# Contents

Welcome and introduction .................................................. 2

Chapter 1 – Your postgraduate research community
- Student engagement and ways to get involved .................. 3-4
- Equality, diversity and inclusion ........................................ 4
- Facilities: common room, library and computing ................. 5-8
- The Graduate School and useful links and contacts .......... 9-10

Chapter 2 – Getting started
- Induction ............................................................................. 11
- Student self service portal .................................................. 12
- Project approval .................................................................. 12-13
- Learning agreement ............................................................. 14
- Research governance ........................................................... 14
- Safety .................................................................................. 14

Chapter 3 – Your research programme
- Being a research student – what the University expects of you .................................................. 16
- Code of practice .................................................................. 17
- Your supervisory team, meetings, making the most of them and recording them .................................................. 17
  - Lab book/research diary guidelines .................................. 18
  - E-Portfolio ........................................................................ 19
- Annual progression ............................................................. 20-22
- Preparation and submission of thesis ............................... 23-24
- Appointment of examiners ................................................. 25
- Your viva ............................................................................. 25
- Graduation, doctoral thesis prize and post-submission scholarship scheme .................................................. 26
- Registration periods: minimums and maximums ............ 26-27

Chapter 4 – Your development as a researcher
- Your training review ............................................................. 28
- Skills development ................................................................. 28-30
- Careers ................................................................................. 30
- Opportunities for teaching in the Faculty .......................... 30

Chapter 5 – Support and advice
- What to do if you have any problems ................................. 31
- Ensuring the quality of your degree .................................... 32
- Maintaining your wellbeing during your studies .............. 32
- Extensions and Interrupting your studies ......................... 32-34
- Parental leave .................................................................... 34
- Annual leave ....................................................................... 34
- Grants and support ............................................................... 35
- Sources of help and support ............................................... 36
Welcome to the Faculty of Medical Sciences and the Graduate School Handbook

The Handbook aims to provide you with an outline of the support that is available to you as a postgraduate research student within the Faculty of Medical Sciences here at Newcastle University along with providing you valuable guidance about the opportunities that are available to you here within the Faculty to help develop your skills and knowledge, details of the facilities that you will have access to and also guidance on how to seek support and opportunities for engaging with your fellow student colleagues.

Postgraduate culture is thriving in the Faculty and particular attention is devoted to additional support for international students.

The Graduate School has a commitment to the delivery of postgraduate training of the highest possible quality. We attach considerable importance to the academic training and pastoral care of our postgraduate students, and have an excellent record for timely PhD thesis submission and completion rates.

Currently the Faculty has around 800 doctoral research students and over 500 academic staff involved in the supervision of those students along with numerous colleagues based within their clinical settings in the local NHS Trusts with whom we have strong collaborative relationships.

A major strength of the research, including that by you, our postgraduate students, is that biomolecular and biomedical research is fully integrated in the clinical disciplines. In addition to areas of research strength in physiology, biochemistry and genetics, microbiology and immunology, there are interdepartmental research themes including ageing, cancer research, neuroscience, and cellular and molecular medicine and expertise in public health, pharmacy and dentistry.

We in the Graduate School are here to provide support for you through your studies alongside those within your own institute where you will be a registered student, or when you want to discuss something outside of this structure. We will be there for you throughout your studies, to help you when anything goes wrong and to celebrate all your successes.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for your studies and hope that I very much get to meet you during the course of your studies, enjoy your time here with us.

Professor John Kirby
Dean of Postgraduate Studies
Faculty of Medical Sciences
Newcastle University
Chapter 1
Your postgraduate research community

As a postgraduate research (PGR) student you are not only a researcher in training but you are also a registered student in the Faculty and at the University and should make the most of being part of a vibrant Faculty and University environment.

Student engagement

Research student representatives from each institute form a Student Representatives Committee which provides a forum for raising any issues of common interest to the student body, for consultation, and for planning social activities. In addition students are represented on the Graduate School Committee, which is responsible for devising Faculty policy and provides a way of representing the views of our Faculty’s postgraduate research students through to wider University forums and formal committees.

Student Representatives are appointed for each Institute, the MRes and Doctorate in Clinical Psychology programmes. They are friendly and approachable individuals who are happy to have informal chats or discuss issues/concerns that may arise during your studies. Representatives are also appointed by the Students Union as members of Graduate School Committee.

If you are interested in finding out more about the role of the student representative please contact the Newcastle University Student Union (NUSU) ‘Your Voice’ Team at rdc.union@ncl.ac.uk for more information or the Faculty’s Postgraduate Skills Development Co-ordinator richard.hetherington@ncl.ac.uk
Ways to get involved

It is important in being part of the Faculty’s postgraduate research community that you also engage in a dialogue with us about your student experience – we are really keen to learn about what you have valued about your studies and whether there are things you would like to see improved.

Postgraduate research experience survey

Every two years the whole University participates in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) which normally runs from early March until May. PRES is a national survey and is a major part of how we engage with our research student community to gain feedback on their experiences so do take the opportunity to respond when you are asked. The survey asks a range of questions about the key areas of your postgraduate research student experience, including supervision, resources, skills development as well as those focused on your overall experience.

We take the results of the PRES very seriously and are interested to learn about our practices and policies from you, what works and what doesn’t. You can find details of the results from previous PRES surveys and what action to has been taken as a result of your feedback on the Graduate School’s web pages. We are also interested in learning how we sit against experiences that postgraduate research students are having at other institutions across the sector.

Student representatives

If you have issues or areas for improvement or perhaps good practice that you feel would be of benefit to the wider student body then you can always let your student representatives know. They can then represent this through the Student Representatives Committee.

Informal feedback

There are, of course, other ways of letting us know your views, for example by speaking to a member of your supervisory team, your institute postgraduate support team or institute office or via the Graduate School Office.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Faculty is committed to making more inclusive working environments for all our staff and students, ensuring and celebrating our diversity.

We firmly believe that a diverse and inclusive culture nurtures success. This commitment applies to all areas of your life here at the University and if you are feel that you are being harassed or discriminated against by other students or the University you must seek advice from your supervisor, the Graduate School or from Student Wellbeing. You may also seek advice from the PGR student coordinators and support staff in your Institute, or the Regional Research Advisor if you are supervised by staff based in one of our teaching schools.

All our institutes and schools are working towards, have applied for or been awarded Athena SWAN awards and we have just submitted our first Faculty Athena SWAN application that will allow us to address key challenges and enable the exchange of good practice around gender equality across the Faculty. The Faculty also works to support the University’s activities towards accreditation through Stonewall, the Business Disability Forum, and the Race Equality Charter.

If you have any queries about EDI and the Faculty email FMS.Diversity@ncl.ac.uk or follow the team on Twitter @FMSDiversityNCL
Facilities

Graduate School Common Room

The Graduate School Common Room provides excellent facilities including bookable private study rooms (each equipped with a PC), a small PC cluster, and lounge and café areas. The Common Room is situated on the ground floor of the Catherine Cookson Building, in the Faculty of Medical Sciences. A new training suite within the Common Room was opened in 2015, and this is where much of the training related to the Development Programme takes place. A new social space for staff and postgraduate students, the Ridley Atrium, also opened in 2015. The atrium provides a space for refreshments and informal conversation between PG students and staff and is located on the ground floor of the Medical School.

The Graduate School administrative office is located on the third floor of Ridley Building 1. Here you will find our reception, open from 8.45 to 5.00 pm (4.45pm on Fridays), and Graduate School staff will be on hand to help you with any queries.

Laboratory facilities

Over the past few years, the Faculty has invested heavily in a range of facilities to support and enhance our own research and that of our commercial partners and customers.

Specialist support ranges from large facilities such as electron and confocal microscopy and flow cytometry to access to techniques such as bio-informatics and proteomic analysis. Clinical Research Platforms combine state-of-the-art facilities with staff experienced in all phases of clinical research. New facilities added recently include the Sir Bobby Robson Cancer Trials Research Centre at the Freeman Hospital; a new Dental Clinical Research Facility; and our ‘Biobank’, providing access to clinical samples for research.

You can find full details of all facilities through the Faculty of Medical Sciences web pages at: www.ncl.ac.uk/medicalsciences/research/facilities
Library facilities

The University Library provides an excellent centrally funded service for supporting student learning. It is a repeat holder of the Customer Service Excellence Award.

The Walton Library is the University’s specialist medical, dental, pharmacy and biomedical sciences library. Based in the Medical School, its facilities include over 40,000 items of book stock, and 900 current journal titles in addition to extensive back runs. It also provides extensive electronic journal, ebook and database access, which is also available off-campus to the staff and students of the University. The Library has 578 study spaces, three PC clusters, an inter library loan service, a silent working area and a café. It has wireless working throughout, and provides laptop docking stations for students to use their own computers as well as laptop loans.

More information about the Library including opening hours, and further details of services and staff contacts can be found at the Library homepage www.ncl.ac.uk/library. The University’s Robinson Library also has a Writing Development Centre, check out the library web pages for more details.

The library subject support team teach on the Graduate Skills Development Programme and places on these sessions can be booked through the on-line training booking system.

Computing facilities

Along with the facilities that will be available to you through your institute there are a range of computing clusters located within the Faculty of Medical Sciences, these offer you access to basic computing facilities and offer an alternative place for you to work, along with printing and scanning facilities. Clusters of computers are provided within the Cookson building in the following locations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Floor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fell</td>
<td>Ground floor</td>
<td>90 PCs</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool</td>
<td>Ground floor</td>
<td>70 PCs</td>
<td>8.45am to 6pm term time only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dene</td>
<td>Fifth floor, Walton Library</td>
<td>30 PCs</td>
<td>Library hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linn</td>
<td>Fifth floor, Walton Library</td>
<td>20 PCs</td>
<td>Library hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glen &amp; Torr</td>
<td>Fifth floor, Walton Library</td>
<td>60 PCs</td>
<td>Library hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Newcastle University Library Service is a multi-award winning service, and the only University Library in the UK to have received the Charter Mark five times.
There are also quick access stations available in the main foyer (Cookson Building) and by the Dental Lecture Theatres.

Other clusters are available across campus and as clusters are often busy, you should use the cluster availability displays in the Walton Library and Cookson foyer, also available from m.ncl.ac.uk or via the Newcastle University app for mobile users, to find the nearest available PC.

**Cluster etiquette**

Whilst working within a computing cluster, please remember this is an academic place of work, not an internet café.

- There must be no drinking or eating. Food and drink should be kept off benches, within bags
- Work quietly and respect that those around you may need to concentrate
- Turn your mobile phone to silent and conduct all conversations outside of the cluster
- During busy times unless you are doing academic work you may be asked to leave so someone else can use the facilities.

Failure to comply with these and other cluster rules of use may result in the temporary suspension of your computing account. Computers are available on a first-come, first-served basis, unless a teaching session is in progress, when you must check the traffic light sign and only enter quietly if the sign is set to orange. Weekly timetables are displayed outside the cluster and you should check this before entering the cluster to see if teaching is or will be taking place. Information is also available from www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice or the NU app.

**Computing software**

A range of software is available through the cluster machines. Some specialist software is available through specific clusters only. More information is available from www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/software.

Student licences are available for most major software, including Microsoft. See information online at: www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/software/licences and www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/software/softwaredeals/student before purchasing your own.

**Off-campus computer access**

The Remote Application Service (RAS) provides access to the networked drive, email, on-campus browser and a range of applications. It is available online and requires uninterrupted internet access.

Students can also use the University network – see www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/connect

Web-based e-mail is available from www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/email/student/outlookwebappowa
Computing support
Term-time help desk support is located within the Dene Cluster on Tuesdays from 1pm to 2pm (Semester 1 only) and Fell cluster on Wednesdays from 2pm to 4pm (Semester 2 only) by Faculty IT Skills teaching staff. Online documentation is also available at: fms-itskills.ncl.ac.uk.

Documentation is available online at ncl.ac.uk/itservice or from the IT Service Desk on extension 85999, email at it.servicedesk@ncl.ac.uk or from Claremont Tower, Reception.

Helpful to know
The University’s IT Service also acts as a Hardware Loans Scheme. This provides a range of equipment that can be borrowed on a short term basis, for further details check out their web pages www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice/hardware-loans/

Printing and scanning
A4 black & white printing is available from all clusters across campus. In the Cookson building, colour A4 printers are available from most clusters and Walton Library foyer. Specialist printing (larger paper) can be printed from any cluster PC and collected from the Old Library Cluster, 1.57. It is also possible to print to a limited range of printers across campus using RAS (ras.ncl.ac.uk).

An initial printing allocation of £37 is provided, and you can top this up online using a debit or credit card, from ncl.ac.uk/itservice/clusters/printing.

Computing contacts
University IT Service Desk
(0191 20) 85999
it.servicedesk@ncl.ac.uk
www.ncl.ac.uk/itservice

Faculty IT Skills Support:
Ramla Gabriel
(0191 20) 84542
ITSkills.Support@ncl.ac.uk
fms-itskills.ncl.ac.uk
The Graduate School

The Faculty’s Graduate School is here to provide you with additional support from your local institute support and the Graduate School administrative office is located on the third floor of Ridley Building 1. Here you will find our reception, open from 8.45 to 5.00pm (4.45pm on Fridays), and Graduate School staff will be on hand to help you with any queries.

Graduate School office staff

You can contact the Graduate School Office on the general telephone number 0191 208 7002. Individual contact details for Graduate School staff are listed below (prefix internal extensions with 0191 20 if phoning from outside the University):

Research students

Email medpg-enquiries@ncl.ac.uk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lizzie Amies</td>
<td>Graduate School Administrator</td>
<td>85034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Hiles</td>
<td>Senior PGR Student Support</td>
<td>88683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lin James</td>
<td>PGR Student Support (IGM, IoN, NICR)</td>
<td>83049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Walker</td>
<td>PGR Student Support (ICAMB, ICM, IHS)</td>
<td>83846</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research skills

Email medpg-dev@newcastle.ac.uk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richy Hetherington</td>
<td>Researcher Skills Development</td>
<td>83846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly Argent</td>
<td>Skills Development Programme Assistant</td>
<td>84856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Masters by Research (MRes)

Email mres-enquiries@ncl.ac.uk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirsty Sanderson</td>
<td>MRes Programme Co-ordinator</td>
<td>85379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Fisher</td>
<td>MRes Support Assistant</td>
<td>86754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiara Michelini-Patrick</td>
<td>MRes Support Assistant</td>
<td>83049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Useful links and contacts

Institute Postgraduate Research Student Coordinators and Institute Staff Contacts

**Institute for Cell and Molecular Biosciences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr Tim Cheek</th>
<th><a href="mailto:tim.Cheek@ncl.ac.uk">tim.Cheek@ncl.ac.uk</a></th>
<th>87010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Louise Campbell</td>
<td><a href="mailto:louise.campbell@ncl.ac.uk">louise.campbell@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>86961</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institute of Cellular Medicine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr Michael Drinnan</th>
<th><a href="mailto:michael.drinnan@ncl.ac.uk">michael.drinnan@ncl.ac.uk</a></th>
<th>2137161</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Karolien Jordens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:icm.pgstudentenquiries@ncl.ac.uk">icm.pgstudentenquiries@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>88988</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institute of Health and Society**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor Elaine McColl</th>
<th><a href="mailto:elaine.mccoll@ncl.ac.uk">elaine.mccoll@ncl.ac.uk</a></th>
<th>87260</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janice Fuller</td>
<td><a href="mailto:postgrad.ihs@newcastle.ac.uk">postgrad.ihs@newcastle.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>88754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institute of Genetic Medicine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr Joanna Elson</th>
<th><a href="mailto:joanna.elson@ncl.ac.uk">joanna.elson@ncl.ac.uk</a></th>
<th>228630</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trish Dunham</td>
<td><a href="mailto:trish.dunham@ncl.ac.uk">trish.dunham@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>228611</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Institute of Neuroscience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr Peter Gallagher</th>
<th><a href="mailto:peter.gallagher@ncl.ac.uk">peter.gallagher@ncl.ac.uk</a></th>
<th>87166</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beckie Hedley</td>
<td><a href="mailto:beckie.hedley@ncl.ac.uk">beckie.hedley@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>88244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Northern Institute for Cancer Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr Luke Gaughan</th>
<th><a href="mailto:luke.gaughan@ncl.ac.uk">luke.gaughan@ncl.ac.uk</a></th>
<th>84422</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claire Sanderson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nicr.teaching@ncl.ac.uk">nicr.teaching@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>84407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regional Research Student Advisors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr Adam Todd</th>
<th><a href="mailto:adam.todd@ncl.ac.uk">adam.todd@ncl.ac.uk</a></th>
<th>Pharmacy School PGR Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Ralf Kist</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ralf.kist@ncl.ac.uk">ralf.kist@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Dental School PGR Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Steve McHanwell</td>
<td><a href="mailto:stephen.mchanwell@ncl.ac.uk">stephen.mchanwell@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Medical Education PGR Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof Marion Petrie</td>
<td><a href="mailto:marion.petrie@ncl.ac.uk">marion.petrie@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>Campus for Ageing and Vitality PGR Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2

Getting started

Induction

For students starting at the beginning of the academic year induction takes place the week beginning 1st October and for mid-year starters you will be contacted about further induction meetings.

Graduate School staff will introduce themselves and explain about your studies and what you can expect to learn and achieve over the next few years. Details of further Graduate School induction events are provided in the Graduate School Development Programme Brochure for 2018-19.

The first event of the year is induction when you are introduced to key figures within the Faculty and informed about sources of help and support within the University. Throughout the year further events are organised, for example visiting speakers and a postgraduate conference which provides an ideal opportunity to put into practice skills learnt during the presentational skills course and to view and discuss the work of colleagues.

Induction is a great way to get to know the University and your fellow research students - be sure to attend the compulsory sessions and make the most of the opportunities for networking available to you!
Student Self Service Portal (S3P)

The Student Self Service Portal (S3P) allows you to register on your programme of study and keep your personal details up-to-date.

You can also pay fees online, produce standard documents to confirm your status (e.g. for council tax purposes) and report an absence. Use this system as your first point of call if you want to:

- Register on your programme of study
- Keep details (addresses etc) up-to-date
- Pay fees
- View and print documentation to confirm your student status
- Report an absence to your institute

Further detail is available here: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/s3p

You can log in here: s3p.ncl.ac.uk/login/index.aspx

Remember!

S3P does not use your campus log-in details. You will need your campus user name and a DIFFERENT password.

You must report any sickness absence and annual leave through the Student Self Service Portal.

Project Approval

Graduate School Research Project Approval Policy

All research proposals must be submitted for approval by an independent panel.

Your progress panel will consist of at least two independent (not part of your supervisory team) members of University academic staff (one of whom can be an Honorary member of academic 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. Your progress panel will normally review your research proposal.

Criteria for evaluation of research proposals

- 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.

- In cases where the project involves extended absences 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.

A component of the project approval process includes considering potential ethical issues and confirming that, where necessary, ethics committee approval has been sought, or the need to seek approval has been noted.
Procedure

Postgraduate research student coordinators will appoint progress panels for all students at the beginning of their studies.

Project approval is administered through the ePortfolio system, help and instructions are available within the relevant section (see portfolio.ncl.ac.uk).

The first section of the form is completed by the candidate and the following information should be attached:

• A research proposal
• A research plan of milestone dates
• Approval by the supervisory team

The research proposal can be typed directly into the form or can be uploaded as a Word document, which should be approximately 2 sides of A4, however, please note this is only a guideline and the crucial point is to present sufficient information to enable the panel to reach an informed decision.

The form and information will be forwarded to your supervisor and then sent to the appointed panel for signature/approval.

Once the project has been checked and signed off by the Institute, final approval will be required by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

Timescale

1. The research proposal and plan should be submitted for approval no later than three months from registration; project development and approval is encouraged to take place as early as possible. A maximum of six months will be allowed for part-time students, however early approval is preferred.

2. In cases where a proposal is not approved then a further proposal should be submitted within one month.

3. If a project changes further peer review is required within one month.
Learning agreement

You are required to indicate that you have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of your postgraduate programme by signing a formal Learning Agreement with your main supervisor. After agreeing the terms with your supervisor, the form should be returned to your Institute PGR Secretary.

You and your supervisor should also complete the confidentiality agreement and return this with the Learning Agreement as above.

Research governance

Before starting your research it is important that you are aware of ethical and legal regulations that govern research.

To help you understand these regulations and your role in conducting research in a legal, ethical and safe manner, the Graduate School provides introductory training in safety (mandatory), research governance and ethics.

The following websites give details of research governance frameworks, policies, legislations and safety.


Safety

Postgraduate students are expected to be aware of the School/Institute and University policies on safety and to attend appropriate safety courses provided by the University.

Postgraduate students must adhere to all legal requirements governing experimental procedures. The University and Faculty have a good safety record that they wish to maintain.

Relevant information can be found within the University Health & Safety Policy (2004) and on the University Safety Office website: www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/Home.aspx

Faculty health and safety policy is available at: internal.ncl.ac.uk/medical/services/safety/index.htm

Please note

You must not proceed with any work involving radioactivity, carcinogens, toxic chemicals, microbiological hazards, genetic modification, animals, human subjects or human-derived materials without appropriate risk assessment, training and authorisation. Immunisation (and in some cases allergy screening) is recommended before certain types of work with animals (e.g. tetanus immunisation) and human biological material (e.g. hepatitis B). Your supervisor should be able to advise you on all these aspects, but in addition your institute will have designated safety officers available to consult.

Finally, remember that an appreciation of health and safety issues is likely to feature as an important element in your future career.
Chapter 3

Your research programme

Well done - you are embarking on a research programme

There are things we will expect from you as a research student and that you can expect from us as your University - welcome to the community!
Being a Research Student – what the University expects of you

You should be able to tick the boxes next to each of these expectations:

- You are required to inform your supervisors and the Graduate School office about any sponsorship you have received for your research project and obligations in terms of reporting to sponsors on progress.
- You are required to attend the induction programme.
- You are required to indicate that you have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of your doctoral programme by signing a formal Learning Agreement with your supervisors, within the first month of your programme starting.
- You are required to attend the research training programme, which will be tailored to meet your needs. In conjunction with your supervisory team, you will agree a personal plan. This will take into account your prior learning and experience, needs in terms of study skills, needs of your research project, and employment-related skills. Your training will be reviewed annually by your progress panel who will expect to see an up-to-date Research Training ePortfolio.
- You are required to maintain regular contact with your supervisors. Many of you will see your supervisors on a weekly, if not daily basis, especially if you are undertaking laboratory research. However, you will have at least ten formal interactions with your academic supervisor per year, approximately monthly with no more than an eight week gap between meetings, and attend regular progress meetings with the full supervisory team with a minimum frequency of three per year. If you are not able to meet these requirements because you will be studying outside the University for a period of time, you are required to agree an equivalent schedule of contacts with your academic supervisor, using for example e-mail and video-conferencing. **You are required, by the University’s Code of Practice, to record and confirm the outcomes of these formal meetings, via ePortfolio. Your supervisor will also be required to confirm that these formal supervisor/student interactions have taken place. Please note, if you are a student studying here on a visa this is the mechanism to monitor your engagement and to report any non-attendance to the UKVI. International students are required to continue to record and confirm the outcomes of supervisory meetings throughout candidature and whilst under examination until completion of their studies.**
- You are required, with support from your supervisory team, to develop a formal research project proposal for consideration by an independent panel. This must be submitted to the review panel within three months.
- You must take responsibility for listening to, understanding, and accepting feedback from your supervisory team and progress review panel.
- You must take responsibility for keeping your research project on track so that it is completed within the normal timescale prescribed by your candidature.
- You must bring any academic problems with the research project to the attention of your academic supervisor or supervisory team immediately so that they can provide support. It is also a good idea to inform them of any non-academic problems with a bearing on the progress of your research as they may be concerned about you and able to help.
- You are required to undertake an annual progress review, which will involve preparing a written progress report on your research project and submitting it to an independent review panel who will interview you. You will also be required to give a brief presentation to your review panel. See Section 4 below for details.
- You are expected to contribute to the research environment by attending appropriate internal and external events and giving at least one formal presentation per year on your work. You will record this in your Research Training ePortfolio.
- We hope that you will help us to improve research provision by providing feedback and through representation on relevant committees and decision-making bodies.
Code of Practice

Graduate School policies encompass the requirements of the University Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

This Code of Practice sets out expectations and you will find a copy in the University Research Handbook and at the following website: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/handbook.htm

Many of the key points are introduced in the next section which you may remember reading about in the documentation provided with your offer letter.

Your supervisory team, meetings, making the most of them and recording them

Before supervisory meetings
Supervisory meetings are a key part of your postgraduate research. They are an opportunity to discuss your research and its progress, and gain expert insight from your supervisor(s). You can make the most of these meetings by being prepared and focusing on what you want to get out of the meeting.

• Agree dates and times in advance. It is your responsibility to organise meetings with your supervisor(s) on a regular basis and record the discussion afterwards.
• Prepare some work for discussion at the meeting. This will look different depending on your specific discipline.
• Summarise your progress and achievements since your last meetings, any problems you are having or areas where you need advice.
• Note down in advance the areas you wish to discuss with your supervisor(s). Try and be specific: rather than asking for general feedback on your progress, try using questions such as "Do you think the methodology I’m using in this chapter is appropriate?".

During supervisory meetings
• Take notes of the discussion, particularly of anything you need to do or follow up after the meeting.
• Don’t expect your supervisor(s) to do all the talking: be prepared to lead the discussion, and ensure that your prepared topics are covered. Ask questions as you go along to make the most of your time with your supervisor(s).
• Be prepared to explain and defend your ideas or findings: this will help you to clarify your opinions and arguments, as well as providing good training for your viva examination.

After supervisory meetings
• Ensure there is a formal record of the meeting, including outcomes and targets reached. Take some time to reflect on the meeting, any feedback you received and any new ideas you’ve had as a result, and think about what you are going to do next.
• Consider your supervisor’s advice carefully, including any constructive criticism. You’re not expected to do everything your supervisor suggests, but you should give appropriate consideration to their recommendations.

You are required to maintain regular contact with your supervisors and many of you will see your supervisors on a weekly, if not daily basis, if you are in a laboratory setting.
Your research programme

Laboratory Book/Research Diary Guidelines for Postgraduate Students

Keeping a good record of your research or experiments is essential for the management of your project and for writing up your thesis.

In addition, a robust set of records is essential to demonstrate your ‘ownership’ of the data (it can be used as a legal document) and is likely to be used by your supervisor or other members of the research team who may want to follow up your work. It is almost like keeping a diary, for recording the experimental procedures that you do on a daily basis. Your laboratory notebook/research diary reflects your personal style, but you should write it so that your supervisor or a co-worker familiar with the subject of your research could understand it. You yourself will need to refer to the notebook at a later date, so do not omit any information necessary to understand what you did, or to repeat it. Thus for every event/experiment you need to record:

• What you did
• Why you did it
• How you did it
• What you concluded

You will be provided with a standard laboratory book or a spiral bound notebook if you are not a laboratory based researcher by your institute. You should number the pages in the book. The use of a notebook helps you to develop good laboratory habits which will serve you well in your future career – in many commercial and clinical settings there will be very rigid procedures for logging records.

The first 2–3 pages should be left blank, as these will ultimately become a list of contents for the rest of the book.

Entries should be made in ink, not pencil. Do not erase or use correction fluid. If you make errors, cross out with a single, horizontal line, so the original entry is still visible (you never know if you might need to be able to read what you crossed out at some time in the future). Make sure you define all abbreviations and make all entries clear, organised and complete and neat enough for someone else to read.

Make daily notebook entries as the diary/experiment progresses, as a running record of the work. The notebook includes a complete history of all research events/experiments performed, and their results. Some research or experiments go on for weeks or months and you need to write up every step, referring back to earlier stages as appropriate.

Each time you perform an experiment or procedure or attend a research meeting, enter the date the work is started, and enter the title of the event at the top of the page. Also, enter the date, title and the page number at which the event/experiment starts in the contents section that you create at the beginning of the book. The contents pages should be filled in as the work progresses.

For each experiment, note the purpose and the conclusion (even if the conclusion is that you need to repeat it).

Enter the aim of the event or new experiment, and then outline the methods used. If you are repeatedly using the same method, it is not necessary to enter the methodology each time the event or experiment occurs, but you can refer back to the first time you used that particular method instead. Include enough information on experimental conditions so that you could repeat the experiment if necessary.

Enter the results of the event or experiment, along with any observations you have about how it worked out.

Write notes or explanations essential to proper performance of the research or experiment or interpretation of the results. This might include your explanation of how you overcame any difficulties encountered in the research or experiment and your own thoughts on research progress.

If there are photographs or printouts from computers or other equipment, mark them with the date and glue or staple into the lab book at the appropriate point. ‘Magic Tape’ is recommended and Pritt Stick is not.

Keep a record of batch numbers of chemicals, kits etc and where you have stored samples.

The reader won’t expect the lab notebook to contain a polished report of the experiment, but will expect to find enough evidence to determine what you did, how you did it, and what results you obtained. Finally, remember the saying ‘if you didn’t write it down, you didn’t do it’.

You will be required to return your lab book/research diary to your supervisor before a pass list for your award can be issued. A training session is available through the Research Student Development Programme on ‘Recording your research, lab books, research diaries and more’.
ePortfolio

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 ePortfolio is to provide a record of your personal development at Newcastle University. The ePortfolio 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 ePortfolio 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 ePortfolio 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.

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

ePortfolio can be found at: portfolio.ncl.ac.uk

This system is integrated with your project approval, progress reviews, approval of title and nomination of examiners and recording of supervisory meetings.

The ePortfolio is your document. At your annual progression review you will be asked to provide evidence of research training undertaken during the year (eg from your Research Training ePortfolio). In addition, ePortfolio is used to record the outcome of formal supervisory meetings and both you and your supervisor will need to confirm the dates these meetings have taken place. Otherwise the document is for your use and it is up to you how much of this you share with your supervisory team.

Your ePortfolio will include relevant information on the following:
- Research Programme
- Personal Development Plan (PDP)
Annual Progression

An Annual Progress report is required for each postgraduate research student. These annual progress reviews will allow you to gauge your progress and to identify any potential problems which might affect the successful completion of the research degree for which you are registered.

Before describing the progress review process, it is necessary to set out the differing timelines we use to assess students registered for each of the research degrees on offer in our Faculty, during the period of minimum candidature. These can be found on Page 27 of this handbook.

NB: annual progress reviews will continue during pending and/or extended submission, until submission of your thesis.

What preparation is required for each progress review?

The Graduate School is always mindful of the breadth of research that is undertaken within our Faculty. For example, the development of research methodology in a patient-based project is likely to differ from that required for a molecular biology project; it is likely that the processes for progression of students working in these two areas will also need to be a little different.

For this reason only framework recommendations for the whole Graduate School are provided, allowing each institute to tailor the process to their specific requirements. However, we do believe that some general guidelines will be helpful.

The first point to be borne in mind is that the progression process is to help you rather than to hinder progress with your research! We certainly would discourage any student from taking leave from their research in order to produce an overlong and highly detailed report for each of their progress reviews. For this reason we make very clear recommendations on the maximum length of any report.

We are also mindful that a report submitted after, for example, 8 months should be longer and contain more detail of the background to the project and the planned experimental work than a report submitted late in the project when many students will have finished data collection and may already be beginning to prepare their thesis.

What preparation is required for each progress review?

The Graduate School is always mindful of the breadth of research that is undertaken within our Faculty. For example, the development of research methodology in a patient-based project is likely to differ from that required for a molecular biology project; it is likely that the processes for progression of students working in these two areas will also need to be a little different.

For this reason only framework recommendations for the whole Graduate School are provided, allowing each institute to tailor the process to their specific requirements. However, we do believe that some general guidelines will be helpful.

The first point to be borne in mind is that the progression process is to help you rather than to hinder progress with your research! We certainly would discourage any student from taking leave from their research in order to produce an overlong and highly detailed report for each of their progress reviews. For this reason we make very clear recommendations on the maximum length of any report.

We are also mindful that a report submitted after, for example, 8 months should be longer and contain more detail of the background to the project and the planned experimental work than a report submitted late in the project when many students will have finished data collection and may already be beginning to prepare their thesis.

In all cases, reports should be word-processed and presented to a high standard. The pages should be numbered and the first page should show the student’s name, institute address, supervisor(s) name, date of first registration, details of the research degree programme undertaken, the number of the progress review (Year 1, 2 etc), the date of submission of the report and the title of the research project.

In order to simplify the process as far as possible, we believe that you and your supervisors should liaise with your assessors to schedule your progress reviews appropriately. The Graduate School should be informed if any progress review, and particularly the first progress review, is delayed as this could also delay your registration at the start of the next academic year.

In addition to my written report, what else is needed for the progress review interview?

1. For all progress reviews you will be required to present a 10–15 minute PowerPoint presentation detailing your aims, the progress you have made against the milestones listed in your Project Approval document, significant results you have obtained and your plans for work you still need to complete. Don’t worry if data projection facilities are not present in the room where your review is held, presentation using a computer screen will be fine.

2. You will need to complete and submit to your assessors an ‘annual report from student for progress panel’ form to pair with a similar form completed and submitted by your supervisor(s).

3. You will need to show the assessors your laboratory book(s), research journal(s) or research diary(s).

You should also bring evidence of your Self-Assessment and Personal Development Plan (E) and List of Training Courses Attended (G) from your research training ePortfolio.
Please be aware that University regulations state that:

“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: ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations

The first progress review of PhD and MD students

This is an important academic exercise and the report must provide your assessors with clear evidence that you have developed a good understanding of the background to and the aims of your work. Furthermore, this knowledge should have led to the development of appropriate and achievable research plans with some evidence of progress with data acquisition, analysis and discussion.

We believe that one of the important features of regular progress review is to reinforce awareness of the timeline leading to successful submission of a thesis. For this reason, we would also expect each student to end the report with a realistic projection of what work will be undertaken throughout the remainder of the project.

The first progress review report should be written in your own time and should not delay the progress of your research.

We recommend the following structure for your report:

1. Table of contents
2. A literature review
3. A clear statement of the aims of your project
4. A summary of the methods developed and results obtained to date
5. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of your work to date
6. An outline of your future work

We are aware that research is hard to do and anticipate that some students will have relatively few results after a period as short as 8 months. For this reason, we believe that the literature review is likely to be a particularly important part of this report and should be up-to-date, comprehensive and fully referenced. Naturally all figures or material which are not your own should be fully acknowledged.

One possibility you might like to consider is that after your progress review the literature review in your report could be submitted to a learned journal for formal publication. There are many examples where this has already happened in the Faculty. Clearly this will almost certainly require further work and discussion with your supervisor(s).

In order to stop students from submitting over-long mini-theses, the Graduate School suggests a maximum word limit for this report (excluding references and figures) of 7500 words. You should observe the maximum word limit for this report and not look to try and include additional information through the use of a large number of appendices.

In addition to your written report, the panel will expect you to give a PowerPoint presentation as detailed above.

Additional information for part-time students

The first progress review for part-time PhD and MD students. The first progress review should be written in your own time and should not delay the progress of your research. We recommend the following structure for your report:

1. Table of contents
2. A (brief) literature review, sufficient to provide the context and rationale for the proposed research
3. A clear statement of the aims/hypotheses of your project
4. A summary of methods to be used
5. Outline of proposed work. The Graduate school suggests that a maximum word limit for this report (excluding references and figures) of 5000 words.

Reports should be uploaded via the e-progression online process (see www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/progression.htm for further information).

The second progress review for part-time PhD and MD students

The purpose of this review is to monitor your progress, expand on the literature review if required, present and discuss results obtained to date and future directions. We recommend the following structure for your report:

1. Expanded literature review (if required)
2. A summary of any results obtained to date
3. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of your work to date
4. An outline for future work.

Intermediate progress reviews for full-time PhD and MD students

The purpose of this progress review is to monitor your progress and to identify any factors which might lead to a delay in the submission of your thesis. We do not require a written report of the length you produced for your first progress review.

We recommend the following structure for your report:

1. A summary of the data you have acquired to date
2. Detailed analysis of a completed portion of your data, showing statistical methods if appropriate
3. A discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of your study to date
4. A list indicating what you will need to achieve in order to complete your work
5. An appendix containing any abstracts, manuscripts or papers you have written or presented

As projects develop differently, we believe a word limit is of limited value by this stage. However, we would expect this report to be about 3–4 pages (excluding any figures), but not to exceed 10–15 pages (double line spacing), including figures but excluding any appendix. If you feel a longer report is necessary, please discuss this with your panel before completion and submission of the document.

In addition to your written report, the panel will expect you to give a PowerPoint presentation as detailed above.

Final year progress reviews

The most helpful form of report at this time will contain a detailed breakdown of the structure of your thesis, presented in the form of a comprehensive table of contents. This should show all main chapter headings with a breakdown of the key sub-headings. It will also be useful to show you have assembled your results (tables, figures etc) into a logical order and have divided them into chapters. There is no need for any discussion but it will be useful for you to identify any outstanding areas of research work together with the approaches you will adopt to complete your study on time. The most crucial aspect of this progress review is to show that you have developed a realistic timetable indicating how and when you will complete preparation of your thesis.

In addition to your written report, the panel will expect you to give a PowerPoint presentation as detailed above.

Where there are additional requirements specific to your institute, a link is provided on the Graduate School website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/documentation/ProgressReviewprocess.htm

What happens at the end of your period of minimum candidature?

If you have not submitted your thesis on completion of your period of minimum candidature we are still keen to help you to gain the degree you have worked so hard for. For this reason we will contact you to check your progress, to find out if there is anything we can do to help you to achieve in order to complete your study on time. The most crucial aspect of this progress review is to show that you have developed a realistic timetable indicating how and when you will complete preparation of your thesis.

In addition to your written report, the panel will expect you to give a PowerPoint presentation as detailed above.

Where there are additional requirements specific to your institute, a link is provided on the Graduate School website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/documentation/ProgressReviewprocess.htm

It is important that you prepare for the milestones of progress review during your studies, it is to help us check that you are on track with your studies and to support you through your candidature.
Guidance for preparation and submission of thesis

Preparation of thesis

One successful outcome of your postgraduate studies will be a thesis, presented for examination.

It is recognised that a doctoral thesis should be a piece of work which a capable, well-qualified and diligent student, who is properly supported and supervised, can produce within the times specified in the University Regulations (three years, or at most four years of full-time study for a PhD).

You are advised not to underestimate the time it will take to write and ‘put together’ (formatting text, final formatting of illustrations, bibliography, etc) your thesis. This process will be greatly helped if your results have been organised and collated as you have proceeded through your studies. If some of the work has been written up for publication, this will also greatly facilitate production of your thesis. Nevertheless, a minimum of three months concentrated and continuous effort should be recognised as the absolute minimum effort required (and for many students six months may be nearer the mark).

The thesis should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication. The simplest way of demonstrating the latter is to have papers published or in press based upon your own work described in the thesis.

Criteria for the Doctorate and MPhil awards are included in the Code of Practice, which can be accessed via www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/CodeofPractice201617webversion.pdf.

Full details of the research degree examination process can be found at: ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/exam.htm
Length

The normal length of a doctoral thesis in the Faculty of Medical Sciences should not exceed 80,000 words, exclusive of bibliographies, footnotes and appendices, and it is strongly recommended that only in exceptional circumstances should a thesis be more than 200 pages in length. A thesis should not be a complete diary of events. Rather, it should reflect a concise, yet complete, exposition of the aims, objectives and outcomes of the studies. Many examiners comment that good work has been spoilt by the inclusion of unsatisfactory and unnecessary material that adds little to the overall thrust of the thesis. Do not confuse quantity with quality!

In preparing your thesis you should consult the following:

- Rules for the Submission of Work for Higher Degrees and Rules for the Form of Theses. Both can be found in the University Calendar, available on the Web at: www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs
- Further guidelines on the submission and format of theses are available on the Student Progress Service website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/exam.htm

Assessment irregularities

The University is committed to ensuring fairness in assessment and has established a procedure for dealing with assessment irregularities.

The University’s procedure in full can be found at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/assessment.htm

Information on Good Academic Conduct, including a link to ‘Right-cite’ can be found at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/conduct.htm

You will find help on this website on how to avoid problems with plagiarism, collusion, and proof reading. There is also a web-based tutorial package on plagiarism which you are recommended to work through if in doubt.

Information on the University’s complaints procedure can be found at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/complaints.htm

Information on the University’s appeals procedure can be found at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/appeals.htm
Appointent of examiners

The exact title of a candidate's thesis must be submitted via ePortfolio for approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies not less than three months before the thesis is submitted.

You will need to log onto ePortfolio to initiate the process. It is the responsibility of your supervisor to nominate examiners, although you will be consulted and have an opportunity to voice any concerns (please note that examiner appointments will only be reviewed if it is clear that there may be bias or prejudice by the examiner).

Submission of thesis

You need to submit the following to the Graduate School Office:
- 2 softbound copies of your thesis
- A copy of your abstract
- Examination entry form signed off by your supervisor and the finance office
- An electronic copy of your thesis

The University will test a sample of theses for originality. Where evidence of plagiarism is detected it will be dealt with under the University's Procedure for Assessment Irregularities. Find more information at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/assessment.htm

The Graduate School Office will send your thesis out to examiners asking them to complete a preliminary report within 6 to 8 weeks. It is your supervisor's responsibility to arrange your viva date (NB for the degree of MPhil a viva is not always required) in consultation with your examiners. Under no circumstances should you contact your examiners directly, either prior to or following the oral examination.

Options open to examiners

Options open to examiners are set out in the relevant degree programme examination conventions at: www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs

Doctoral viva seminars

In order to enhance the research culture, student experience and the PhD/MD examination process, each student will present a seminar immediately before their viva examination. The seminar will not form part of the formal examination and shall not contribute to the examiners’ decision on the student’s performance. Full details can be found on the Graduate School website at: newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/mgs/Documents/DoctoralVivaSeminarguidelines.pdf

Each student will present a seminar on the day of their PhD/MD viva examination, ahead of the viva. The seminar will not form part of the formal examination and shall not contribute to the examiners’ decision on the student’s performance. This innovation is designed to enhance the research culture, student experience and PhD/MD examination process within the Faculty.
Graduation

Once you have completed all your studies, successfully completed your studies and received notification of your pass list from the Graduate School you will be able to register for the next available graduation ceremony known as congregation, these take place in December and July each year and further details and advice can be found here www.ncl.ac.uk/congregations.

Medical sciences doctoral prize thesis

In order to recognise outstanding quality of research carried out during doctoral research studies, a limited number of prizes are awarded biannually on the nomination of examiners of PhD and other doctoral research theses. Further information is available at: ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/documentation/documents/PhDPrize.pdf

Post-submission scholarship scheme

The Faculty of Medical Sciences Graduate School is able to provide a limited number of scholarships for research students reaching the end of their studies. Three forms of scholarship are available, Intern Scholarships, Enterprise Scholarships and Academic Development Scholarships. For further details and to apply online visit www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/es/

Completion and submission time frames

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time MRes/PhD thesis</td>
<td>Must be submitted within 4 YEARS of first registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time PhD thesis</td>
<td>Must be submitted within 4 YEARS of first registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time PhD thesis</td>
<td>Must be submitted within 7 YEARS of first registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time MD thesis</td>
<td>Must be submitted within 3 YEARS of first registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time MD thesis</td>
<td>Must be submitted within 5 YEARS of first registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time MPhil thesis</td>
<td>Must be submitted within 2 YEARS of first registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time MPhil thesis</td>
<td>Must be submitted within 3 YEARS of first registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree and minimum candidature</td>
<td>Progress review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRes/PhD 4 years FT</td>
<td>MRes approx. 6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD 3 years FT</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD 6 years PT</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD 4 years (Combined Regulations (FT/PT))</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD 2 years FT</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD 4 years PT</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD 3 years (Combined Regulations (FT/PT))</td>
<td>8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD 1 year FT</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPhil 2 years PT</td>
<td>10 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pending submission progress reviews in blue only take place if the student has not submitted six months before final submission date.
Chapter 4
Your development as a researcher

Your training review

Your training review is through your Training Needs Analysis and Personal Development Plan (PDP) and is based around the Researcher Development Framework (RDF). For each of the 12 sub-domains you will be asked to consider what skills you want to further develop. The sub-domains are very broad, so focus on one or two specific skills or attributes that will be useful for your research project and also your longer-term career. Identify resources or actions that will help you.

You should submit your Training Needs Analysis/PDP(s) as part of your evidence for Annual Progression. It is important to show that you have engaged with the process and are playing an active role in developing your skills.

You will probably find it beneficial to discuss your PDP with your supervisor(s).

Skills development

You will be offered the opportunity to develop a relevant range of knowledge and skills, including skills for employment. The Programme has been devised to support the development of research students in a range of areas which align to the expectations of the UK Researcher Development Framework. The Graduate School will make appropriate arrangements to:

- Identify your development needs and skills gaps
- Provide opportunities for development
- Record the development of skills in your ePortfolio
- Ensure that you are introduced to relevant academic networks
- Advise on opportunities to attend seminars and conferences
- Encourage you to present academic papers
- Support career development

Pursuing your research programme also allows us to support you in becoming a confident and capable professional researcher and our Skills Development Programme is carefully designed to enable you to flourish.
Full details of the Research Student Development Programme are published in a separate training booklet which you will be issued with each October for the new academic year, and which will also be available on the Graduate School website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/skills/index.htm. Also check the events calendar at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/calendar.htm for the most up-to-date listings.

Teaching opportunities are available each year and details are published on the Graduate School website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/teaching.htm

The University's policy on teaching for postgraduate students is available at: www.ncl.ac.uk/quilt/assets/documents/qsh-pgswhoteach-pol.pdf

The Faculty’s guidelines on teaching and demonstrating for postgraduate students is available at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/documentation/faculty.htm

Research seminar programmes
An important element of the research environment in which you will be working is the many programmes of research seminars within the Faculty. Some of these are run by Institutes and others by research groups either within or between Schools or Institutes. Some of these are publicised on the Development Programme Calendar of Events at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/calendar.htm. Others are publicised via email lists which you need to join.

It is recognised that the best researchers gain experience outside their own immediate research area. It is recognised that research meetings span the diversity and breadth of research in the Faculty and that they are a valuable resource to you. Attendance at these meetings would be an excellent opportunity for you to broaden your knowledge and interests. We recommend that you discuss what you feel would be of benefit to you with your supervisor, bearing in mind that it doesn’t have to be directly relevant to your research, and then record attendance in your Research Training ePortfolio. Remember that you must attend a minimum of 10 research seminars per year, but it is likely that you will be interested in more than this.

Here are some of the advantages of attending research seminar programmes:

- You will acquire a broader knowledge base
- It will engender the Faculty research ethos
- You will have the opportunity to meet other researchers/postgraduate students
- It will engender a sense of belonging to the Graduate School
- The flexibility of the scheme enables your programme of study to be tailored to your needs
- It will expose you to areas of research strengths in the Faculty and foster inter-disciplinary collaboration.

Learned societies
As a postgraduate research student you are encouraged to join appropriate learned societies. Your supervisor should be able to provide information about which societies would be most appropriate to you. The student membership subscription is often much lower than full membership and there may be a number of benefits to be gained from joining (e.g. free or reduced-rate attendance at the society’s meetings; travel awards/bursaries, free or reduced-rate publications etc). This should be your first port of call for funding to support travel/attendance at a conference. If you are unable to obtain funding from any other source, the Graduate School holds a small travel grant budget (see page 25 for details). Some societies hold events particularly aimed at postgraduate students (e.g. Careers Fairs).

Bionow
You will have the option to attend free research seminars and workshops organised by bionow, www.bionow.co.uk/home.aspx. You will benefit from the wealth of information on the website including a searchable database of local scientific expertise and resources, a diary of events, job vacancies and links to many other related sites.

Vitae
Vitae is an organisation which supports all academic researchers. Vitae supports postgraduate researchers to be fully equipped and encouraged to complete their studies successfully and then to make the successful transition from their PhD studies to their future careers. Their belief is that:

Doctoral researchers are our most talented: they have the potential to make a significant difference to the economic competitiveness of the UK. The UK GRAD Programme has a key role in enabling them to realise their potential.

Alison Mitchell, Director of Development, Vitae

The website address of this important organisation for UK students is www.vitae.ac.uk and you will probably want to keep up-to-date on what training events are available. They run excellent UK Grad Schools which are free residential workshops for research council-funded students (and are open
to other UK students too) and are designed especially for postgraduate researchers. So, if you’re looking for inspiration, motivation, self-awareness and the chance to decide your next move, then these courses are for you. Remember they can count towards your development training and are an excellent networking opportunity. It is hoped to make funding available to non-research council-funded students. This is what recent participants had to say:

The GRADschool was such a worthwhile use of my time. I have no doubt that it has had a huge impact on my life.
Catherine Morgan, Heriot-Watt University

The GRADschool is excellent, it far outdid my expectations and I came out feeling confident about myself academically.
Feluzia Shariff, University of Warwick

Careers

Your developing career
An important part of the development of a postgraduate research student as a developing researcher is the ability to manage their own professional and career development (as specified in the National Researcher Development Framework). The Faculty and the University are keen to actively support our research students to become confident in their developing careers.

Specialist postgraduate research support
The Graduate School works extensively with the University’s award-winning Careers Service to offer a range of support tailored to the needs of postgraduate researchers. This includes confidential, independent, one-to-one advice from June Kay, who has experience of supporting research students and staff at several UK universities throughout their career journeys. One-to-one advice is available without appointment at any stage so please take the opportunity to get advice early - it may help shape your activity, help you make appropriate contacts for the future or assure you that you’re on the right track.

99% were in work or study 6 months after graduating of the 156 PGR leavers in 16/17.

The Careers Service also provides a network of graduates, a database of over 600 north East employers and an enterprise unit that can support researchers with Intellectual Property queries relating to their research and beyond. They can also advise on new company start-up.
Check the Careers service website www.ncl.ac.uk/careers for further information or e-mail june.kay@ncl.ac.uk.

Opportunities for teaching in the Faculty

The Graduate School encourages all PhD students to take appropriate teaching opportunities.
Many teaching opportunities are informal through supporting undergraduate project students or providing guidance for less experienced research students, training is not a requirement for informal teaching but is advised. Training is compulsory for all students prior to taking part in formal, paid teaching.
Four Schools in the Faculty of Medical Sciences provide teaching opportunities. Formal teaching opportunities are normally only available to full time doctoral research students (not available to MRes).

School of Biomedical Sciences
For further details contact Dr Nick Morris n.j.morris@ncl.ac.uk

School of Pharmacy
For details contact Mr David Race david.race@ncl.ac.uk

School of Psychology
For details contact Carla Chivers carla.chivers@ncl.ac.uk

School of Medical Sciences Education
For details contact Ms Ramla Gabriel ramlagabriel@ncl.ac.uk

If you are studying at the University on a Tier 4 visa you will need to be ‘employed’ through only one department at a time at the University, if you are unsure seek advice from the Student Visa Team based in King’s Gate.

Informal teaching opportunities
The Language Resource Centre runs the Tandem Learning Project for students whose first language is not English the scheme allows students to work together to improve their language skills.
Chapter 5
Support and advice

What to do if you have any problems?

It is expected that every attempt will be made to resolve any problems within the institute in the first instance via your academic supervisor, Postgraduate Student Co-ordinator or postgraduate support staff in your Institute.

We always try to be available to meet informally with students so please make an appointment at the Graduate School Office to talk to us if there is anything we can do to help.

In the case of a serious problem it will be necessary for the Dean of Postgraduate Studies to meet with your supervisor and then with you individually to attempt to resolve the situation. Examples of serious problems are a breakdown in student/supervisor relationship; very poor progress causing concern that a student may not be capable of achieving his or her degree; significant other factors impeding a student’s progress. Such meetings are formally minuted.

If at any stage throughout the period of study the supervisor feels that the progress of a student is unsatisfactory or that the standard of work generally is below that expected, he/she should inform the student by letter as well as orally and a copy of the letter should be sent to the Graduate School Office and to the director of the institute concerned. The supervisor should discuss with the student what action should be taken to improve the position.

If a student’s progress/performance during the year has been sufficiently unsatisfactory, the director of the institute, in conjunction with the supervisor, may recommend to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies that the student either discontinue his/her studies or change his/her registration if this is possible and appropriate. The situation would be formally investigated as discussed in paragraph 2 before any action was taken. If the Dean of Postgraduate Studies approves such a recommendation the student would be informed in writing by the Graduate School Office.
Ensuring the quality of your degree

Postgraduate Research Degrees are reviewed annually via the Quality and Enhancement Framework. Details of this process, which includes student representation and external review, can be found at: www.ncl.ac.uk/ltds/governance/monitoring/researchdegree

Maintaining your wellbeing during your studies

Evidence suggests that one of the greatest challenges in completing your postgraduate research studies can be maintaining good mental wellbeing.

The Faculty of Medical Sciences hopes that you will not be affected by any poor mental wellbeing during your studies but takes this very seriously and recognises that you might be, and it could be possible that some of your friends and colleagues might be. It is therefore really important to be aware of the issues, and to know where to turn for help, whether for yourself or a friend.

Key statistics
Mental health problems are extremely common. Each year, 25% of people in the UK suffer a serious mental health problem, with 95% of people suffering clinical anxiety at some in their life. Some surveys suggest that rates can be even higher in postgraduate researchers.

To request an interruption of studies please complete the appropriate form which is available through e-portfolio or at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/changescircs/ you will need to return this to the Graduate School Office, enclosing supporting evidence, at the time of the interruption. Once this has been approved we will formally write to you to interrupt your studies. At this point the clock governing the time prescribed by the regulations stops ticking and does not start again until you resume your studies. This ensures that you are not disadvantaged. When you are able to resume work the completion date will be moved forward by the equivalent amount of time to ensure that you have the correct amount of time to finish your thesis. On returning to study, following a substantial period of interruption, you will be invited to attend a ‘re-entry interview’ with your institute postgraduate research student coordinator.

It is very important to note that an interruption of studies often enables a student who has experienced problems/had a baby to still complete their thesis on time.

If you are absent for a period of 2 months or more, a re-entry interview will be arranged by your postgraduate research student coordinator to ensure that you are supported through your return to studies.

Extensions and interrupting your studies

We sincerely hope you will not experience any personal misfortune during the course of your studies but recognise that significant life events affect all of us at some time in our lives.

If you become seriously ill or are prevented from working due to illness, bereavement or some other major life event, we recommend that you seek an interruption of studies for an appropriate length of time until you are able to resume work. Depending on circumstances, a medical note may be required and if you are studying on a Tier 4 visa you are advised to seek additional advice from the Student Visa Team as interruptions to study may have implications for your visa status and ability to remain in the country.
International students seeking an interruption of studies will be required to return home to comply with the terms of their visas. Advice on visa issues is available via the visa team, see www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/visa

Students who receive a stipend paid via the University should note that payments during a period of interruption will normally be discontinued.

The Graduate School will normally inform your sponsor of any periods of interruption but students should take responsibility for ensuring they check the terms of their studentship for any financial or other implications.

All students who are absent through illness should inform their supervisor as soon as possible, and should complete a ‘student notice of absence form’ via S3P for any period of illness between 3 and 7 days. Periods of absence of more than 7 days require in addition a medical certificate from your doctor.

Further guidance can be found in the University’s policy on sickness absence, which is available at: ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research.

Policy on extensions

You must take responsibility for keeping your research project on track so that it is completed within the normal timescale.

Extensions are not normally granted. If you believe you are in danger of failing to submit on time please contact the Graduate School Office immediately for advice.
Be aware

Every student should register with a General Practitioner (GP) as soon as they are a registered student. GPs are able to manage a range of medical concerns including physical and mental health problems.

Many PhD students experience occasional feelings of anxiety or low mood – especially during critical periods in their studies like progress review, submission and the viva. These moments and difficulties do tend to be transient and often resolve without the need for any intervention and most students can manage these using their own coping skills, resilience and support network. Learning to manage stress and workload is an essential skill in its own right. However, for some students these difficulties can become more debilitating and start to impact on their day-to-day life. Recognising and seeking help for these situations is important and so, for both yourself and fellow research students, you should make yourself aware of the support that is available to you.

Postgraduate research can be challenging, it can often lack structure, and can feel isolated. Health, money and family problems can also impact on your mental wellbeing. There are many forms of poor mental health, but a good general rule is that if you are finding routine tasks, sleeping well or eating well difficult then you could be suffering from a mental health issue, and should consider getting help.

It is important to think about the mental wellbeing of you and those around you, as early detection and treatment really helps.

Be prepared

It is important to have a plan for how to deal with poor mental health if you do find it does occur.

There are also many steps you can take to proactively reduce your likelihood of poor mental wellbeing. Building a supportive network of friends and colleagues is really important. Eating well and getting exercise, cutting down on any alcohol, taking time for outside interests and keeping a sensible perspective about your research are also important. The University’s Student Wellbeing Service has full guidance on Counselling and Mental Health.

If you find you are having problems - do get help

All mental health issues can be improved by appropriate support. Key sources of support include:

• University counselling service
  Accessed through Student Wellbeing.

• Friends and family
  People across the UK are very sympathetic to mental wellbeing, it is has been much highlighted and increasingly recognised and acknowledged in recent years and most are likely to be very supportive. Friends and family can also help you keep your research and studies in perspective.

• Colleagues
  Many academics and other postgraduate researchers may have themselves struggled with mental wellbeing, or have supported colleagues through issues. There is widespread understanding and acknowledgement of these areas across the academic community.

Annual leave

The University’s policy on holiday entitlement for postgraduate research students can be found at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGRMaternityPolicy.pdf

Parental leave

The University policy on maternity/paternity leave can be found at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGRMaternityPolicy.pdf

Don't forget to record your annual leave and sickness absence in the Student Self-Portal (SP3) - we need to know!
Grants and support

Travel grants for graduate students registered for PhD

Research students registered for PhD are eligible to apply to the Faculty for a travel grant to support, for example, attendance of a conference or a laboratory visit.

Unfortunately this is not available to MD students who normally have alternative sources of funding through their employment. Similarly, salaried staff candidates usually have alternative arrangements.

Students may make only one application during a three-year period of full-time study; successful applications will typically be made during the second or third year of study. Applications for up to £800.00 will be considered. Under exceptional circumstances an award of up to £1000 may be requested but very few grants will be to this value. An element of competition will exist, as it is likely that the fund will be oversubscribed. Factors such as student progress, supervisor’s recommendation, publication history and contribution to the meeting (e.g. poster or oral presentation), and attendance at development programme sessions will all be considered.

As we have finite resources we will obviously expect applicants to apply for funds from all other sources available. Typically these will include professional societies, etc – please consult your supervisor.

For an application form please see: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/funding/travelgrant/index.htm. Completed forms should be submitted online to the Graduate School Office at least three months in advance of the proposed travel.

Applications will be considered on a monthly basis.

Following notification of an award, the Fund will provide money up to a clearly stated maximal amount which can be used to support economy travel and reasonable accommodation; other expenses will also be considered if a clear case is presented at the time of application. Funds are only released after expenditure. It is vital that all receipts are submitted with your claim.

Successful applicants will be required to provide a brief report (~ 500 words) on the outcomes of their award.

Training grants for doctoral students

Additional training grants are available from time to time and opportunities will be circulated to relevant doctoral students. Details will be published at: www.ncl.ac.uk/fms/postgrad/funding together with relevant criteria and instructions on how to apply.
Sources of help and support

As a postgraduate student there may be times when you need help/advice/support. This could be for academic, financial or other personal reasons. Here are some suggestions of where you might go to find this:

Supervisor/s
Often the first port of call for a range of problems.

Graduate School Office
Lizzie Amies is the Graduate School Administrator in the Faculty and her office is in the Graduate School which is located on the third floor of the Ridley Building 1. She will be able to advise on queries relating to your studies, funding or welfare and to point you in the direction of other sources of help if necessary. Lizzie is also available for a friendly chat about any difficulties you may be experiencing. Phone (85034), e-mail (medpg-enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

Dean of postgraduate studies
Professor John Kirby, Graduate School, Faculty of Medical Sciences. He should be informed of any major difficulties likely to affect your progress. The earlier he is aware of issues, the more likely he will be able to find an effective solution. Phone (83848), e-mail (john.kirby@ncl.ac.uk). He may also be contacted via the Graduate School Office.

Importantly, the following may also be able to help:

Student counselling service, King’s Gate
www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/support/counselling.htm
A free and confidential service for students.

Student advice centre, Student’s Union Building
www.nusu.co.uk/support/sac
A source of information, advice and assistance on practical problems encountered by students.

Provision for disabled students, King’s Gate
www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/disability-support
The University has a Disability Unit which is a centre offering advice, guidance and support for students and staff.

The Careers Service, King’s Gate
www.ncl.ac.uk/careers
The Careers Service provides the support you need to gain skills and experience, to make informed decisions about careers and to find jobs or further research opportunities.

Writing development centre, Robinson library
www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc
The Writing Development Centre offers guidance and tuition for students who wish to improve their writing skills for study or employment purposes.

English language materials online (ELMO)
elmo.ncl.ac.uk
ELMO is a website of multimedia, self-study English language activities to help you improve your English for Academic Purposes (EAP). It is free for Newcastle University students and staff.

Visa support, King’s Gate
ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/Visa
A range of assistance from student visa renewal to advice on the immigration implications of changes of study plans.

Accommodation, King’s Gate
www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation/current
Information on a range of accommodation issues

Finance, King’s Gate
www.ncl.ac.uk/finance
Information on a range of finance issues.

If you want to talk to someone less involved with your research:

Institute postgraduate research student coordinator
Every institute has one. Make sure you know who it is for your institute. A list is included on page 10 of this handbook.

If you would like to talk to someone outside your institute:

Faculty postgraduate tutor (Associate Dean)
Dr Alison Tyson-Capper. Can be contacted via the Graduate School Office or on extension 87156 or email medpg-enquiries@ncl.ac.uk for a confidential meeting or to help you find other sources of support.