

Programme Specification 2019-20

Generic information for sections 13, 14, 15

Section 13 Support for Student Learning

The Student Self Service Portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <https://s3p.ncl.ac.uk/login/welcome.aspx>

Induction

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principal support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the University Library).

Academic and Pastoral support

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.*

A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Placement support

During the placement year students will be supported by a placement tutor/supervisor and an employer- or industry-based supervisor as detailed in the School's Placement Handbook, as well as the Careers Service Placement Team.

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support team provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and the University's IT Service (NUIT), which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

Section 14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. The introduction of new modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Education Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to the Faculty Education Committee. The Faculty Education Committee takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Taught Programmes Sub-Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. External Examiner reports and the response to the External Examiner from the Board of Studies are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Student-Staff Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules and stages* are subject to review through online questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School/institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

*With the exception of intercalating years and the final stages of undergraduate programmes.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Student-Staff Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo Learning and Teaching Review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Education Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Research programmes are subject to the University's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Framework for Research Degree Programmes. This provides Schools with an opportunity to reflect on practice and a forum for enhancement of the student experience through the sharing of good practice and feedback from external sources. An Annual Review of Research Degree Programmes provides a formal opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of provision. The Annual Review is supplemented by a Review Visit every six years. The outcome of the Annual Review and the Review Visit are considered by the Graduate School Committee and the outcomes reported to the University Education Committee.

Section 15 Regulation of assessment

Please refer to the Examination Conventions at

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2018/>

Assessment of Placement Year

The placement year module is assessed on a pass/fail basis, and there is one re-assessment opportunity. Students who fail this module may still progress to the final year of studies, but will graduate from the standard (non-placement) version of this programme.

Role of the External Examiner

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by the University following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is required to:

- i. confirm whether the standards of the University's awards meet or exceed the academic standards specified in external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the UK Quality Code, subject benchmark statements, and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;

- ii. confirm whether the academic standards of the University's awards are consistent with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
- iii. report on whether the University's processes for assessment measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and are conducted in line with University policies and regulations;
- iv. identify, where appropriate, examples of exemplary practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment;
- v. comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

Research Programmes

The research elements of the programme will be reviewed by external examiners appointed in accordance with the University's Handbook for Examiners of Research Degree by Theses:

<https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/handbook.htm>

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