Handbook for Research Students and Research Supervisors 2018 - 2019

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/
Introduction by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Welcome to Newcastle University.

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

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

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

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

I wish you the very best success with your studies.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Learning and Teaching
This handbook provides advice and guidance for Postgraduate Research Students and Research Supervisors and highlights key activities that Postgraduate Research Students should be aware of.

An online version of this handbook is available at: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/Publications.htm

This handbook should be read in conjunction with the following:

- **University Regulations**: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/
- **Student Guide**: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/pre-arrival/support/
- **Student Charter**: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/pre-arrival/regulations/#studentcharter
- **University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses**: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/Publications.htm
- **Faculty Training Programmes**: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/keyactivities/FacultyTrainingProgramme.htm

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PART ONE - SOURCES OF ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

Research Student Support Teams/Medical Sciences Graduate School
Each Faculty has a Graduate School Administrator who leads a team of staff supporting postgraduate research (PGR) student administration. In the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences (HaSS) and Science, Agriculture and Engineering (SAgE), this team is the Research Student Support Team (RSST). In the Faculty of Medical Sciences, this team is the Medical Sciences Graduate School (MSGS).

The following are examples of issues that the Graduate School Administrators in RSST and MSGS deal with:

- Student Registration;
- Student Progress (including MPhil/PhD upgrades, interruptions of study, extensions to thesis submission dates, academic concessions, appointment of examiners, the PGR examination process and pass lists);
- Research Students’ project approval and annual progression;
- Advice on University and programme regulations and PGR policies and procedures;
- Complaints, academic appeals, student discipline, assessment irregularities;

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

Research Student Support Team (RSST)  Medical Sciences Graduate School (MSGS)
King’s Gate  Ridley Building 1
Level 2  Level 3
Newcastle University  Newcastle University
Telephone: +44 (0) 191 208 6206  Telephone: +44 (0) 191 208 7002
E-mail: rssteam@ncl.ac.uk  E-mail: medpg-enquiries@ncl.ac.uk

Each Faculty has a Dean of Postgraduate Studies who is responsible for leading the implementation of the Faculty's postgraduate strategy and its quality assurance of the postgraduate research programmes. Each Faculty also has a Postgraduate Tutor who has considerable experience of postgraduate matters and who can offer impartial and confidential advice. The postgraduate tutor can be consulted in confidence at any stage of your research.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Dean of Postgraduate Studies  Professor Helen Berry
- Graduate School Administrator  Mr Ross Patterson
- Faculty Postgraduate Tutor  Professor Robin Humphrey and Dr Laura Leonardo
The Academic supervisor should be the first person a research student approaches for help and advice, for example if a research student is encountering difficulties in their study or in things which affect their study. Most difficulties can be resolved easily by a supervisor, though he or she may sometimes suggest that a research student contacts one of the many support services throughout the University for specialised information or support.

It is recognised that occasionally a research student may not feel able to approach a supervisor about a particular matter. In these situations, a student, you should discuss the matter with the head of school. If for some reason this is not possible, there are other sources of advice within the University including school (e.g. school director of postgraduate studies), faculty (e.g. dean of postgraduate studies or graduate school administrator) and University services (e.g. the Student Wellbeing Service, the Student Progress Service and the Union Society's Student Advice Centre).

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

- Faculty Researcher Development programmes have been compiled to support research students and provide generic skills expected of researchers in their field of study;
- The University Library has a wide range of resources and services to support research students. Visit the Research Support section for more information: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/research-support/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/research-support/);
- The Education Unit within the Union Society offers advice and occasional training sessions aimed at specific groups of students;
- Specialist Learning Advisers in the Student Wellbeing Service (based in King’s Gate) can assist students with dyslexia and related difficulties;
- The Writing Development Centre offers support with writing skills, see [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc/);
- Finally, Part Three of this Handbook offers comprehensive *Guidelines for Research Students* which include a range of suggestions for study.
Health and Safety
Newcastle University offers postgraduate students the opportunity to study and/or research in a wide range of subjects across many disciplines. The activities entailed can generate a diverse spread of hazards and some of these can pose significant dangers. To facilitate these activities and avoid serious accidents, it is critical that these hazards are effectively controlled. The University does this through a variety of policy and other arrangements.

Each Faculty will provide a health and safety induction and training, which students are expected to attend having regard to their work activities. The precise format and number of safety courses will be decided by each Faculty. Students may not be allowed to carry out certain high-risk work activities until they have been trained, e.g. work with ionising and non-ionising radiation.

Students are encouraged to liaise closely with their Academic Supervisor, their School or Institute Safety Officer, other local staff or central University support team in Occupational Health and Safety Service (OHSS) for additional advice and guidance. Further information is available at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ohss/about/policy.htm

Student Services Information
There are many services available to staff and students in the University and brief information is included below on these.

Tuition Fees
Fees payable by postgraduate students are set out in the University Fees Schedule and are subject to an annual increase: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/fees/

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

If you are responsible for payment of your own tuition fees (or part payment) and you wish to pay your fees in full before or at the time of registration, you will be entitled to a 2% discount on the proportion of your tuition fees for which you are personally liable. If you do not take advantage of the 2% discount you will need to pay your fees in two equal instalments, the first instalment being when you complete your registration and the second at the end of January 2019.

Information on payment methods can be found in the Student Guide 2018-19 available at: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/pre-arrival/support/
**Financial Support**
The Student Financial Support Team is part of the Student Health and Wellbeing Service and administers various financial support schemes to assist students as well as providing information, advice and guidance about student finance related matters. More information is available in the [Student Guide](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance) and at: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance)

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

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

The service is offered free, confidential and available to all students throughout the year and at any time during their University career. Further information is available at the Student Health and Wellbeing Service webpages and a session is also provided as part of the Faculty Research Training programme: [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing).

**Visa Support**
Visa support is provided within the Student Progress Service in King’s Gate. The Visa Team is authorised to provide free, impartial and confidential immigration information and advice for International students on a wide range of visa and immigration enquiries. Further information is available from the Visa Team webpages and a session is also provided as part of the Faculty Research Training programme: [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/visa](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/visa).

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


**Other Student Services**
Further information on the following and other Student and Academic Support services can be found in the [Student Guide](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance):

- The Library
- Newcastle University IT Services
- Careers Service
- Accommodation Services
- Language Support
- Newcastle University Students’ Union
- Sport & Physical Wellbeing at Newcastle University
Other Useful Guidance and Information for PGR Students

Council Tax
Most students under candidature are entitled to some form of exemption or discount, but this depends on individual circumstances. Students who are exempt from paying Council Tax must submit a Student Exemption application form to their local council as well as a Student Certificate providing details about their course. Students living within the Newcastle City Council area can complete an online exemption/discount form at: http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/benefits-and-council-tax (Newcastle City Council Tel: 0191 278 7878).

Further information is available at:
Student Progress Service: https://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/student-resources/PGR/changetrics/CouncilTax.htm
Student Health and Wellbeing: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/advice/counciltax.htm

Registration with GP/Dentist
Students are required by the University Regulations to register with a local doctor/General Practitioner (GP). You should register as soon as possible when you arrive in Newcastle. It is also advisable for students to register with a dental practice. Further information is available at: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/medical

Procedure in the case of illness
If illness prevents you from studying at any time whilst you are a student at the University, you should inform your supervisor immediately. If you are absent from the University through illness for more than three working days, you must complete a Student Notice of Absence form available on the University’s website. If illness prevents you from studying for more than seven working days, you must obtain a medical certificate from your GP and forward it to your School/Institute as soon as possible, in addition to completing the Student Notice of Absence form. Further information is available at: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/Regulations/SPS/Attendance/

Postgraduate Student Travel and Outside Study Policy
This Policy outlines the University’s requirements when Postgraduate students (on Taught and Research programmes) are participating in travel and outside study (off-campus and abroad) and refers to relevant insurance implications and guidelines for students and their tutors / supervisors / advisers.
The University normally provides automatic and free travel insurance to current registered Newcastle University postgraduate students travelling overseas on official University business. However, there are occasions where the University may not be able to provide travel insurance, even if a student is travelling on official University business and students should consult the relevant policies for full details.

Further information is available at:
**PG Travel Policy:** [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGStudent-Travel-Outside-Study-PolicyJuly15.pdf](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/assets/documents/PGStudent-Travel-Outside-Study-PolicyJuly15.pdf)
**Insurance Cover and Procedures:** [http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/insurance/cover/travel_pg.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/insurance/cover/travel_pg.htm)

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

**Information on staying safe**
Personal safety advice and details on how to report any incidents is available on the University Security website at:
[http://www.ncl.ac.uk/estates/services/security/personalsafety.htm](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/estates/services/security/personalsafety.htm)