

Introduction and Welcome

First of all, let me say welcome – or welcome back – to your research degree here at Newcastle! Postgraduate Research students (PGRs) are at the heart of what we do as a University, and you are absolutely key members of our community. We have a vision that postgraduate research should be at the centre of the University's activities, and that all PGR students should be provided with leading-edge education and development opportunities that will allow you to flourish in many different futures, and enable you to contribute fully to the University's research excellence and impact. Indeed, this year we are undertaking a review of the University's PGR strategy, policies and procedures, so that we can ensure our vision matches the reality. I look forward to working with you as we undertake this review and make plans for the future.

We are certainly not starting from scratch. Over many years we have designed and developed a very comprehensive package of support for you as you proceed through your degree. You'll find support in your School or Institute, from individual academics, and most obviously your supervisors. Our Professional Services colleagues are also here to help you navigate the degree. Each of our three Faculties has support structures in place. Faculties have Graduate Schools with staff who'll be responsible for assuring your progress. And we have a dedicated team based in the Doctoral College to support PGR students across the University. The Doctoral College can help you to gain the skills you need to advance your goals and enhance your career prospects. There's a Research Enhancement Fund for instance, which can provide bursaries and awards to support things like conference attendance, research in the field, student enterprise and so on. And of course you'll get advice, encouragement and friendship from other students in your community. The Newcastle University Students' Union—run by students, for students—is dedicated to championing student issues and enhancing your university experience. It also offers great opportunities to connect with the research student community and get involved in its activities. They'll be delighted to hear from you. In this Handbook you'll find our policies and procedures, various guidelines, and our codes of practice. Some of these might not seem relevant if you are just starting your degree but will be useful as you reach new stages of your work. Some sections are crucial reading now though, and we urge you to take a look as you begin your studies. There is advice here on choosing your topic for example and establishing good relationships with your supervisors. In fact, we hope that supervisors as well as students will read the handbook: there's great advice for everyone, including a whole section on 'Guidelines for Research Students and Supervisors'.

Let me end by reiterating my welcome. Wherever you've come from, whoever you are and whatever subject you're studying, you are welcome here. You're part of our community, and I hope that this community is something that will support you, but also that you can help to shape. I'm sure you'll have a wonderful, exciting, and enriching time here during your degree, and I wish you every success.

Professor Matthew Grenby

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation

