Code by all those working on projects that they are PI.

13.2 Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that they, and all those who involved in the project, are fully aware of the terms and conditions of grants and contracts and the implication of these in relation to their research projects.

14 Conflict of Interest

14.1 Researchers should declare and manage any real or potential conflicts of interest both financial and professional. These might include:

• where the researchers have an existing or potential interest in the outcome of the research;

• where there is a private, or private practice, benefit significantly dependent upon the outcome of the research;

• where the researcher’s professional or personal gain arising from the research may be more than might be usual for research.

What to do when your research nears completion …

Submission of Thesis

Approximately three months prior to the submission of your thesis, you need to submit a form on ePortfolio for the approval of your thesis title to your supervisor. Your supervisor will also use this form to begin the process of appointment of your examiners. You are advised to ensure that debts are cleared in advance of submitting this form.

On submission, you will need to provide the following:

• Two soft-bound copies of your thesis,

• A completed Research Degree Examination Entry form, which has a declaration from you regarding your work and which will be used to check that all your financial obligations to the University have been met.

• An electronic copy of your thesis, which may be submitted through plagiarism detection software.
These should be submitted to either the Research Student Support Team (RSST) or the Medical Sciences Graduate School (MSGS).

Once your soft-bound thesis has been received by RSST/MSGS, it will be forwarded to your examiners with copies of regulations and report forms. Your supervisor will arrange the oral examination date, in consultation with the examiners and yourself.

Following your oral examination, RSST/MSGS will inform you of the result of your examination, and give details of any revisions that may be required along with the deadline for your resubmission.

Once you have been informed in writing by RSST/MSGS that the examiners have agreed that you have met all the conditions for your award, you will be asked to submit one hard-bound copy of your completed thesis along with an electronic version. You will also need to complete the Library Deposit Form at this time. When these are submitted to the RSST/MSGS, your passlist will be produced.

**Congregation**

When passlists have been produced, students will be invited to apply to attend at the next available congregation ceremony. Congregations are held in May, July and December each year. Students need to apply to be included in a particular ceremony. For further information on any aspect of Congregations, please refer to the Congregations website: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/congregations/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/congregations/) or contact the Congregations Administrator, telephone: 0191 208 6127.
PART FIVE

Academic Matters

Regulations, Policies and Procedures

The University has a range of regulations, policies and procedures, which exist for the purpose of protecting and supporting the highest standards within the University.

Readers are encouraged to be familiar with their existence.

The full policies and/or procedures are not included below – only key points are highlighted. Policies and procedures are also subject to annual review and the latest versions are available from the University’s website.

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Postgraduate Research Regulations

Postgraduate Research regulations have been provided for the Doctor of Philosophy programme only, the regulations for other research programmes are available from the University website provided below. All research degree regulations are subject to annual review and the latest versions will be available at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/

Doctor of Philosophy Degree Progress Regulations

Postgraduate research students are responsible for familiarising themselves with the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes approved by Senate, which is reviewed annually and made available each academic year and included in the Handbook for Research Students and Supervisors.

These regulations should be read in conjunction with the Examination Conventions for Doctor of Philosophy by Thesis (section XV) for all doctoral programmes, except where programme specific regulations have been approved by the University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (ULTSEC).

The basis for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to staff candidates shall be the same as the basis for the award of the degree to students.

A. Introduction

1. Applicants for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy are required to show ability to conduct original investigations, to explore critically, evaluate and test their ideas, and those of others, and to relate them to a wider body of knowledge. (The University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees provides further details in the section, ‘Criteria for the Doctorate.’) A doctoral thesis should be a body of work which a capable, well-qualified and diligent student, who is properly supported and supervised, can produce in three years of full-time study (or equivalent for part-time study). It should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication.

2. Applicants, including members of staff, who are approved for admission as students for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy under these regulations, will be required to pay the fees for the degree as set out in the annual Fees Schedule.

3. Where the University has approved that research students may be registered and managed by a research institute, the director of the institute has the same authority and responsibility as a head of school. In these situations references to school and head of school include institute and director of institute.

B. Admission as a Student for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

4. An applicant may be approved for admission as a student for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by a minimum of two postgraduate admissions selectors in accordance with the University’s Postgraduate Admissions Policy and
faculty/programme criteria approved by respective deans of postgraduate studies, where an applicant:

a) is a graduate of this or another approved university or other approved degree-awarding body or who holds other qualifications approved by the dean of postgraduate studies;

b) has completed an approved application including:

i. evidence of the applicant's suitability to become a student in terms of academic ability and prior training and experience.

ii. evidence that the applicant's English language proficiency meets the published requirements for the programme of research;

iii. a research proposal, if required;

c) has supplied details of two recent referees and evidence of prior qualifications and experience as the postgraduate admissions selectors and/or the dean of postgraduate studies may require.

5. Where an applicant has previously studied for a Doctor of Philosophy at another institution and wishes this to be taken into account at Newcastle University, the application must be approved by the dean of postgraduate studies.

6. In considering an application for admission as a student for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, the postgraduate admissions selectors must be satisfied not only as to the suitability of the applicant, but also as to the availability to the applicant of appropriate supervision and suitable facilities and resources once the applicant is admitted. It is the responsibility of the relevant head of school, directly or through the postgraduate admissions selectors, to ensure that appropriate supervision, suitable facilities and resources will be available to an applicant once admitted.

C. Admission as a Staff Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

7. In addition to the requirements set out in Regulation B, a member of staff seeking approval as a staff candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall be required to complete and submit an application at the outset of studies in which is set out:

a) a description of proposed research as specified by the relevant Faculty;

b) details of the nature of the appointment held by the member of staff and its duration;

c) approval from both the head of the school of employment and the head of school of study.

Note: For the purpose of agreeing staff fee, the applicant must hold a substantive post, defined as being a contract of employment of at least 25% FTE over a full 12 months period, and covering the annual period of registration with the University. This does not include people who were initially Students and then employed part-time by the University, e.g. as demonstrators, General Duty Assistants, Laboratory Technicians, etc.
D. **Conditional Candidature**

8. An application for admission as a student for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will be approved conditionally. During the first year of study for those students studying full-time (second year for those students studying part-time), Doctoral candidature status will normally be confirmed following a recommendation of satisfactory progress by the progress panel, which is confirmed by the dean of postgraduate studies.

E. **General Preconditions to the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

9. Before being awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, a student must:
   a) satisfy the entrance requirements for the degree;
   b) register for and make satisfactory progress throughout the relevant programme of study;
   c) satisfy the examiners in the assessments specified.

F. **Supervision of Students**

10. A student for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy must engage in advanced study and research under the direction of a supervisory team in the University. The supervisory team normally consists of at least two members of University staff and the academic supervisor is appointed by the head of school, or nominee, before a student is accepted onto the programme of study.

11. To be eligible to supervise students for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, a member of staff must hold the degree of Doctor of Philosophy or an equivalent research degree or have equivalent research expertise. The appropriateness of an equivalent research degree or expertise should be determined by the relevant head of school in consultation with the dean of postgraduate studies.

12. The academic supervisor will be a member of staff of Newcastle University and will normally have had previous experience of at least one successful supervision. The academic supervisor will have primary responsibility for supporting the student throughout the period of study. Any reference to the supervisor in these regulations or in the Code of Practice for Research Degree programmes or in other documents shall be deemed to be a reference to the supervisory team.

13. In any case where students are studying outside the University at another institution, arrangements may also be made for local supervision and support to be provided to the student by staff at that institution (see Regulation 17d). Such arrangements will supplement the role of the supervisor detailed in Regulation 12 above. Where External Supervisors are added to the supervisory team, the Principles for External Supervision Arrangements should be consulted at [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qshexternalsupervisionarrangements.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qshexternalsupervisionarrangements.pdf).

**Notes:**

(i) Where the members of the supervisory team are permanently changed students should normally be consulted in advance. The outcome of the consultation informs decisions made regarding the supervisory team.
(ii) On rare occasions supervisory relations may break down. In such circumstances, in the first instance students should consult with another member of the supervisory team. If it is not possible to resolve the problems in this manner, then the student and/or a member of the supervisory team should report difficulties, in writing, to the head of school (or nominee), who may refer the matter, if necessary, to the relevant graduate school administrator or dean of postgraduate studies for advice.

(iii) All supervisory changes must be notified to the relevant graduate school administrator and be agreed by the dean of postgraduate studies.

(iv) The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes provides further details on changes to supervisory teams and on appropriate supervisory support for research students.

G. Type of Candidature, Period of Study and Registration Requirements

14. An applicant may be approved by the postgraduate admissions selectors as a student for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in any of the following categories:

   a) as a student whose minimum period of advanced study and research in the University shall normally be not less than three years of full-time study;

   b) as a student whose minimum period of advanced study and research shall be not less than four years, of which normally not less than one year shall be spent in full-time study in the University, in periods of at least three months duration;

   c) as a student whose minimum period of advanced study and research shall be not less than six years of part-time study.

Notes:

(i) Students will normally only be registered under Regulation 14(b) if this is specified in their offer of admission. Students will not normally be transferred on to Regulation 14(b), if they have previously been registered under Regulation 14(a) or 14(c).

(ii) Staff candidates shall be deemed to be registered as part-time students during their period of candidature and therefore, this shall normally be six years in length as outlined in Regulation 14(c). However, if the dean of postgraduate studies is satisfied that the greater part of the candidate’s time is devoted to supervised research the candidature can be deemed to be 3 years of full-time study as outlined in Regulation 14(a).

(iii) The normal expectation is that a student will study at the Newcastle University, London, or overseas campuses. If study will be carried out away from these approved campuses and this is known at the admissions stage, then ‘Outside Study’ approval should be sought from the dean of postgraduate studies, in advance of registration on the programme.

15. Any student who wishes to transfer from one of the categories of candidature specified in Regulation 14 to another such category may do so only with the approval of the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies and subject to the recommendation of the supervisory team and head of school, or nominee.
16. In all cases of candidature approved under Regulation 14, approved students shall be required to register continuously from commencement of their candidature until completion. During this time a student must abide by the requirements of the University's General Regulations. A student's period of study shall be reckoned from the date of first registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy or Master of Philosophy.

H. Study Undertaken Outside the University

17. Any student may be permitted by a dean of postgraduate studies, on the recommendation of the relevant supervisory team and head of school, to study outside the University (or an approved campus) for more than one month, provided that in respect of any period of study not undertaken in the University (or an approved campus) the dean of postgraduate studies is satisfied before the beginning of that period of study that:

a) the student will have access to adequate facilities, resources and appropriate research training;

b) sufficient time for study and research will be available to the student;

c) appropriate arrangements have been made for the student’s supervision and progress monitoring during the period of study outside the University, including arrangements for the supervisory team to maintain contact with and to meet with the student in accordance with requirements stated in the Code of Practice for Research Degree programmes and as often as is necessary;

d) appropriate arrangements have been made in any case where the student is attached to or working at an institution outside the University and is offered local supervision and support by staff at that institution;

e) any relevant health and safety issues have been considered and approved by the head of school/nominee in line with University guidelines and University Insurance policies.

Approval should normally be sought three months in advance of the start of the period of outside study.

All study visits, of any duration, by students to high-risk locations (as specified in the Postgraduate Student Travel and Outside Study Policy [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGStudent-Travel-Outside-Study-PolicyJuly15.pdf]), must also be signed off by the dean of postgraduate studies, or faculty PVC under certain circumstances.

Notes:

(i) that periods of study outside the University of less than one month should be agreed within the student's school and the student should complete a Student Notice of Absence form.

(ii) that any student who is permitted to undertake part of their study outside of the University is still required to pay the standard fees whilst within their candidature, unless alternative arrangements were approved as part of the admission process.

(iii) that any student who is permitted to undertake part of their study outside of the University is still required to have their attendance monitored on the
programme, including time registered as a pending or extended submission student.

(iv) that any student who is permitted to undertake part of their study outside of the University is still required to adhere to their deadline for submission, unless an extension or interruption of studies has been agreed as part of the outside study approval.

(v) that students who are Tier 4 visa holders are required to inform the University if they are away from Newcastle (or approved campus) as a condition of their visa sponsorship.

J. Attendance and Progress

18. A student registered for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall comply with the University’s requirements for progression, as follows:

   a) Within one month of registering for the research programme, the student and the University shall have signed an approved learning agreement to cover the period of candidature;

   b) Students should submit project proposals within the guidelines identified by the relevant graduate school committee, up to a maximum of three months (six months for part-time students) from registering for the research programme. The student’s project proposal must be approved by an independent school panel and head of school/nominee, before being submitted for approval by the dean of postgraduate studies. Where a student’s project proposal has already been reviewed and approved by external peer review, a project plan and supervisory team list should still be submitted to the panel for approval before being submitted for approval by the dean of postgraduate studies.

Progression on the programme will be dependent upon acceptance of the project proposal. If the school panel is unable to support the initial project proposal, a student will be permitted an opportunity for re-assessment, normally within three months (six months for part-time students). If, even after a re-assessment opportunity, the school panel does not approve the arrangements for the project it will be the annual progress panel that will be required to make a recommendation regarding the outcome for a student (see Regulation 21);

   c) Students should attend the University as frequently and at such intervals as the supervisory team shall require, bearing in mind whether the student is registered as full-time or part-time and allowing for any period of study undertaken outside the University. As a minimum for full-time students, in accordance with the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, students should have regular contact with their academic supervisor at least ten times a year, approximately once per month, and should have formal contact with their supervisory team at least three times a year, normally once per term (structured interactions for part-time students should be pro-rata) while they are in candidature. The University requires that students record and confirm the outcomes of supervisory meetings, via ePortfolio.
d) In addition to c) above, students who are Tier 4 visa holders should continue to record and confirm the outcomes of their regular supervisory meetings, via ePortfolio while under examination through to completion of their studies, as a condition of their visa sponsorship.

e) Students should maintain a record of their personal development throughout their period of registration and submit this as evidence of development on an annual basis to their progress panel;

f) Students should submit reports and evidence of achievement as specified by the school or faculty graduate school committee on an annual basis. Students may also be required to make a project presentation or submit a piece of work or to attend a viva as prescribed by the school. This material, along with reports from the supervisory team, will be considered as part of an annual submission to the progress panel for each student.

19. The school will appoint a progress panel for each student. The progress of each student will be reviewed annually via ePortfolio until submission of the thesis for examination. In accordance with Regulation 8, a satisfactory progress outcome during the first year of study for those students studying full-time (second year of study for those students studying part-time) will result in confirmation of Doctoral status.

20. The supervisory team shall submit an annual report via ePortfolio concerning the progress of the student’s research for review by the appointed progress panel until submission of the thesis for examination.

21. The progress panel will make a report to the dean of postgraduate studies via ePortfolio and further progress on the programme of study is subject to approval by the dean of postgraduate studies. In addition to detailed feedback that the progress panel may wish to provide to the student and the supervisory team, the progress panel will make one of the following recommendations:

i. that the student’s performance is satisfactory and that the student can proceed to the next stage. If the student is a stage 1 student the candidature to study for the Doctor of Philosophy is confirmed;

ii. that notwithstanding some concerns, which the student and supervisory team should note, the student’s overall performance is satisfactory and that the student can proceed to the next stage. If the student is a stage 1 student the candidature to study for the Doctor of Philosophy is confirmed;

iii. that the student’s performance is unsatisfactory and that a further assessment should be held normally within two months (four months for part-time students) to determine whether progress on the programme will be recommended;

iv. that the student’s performance is unsatisfactory and that a submission for a Master of Philosophy examination is recommended instead of a submission for a Doctor of Philosophy examination;

v. that the student’s performance is unsatisfactory and that no submission for a Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy examination is recommended, and that the candidature is terminated.
22. In exceptional cases where the progress panel is not satisfied that the supervisory arrangements are adequate and appropriate, but considers that the student would otherwise be able to achieve the standards of the award, the panel may seek the approval of the head of school, to make a recommendation to the dean of postgraduate studies for the replacement of all or part of the supervisory team.

23. The annual progression review procedure will be deemed equivalent to a board of examiners and therefore the University's procedure for assessment irregularities shall apply to any reported or suspected cheating or plagiarism. The procedures are available at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/assessment.htm.

24. A student whose progress is not deemed sufficient to continue studying for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy may nonetheless be deemed by the progress panel to have made satisfactory progress as a student for the degree of Master of Philosophy. In such a case the student shall be permitted to submit a thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy. The normal expectation in such cases, is that a student will be in a position to either: submit immediately for the Master of Philosophy; or submit for the Master of Philosophy following a period of pending submission, which should be up to one year following the date of the decision to downgrade. A student will not normally receive an additional period of candidature.

25. Where the progress panel recommends submission for a Master of Philosophy, instead of a Doctor of Philosophy, there will be no expectation of an upgrade back on to the Doctor of Philosophy at a later stage.

26. Exceptionally, the student may be permitted to continue studying for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy for a further period and be reconsidered for confirmation of their candidature for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at a later date. Such cases should be reconsidered no later than two months after the initial decision (four months for part-time students).

27. A student registered for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy whose progress is deemed unsatisfactory at Research Masters degree level shall not be permitted to continue as a registered student for either degree, and registration will be terminated.

Notes:

(i) That the progress panel should not normally recommend that a student’s registration is terminated (Regulation 21(v)), without having previously provided a further assessment opportunity to the student (Regulation 21(iii)).

(ii) That any further assessment opportunity should be recorded via ePortfolio.

(iii) In each Annual Progress Review, a student should normally only have one further assessment opportunity.

K. Confirmation of Registration for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

28. Students registered for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall have their progress reviewed (in accordance with Regulation 18) during their first year of study for those students studying full-time (second year for part-time students), with a view to determining whether or not a recommendation should be made to the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies (via the progress panel) that
they should continue studying for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (see also Regulation 8).

L. **Mid Year Procedure for Dealing with Unsatisfactory Progress**

29. A student whose progress is considered unsatisfactory by the supervisory team at times other than the normal annual assessment of progress shall be notified in writing of the reasons for this opinion and shall be given the opportunity of an interview with the supervisory team. Following this notice and any interview, and taking account of all known circumstances, the supervisory team may, either

   a) monitor the student's attendance, progress and performance for a specified period; this may require the undertaking of additional pieces of work. If the student's performance has not improved within the period specified in the written notice, the supervisory team shall notify the head of school or nominee and submit a report for review by the progress panel.

   or

   b) the supervisory team shall notify the head of school or nominee and submit a report for review by the progress panel without undertaking a period of monitoring.

In either case, where a report is made to the progress panel for review of the student's progress, the student shall also be given the opportunity to submit a report to the progress panel. The progress panel will make a report and recommendation to the dean of postgraduate studies (in accordance with Regulation 21). This review should be carried out via ePortfolio.

M. **Procedure for Review of Penalties for Unsatisfactory Progress**

30. A student applying for review of the decision of the progress panel may only do so in writing, using the University Academic Queries and Appeals Procedure [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm), specifying one or more of the following grounds:

   a) the progress panel were not aware of circumstances affecting the student's performance. (That is: the student was adversely affected by illness or other factors of which s/he was previously unaware, or which for a good cause, s/he was unable to disclose to the progress panel, or unable to provide evidence at the time);

   b) procedural irregularity on the part of the progress panel;

   c) bias or prejudice on the part of the progress panel.

   d) that the decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

N. **Interruption of Study**

31. The University normally expects students to complete their candidature in a single continuous period, i.e. to be continuously registered until completion. Sympathetic consideration will be given to requests for periods of interruption, however, candidature should not normally be held in abeyance for more than twelve months. An Interruption to registration may be granted by the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, subject to the student providing a strong justification, supported by the supervisory team. A request for any period
of absence of more than one month should be submitted to the graduate school administrator as soon as possible prior to the time of occurrence. The request should be supported by evidence and approved by the dean of postgraduate studies.

Notes:
(i) As a result of a formal interruption of study a student’s latest submission deadline will be adjusted accordingly.

(ii) Absences of less than one month should be recorded via the Student Notice of Absence form but do not constitute a formal interruption of study and as such the latest submission deadline is not adjusted.

P. Teaching Duties
32. Students for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy may undertake paid duties in the University in any period of full-time study, provided that they consult their academic supervisor about the time that may be devoted to such duties and provided that they do not contravene the terms of any studentship that they might hold and/or any visa restrictions. Ordinarily, this will mean that teaching duties are additional to the normal commitments of a sponsored full-time student. All teaching must be conducted in accordance with the University’s Postgraduates Who Teach Policy http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/assets/documents/qsh-pgswhoteach-pol.pdf

R. Submission for Examination by Thesis
33. The results of a student’s advanced study and research must be embodied in a thesis in the approved form in accordance with the Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees and the Rules for the Form of Theses (see items XVIII and XIX). The length of a thesis shall be determined, bearing in mind the requirements laid down, or guidance issued, if any, by the student's graduate school committee. The thesis must be submitted, together with the completed and signed submission form and other relevant material, to the graduate school administrator.

In addition to the soft bound copies of the thesis, students must also submit an electronic copy of the thesis, to allow the University to operate plagiarism identification software. If any incidences of plagiarism are detected then the University’s Procedure for Assessment Irregularities will apply http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/assessment.htm.

34. The exact title of a student’s thesis must be submitted on ePortfolio for approval by the dean of postgraduate studies normally three months before the thesis is submitted. Any change to the approved title of thesis following the initial approval must be notified to the relevant graduate school administrator and be agreed by the dean of postgraduate studies.

35. The thesis for all students must be submitted for examination within the period specified below from the date appointed as the beginning of the period of study:
   a) within four years in the case of students proceeding under the provisions of Regulation 14(a);
   b) within five years in the case of students proceeding under the provisions of Regulation 14(b);
c) within seven years in the case of students proceeding under the provisions of Regulation 14(c).

36. Except with the permission of the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, a student may not submit a thesis earlier than the beginning of the last term of the prescribed period of study. Any student who submits a thesis earlier than the minimum period of advanced study and research with appropriate permission, shall nevertheless still be required to pay tuition fees (full-time or part-time as appropriate, depending on the type of candidature) for the whole of the minimum prescribed period of study.

S. Pending Submission for Students completing their minimum period of Candidature

37. All students, who have completed their minimum candidature and have not submitted their thesis may be permitted on the recommendation of their progress panel to proceed to ‘pending submission’ student status for one further year. All ‘pending submission’ students are required to register with the University.

Notes:

(i) Students who have completed their minimum candidature and who still require more time to work on their research and thesis must continue full registration with the University.

(ii) The fact that a student has completed their minimum candidature does not of itself constitute grounds for transferring to ‘pending submission’ registration. Students who are still actively researching must continue full registration and will pay the full tuition fee for the period of their continued candidature. Students registering under the ‘pending submission’ category will not be permitted to work in laboratories or studios or to take part in field trips (unless they have the authority of the appropriate head of school to do so for teaching or demonstrating purposes).

(iii) It is expected that students who are registered as ‘pending submission’ will continue to receive regular structured interactions with members of the supervisory team and full access to Library and computing facilities will be available.

T. Extensions of Time for Submission

38. Students must submit within their maximum candidature, however, in exceptional cases, an extension of time for submission may be granted by the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, subject to the student providing a strong justification and evidence for an extension, supported by the supervisory team. The request for an extension of time for submission should normally be submitted to the graduate school administrator before the current deadline for submission. Students granted extensions of time in accordance with this provision will be required to register as ‘extended submission’ students and pay tuition fees as stipulated in the University’s fee schedule.

Notes:

(i) Students who are still actively researching must continue full registration and will pay the full tuition fee for the period of their continued candidature.
(ii) It is expected that students who are registered as ‘extended submission’ will continue to receive regular structured interactions with members of the supervisory team and full access to Library and computing facilities will be available.

U. Language of Submission

39. A student’s thesis must be written in English. In exceptional cases, subject to the student justifying such a concession, the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies may allow the student to submit a thesis written in a modern language other than English. Such a concession shall be granted only where a student can demonstrate that the language of submission is integral to the research project, for example where the object of study is an aspect of the literary or linguistic culture of the language of submission and/or a significant proportion of the secondary literature on the object of study is written in the language of submission. Approval for submission in a language other than English must be sought at the time of application to study for the degree. Where approval is granted, the abstract of the thesis must be written in English and any viva voce examination must be conducted in English.

Note: The University cannot undertake to arrange the examination of a thesis immediately after its submission. Students are warned that several weeks may elapse between the submission of a thesis and the completion of the examination. The normal period between submission of a thesis and an examination is ten weeks, although circumstances may necessitate a longer time frame. Candidates shall be kept informed of the progress of the examination at monthly intervals by the Graduate School Administrator, should the examination process extend beyond the normal ten week period.

V. Examination

40. Details of the required arrangements for the examination are provided in the XV Doctor of Philosophy Examination Conventions.

Doctor of Philosophy Examination Conventions

A. Scope

1. These Examination Conventions apply to all candidates at Newcastle University who, having met the requirements of the University's General Regulations and the Doctor of Philosophy Degree Progress Regulations, are eligible to submit for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

These Examination Conventions apply to a submission either by thesis or by published work. Where these examination conventions refer to a thesis, they also apply to a published work submission by staff candidates. The basis for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to staff candidates shall be the same as the basis for the award of the degree to student candidates.
Notes for Published Work Submissions – for Staff Candidates Only

(i) A submission by published work is only available to candidates registered as staff candidates. A member of staff who wishes to be a staff candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of the submission of published work must have held an appointment in the University for a continuous period of at least three years at the time of submission and the study and research carried out during the candidate’s period of appointment must have formed a significant contribution to the published work.

(ii) The published work submitted should overall be seen to be broadly comparable to a PhD thesis in the same discipline, so that it is evidently the result of a sustained level of recent research activity normally in a single field of study to which it makes an original contribution.

(iii) The submission shall consist of a collection of published material including papers, chapters, monographs or books. The publication of papers shall normally have taken place in refereed journals, or other journals held in high standing by academics working in the relevant field. Books, monographs, and chapters in books shall normally have been published by established publishing houses or other recognised publishing media. The publications submitted shall normally relate to work undertaken during a minimum period of three years and a maximum period of six years.

(iv) Work shall only be regarded as published if at the time of submission copies of the work are generally obtainable through normal sources, such as publishing houses, bookshops and academic libraries. Proofs of papers not yet published but accepted for publication are acceptable. However, reports or other documents prepared for organizations such as private companies, government departments or charities or for internal University purposes are not acceptable unless they have been published widely outside the organization for which they were prepared.

B. Appointment of Examiners

2. A candidate’s thesis shall be examined by examiners appointed by the dean of postgraduate studies on behalf of Senate. The examination shall consist of a review and assessment of the candidate’s thesis (and where appropriate, other artefacts) by the examiners appointed and of an oral examination on the content of the thesis and subjects related thereto. A candidate may also be encouraged to give a presentation of the work embodied in the thesis in the form of a public lecture or seminar.

3. There shall ordinarily be one external examiner and one internal examiner appointed for each candidate. For staff candidates, the examination shall normally be conducted by two external examiners for each candidate although for junior members of staff, at the discretion of the dean of postgraduate studies, one external and one internal may be appointed.

4. All examiners will be nominated by the relevant head of school in consultation with the candidate’s academic supervisor. Such nominations shall be submitted on the approved form at the same time as the candidate submits an application for approval of thesis title. This should normally be three months before the thesis is submitted. (The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes provides further details in the section, ‘Criteria for Appointment of Examiners’.)
5. Where the University is unable to appoint, or chooses not to appoint, an internal examiner for a student candidate, a second external examiner will be appointed.

6. In all cases where two external examiners are appointed, the dean of postgraduate studies will also appoint an independent member of University staff who will chair the oral examination. The Independent Chair will normally be from outside the candidate’s school/institute. The independent chair is not an examiner of the thesis but provides guidance on University regulations and procedures to ensure that the oral examination is conducted in accordance with normal University practice. The Independent Chair is required to be present for the duration of the oral examination. (*The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes provides further details in the section, ‘Criteria for Appointment of Examiners’.*)

7. The supervisory team will provide candidates with the opportunity to comment on the nominated examiners. If the candidate believes that there is a concern about the nominated examiners this should be drawn to the attention of the supervisory team and the head of school in writing, as soon as possible. Examiner appointments will, however, be reviewed only if it is clear that there may be bias or prejudice by an examiner.

8. A former member of staff of the University shall not normally be appointed as an external examiner until at least five years have elapsed since that person left the employment of the University. A retired member of staff of the University shall not normally be appointed as an external examiner. A retired member of staff of another institution may be appointed as an external examiner only if he or she is still active in the field of research and study concerned.

*Note: The University cannot undertake to arrange the examination of a thesis immediately after its submission. Candidates are warned that several weeks may elapse between the submission of a thesis and the completion of the examination, and they should consult their academic supervisor at least three months in advance of submission. The normal period between submission of a thesis and an examination is ten weeks, although circumstances may necessitate a longer time frame. Candidates shall be kept informed of the progress of the examination at monthly intervals by the Graduate School Administrator, should the examination process extend beyond the normal ten week period.*

C. Examiners’ Preliminary Reports

9. The examiners should independently write a preliminary report indicating their provisional assessment of the thesis and of the issues to be explored in the oral examination. It is expected that, if the criteria for the award of the degree have clearly been met, the preliminary reports will be very brief (a single paragraph). If, on the other hand, the examiners have serious concerns about whether the criteria have been met, fuller reports will be expected. Each examiner's preliminary report should be sent to the relevant graduate school administrator in advance of the oral examination taking place. Examiners should not consult with each other before both independent reports have been submitted to the graduate school administrator. The reports will be forwarded to the relevant dean of postgraduate studies. They must not be shown to the candidate or the supervisory team in advance of the oral examination. But examiners should be aware that preliminary reports will be made available to
candidates after the oral examination if they request them under the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

10. Exceptionally, and two weeks or more in advance of a scheduled viva, if the external examiner upon initial independent review of the thesis is unequivocally of the view that the thesis is not worthy of defence without significant re-work by the candidate, s/he shall contact the graduate school administrator. The dean of postgraduate studies shall then determine whether it is appropriate for extraordinary arrangements to be put in place for the examiners to confer before the scheduled meeting. If approved by the dean, the examiners will be permitted to prepare a joint report. The decision reached under these arrangements shall be limited to Convention 29 (biii) only – i.e. permitting resubmission, and the terms of Convention 34 must apply. An oral examination will be required after resubmission.

D. Personal Extenuating Circumstances

11. Following submission of thesis, if a candidate is aware of any circumstances that may prevent them from attending the oral examination, these should be brought to the attention of their supervisor and the graduate school administrator immediately, to determine if it necessary to delay the oral examination.

12. A candidate should also contact their supervisor and the graduate school administrator if there are personal circumstances they believe could impact on their performance at the oral examination. This information will be provided to the examiners in advance of the oral examination, to determine if any reasonable adjustments are required.

13. Irrespective of personal circumstances, examiners will be expected to assess the candidate against the doctoral assessment criteria.

14. By attending an oral examination, a candidate is declaring that they are fit to attend the examination and, as such, it is unlikely that a candidate would be able to submit a later claim that their performance was affected by personal circumstances.

E. Nature of the Examination

15. The examination shall consist of a review and assessment of the candidate’s thesis by the examiners appointed and of an oral examination on the content of the thesis and subjects related thereto, chaired by the external examiner, where an independent chair has not been appointed. The viva shall be conducted in accordance with the guidelines in the University’s Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees.

16. The purpose of the oral examination is to enable the examiners to:
   a) establish that the research has been undertaken by the candidate;
   b) test the ability of the candidate to defend his or her thesis;
   c) establish whether the candidate has a satisfactory knowledge of the wider field surrounding the research topic.

17. In exceptional circumstances the dean of postgraduate studies may, subject to the agreement of the examiners, exempt a candidate from the oral examination, subject to alternate arrangements being in place to assess the above aspects.
18. In examining a candidate’s thesis, the examiners should take into account the assessment criteria detailed in the ‘Criteria for the Doctorate’ section of the University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees.

19. The results of the research and study must be satisfactorily presented in the thesis which should include matter worthy of publication. The thesis itself need not however be submitted in a form suitable for publication.

20. In the case of any work done jointly, or in wider collaborations, or under direction, it is important that the extent of the candidate’s own contribution is made clear both in any introductory element of the thesis and at relevant points within the thesis.

F. Public Presentation

21. In association with the examining process, a candidate may be encouraged to give a presentation of the work embodied in the thesis in the form of a public lecture or seminar. Such a presentation shall not, however, form part of the formal examination and shall not contribute to the examiners’ decision on the candidate’s performance.

G. Role of the Supervisory Team during the Examination

22. A member of the supervisory team will not be appointed as an internal examiner.

23. The academic supervisor may, at the request of the candidate, be present at (but will make no contribution to) the oral examination. S/he should in all cases be available to be consulted by the examiners on the occasion of the oral examination. The academic supervisor will have the right to confer with the examiners following the oral examination, and to be given an oral report on its outcome.

24. The academic supervisor will co-ordinate the arrangements for the oral examination and inform the graduate school administrator of the details.

25. Under no circumstances should the arrangements for the oral examination be delegated to the candidate. There should normally be no direct contact between the candidate and the examiners before or after the oral examination.

H. Examiners’ Final Reports

26. Having considered all the evidence presented to them, the examiners shall submit a joint report form on the examination. The report shall include a written statement concerning the candidate’s performance and the manner in which the work submitted has contributed to the advancement of knowledge and understanding, together with a recommendation as to the outcome of the examination. The report should also address directly any concerns raised in the preliminary reports and make clear the areas required for amendment if they require revisions or resubmission (See Convention 42).

27. The joint report must be sent to the relevant graduate school administrator. The report will be forwarded to the dean of postgraduate studies who shall consider it and decide whether due process has been followed. Exceptionally, the dean of postgraduate studies may require further information from the examiners to justify their decision. After consideration of the report by the dean of postgraduate studies, copies of the joint report will be sent to the candidate and the supervisory team by the relevant graduate school administrator (unless there is disagreement between the examiners, see Conventions – 44-46 below).
A copy shall also be sent to the head of school or nominee, unless otherwise directed by the dean of postgraduate studies.

28. Where two external examiners have examined the thesis and it is agreed that revisions are required (in the recommendations 29 a.ii or a.iii or c.ii or c.iii) they should agree between them which examiner shall receive the revised thesis and ensure that the required revisions have been made.

Note: that preliminary reports and a joint report should be completed for all examinations requiring the input of both examiners. This applies to both first submission and re-submission.

I. Recommendations Open to the Examiners

29. Following the first submission and examination of a candidate, the examiners may only make the following recommendations:

a) 
   i. that the candidate be admitted immediately to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; or

   ii. that the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor corrections, (e.g. of detail or presentation but not involving changes to the substance of the text/doctoral statement) made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made; or

   iii. that the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor revisions, (e.g. of a more substantial nature than in ii above, but not involving a major revision of the thesis/doctoral statement) being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

b) 
   i. that the candidate's thesis/submission be deemed to be of a satisfactory standard, but that the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners in the oral examination and that the candidate therefore be required to submit within six months either for a second oral examination or for a written examination, as the examiners shall determine in their written report; or

   ii. that the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners in the thesis/submission and the candidate be permitted to revise and re-submit the thesis/submission within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners, without a further oral examination; or

   iii. that the candidate be adjudged to have failed to satisfy the examiners and the candidate be permitted to revise and re-submit the thesis/submission within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be examined orally; or

c) 
   i. that the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Masters Degree and should immediately be awarded that degree instead; or
ii. that the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Masters Degree and should be awarded that degree instead subject to minor corrections of the text/doctoral statement made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made; or

iii. that the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Masters Degree and should be awarded that degree instead subject to minor revisions being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

d) that the candidate be permitted to revise and re-submit the thesis/submission for the appropriate Masters Degree within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be re-examined orally if the examiners so require by indication in their written report.

e) that no degree be awarded and that the candidate be adjudged to have failed.

Minor Revisions or Corrections

30. Recommendations 29 (a) or (c) may be made subject to a requirement that the candidate correct minor textual errors or make minor revisions to the thesis before the deposit of a copy of the thesis in the University Library in accordance with the Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees.

31. Where minor textual corrections are required, candidates will be advised by the relevant graduate school administrator that the corrections must be made within one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections. It shall be the responsibility of the internal examiner to certify that the necessary corrections have been made before a pass list can be issued.

32. Where minor revisions to the thesis are required, the candidate shall normally be required to make the revisions within six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

33. It shall be the expectation that the thesis will not require referral back to the external examiner and that the candidate will not be expected to undergo a further oral examination. However, if the internal examiner feels that any recommendation other than recommendations 29 (a)(i), (a)(ii), (c)(i) or (c)(ii) is appropriate following reconsideration of the thesis after the minor revisions have been made, the thesis shall also be referred to the external examiner.

Resubmission for Re-examination by Internal and External Examiners

34. In the case of a candidate subject to recommendations 29 (b) or (d) above, the revisions expected of the candidate shall be more substantial than in the case of a recommendation 29 (a) or (c). However, these recommendations shall be made only where the examiners are of the view that the thesis is basically acceptable for the degree concerned and/or that it is reasonable to expect the candidate to be able to attempt to revise and resubmit the thesis successfully in the normal time available and without conducting significant further basic research.

35. At resubmission, candidates must provide a commentary indicating the changes they have made to the thesis in response to the requirements of the examiners.
36. If the extraordinary arrangements under Convention 10 have been applied, the examiners will be required to conduct an oral examination upon resubmission.

37. In exceptional cases, an extension of time for making the corrections may be granted by the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, subject to the candidate justifying such an extension, supported by the academic supervisor.

**Recommendations after Resubmission for Re-examination by Internal and External Examiners**

38. Where the candidate’s oral performance on the first occasion of examination was satisfactory and the examiners are agreed, after considering the resubmitted thesis, that a further oral examination is not required, they may submit their recommendations without re-examining the candidate orally.

39. Examiners may, on consideration of the revised thesis, require a further oral examination, even if this had not originally been required as part of resubmission.

40. Where a candidate has been permitted to revise and resubmit a thesis in accordance with Conventions 29 (b) or (d), the only options open to the examiners when re-examining the thesis shall be one of the following, as appropriate;

   a)  
      i. that the candidate be admitted immediately to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; or
      
      ii. that the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor corrections, (e.g. of detail or presentation but not involving changes to the substance of the text/doctoral statement) made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made; or
      
      iii. that the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor revisions, (e.g. of a more substantial nature than in ii above, but not involving a major revision of the thesis/doctoral statement) being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.  

   or

   b)  
      i. that the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Masters Degree and should immediately be awarded that degree instead; or
      
      ii. that the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Masters Degree and should be awarded that degree instead subject to minor corrections of the text/doctoral statement made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made; or
c) that no degree be awarded and that the candidate be adjudged to have failed.

Note: Following the resubmission outcome and submission of the revised thesis, no further revisions to the thesis other than minor textual corrections made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month after receiving formal notification may be recommended.

Recommendations Following a Further Oral or Written Examination

41. In the case of a candidate subject to recommendation 29 b(i) and (d) above, the only options open to the examiners when re-examining the thesis shall be one of the following, as appropriate;

a)  
   i. that the candidate be admitted immediately to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy; or
   
   ii. that the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor corrections, (e.g. of detail or presentation but not involving changes to the substance of the text/doctoral statement) made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made;
   
   iii. that the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy subject to minor revisions, (e.g. of a more substantial nature than in ii above, but not involving a major revision of the thesis/doctoral statement) being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, within a period of up to six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

   or

b)  
   i. that the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Masters Degree and should immediately be awarded that degree instead; or
   
   ii. that the candidate has reached the standard required for the appropriate Masters Degree and should be awarded that degree instead subject to minor corrections of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made; or

   c) that no degree be awarded and that the candidate be adjudged to have failed.

Note: Following the resubmission outcome and submission of the revised thesis, no further revisions to the thesis other than minor textual corrections made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month after receiving formal notification may be recommended.

Provision to the Candidate of Information about Corrections/Revisions Required or Resubmission

42. In all cases where a candidate is required to make corrections/revisions to a thesis or to resubmit a thesis, it shall be the responsibility of the examiners to
provide full details of the corrections, revisions or additional publishable material (for published work submission) required of the thesis, but not extending to proof-reading or editing of the thesis. The examiners should provide a detailed written statement of the nature of the changes they wish to see made to the thesis, along with their completed joint report form. These should be sent to the relevant graduate school administrator who shall formally forward these documents on to the candidate and the supervisory team. When forwarding the final report to the candidate, the graduate school administrator will make it clear to the candidate that resubmission in itself will not guarantee the award of a qualification.

K. Communication of the Result to the Candidate

43. The dean of postgraduate studies acts as the Chair of the Board of Examiners and any recommendations are considered by the dean who will then confirm or otherwise the recommendations of the examiners, following receipt of examiner reports by the graduate school administrator. The results of the examination or re-examination shall be communicated formally to the candidate by the relevant graduate school administrator, once they have been considered by the dean of postgraduate studies. Neither an examiner nor any other person is empowered to communicate the result formally to a candidate before the official notification of the result to the candidate by a graduate school administrator on behalf of the Academic Registrar. In any case where an examiner chooses to give the candidate an informal indication as to the recommendation that will be put forward, the examiner concerned must stress that the recommendation is subject to ratification and that only the graduate school administrator (on behalf of the Academic Registrar) is empowered to issue official results.

L. Disagreement between the Examiners

44. If there is a disagreement between the examiners or doubt about their intentions, they shall be consulted with a view to resolving the matter. Where there is irreconcilable disagreement between the examiners an additional external examiner shall be appointed.

45. The additional external examiner shall be asked to read the candidate’s thesis and to conduct an oral examination. The additional examiner shall be told that the previous examiners had failed to reach agreement but will not have sight of their reports. On the occasion of the second oral examination the supervisory team (and where appropriate the internal examiner) shall be available to be consulted by the additional external examiner. The dean of postgraduate studies shall appoint a member of University staff as an independent observer, who will report on the conduct of the viva. The academic supervisor shall co-ordinate the arrangements for the oral examination. After the conclusion of the oral examination, the additional examiner shall make a recommendation which shall be final. He/she shall submit a final report which will, subject to the approval of the relevant dean of postgraduate studies, be forwarded to the candidate and the supervisory team in the normal way. In the event that changes to the thesis are required it will be the additional external examiner who shall examine the thesis.

46. Where a disagreement between examiners is identified at the examination of a resubmission, the additional external examiner shall be asked to read the candidate’s thesis and to consider the work submitted against the examiners
joint report from the first submission. If an oral examination is required for the resubmission the dean of postgraduate studies shall appoint a member of University staff as an independent observer, who will report on the conduct of the viva. After the conclusion of the oral examination, the additional examiner shall make a recommendation which shall be final. He/she shall submit a final report which will, subject to the approval of the relevant dean of postgraduate studies, be forwarded to the candidate and the supervisory team in the normal way. In the event that minor textual corrections are required, they will need to be made to the satisfaction of the additional external examiner.

47. A candidate who is subject to the procedure set out in Conventions 44 to 46 shall be informed that the examiners originally appointed have disagreed and that an additional examiner will be appointed. The candidate shall not be informed as to the nature of the disagreement between the original examiners and shall not be given a copy of their reports. If, however, the candidate subsequently appeals against the final decision in respect of the award of the degree, the report of the original examiners will form part of the formal record of appeal. The candidate shall be informed that a second oral examination will be required. After the second oral examination, and once a final decision as to the award of the degree has been made in accordance with Conventions 29, 38 and 41, the final report of the additional examiner shall be made available to the candidate and the supervisory team.

M. Provision for an Oral Examination to be Conducted Outside the University

48. It is expected that all oral examinations will take place within the University unless specifically requested otherwise and that all expected attendees are present at the University. With the approval of the dean of postgraduate studies, the oral examination for a candidate may be held elsewhere than at Newcastle. Both examiners should be present at any oral examination and only in very exceptional circumstances may the dean of postgraduate studies permit other arrangements to be made. (Further guidance is available in the University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees.) A member of the supervisory team is not normally expected to be present unless at the specific request of the candidate to attend the venue for an examination held outside Newcastle, but is expected to be available to be contacted by the examiners if required, for example by telephone. In all cases written consent for the examination to be conducted outside the university must be obtained from the candidate.

N. Posthumous Awards

49. A posthumous degree can be awarded where a deceased candidate’s body of work is sufficient to meet the criteria for the award. To initiate a request for a posthumous award, the academic supervisor should provide a statement to the relevant dean of postgraduate studies outlining why the deceased candidate should be considered for the posthumous degree. Requests should be endorsed by the head of school (or nominee) in which the candidate was registered and should normally have the support of the student’s family. (The Policy on Posthumous Awards for Postgraduate Research Students provides additional detail

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PolicyonPosthumousDegreesforPostgraduateResearchStudentsAugust2015Final.pdf)
Postgraduate Student Travel and Outside Study Policy

This Policy outlines the University's requirements when Postgraduate students (on Taught and Research programmes) are participating in travel and outside study (off-campus and abroad) and also makes reference to relevant insurance implications and guidelines for students and their tutors/supervisors/advisers.

It should be noted that the policy is of particular relevance to students registered at the Newcastle campus. Nevertheless, the general principles in this policy apply to all students, regardless of their location, course or mode of study. Staff and students should note that there may be particular provisions or different insurance arrangements at our Newcastle University London or overseas campuses (NuMEd, NUIS etc.) and for students studying at a distance or through e-learning. Students based at the University's London or overseas campus locations should contact the Insurance Office when they are considering travel and outside study, so that their individual situation can be considered. Contact details for the Insurance Office are; ext. 86520 or email insurance@ncl.ac.uk

The details of the Policy refer in the main to University activity and associated travel outside the UK territorial limits.

The University encourages student engagement with diverse opportunities available as part of their programme of study, which can include, for example, primary research or field-work, off-campus/outside placements in various national or international locations. 'University business' is defined as an activity which is a formal part of the programme of study or research, or any other academic activity which has been approved as part of the programme of study, training or research. For clarity ‘Off-campus’ is defined as a location away from the student’s registered Campus, which includes all University buildings/farms/laboratories etc.

As a consequence the University's Travel Abroad Policy, Insurance and current risk management authorisation protocols should be applied in every case. The full policy is available at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGStudent-Travel-Outside-Study-PolicyJuly15.pdf

Academic Appeals & Query Procedure for Students

A student who wishes to challenge the decision of the Examiners of their thesis/viva or the Annual Progress Review Panel must make a case on one of the following grounds:
(i) You were adversely affected by illness or other relevant factors, of which you were previously unaware, or which for a good cause you were unable to disclose to the Examiners in advance.

(ii) Procedural irregularity on the part of the examiners.

(iii) Bias or prejudice on the part of an examiner or examiners.

*Or for Unsatisfactory Progress only*

(iv) That the decision reached was perverse in that it was one which no reasonable person could have reached on the available evidence.

Challenges to the academic judgement of the examiners on an assessment outcome or the level of award recommended cannot form the basis of an appeal. The full Academic Appeals Procedure is available at; [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm)

Given the existence of procedures for complaint and redress during the study period, alleged inadequacy of teaching or supervision shall not constitute grounds for an appeal. Separate policies and relevant information are contained in the following documents:

- **Student Complaints and Resolution Procedure**
  [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/complaints.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/complaints.htm)

- **Dignity and Respect Procedure**
  [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/dignity.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/dignity.htm)

- **Guidelines for Research Students**
  [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/)

- **Student Guide**
  [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/StudentGuide.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/StudentGuide.pdf)

- **Public Interest Disclosure ‘Whistleblowing’ Policy**
  [https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/assets/documents/PolicyonPublicInterestDisclos ure.pdf](https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/assets/documents/PolicyonPublicInterestDisclos ure.pdf)

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**Procedure for Assessment Irregularities**

The University’s Standards of Academic Conduct (see Part 4 of this handbook) must be maintained. Students who are suspected of being in breach of these standards will be subject to the University's Procedure for Assessment Irregularities and may also be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

For the purposes of the Procedure for Assessment Irregularities, an assessment irregularity involves the use of improper means by a candidate in the assessment process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying from or conferring with other candidates or using unauthorised material or equipment in an examination room;
- Impersonating or allowing another to impersonate a candidate;
- Introducing examination scripts into the examination process otherwise
than in the course of an examination;

• Permitting another student to copy work;

• The falsification (by inclusion or suppression) of research results;

• Plagiarism. This is defined as the unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas, words or works either verbatim or in substance without specific acknowledgement. For the avoidance of doubt, plagiarism may occur in an examination script as well as in assessed coursework, projects, reports and like work and may involve the use of material downloaded from electronic sources such as the internet. Further, the inclusion of a source in a bibliography is not of itself a sufficient attribution of another’s work.

• Auto (self) Plagiarism. This applies when work (or similar) has already been submitted for an assessment at Newcastle or elsewhere. This may be considered to be an attempt to gain double credit for the same piece of work and is unfair and dishonest. This should not apply to draft copies of research work; if you are unsure, please speak to a member of staff for clarity before submitting your work.

Note that for research students, responsibility for initial investigation lies with the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, who acts as the Chair of the Board of Examiners for Research Degree students.

The full Procedure for Assessment Irregularities is available at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/assessment.htm

Dignity and Respect Procedure

1 Introduction

The University is unequivocally committed to the goal of fostering mutual respect and understanding between individuals and within its constituent communities and to promoting equality of opportunity among employees and students alike. The University aims to promote a working and learning environment and culture in which differences are tolerated, harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to deal with harassment and bullying without fear of victimisation. This procedure aims to ensure that if harassment or bullying does occur employees, students or visitors have support and adequate procedures to deal with the problem.

The University undertakes to:

• Treat incidents of harassment or bullying as serious;

• Publicise the procedure as widely as possible in order to ensure that all employees and students are aware of its existence;

• Include information in employee induction and appropriate staff development sessions (e.g. awareness training);

• Monitor the number of cases arising and the effectiveness of the procedure.
Harassment and bullying can have a detrimental effect upon health, confidence, morale and performance of those affected by it, and on the working and learning environment. The University undertakes to ensure a prompt response to all complaints and to treat them with due respect, appropriate confidentiality and fairness.

Informal resolution can often be the quickest and most effective way to deal with bullying/harassment. The University wishes to encourage a degree of flexibility appropriate to the individual circumstances to allow for informal resolution. However, when a formal complaint is made, every effort will be made to ensure it is dealt with expeditiously and within prescribed timescales.

**Definition of Bullying and Harassment**

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as

- “unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the complainant, or violating the complainant’s dignity”;
- Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment);
- Treating a person less favourably than another person because they have either submitted to, or did not submit to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment.”

Harassment may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment status, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race (including ethnic origin, nationality and colour), religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender, political belief, trade union membership, or any personal characteristic of the individual. It may be persistent or an isolated incident.

The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient and that it is reasonable for the recipient to feel this way, or perceive the actions in this way.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

**All Employees and Students**

Everyone has a responsibility to comply with this procedure and all staff and students should ensure that their behaviour towards colleagues does not cause offence and could not be considered harassment or bullying.

Differences in culture, attitudes and experience, or the misinterpretation of social signals, can mean that what is perceived by the person experiencing the behaviour as harassment and/or bullying, may be perceived by others as normal. It is important to be sensitive to the feelings and reactions of others. Consider the appropriateness of your behaviour and the affect it has on others and be prepared to adjust it if necessary.

**Line Managers and Supervisors**

Those responsible for the management of employees or the supervision of students should:

- Set a good example by treating employees and students with dignity and respect.
• Understand the Procedure and make every effort to ensure that harassment and bullying do not occur, particularly in work or study areas for which they are responsible.

• Respond sensitively and supportively to any employee or student who makes an allegation of harassment or bullying; provide clear advice on the procedure to be adopted; maintain confidentiality in accordance with this Procedure; monitor the work and study environment to ensure that there are no problems of harassment or bullying, or of victimisation after a complaint has been made.

• Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action; do not wait until complaints are brought to your attention if you are aware of behaviour of other managers, employees or students which might cause offence. If the incident is not serious then calling the individual aside and providing some advice may be sufficient to stop the behaviour.

• Ensure that employees and students know how to raise problems, are aware of the Procedure and sources of help and support.

The full Policy on Dignity at Work and Study, with the procedure to follow for making and dealing with complaints of harassment and bullying, is available at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/assets/documents/dignity_and_respect_procedure_mar_2016-et.pdf

Students who wish to make a formal complaint under this Policy, should follow the Student Complaints and Resolution procedure.

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/complaints.htm

Equality & Diversity

Equality Strategy

1. Purpose
The Equality Strategy is our public declaration of our commitment to develop a fully inclusive University community which recruits and retains talented staff and students from all sectors of society equally. It also sets out how we, at Newcastle University, plan to meet the duties placed on us by equality and diversity legislation and to follow best practice in all that we do: including employing our staff, providing teaching and learning to our students and being engaged with local communities.

2. Context
Our Vision is of Newcastle as a Civic University with a global reputation for academic excellence. Our Mission is: to be a world-class research-intensive university; to deliver teaching and facilitate learning of the highest quality and to play a leading role in the economic, social and cultural development of the North East of England. There are certain fundamental values shared
throughout the higher education sector to which we are committed, including: academic freedom; the pursuit of knowledge and understanding; a sound academic disciplinary base; a methodology based on reason and evidence; social responsibility; and transparency. In addition, we are committed to excellence; value diversity; respond to societal challenges; accord parity of esteem to research and teaching; educate for life; are globally ambitious and regionally rooted and invest in excellent staff.

Arising from the three elements of the mission statement, we have three core academic functions: research and innovation; learning, teaching and the wider student experience; and engagement and internationalisation. As a university, our institutional objectives are: to achieve: top 20 in the UK for research; top 20 in the UK for student satisfaction; a focus on three societal challenge themes (ageing, social renewal and sustainability); a significant international, national and regional profile and reputation; and financial and environmental sustainability.

3. Commitment to Equality and Diversity
Our Equality and Diversity commitment is to develop a fully inclusive University community which recruits and retains staff and students from all sectors of society. We will nurture them, ensuring that they can be developed within a positive and supportive culture that encourages everyone to flourish and reach their potential. We will build strong positive relationships between staff, students and external stakeholders (including contractors and visitors) and promote a common vision where diversity is valued by all. Everyone must be treated with dignity and respect. We can identify how Equality and Diversity are relevant to and will assist us to achieve our core academic objectives.

4. Responsibility for the Strategy and Actions
All staff in the course of their employment and all students in the course of their studies and others associated with the University, without exception, have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with the requirements of the http://www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity/ and promote good relations between people of different groups. Taking into account the legal and cultural environments of other countries, the principles of the strategy will also apply to educational partnerships, including branch campuses of the University, unless by doing so any member of staff might commit a criminal offence in that country. University Council is responsible for ensuring that the University acts within the requirements of the UK legislation and meets all its general and specific public duties. It is also responsible for ensuring that the commitments and behaviours required in the Equality Strategy are followed.

The Vice Chancellor has ultimate executive responsibility for the effective development and implementation of Equal Opportunities Policies and ensuring that effective procedures are in place.

The Diversity Committee has responsibility for the formulation of Equality Policies and procedures and for overseeing their implementation. The Committee reports to the Executive Board of the University which has the authority to make decisions or to recommend the policies for approval by Council. This includes specifically advising on the development and
implementation of the Equality Strategy and the University's Equality and Diversity objectives.

The Director of Human Resources and the Academic Registrar have responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy as it pertains to staff and students respectively; ensuring that appropriate staff training and development is carried out.

All Managers (including Pro-Vice Chancellors, Heads of Unit, Heads of Service and all other line managers) are responsible for ensuring that the Strategy is implemented and maintained within their own Units/Services; ensuring all staff are fully informed about their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying them out; taking appropriate action against staff or students who discriminate for unlawful reasons; this may include invoking appropriate University disciplinary or grievance procedures, and initiating procedures for dealing with complaints and ensuring that the Strategy and its procedures are followed within their areas of responsibility.

Further information on Equality and Diversity at Newcastle University can be found at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity/

Students who wish to make a formal complaint under this Policy, should follow the Student Complaints and Resolution procedure.

Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure

1 Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs in a responsible manner taking into account the requirements of the funding bodies, the standards in public life set out in the reports of the Nolan Committee, and the principles of academic freedom embodied in its Statutes.

1.2 The Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into effect on 1 January 1999, gives legal protection to workers against being dismissed or penalized by their employers as a result of disclosing in the public interest certain serious concerns. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. However, an individual within the organization should have the right to disclose certain matters of public interest without fear of reprisal. The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 confirmed that the legal framework that gives protection to workers who raise public interest disclosures is intended to apply only to disclosures that are made in the broader public interest, as opposed to issues in which an individual may have a personal interest.
1.3 This policy and procedure is intended to guide and assist workers and students who wish to make a disclosure, in the public interest, about what they believe to be malpractice or impropriety in order to assist the University in the maintenance of appropriate standards of propriety and good practice. Workers and students are expected to use this policy and procedure in the first instance rather than report their concerns to a third party outside the Institution. Whilst the law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate for workers to report their concerns to an external body such as a regulator, the University strongly encourages workers and students to seek advice from an appropriate manager or Students’ Union Officer before reporting a concern to anyone external.

2 Scope of Policy

2.1 This policy and procedure provides for workers and students registered at Newcastle for a period of study who wish to make a disclosure of information which they reasonably believe to be in the public interest and constitute malpractice or impropriety to bring their concerns to the attention of the appropriate University officer.

2.2 Instances of malpractice or impropriety might include:

- That a criminal offence has been committed, is benign committed or is likely to be committed
- That financial malpractice is being committed or is likely to be committed
- That impropriety or fraud has been committed, is being committed or is likely to be committed
- That a person has failed, is failing or is likely to fail to comply with any legal obligation to which he or she is subject
- That the health or safety of any individual has been, is being or is likely to be endangered
- That the environment has been, is being or is likely to be damaged
- academic or professional malpractice or
- that information tending to show any matter falling within any of the above paragraphs has been, is being or is likely to be deliberately concealed

2.3 The University already has in place a number of policies and procedures for addressing matters that relate to individual employees or employment-related complaints or student complaints, such as grievance, complaints, discipline and harassment. This policy and procedure should not be used where a matter of concern should more appropriately be addressed through other approved University procedures. However, investigation of matters raised under this policy and procedure may subsequently lead to the invocation of other University procedures (see sections 4 and 6 below).

This policy and procedure will be the subject of periodic review and, if necessary, revision in light of experience and in consequence of any further advice which may be issued in the higher education sector.

The full policy is available at: https://my.ncl.ac.uk/staff/assets/documents/PolicyandProcedureonPublicInterestDisclosure.pdf
Student Disciplinary Procedures

1(a) Introduction

These procedures seek to ensure that student disciplinary matters are dealt with fairly and promptly at the appropriate level by those with clear authority from the University. The procedures apply to persons who are subject to the discipline of the University as prescribed in the General Regulations.

The purpose of the procedures is to regulate student behaviour in order to secure the proper working of the University in the broadest sense. As serious consequences may follow a finding of misconduct, it is necessary in every case for it to be shown that the conduct in question falls within the general definition before it may be characterised as misconduct.

(b) Definition of Misconduct

A breach of discipline is, for the purpose of these procedures, called an "act of misconduct", and this will include, but not be limited to, failure to observe all University rules and regulations including local regulations for the governance of Academic Schools, Academic Service Departments and University Residences. The essence of misconduct under this code is improper conduct or improper interference, in the broadest sense, with the proper functioning or activities of the University, or those who work or study in the University. It also includes conduct which otherwise damages the University.

(c) Scope

These procedures apply to all registered students in all locations on and off campus both in the UK and overseas (when it is found that there is some link to the University or its reputation).

Discipline of students within the Students’ Union building shall be the responsibility of officials of the Students’ Union nominated by the Students’ Union. The Students’ Union has an agreement with the University which identifies matters which it will report as a matter of course to the University and matters which it will report to the Police. The agreement is subject to annual review. Examination and other assessment irregularities are normally dealt with in accordance with the University "Procedure for Assessment Irregularities".

(d) Fitness for Professional Practise

As part of the function of the University, graduation from certain courses entitles a graduate to practise in a profession or to obtain professional status. In some cases where professional fitness to practise issues arise (e.g. medicine, dentistry, education), the University may also invoke relevant procedures. In such cases, the disciplinary case file may be shared with other University Officers responsible for such procedures.

The full Student Disciplinary Procedure is available at
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/disciplinary.htm
Fitness to Study Procedure

Introduction
This policy is intended to apply in rare cases where conduct creates serious concerns about the student’s welfare such that normal adjustments are not sufficient. Many students encounter difficulties and other procedures such as the Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) Procedure should normally be considered before invoking the Fitness to Study procedure.

Scope of Procedure
1.1 Newcastle University recognises that at various stages during the course of study a student may encounter physical or psychological difficulties. This may result in:
- concerns about the student’s fitness to study successfully, and / or
- concerns about a student’s fitness to engage with other aspects of University life, and/or
- conduct which may be regarded as a risk to the student or others.
In these circumstances the University seeks to support students to the completion of their studies where possible.

1.2 This procedure is not an alternative to disciplinary action, or other relevant University procedures such as Fitness to Practise or Unsatisfactory Progress. The University reserves the right to refer to other procedures where appropriate.

1.3 A student’s fitness to study may be considered despite the fact that other University processes have been invoked. Examples include:
- Failure to make satisfactory progress in academic studies (dealt with under the appropriate Progress Regulations www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/)
- Misconduct as normally defined in the University (dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Procedure www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/disciplinary.htm )
- Fitness to Practise: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/fitness.htm .
For MBBS and BDS students, the Fitness to Practise procedure would normally be invoked instead of the Fitness to Study procedure but staff have the discretion to choose.

The University may refer between procedures but will not normally consider parallel procedures about the same substantive matter. Advice on which procedure should take precedence can be sought from the Head of the Student Progress Service or the Head of the Student Wellbeing Service.

1.4 The procedure is intended for use when there is serious concern about the student’s ability to study successfully, and may relate to the presence of a diagnosed illness or disability. This procedure may also be used when there is no diagnosed illness or disability, or no notification of such a diagnosis. The...
decision about whether to use this procedure or an alternative procedure is at the discretion of the Degree Programme Director or nominee in Academic Units and senior member of staff for other areas responding to the concerns about the student’s conduct. If the student has been given permission for an interruption in studies (leave of absence), the fitness to study procedure should not be considered until the student returns to study.

1.5 The University has a duty of care to its students, which it takes very seriously. The University must ensure that any decisions have due regard to the best interests of the student, as part of its wellbeing strategy. This includes being sure, as far as possible, that a student is fit to study. This also entails a requirement to consider the impact that the student may have on other students and staff. An additional factor is the consideration of any reasonable adjustments being put into place to enable the student to continue to study.

1.6 The Fitness to Study Procedure consists of three levels (see section 3). However, depending on the individual circumstances this procedure may be invoked at any of the three levels.

1.7 If a concern regarding fitness to study arises whilst the student is on placement, the University may discuss and consider alternative arrangements with the placement provider. If it is not possible for alternative arrangements to be made, the student’s placement may be withdrawn and deferral or other adjustments considered.

The full Fitness to Study Procedure is available at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/f2s.htm

Student Complaints and Resolution Procedure

Introduction

1. The Complaints Procedure described below should be followed in cases where a student wishes to make a complaint about a service or member(s) of staff or another student within the University where it has not been possible to resolve the problem with the service or individual(s) concerned.

2. The University provides a clear three-stage procedure for students to complain about the level of service or treatment which may have fallen short of what might reasonably be expected. At Level 1 (informal stage for resolution), complainants are expected to make every effort to resolve informally a problem with the individual(s) concerned or to seek help/advice in writing from the complainant’s tutor/supervisor/Head of School, or appropriate Head of Service.

3. Only when the steps taken under Level 1 of the procedure have failed, or when the complainant considers that their complaint has not been resolved may Level 2 of the procedure be invoked by submission of the Complaints Form, together with full details of the complaint and any supporting evidence.

4. Level 3 is the formal review of the Level 2 outcome, where the complainant requests a review of the outcome of their complaint at the Level 2 stage.

5. The University has complementary policies about expectations in respect of
dignity and Respect, equality and diversity (See www.ncl.ac.uk/hr/policy/). Students wishing to make a complaint about actions which are contrary to these policies shall do so by completing the student complaint form/procedure. They should also make it clear that their grievance relates to one of these specific policies.

Appeals resulting from Student Disciplinary Procedures are dealt with under separate arrangements.

There are also separate procedures for dealing with complaints relating to tenants, staff or service in University accommodation. The procedures are contained in the relevant information booklets supplied by the respective student residences.

6. The Complaints and Resolution Procedure shall not apply to cases in which an individual wishes to appeal against an academic decision; in such instances the applicant should follow the Academic Appeals Procedure for Students. In order to avoid duplication of effort, the Academic Registrar shall determine whether a complaint shall proceed if an appeal has also been made in connection with the same/similar matter as the complaint.

Students shall not be disadvantaged for lodging a complaint in good faith.

Further Information
Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Student Progress Service, Student and Academic Services, King’s Gate or from the Student Advice Centre in the Union Society.

The full procedure and form is available at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/complaints.htm

Policy for Intellectual Property and Research Studentships

Introduction
The University has become concerned that heads of School and supervisors may not be fully aware of the pitfalls that can accompany our attempts to protect and commercialize Intellectual Property (IP) arising from work carried out during an MPhil or PhD programme, or during an undergraduate research project or during a working visit by a member of staff from another institution. Where supervisors believe that a project involving a student or an academic visitor is likely to generate potentially commercialisable IP, they should note carefully the position outlined below.

Intellectual Property generated by members of staff in the University is automatically vested in the University, provided that it relates to work that the member of staff would normally be expected to carry out as part of their day-to-day activities. However, undergraduate and research postgraduate students and academic visitors are not members of staff, and there may be considerable
variation in the nature and source of their funding. This is a complex situation. This note explains the IPR position of different types of studentships. It details where positive action is taken by University Research Office (URO) to protect IP and identifies where schools need themselves to take specific action.

Where a student or a visitor is joining a large research effort with considerable and possibly highly commercialisable IP, supervisors must ensure that the IP position is reviewed immediately with the student, that the student is aware of the position with regard to IP, that he or she understands the problems that will arise for the University should the IP associated with a project be disclosed prematurely, and that the IP generated in the course of the grant is properly vested in the University in exchange for an undertaking to treat the student as if he or she were a member of academic staff with regard to intellectual property. A corollary of this is that where the student has clearly been responsible for 'inventive' steps in the prosecution of his or her research, and that research has led to a patent being filed by the University, the student's name shall appear on the patent.

Policy Statement on Confidentiality and Intellectual Property (including Inventions) and Results for Research Students, is available at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/res/assets/documents/PGRPolicyv10111114FINALClean.pdf

Case Students and Commercially Funded Studentships
For students on CASE awards, or awards that are funded in whole or part by Industry, URO will issue a standard letter to the student, a copy of which can be seen on the Web. In this letter it is made clear that the IP generated by the student during his or her research will be owned by the University and that in this regard the student will be treated as if the student were a member of the academic staff. URO will normally negotiate the ownership and exploitation conditions of any IP arising from the work with the company before the research project begins. It is very much in the interests of supervisors to ensure that such an agreement is in place; failure to do so may have very serious consequences at a later date.

Studentships Supported from Charitable Foundations
For students on charitable foundation grants, the situation is more variable: with some charities, such as the Cancer Research Campaign, the University has a framework agreement; many other charities impose conditions on IP and its exploitation as part of their standard conditions of grant, and supervisors are strongly advised to consult URO to establish the situation in each case. Where such agreements exist, or where conditions attached to the grant vest the IP with the charity or with a third party acting on behalf of the charity, the supervisor should liaise with URO to ensure that the student receives and signs an appropriate assignment letter. Where no agreement is in place, and/or the charity makes no disposition of IP arising from its grants, the difficulties are similar to those described in the next section.

Research Council Funded and Quota Studentships
For students funded by the Research Councils alone, the precise situation will depend on the nature of the award. Many awards are made as 'earmarked' studentships i.e. the studentship is part of a larger grant; the conditions of such grants normally vest the exploitation of the IP generated with the University, and supervisors should seek the advice of URO over the assignment of the student's
IP to the University, using a standard letter available on the website. Students on this type of grant will for the purposes of intellectual property be treated as if they were members of staff. For students funded by normal Research Council Quota studentships, the responsibility for exploitation of any IP arising from the studentship is vested with the University, but IP arising during the studentship remains, in principle, the property of the student unless explicit steps are taken. It is of the highest importance that supervisors and heads of school recognize this fact.

**Self-funded Students**

A more complex situation arises where students are self-funded. Under these circumstances, students are free agents, and no assumption can be made that IP generated during the course of the research project will vest solely with the University. Where the creative step can clearly be traced to the supervisor, and documentary proof of this can be produced, then there is no problem, but real-life situations are usually far from being so clear-cut, with both the supervisor and the student likely to claim some of the credit. The University does not believe that it would be feasible to introduce a general condition into the PhD regulations automatically vesting IP derived from a PhD or MPhil project with the University; such a clause, affecting those who are essentially ‘self-employed’ would be unlikely to survive scrutiny by the courts. On the other hand, ownership of only some of the IP is also of little intrinsic value to the student. We believe, therefore, that the most effective way forward would be for the supervisor to agree with the student, in writing, before the research starts that any IP arising from the work carried out, and any which is additional to that provided before the start, should be assigned to the University, with the student being assured by the University that his or her interests will be taken fully into account. A draft letter for this purpose can be found on the website. All background IP of relevance should be properly documented, so that the starting position is clear, and the student invited to agree that any IP arising from his/her work would be added as appropriate to that background IP. A signed statement to this effect should be obtained.

**Students Funded Directly by Third Parties**

A student funded directly by a third party, such as an overseas government or agency, may claim that no agreement over IP is possible without consultation with his/her sponsor(s), and an opportunity should be given for such an agreement to be obtained. However, where such an agreement proves impossible to obtain, supervisors should consider carefully the nature of the project, recognising that it may not be possible under these circumstances for the University to obtain protection for any IP generated.

**Practicalities**

Schools should use the standard letter which can be accessed from the URO website. Two copies of each letter should be signed by the supervisor and the student. The student should be given one copy and the other signed original must be deposited with URO, since any legal steps needed will have to be undertaken by URO.

Further general guidance about Intellectual Property is available in University Research Office: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/res/resources/Polices%20Forms%20and%20Guidance/Policies.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/res/resources/Polices%20Forms%20and%20Guidance/Policies.htm)
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• up to 5 per cent or one whole article (whichever is the greater) from a single issue of a journal;
• up to 5 per cent or one paper (whichever is the greater) from a set of conference proceedings;
• up to 5 per cent of an anthology of short stories or poems or one short story or one poem of not more than 10 pages (whichever is the greater);
• up to 5 per cent or one single case (whichever is the greater) from a published report of judicial proceedings.

What the Licence does not cover

The following Excluded Material is outside the scope of this Licence Agreement:

♦ printed music (including the words)
♦ bibles, liturgical works, orders of service
♦ maps, charts, or books of tables
♦ newspapers
♦ public examination papers
♦ industrial house journals
♦ workbooks, work cards and assignments
♦ 'copying not allowed under the CLA licence' titles
♦ private documents (fee-based tuition)
♦ works included on the Excluded Works list
♦ works published by non-participating US publishers
♦ works published outside Mandating Territories

Policy on Postgraduates Who Teach

Introduction

This policy covers teaching and learning practices for postgraduates teaching or demonstrating on modules. Appointment practices, employment terms and conditions are covered in more detail by separate Human Resources policies. This policy does not cover arrangements for hourly paid bought in teaching.
The University recognises the value to postgraduates of the teaching experience it provides, and is committed to providing such opportunities consistent with its desire to deliver teaching of the highest quality on its programmes.

Postgraduates may support teaching by:

- Taking small groups such as seminars, tutorials or workshops
- Helping with fieldwork
- Demonstrating in laboratories
- Providing occasional lectures on their own specialism
- Assessment under the conditions indicated in this document.

**General**

1. Payment for teaching and demonstrating is determined by Human Resources annually and the demand for such teaching is governed by the needs of the teaching needs of the School responsible for the programme.
2. All recruitment of postgraduate students to teaching and demonstrating posts will be fair and transparent, and made on the basis of their academic ability or relevant experience, regardless of age, religion or belief, ethnicity, gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation or disability.
3. Only registered postgraduate students are eligible for teaching and demonstrating duties.
4. Any student engaging in teaching and demonstrating must have already obtained a qualification at the level they are teaching.
5. Postgraduates who teach must possess a good standard of English, equivalent to a minimum of IELTS 6.5, and where required by the School a higher level.
6. All postgraduates who teach must satisfactorily complete formal training before they begin to teach. Training will be available for all postgraduates who teach from the Staff Development Unit.
7. Postgraduates cannot teach on any module that contributes to the programme they are currently registered on. (This does not prevent postgraduates passing on their experiences on the programme to their peers where this does not contribute to the assessment.)
8. Schools must not make excessive demands on the student’s time. Tutors and supervisors must be consulted about the time devoted to such duties and teaching hours must be consistent with the requirements of the student’s work, the terms of their studentship and any visa arrangements. Any disagreements should be resolved by the Head of School or nominee.
9. Postgraduates who teach can first or second mark assignments provided they have received guidance in this area, have clear marking criteria, and moderation processes are in place.
10. Schools remain ultimately responsible for the quality of teaching on their programmes and module Leaders for the quality of the teaching of postgraduates on their module, including module assessment where postgraduates are involved in this activity.
Training and Support

All postgraduate teachers should normally successfully complete the Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILTHE) before they teach. Though not mandatory, on completion of this introduction participants can also apply to undertake Module 1 of the Higher Education Academy accredited Certificate in Advanced Studies in Academic Practice (CASAP), Learning, Teaching and Engaging Students (LTES) which leads to Associate status (Descriptor 1) of the Higher Education Academy. It is necessary to have teaching experience before signing up to this module.

If specialist postgraduate training, not provided by the ILTHE, is required an alternative can be proposed by the relevant Faculty Dean of Postgraduate Studies and approved by the Chair of ULTSEC, provided that this training is at least equivalent to that provided by ILTHE, although it may be more focused, and is reviewed as part of the Faculty’s normal quality assurance procedures.

Postgraduate Deans are responsible for granting and keeping a record of individual exemptions for postgraduates from University training, based on the criteria below. Exemption from attending the programme will normally apply if:

- A postgraduate already has a teaching qualification comparable with the relevant elements of the ILTHE (e.g., PGCE).
- The HoS, or their nominee, recommends exemption for some other reason such as: a postgraduate has 3 years teaching experience at this level or equivalent professional experience; at least 1 year’s prior teaching or professional experience at this level combined with evidence of learning (e.g., professional development activities such as workshops and seminars on teaching).

Responsibilities of the Postgraduate Teacher or Demonstrator

1. Postgraduates who teach should attend and participate in all training and briefings provided by the University and School.
2. Postgraduates who teach should participate in the student feedback mechanisms that the School employs to monitor teaching.
3. Postgraduates who teach should attend appropriate Boards of Studies, Staff Meetings and other meetings as specified by the School e.g. teaching away days relevant to their teaching.
4. Postgraduates are responsible for consulting with tutors or supervisors concerning their teaching and ensuring that it is consistent with the requirements of their project and studentship.

Responsibilities of the School

1. Postgraduates who teach should be provided with School resources, course materials and support, adequate to fulfil their teaching /demonstration responsibilities.
2. Postgraduates should be told how much time they are expected to spend on their duties and the hours for remuneration.
3. It is the responsibility of the module leader to provide support and guidance to postgraduates undertaking teaching.
4. The School should organise appropriate induction and briefing sessions for postgraduates who teach.
5. The School is responsible for ensuring that postgraduate teachers participate in the training necessary to carry out their teaching.

6. It is the School’s responsibility to ensure that postgraduates are aware of any relevant health and safety procedures.

7. There should be clear and regular procedures for review and evaluation of postgraduates’ performance, using peer observation and standard student feedback procedures. Schools should take appropriate action if the feedback is negative.

8. Postgraduates who teach should be provided with an opportunity to give feedback on both their teaching and the support available for teaching to the School, and procedures for raising any issues should be made clear to them.

**Withdrawing from the University**

Occasionally students decide for a variety of reasons that they wish to withdraw from the University. If at any stage you begin to have doubts about continuing with your studies, you are advised to discuss the matter with your supervisor as soon as possible as it may be the case that something you perceive as a problem can be overcome. If you do decide to withdraw, you should inform your sponsor, your supervisor and the relevant graduate school administrator. If you are liable for tuition fees or for any or all of the tuition fee contribution, you should contact the Finance Office to find out how much you owe to the University or whether any refund is due to you. Even if you withdraw before the first instalment of a tuition fee contribution is due, you may still be liable to pay a certain amount to the University (see also Payment of Tuition Fees in Part Two of this Handbook).

If you are in University managed accommodation, you must also notify the Accommodation Office of your withdrawal. You will remain responsible for the rent charges for the full termly billing period. You will only be released from this if the room is re-let to another student who is not already committed to University accommodation.