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. We are fully committed to the training of our research students so that they produce high quality research and further develop their skills. 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 the school and faculty. 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.

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 our 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
Section One - University Information

Dates of Terms and Semesters

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<thead>
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<th>2011-12 Academic year</th>
<th>2012-13 Academic year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 26 September 2011</td>
<td>Monday 24 September 2012</td>
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<td>Friday 16 December 2011</td>
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<td>Spring term</td>
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<td>Friday 16 March 2012</td>
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<td>Summer term</td>
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<td>Friday 15 June 2012</td>
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<td>Semester 1</td>
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<td>Monday 26 September 2011</td>
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<td>Semester 2</td>
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<td>Monday 30 January 2012</td>
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<td>Friday 15 June 2012</td>
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Registration and Progression

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

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

Research students who are not in Newcastle during the main registration period should still register in the normal way using the self-service registration system and then contact the relevant Graduate School Administrator to inform them of your circumstances.

All research students must register for each year of their research programme, as specified in the regulations for the relevant degree, until submission of the thesis for examination.
All registered research students must comply with the University’s requirements for progression on their research programme, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2011.html

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

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

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

Candidates must submit at the end of the ‘pending submission’ year which is deemed the maximum candidature. However, in exceptional cases, an extension of time for submission may be granted by the appropriate dean of postgraduate studies, subject to the candidate providing a strong justification for an extension, supported by the supervisory team. Candidates granted extensions of time in accordance with this provision will be required to register as ‘extended submission’ candidates and pay tuition fees as stipulated in the University’s fee schedule, www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/fees/.

As part of registration you are required to collect your SMART CARD. All students need a Smart Card in order to use University facilities such as; the University Library; Sports Centre; Computing (ISS) facilities and the Students’ Union. Your Smart Card will contain a digital photograph and brief details including your name, programme of study and card expiry date. Once you have obtained your Smart Card, you will keep it for the duration of your studies, although you will need to go through the process of Registration at the start of each new academic year for the card to remain active.
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Useful Contacts

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

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Mrs Caroline McLean  
Research Student Support Team  
King's Gate  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 7RU  
Telephone: +44 (0) 191 222 6206  
E-mail: hss.gradschool@ncl.ac.uk

**Faculty of Medical Sciences**

Mrs Barbara Sumner  
Graduate School  
Framlington Place  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE2 4HH  
Telephone: +44 (0) 191 222 7002  
E-mail: medpg-enquiries@ncl.ac.uk

**Faculty of Science, Agriculture & Engineering**

Mrs Nicola Houghton  
Research Student Support Team  
King's Gate  
Newcastle University  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE1 7RU  
Telephone: + 44 (0) 191 222 8713  
E-mail: sage.gradschool@ncl.ac.uk
### Other Contacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Telephone / Fax</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation Service</td>
<td>0191 208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation">www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Service</td>
<td>0191 222 7748</td>
<td><a href="mailto:careers@ncl.ac.uk">careers@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/careers">www.ncl.ac.uk/careers</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaplaincy</td>
<td>0191 222 6341</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chaplaincy@ncl.ac.uk">chaplaincy@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/chaplaincy">www.ncl.ac.uk/chaplaincy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>0191 208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding">www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childrens Loan Equipment (UNCLE)</td>
<td>0191 239 3962</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Uncle.union@ncl.ac.uk">Uncle.union@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>www unionsociety.co.uk/sac/content/137845/uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>0191 208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/support">www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/support</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Disability Support</td>
<td>0191 208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/disability-support">www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/disability-support</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Office (Cashiers)</td>
<td>0191 222 5215</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cash@ncl.ac.uk">cash@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm">www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance Office (Tuition Fees)</td>
<td>0191 222 5520</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tuition-fees@ncl.ac.uk">tuition-fees@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm">www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/teams/income.htm</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Assistance</td>
<td>0191 208 3333</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries">www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance">www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>International Office</td>
<td>0191 222 5594</td>
<td><a href="mailto:international.office@ncl.ac.uk">international.office@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international">www.ncl.ac.uk/international</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTO Newcastle</td>
<td>0191 222 7535</td>
<td><a href="mailto:into@newcastle.ac.uk">into@newcastle.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/insessional/about/">www.ncl.ac.uk/students/insessional/about/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
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<td>Open Access Centre</td>
<td>0191 222</td>
<td><a href="mailto:open.access@ncl.ac.uk">open.access@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen">www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen</a></td>
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<td>Occupational Health</td>
<td>0191 222</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/occupationalhealth/">www.ncl.ac.uk/occupationalhealth/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Advice Centre</td>
<td>0191 239</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Sac.reception@ncl.ac.uk">Sac.reception@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.unionsociety.co.uk/sac">www.unionsociety.co.uk/sac</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Progress Service</td>
<td>0191 222</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Student-Progress@ncl.ac.uk">Student-Progress@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress">www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Union (The Union Society)</td>
<td>Reception: 0191 239</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Union.society@ncl.ac.uk">Union.society@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.unionsociety.co.uk">www.unionsociety.co.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Library (Liason Librarians named in Part Two)</td>
<td>0191 222</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Lib-readerservices@ncl.ac.uk">Lib-readerservices@ncl.ac.uk</a> Or <a href="mailto:Lib-walton-rs@ncl.ac.uk">Lib-walton-rs@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/library">www.ncl.ac.uk/library</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Computing Service</td>
<td>0191 222</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ISS.Reception@ncl.ac.uk">ISS.Reception@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/iss/">www.ncl.ac.uk/iss/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>University Research Office</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/business-directorate/">www.ncl.ac.uk/business-directorate/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>University Safety Office</td>
<td>0191 222</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Safety-Office@ncl.ac.uk">Safety-Office@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.safety.ncl.ac.uk">www.safety.ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Radiation Protection</td>
<td>6274</td>
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<td>(Separate sections for Radiation, and all other general safety services)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Sports Centre</td>
<td>0191 222</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sport@ncl.ac.uk">sport@ncl.ac.uk</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sport">www.ncl.ac.uk/sport</a></td>
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PART TWO

Financial Matters, Facilities and Services

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

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

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<td>Sport &amp; Personal Fitness at Newcastle</td>
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<td>University</td>
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Tuition Fees

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

Students whose tuition fees are to be paid by a sponsor or funding body are asked to bring with them official letters of sponsorship/funding as evidence that their fees will be paid and present these at Registration, and this may be 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. Alternatively students who are self-supporting are permitted to pay their fees in two instalments, a minimum of 50% of the course fee at Registration and the balance at the end of January 2012. You can now pay online at [www.onlinepayments.ncl.ac.uk](http://www.onlinepayments.ncl.ac.uk). Alternatively, payment may be made by cheque, cash, or credit card. If you have any queries about your tuition fees, you should contact the Tuition Fees Team, King’s Gate (telephone 0191 222 5520 or email: Tuition-Fees@ncl.ac.uk).

Financial Support

A. Access to Learning Funds (UK Students only)

The Access to Learning Fund (ALF) is provided by the Government to give discretionary financial assistance to UK students experiencing unexpected financial hardship so that they can access and remain in Higher Education regardless of their financial circumstances. Only students who meet the residency rules of a ‘home’ student can apply for ALF. Applicants must be registered on either a full-time course or a part-time course which is the equivalent to half of a full-time program. PGCE students must have applied for the full student loan to which they are entitled before applying to ALF. Postgraduate students must be able to show that their financial hardship is unforeseen and not the result of having commenced their course without sufficient funding to cover course fees and living costs. Funding from ALF cannot be awarded to assist students with the payment of their tuition fees. Successful applicants may receive either a non-repayable award or a repayable loan, depending upon their circumstances.

Web: [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/ukstudents/hardship/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/ukstudents/hardship/)

B. Financial Assistance Fund (International and non-UK EU Students only)

The Financial Assistance Fund (FAF) is provided by the University to allow discretionary financial assistance to be given to International and non-UK EU
students if they experience unexpected financial hardship due to circumstances outside of their control. To be eligible postgraduate students must be registered on either a full-time course or a part-time course which is the equivalent to half of a full-time programme. Students must be able to demonstrate that they had adequate funds to cover tuition fees, living expenses and, if appropriate, meet childcare costs for their whole period of study. FAF cannot act as a main source of funding and cannot be used to assist with the payment of tuition fees. Successful applicants receive either a non-repayable award or a repayable loan depending upon their circumstances.

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

Application forms for the Access to Learning Fund, the Financial Assistance Fund can be obtained from King’s Gate, Level 2 Reception or www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/resources/application.htm

C. Emergency Loans

Students who have exhausted their funding completely may be able to apply for an Emergency Loan in exceptional circumstances. These are administered on a discretionary basis to help students who are in immediate financial difficulties and are intended to help cover basic living costs as an interim measure. Students must attend a short interview with a member of staff and provide documentary evidence of their financial situation.

Due to the discretionary nature of all the above funds there is no guarantee of funding or any automatic right or entitlement to receive funding.

D. Research Council and other Public Funding

There are limited government funded research grants, studentships or fellowships available for postgraduate study. The awards mainly come from 7 research councils that cover specific areas of study. For a list of Research Councils see; www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/ukstudents/postgraduate/research.htm Not all postgraduate courses attract studentships and not all students on eligible courses receive funding. Most research council funding awards are given through university schools, so applications for these awards should be made through the school. There is no mandatory funding available for postgraduate study except for students undertaking a PGCE, Clinical Psychology, Applied Educational Psychology and Language Pathology.

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

A large number of partial and full scholarships, bursaries and discounts of differing values, are offered to postgraduate international students from all countries outside the EU. These include:

Newcastle University International Postgraduate Scholarships
Alumni Tuition Fee Discount
International Family Discount

All international postgraduate students who are offered a place to study at Newcastle are eligible to apply for at least one of our University scholarships. University Scholarships are awarded on the basis of academic merit, so students must possess, or expect to receive excellent results. The above awards are available only to applicants and are offered during the admissions process. Students holding these awards should have received confirmation of their awards from the University prior to the start of their studies.

Some funding opportunities are listed in our postgraduate funding database to help students to identify sources of funding they may be eligible for. For further information visit: [www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/index/.php](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/funding/index/.php)

For further information about postgraduate international scholarships contact:

Tel: 0191 208 3333
[https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/contact](https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/contact)
[www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/nonukstudents/scholarships](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/funding/nonukstudents/scholarships)

F. Student Finance Adviser

The Student Finance Adviser can provide information and advice to students on a range of finance related topics such as sources of funding; discretionary and statutory funding schemes and money management and budgeting.

The Adviser offers one-to-one appointments and regular drop-in sessions to assist students. Group information sessions and workshops are also available upon request.

Web: [www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/advice/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/finance/advice/)

For further information:

Tel: 0191 208 3333
Web form: [https/my.ncl.ac.uk/students/contact](https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/contact)
 Council Tax

Council Tax is a system of local taxation collected by local authorities. It is a tax on domestic property. Some property is exempt from Council Tax. Some people do not have to pay Council Tax and some people get a discount. Most students are entitled to some form of exemption or discount but this depends on individual circumstances.

Properties only occupied by full-time students will be exempt from Council Tax. If students live in university owned or managed accommodation or live in non-university accommodation where everyone in the household is a full-time student there will be no Council Tax to pay once the local authority have received proof that all residents are full-time students.

If students study full-time but live with an adult who is not a full-time student their household will be issued with a Council Tax bill. A 25% discount should be applied to the bill once a student has submitted proof that they are studying full-time. If you study full-time and live with more than one adult who are not full time students your household will be issued with a Council Tax bill.

Part-time students are not exempt from paying Council Tax under the student rules. If you are a part-time student with a low income you may be eligible to apply for Council Tax Benefit and or be eligible to receive a 25% discount if you live alone.

Non-British and non-EEA*-citizen spouses of non-EEA international students may have the students’ exemption extended to include them if the terms of their immigration leave to remain in the UK exclude them from working or claiming benefits.

Students who think that they are exempt from paying council tax will need to submit a Student Discount / Exemption application form to their local council as well as submitting a Student Certificate which provides details about their course. Students living within the Newcastle City Council area can apply for exemption using an on-line form available from: www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/counciltaxinfo or can contact Newcastle City Council tel: 0845 111 4101 or council.tax@newcastle.gov.uk

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

*EEA = European Economic Area
Overseas Business Travel Insurance

The University provides overseas travel insurance without charge to postgraduate students on the business of Newcastle University. Full details of the procedure and cover are available at www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/insurance/cover/travel_pg.htm

For further details, contact:
Insurance & Risk Manager, Finance Office, King’s Gate. Telephone 0191 222 6520; email: Insurance@ncl.ac.uk; Website http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/finance/insurance/

Student Wellbeing Service

Disability and Specialist Learning Support

Advice, information and guidance are available to disabled applicants and students at all stages of their university career. Assistance is offered with applications for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSA) and help given to arrange assessments of study support requirements.

Postgraduate students are eligible to apply for DSA if they study a recognised taught or research postgraduate course (including a distance-learning course) and meet the personal eligibility conditions. All postgraduate courses should last at least one year and lead to a master's degree, doctorate, postgraduate diploma or certificate, for which the entry requirement is at least a first degree or equivalent. Part-time courses need to take no longer than twice the time of an equivalent full-time course in order to be eligible. Where the funding body is a Research Council applications for DSA are normally dealt with by the research organization ie, Universities on behalf of the Research Council. Applicants / students should contact the Student Wellbeing Service at the University for advice on how to apply for DSA. The Student Wellbeing Service has close links with UCAN (University Centre for Assessments at Newcastle) which independently carries out assessments of study support requirements for applicants and students across the UK.

The Student Wellbeing Service can also facilitate arrangements for additional support, eg notetakers, BSL Interpreters, support workers and if appropriate, can liaise with external specialist agencies. Disabled students can also be offered advice on accommodation issues and campus accessibility.

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

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

Workshops

During 2011-12 the Library will be running a series of classes as part of your postgraduate research training programme. Topics covered will include; constructing effective research strategies, using databases and e-journals, using EndNote to manage your references and avoid plagiarism, exploiting primary literature and archives, staying at the cutting edge of new research and scholarly communication. These classes are designed to help you save time and make your research more effective, so please do attend.

Research Information at Newcastle (ResIN)

www.ncl.ac.uk/library/resin

The Library has a set of dedicated web pages designed specifically to address the needs of researchers at Newcastle. Use it to discover how to find information in a wide variety of resources, from grey literature to statistical data, primary sources to official documents. You will also find advice on keeping up to date with new publications, plus details of the basic and advanced EndNote workshops run in the Library throughout the year.

There is also a section specifically concerned with the process of ‘Writing Up’ including guidance on thesis production, and publication in the University’s e-theses repository, academic integrity and citation, while ‘Hot Topics’ highlights major issues such as the open access publishing.

The ‘Latest research news’ and ‘New research resources’ will alert you to important new provision and developments within the Library service, while selected RSS ‘Research news feeds’ on key topics are also available.

Liaison Librarians

Your Liaison Librarian is here to help you make best use of the services and resources provided by the Library. Come and discuss your research with us.

- Humanities and Social Sciences
Information Systems and Services (ISS)

ISS provides computer services for staff and students at the University. There are currently over 1300 PCs located in computer cluster rooms across campus, which are free to use if the room is not booked for teaching. Some clusters are open evenings and weekends, and some have 24 hour access via your Smartcard, visit [www.ncl.ac.uk/iss/clusters](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/iss/clusters) for details.

Many postgraduate research students have access to personal or shared PCs in their own place of work: such PCs will usually be running the University Common Desktop, and will therefore have broadly the same facilities as cluster room PCs.

The Common Desktop provides access to your University e-mail, printers and to your personal filestore known as your Home Folder (H: drive), which is a secure place to store your work.

A wide range of software is supplied to assist in teaching, research, and for personal development. However, if you have any specialist requirements please contact your School Computing Officer for advice.

Students with their own computer will find wireless coverage widely available across campus, and almost all rooms in Halls of Residence have their own cable network connection. Visit [http://connect.ncl.ac.uk](http://connect.ncl.ac.uk) for details on how to get connected.

If you need to access you files off campus, the Remote Application Service (RAS) is a simple way to access almost all University computing facilities from any web browser, anywhere. You can log in at [https://ras.ncl.ac.uk](https://ras.ncl.ac.uk)

Staffed Help Desk support is available in the Old Library Building (OLUA) and...
Robinson Library clusters, you can also contact the University IT Service Desk by telephone (5999) or email it.servicedesk@ncl.ac.uk if you require further assistance.

The many services of ISS are described at www.ncl.ac.uk/iss/

**Careers Service**

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

**Individual Advice & Guidance**

Our information officers and careers advisers are here to offer one-to-one advice, guidance and the information you may need to explore your existing plans or generate new ideas. You can drop in any weekday, 10am – 4:30pm (may vary in vacations), no appointment necessary. Longer (45min), one-to-one appointments are also available.

**On line Information**

Our website offers lots of useful links to key resources for postgraduate research students and you can even make use of specialist publications and reference materials in the Careers Service.

**Join the entrepreneurial revolution**

If you have a business idea and want to take it further, then visit the Careers Service for a chat with one of our business start-up advisers. You can also make use of the Elevator – our creative thinking space that’s equipped with office facilities. Check out the Self Employment page on our website for more details.

**Career development skills & experience**

We offer a programme of careers-related sessions and events tailored to the needs of postgraduate research students in each Faculty Training Programme. The Careers Service also provides a variety of work related opportunities to develop and broaden your practical experience, including personal development and business planning competitions, intern positions and workshops on enterprise, entrepreneurship and employability. These opportunities are open to all students.

Check your faculty postgraduate researcher development programme for details of current opportunities and visit www.ncl.ac.uk/careers
Building networks

Networking may sound scary, but it can give you a head start when it comes to landing your job, developing your business idea or deciding what to do next. The Careers Service can help you make contacts:

- ‘Graduate Connections’ is an online database of over 600 contacts, including PhD graduates. You can read their profiles or even contact them directly to get first-hand information, advice and insight about the work they do and how to follow in their footsteps.
- Graduates from a range of sectors and careers regularly visit the University to give presentations and take part in expert panel discussion. They offer an insight into specific sectors and career paths.
- Networking events run throughout the year and provide an opportunity to meet with new and established business entrepreneurs. For dates, times and details see our website.

Access to employers and vacancies

Regional, national and international employers visit the University throughout the year to deliver presentations and attend recruitment fairs. These events offer an excellent opportunity for you to talk informally to employers and recent graduates and gain a real insight into their organisation and sector, the nature of the work they offer and how to apply successfully.

Vacancies online

We advertise part-time, temporary and vacation jobs that you can fit around your research commitments. Our jobs board, ‘Vacancies Online’ also features graduate job vacancies, work experience positions and voluntary roles. Vacancies are regularly updated and include opportunities for postgraduate researchers. You can also register to receive email alerts of opportunities that match your preferences. Check out our current vacancies by visiting: www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/vacsonline

Making applications

We deliver specialist sessions on marketing your research experience through the faculty postgraduate researcher development programmes and central workshops throughout the year which cover all aspects of applying for jobs, from writing your CV to participating in assessment centres. We also offer individual advice and feedback on your CV, job application forms, covering letters, interviews and business-related applications.

Web: www.ncl.ac.uk/careers

Careers Service, Student Services, Level 1, King’s Gate.
Open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm (except Wed, 10am – 5pm)
Research Student Support Teams

Within Student and Academic Services, it is the Student Progress Service whose work is directly concerned with students, from first arrival to graduation. Each Faculty has a Graduate School Administrator who leads a Research Student Support Team. Please see Part One, page vii for contact details.

Examples of the issues that the Graduate School Administrator and Research Student Support Teams deal with are:

- Student Registration;
- Student Progress (including MPhil/PhD upgrades, confirmation of candidature, suspension of study, extensions to thesis submission dates, academic concessions, appointment of examiners, dealing with thesis submissions and examiners’ reports, pass lists);
- Research Students’ annual progression;
- Training programmes for research students;
- Advice on University and programme regulations;
- Complaints, academic appeals, student discipline, assessment irregularities;

Relevant Information and forms for these processes can be found at:
www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/index.htm

Accommodation Service

University Accommodation

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

If you require information about individual sites, you should contact the Accommodation Service for a copy of the Student Accommodation 2011-2012 brochure, or refer to the University website at: www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation/

Accommodation Contract

If you take up a place in University owned accommodation, you will be provided with an online accommodation contract until the end of the academic year (the minimum agreement is from 20 September 2011 until 16 June 2012). You have the option of two contract periods – 38 and 49 weeks. If you choose a 49-week contract, you will be able to stay in your room throughout the year until the 3 September 2012. If you have a 38-week contract, it should be possible to extend your stay until the end of August 2012.
but there is no guarantee that you will be able to stay in the same room. Tenancies are terminated only in the event of the tenant ceasing to be a registered student of Newcastle University. If you withdraw from University or fail to register you will still be required to pay the full rent due for the termly billing period in which you leave, that is, 07/1/2012, 14/4/2012 or 16/6/2012. Those who leave University accommodation for non-University accommodation remain responsible for the rent until the end of the tenancy agreement or until the room is re-let to another student who is not, at that time, paying rent to the University.

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

Changing Your Accommodation

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

University Accommodation After-Your First Year

With expanding student numbers we usually need all of our accommodation for the new intake of students each academic year. Therefore we cannot guarantee that it will be possible to offer you a room in University accommodation beyond your first year. Information on availability of accommodation for continuing students will be available in January 2012.

Summer Rent

If you are offered accommodation for a second or subsequent year in self-catered accommodation, your tenancy agreement will start in June 2012 and end in June 2013. You will be required to pay rent for every day of the tenancy agreement, which includes the summer period. This means you may stay in your accommodation over the summer vacation and keep your belongings in your accommodation during this time.

NUstudenthomes Private Sector

If you have a query regarding private accommodation, you should contact a member of staff in NUstudenthomes Team: Alison Clemett, Pamela Bonner, Alec Hughes or Grant Jackson. This team provides services for students who are searching for, or currently living in private rented accommodation. They offer help and advice on all aspects moving into the private sector, including advertising available properties on our website, many of which are directly managed by the University. They can offer information on the private-rented sector in Newcastle providing details on popular student areas, rent levels and other aspects of what to expect in a private-sector tenancy. We have a property search facility at
www.ncl.ac.uk/accommodation/current/private/search where you can look for properties for groups, couples, families and single rooms in flats sharing with other students.

If you are an international student, we would encourage you to apply for and live in University accommodation during your first year in Newcastle, since you are eligible for this accommodation. However, if you choose to live in the private-rented sector, we strongly recommend you spend a few days in Newcastle during the summer vacation to families yourself with the various residential areas and to view several properties before making a decision. We can provide details of hotel accommodation for your stay. Please not that most private-rented sector tenancies run for a 51-2-week period.

If you are an EU or UK postgraduate who does not fall under the University guarantee, or would prefer to live in the private sector, NUstudenthomes provides a special service whereby we allocate you accommodation exclusively with other postgraduate students in selected properties that the University directly manages. This service provides the following benefits:

- Access to good quality, affordable accommodation in all popular student areas;
- Peace of mind that the University is acting as your landlord;
- Unlike most private agents, we charge no administration fees and do not ask for rent up front;
- Water rates and personal belongings insurance are included in the rent;
- The assurance that all properties meet the necessary safety standards;
- Flexible rent payment options;
- Quick and effective repairs service.

This service has always proved very popular in the past, but while we do have a number of properties, accommodation is always subject to availability.

NUstudenthomes also manages a small number of properties for students who intend to bring their families to Newcastle, but these properties are very limited so we would encourage you to enquire about them in advance.

We also have limited list of householders in the area offering lodgings to students. Although not usually popular as long-term accommodation, lodgings are useful for people requiring accommodation for a short period of time.

The Accommodation Service is situated in King’s Gate
Telephone: 0191 208 3333
Counselling & Mental Health Support

Talking to a counsellor can help with a variety of problems from the past or present (e.g. loss, depression, eating disorders, relationships). A counsellor does not give advice, but the listening process will enable students to have an increased understanding of themselves and the choices that they have.

The Student Wellbeing Advisers (Mental Health) offer a wide range of therapeutic interventions and support for students experiencing mental health problems (e.g. anxiety, depression, self-harm, anger).

Group and workshops are offered to schools throughout the University on a variety of topics including Beating Stress, Relaxation, Confidence Building and Dealing with Work Block. Groups offer a preventative approach to difficulties and enable students to share thoughts and ideas. They promote positive life skills and provide opportunities to explore practical solutions and set personal goals.

Making contact: Counselling, Mental Health Support

Initial appointments are available over a 5 day period from the point of contact. Students are encouraged to make contact using the details below and an appropriate appointment will be offered. It is vital that students leave a contact number where they can be reached to arrange a suitable time. The appointment lasts approximately 30 minutes. On making an appointment, students should arrive 15 minutes early to complete the necessary forms and it is important to arrive on time. Students will not be able to be seen on that day if they arrive late.

We are closed on bank holidays and during the University Christmas closure.

The service we provide is free and available to all students throughout the year and at any time during their University career.

Staff Training and Consultancy

The Student Wellbeing Service offers a range of training to staff which can be accessed via the Staff Development Unit. We also welcome individual requests to tailor events specifically to service/department needs. All University staff are welcome to consult with the service about any issues concerning them in regard to their role with students.

Student Wellbeing Service

Newcastle University
King’s Gate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU
Tel: + 44 (0) 191 208 3333
Enquiries : www.ncl.ac.uk/enquiries (prospective students and NCL staff)
http://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/enquiries (current students)
Web: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing
Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy is both a place and a team of people. We are a team of Chaplains working together, and are made up of several Christian chaplains, a Buddhist chaplain and a Jewish chaplain. We are appointed by our faith communities, recognized by the University and the chaplaincy is affiliated to the Student Wellbeing Service. We are committed to working with students and staff of different faiths and none, and to making the University a place of religious tolerance and respect.

The Chaplaincy is situated in 19/20 Windsor Terrace, which is behind the Robinson Library. We have a medium-sized meeting room, the Mandela Room, which can be booked at any time. We also have a library that students and staff are welcome to borrow from, a small number of work stations (with networked computers) and a kitchen. The Mandela room is regularly booked by groups of people from different faiths, currently including Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Ismailis, and Quakers. Some students like to come and spend some quiet time in the library. All are welcome.

It is a great place to come to relax, meet friends, have a coffee, or have some space. The Chaplaincy is open every day between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm. 24-hour access is by smartcard – please ask. Our noticeboard and website have details of the weekly activities and events.

We keep in touch with many churches and with all of the major faith groups in the city and with a number of other voluntary organizations. Even if we can’t help, we can normally point you in the right direction. The Chaplaincy – the place and the people – is here for you.

www.ncl.ac.uk/chaplaincy or you can call us on 0191 222 6341

YOUR CHAPLAINS ARE:

Coordinating and Anglican chaplain
Revd Catherine Lack
telephone: 0191 222 6341 or 07582 033125
e-mail: catherine.lack@ncl.ac.uk

Methodist
Revd Rob Hawkins
telephone: 0191 281 2309
e-mail: rob.hawkins@ncl.ac.uk

Baptist
Prof Bill Clegg
Telephone: 0191 222 6649
Email: w.clegg@ncl.ac.uk

United Reformed Church
(post vacant)
Buddhist
Revd Sujatin Johnson
telephone: 0191 213 2564
eemail: sujatin@gmail.com

Catholic
Miss Mia Fox
telephone: 0191 281 1053
eemail: mia.fox@ncl.ac.uk
Priest: To be appointed Summer 2011.

Jewish
Rabbi Mati Kos
Telephone: 07817 250 557
Email: mati@ujc.org.uk

Salvation Army
(post vacant)

Honorary Chaplains:
Mr Rob Davidson
0191 222 6203
eemail r.i.davidson@ncl.ac.uk
Rev Bryan Vernon
Telephone: 0191 222 8945
Email: b.g.vernon@ncl.ac.uk
Dr David Golding
Telephone: 07817 637 746
eemail: D.W.Golding@ncl.ac.uk
Mrs Sue Vernon
eemail: s.j.vernon@ncl.ac.uk

Other World Faiths:
Muslim
The University Muslim Prayer Room is in
the King George VI Building
Telephone: 0191 222 5658

Medical Matters
Medical care
Students are required by the University Regulations to register with a medical practice. There are many NHS medical practices in Newcastle, the names and addresses of which are available from Newcastle Health Authority. Names and addresses of practices in other areas of Tyne and Wear, Durham and Northumberland can be obtained from the local health authority for that area.

Before registering with any medical practice, students are advised to ensure that the practice will carry out home visits to their addresses. A list of medical practices in the areas most commonly lived in by Newcastle students is given in the Appendix of The Student Guide.

Contact details for other faiths can be found on the chaplaincy website: www.ncl.ac.uk/chaplaincy
Dental care

It is advisable for students to register with a dental practice. There are many NHS dental practices in Newcastle, the names and addresses of which are available from the Newcastle Health Authority.

Procedure in the case of illness

The following advice applies to most students in the University. Students on some programmes of study (e.g. medical and dental students) may be required to follow slightly different rules about notifying relevant staff of illness, and will be provided with the necessary information by their schools or faculties.

If illness prevents you from studying at any time whilst you are a student at the University, you should inform your tutor or supervisor immediately. If you are absent from the University through illness for more than three working days, you must obtain a Self-Certification of Illness form from your tutor/supervisor or school office or from the University’s website at www.ncl.ac.uk/spo and return the completed form to your tutor/supervisor as soon as you are able to return to your studies. 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 tutor/supervisor as soon as possible.

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

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

Occupational health

Provision of Occupational Health Services will be provided for Postgraduate students only who are undertaking research higher degrees, or who are also in the University's paid employment.

The role of the Occupational Health Service is to provide advice to management and postgraduates for issues in which work has an impact on health or health has an impact on work.

Further information about the Postgraduate Occupational Health Service go to occupational health website ref http://www.ncl.ac.uk/occupationalhealth/information/managers/postgrad.php
Health and Safety
www.safety.ncl.ac.uk

Every year University students are seriously injured in UK Universities. Almost all of these incidents are readily avoidable without preventing activities being undertaken. On rare occasions activities are stopped because they generate excessive risks and so cannot be permitted to continue without substantial additional controls being put in place. The following sections provide a brief guide for the major areas that have specific controls and requirements, and the areas of the University Safety Office website where you can get assistance.

Policy
www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/universitypolicy.aspx

The University Safety Policy and guidance, is required to be complied with at all times. In addition to this there are School Safety Policies local rules which can be obtained from your School Safety Officer. Some individual labs may also have specific rules. It is a legal duty on the University, its staff and students, to ensure that the University is a safe place to work. It is therefore important that everybody complies with the local rules and reports all incidents, defects etc. to the School Safety Officer or University Safety Office. If problems are not reported they may result in others being injured. There are on-line reporting forms for Accidents, Incidents and Near Misses and other types of incidents at www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/accidentfireandemergency.aspx

Biological Safety
www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/biologicalsafety.aspx

The University has several high hazard biological labs (classified at 'containment level 3') and these as well as the Genetic Modification work undertaken are all subject to additional legislation. All these areas are required to have specific risk assessments and in the case of higher containment work specific training for the people involved.

Fire
www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/firesafety.aspx

The University has strict rules on Fire Evacuation, including drills. There are strict rules to maintain the levels of fire protection including keeping corridors clear. In late 2003 there was a fire at the University costing over £2M, which also had the potential to have killed people in the building. Almost every year there is a major University building lost to fire somewhere in the UK.

The University is generally a safe place with very few fires and in general the fires that do occur are prevented from becoming large by the strict precautions that are in place. These rules therefore must be complied with at all times to help keep your working environment safe. Penalties for breaches of fire rules ultimately include expulsion from the University for the most serious offences. The Fire Brigade has a policy of prosecuting students for serious offences. Further information and training is available from the University Safety Office www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/training.aspx including training courses on the use of Fire Extinguishers (a legitimate chance to let one off!).
Radiation protection
www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/radiationprotection.aspx

Work with ionizing radiation is very tightly controlled and every school using radiation for research work will have a Radiation Protection Supervisor. Nobody is permitted to use radiation until they have been approved by the University Radiation Protection Officer which will involve a Newcastle course being undertaken (experience from other Universities will help, but the Newcastle Course is required for even the most experienced users). This is to ensure that people are aware of the Newcastle local rules as well as being suitably competent to be permitted to work with sources.

Risk Assessment
www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/riskassessment.aspx

University safety is driven by Risk Assessment. All research students are required to consider their own safety and the safety of others in their work (including the cleaners and visitors). Training is available for postgraduate students from the University Safety Office.

Training
www.safety.ncl.ac.uk/training.aspx

Research students will be accepted for places on many of the Safety Office training courses on the same basis as staff. Prior to undertaking work with some high risk chemicals, radiation or high hazard biological materials, training may be required. The list of courses is available on the Safety Office website.

In-Sessional English Programme
www.ncl.ac.uk/students/insessional/

The In-Sessional English Programme provides a range of English Language support courses and advice for international students whose first language is not English. The provision includes English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) courses, English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) courses, Open Sessions, online learning and one-to-one advisory sessions. Full details are available on the In-Sessional programme website.

The In-Sessional is run by INTO Newcastle University (www.intohigher.com/uk/en-gb/our-centres/into-newcastle-university/). The INTO Newcastle Centre also provides a range of full time, intensive academic preparation programmes leading to undergraduate and postgraduate study at universities in the UK.
Before Registration, all students whose first language is not English must take the University English Language Assessment (UELA) in English, (separate information on the test can be found in the Pre-Arrival Information booklet sent to new students and on the In-Sessional website). Advice is then given to you and your tutor on any problems revealed by the results and a recommendation made about what you can do to improve.

You may be advised, for example, to attend some of our classes in academic reading and writing, listening, speaking and seminar skills or grammar and pronunciation, which run throughout term time. These classes are free of charge to registered students and are a key part of Newcastle University’s In-Sessional English Language provision.

**INTO Newcastle University**
Reception, 6 Kensington Terrace
email: into@newcastle.ac.uk
Telephone: 0191 222 7535   fax: 0191 222 5239
Monday to Thursday 9.00 am to 4.45 pm
Friday 9.00 am to 4.30 pm.

**Language Resource Centre**
www.ncl.ac.uk/langcen/

**Languages in your own time**
Even if you cannot study a language as part of your degree, there are excellent language learning resources and facilities for you in the University’s award-winning Language Resource Centre.

**Language Resource Centre**: Our centre is fully equipped with computer-aided learning programmes, DVD films, CDs, satellite TV (twenty four channels in seventeen languages) and online programs for the independent study of over 50 languages.

Log on to [http://www.linguacast.ac.uk](http://www.linguacast.ac.uk) and [http://universed.co.uk](http://universed.co.uk) for fun language learning ideas. Advisers are available by appointment to help with independent language learning.

Membership is **free** to students and staff of this University. You need to show your smartcard to register to use the facilities.

**Language Resource Centre**: No 26 on the Campus Map
Level 2, Old Library Building (entrance opposite the Armstrong Building);
email: open.access@ncl.ac.uk;
Telephone: 0191 222 7490
Term time: Monday to Thursday 9.00am to 7.15pm Friday 9.00am to 4.45pm.
Vacations: Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm.
Newcastle University Students’ Union (NUSU)

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

Your Learner Voice

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

Full-time sabbatical officers:

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

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

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

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

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

Editor of the Courier
Tel: 0191 239 3940
Email: editor.union@ncl.ac.uk

Part-time officers:

For all part time officers, telephone 0191 239 3900
Your Wellbeing
NUSU runs a number of welfare related services which complement those of the University.
Student Advice Centre (SAC)
Mon 10:15am – 4pm,
Tue, Thu, Fri 10am – 4pm
Wed 12 noon – 6pm

Tel: 0191 239 3979
Email: sac.recpetion@ncl.ac.uk
www.nusu.co.uk/sac

At some point during your studies, you may need to seek independent advice or assistance. The Student Advice Centre is a free, confidential and professional service to the Students’ Union. The friendly staff can offer specialist advice, representation and assistance on a range of issues, including: finance, legal, consumer, housing, academic and personal matters. The SAC also work with other specialist services, such as private rented project. The SAC has an online advice service, check out their website for further information. The SAC’s service is independent of the University, and strictly confidential.
The **Baby Equipment Service for Students (BESS)** has a supply of basic safety equipment for young children available for hire by registered students. The items available are not necessarily new, and include cots, highchairs, fireguards, stair gates and baby alarms. There is a membership fee plus a small charge per item for each three month’s loan.

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

The **Student Nightbus** is a service provided by NUSU to ensure that you get home from campus safely in the evening. It costs just 70 pence so it will save you a lot of money on taxis after a night out or a long library or gym session.

The service runs Monday to Friday from pick-up points at the STUDENTS’ UNION, ROBINSON LIBRARY and the MEDICAL SCHOOL, from 7pm and takes you directly to your door (within the specified boundaries). Wallet sized timetables are available to collect from all receptions at halls of residence, the Students’ Union, Library and Medical School.

Your Opportunities

NUSU looks to maximize the number of available opportunities for students to participate in activities that enhance personal development and life skills. These include: our **Athletic Union** which offers a spectrum of sporting opportunities and supports over 60 different sports clubs; our 150 different Societies which give members the chance to pursue their own interests, be they political, cultural or social; **Student Community Action Newcastle (SCAN)** which is our volunteering sub-charity for students who wish to participate in community and charitable projects; and the **Courier Newspaper, Newcastle Student Radio** and **Newcastle University TV** which offer opportunities to develop skills in media. We also need volunteers to help run **Freshers’ Week, RAG Week** become **Course and Hall Reps**, and sit on our **Students’ Union Council**.

Your Community

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

From September 2011 our doors will open onto a beautifully refurbished building providing a variety of services including food and bar outlets plus some new offerings such as Subway and Madventurer as well as Newcastle on campus computer support service. The Union Shop sells everything from lipstick to pens and paper as well as a wide range of food items, newspapers, wines and spirits, clothing and household products. Open early throughout the week we pride ourselves on delivering a first class convenient service.
Sport and Personal Fitness at Newcastle University

Newcastle University has a renowned reputation as one of the top universities for sport in the country.

The Centre for Physical Recreation and Sport and the Athletic Union provide excellent facilities and an extensive programme of competitive and recreational sporting activities for students of all abilities, whether you wish to take up a sport for the first time or are participating for fun, fitness or serious competition.

Sports Clubs

All students at the University are eligible to become members of the Athletic Union (AU) and are able to join any of its 55+ student run sports clubs. These range from traditional sports such as hockey, rugby and football, to more adventurous activities such as mountain biking, parachuting and sub-aqua. If we do not have a sport for you, you have the opportunity to set up your own club.

Performance Sport and Sports Scholarships

University representative teams compete under the banner of ‘Team Newcastle’ in the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) competitions where Newcastle has achieved a top 15 BUCS ranking since 2005. Our student clubs also compete in regional and local leagues. For high-performing athletes we offer a range of professional support aimed at ensuring that these athletes fulfil both their academic and sporting potential. The Elite Athletes Squad is a specific support organization for up to 20 high-performing athletes that include an annual lecture program, full medical, physiotherapy and vision screening and the support of a personal tutor. In addition, the Centre for Physical Recreation and Sport awards up to 40 Sports Scholarships annually.

Campus Sport

Our Campus Sport programme offers you a way to stay fit and participate in a variety of sporting and recreational activities. There is an extensive intra mural competition in which groups of students within the University compete against each other in different sports, e.g. rugby, netball, mixed hockey, basketball and football. The exercise class program consists of a wide range of fitness and wellbeing classes including yoga, pilates, zumba and spin cycling. For those not wishing to be organized, sports centre membership allows casual booking of activity space for indoor sports including 5-a-side football, badminton, squash, basketball etc, as well as access to the 125 station state-of-the-art Health and Fitness suite and associated services eg personal 1 to 1 training, personal fitness programmes.

Sports Facilities

Indoor sports are catered for at the University Sports Centre which houses a state-of-the-art, 125-station health and fitness suite, a strength & conditioning room, a dance studio, the main sports hall and two multi-functional rooms as well as four squash courts located adjacent to the Centre. In addition a new high performance strength and condition room will be completed in 2011-12.
These facilities combine to provide opportunities to participate in a wide range of indoor sports, including five-a-side, badminton, basketball, squash, netball, volleyball and trampoline as well as hosting the Campus Sport and Performance Sport programmes.

Outdoor sports facilities are available at Cochrane Park, Heaton and Longbenton providing facilities for rugby (union and league), football, cricket, netball, tennis, shooting and lacrosse. The facilities at Cochrane Park are such that they have been chosen as an official Games-Time Training venue for the London 2012 Olympic Games football tournament. In addition there are two floodlit all-weather artificial pitches provide facilities for hockey and football as well as acting as training venue for all our major team sports. Newburn Water Sports Centre hosts our Canoe and Boat Clubs with the river Tyne providing the ideal training resource for these sports.

Track and field facilities are available at Gateshead International Stadium while ice hockey takes place at Whitley Bay Ice Rink. Swimming and other water sports, such as canoe polo, water polo and sub-aqua take place in pools throughout the city. Other outdoor activities, such as sailing, walking, mountaineering and climbing are well catered for in the nearby countryside and along the North East coast.

Sports Centre Membership

Students can take advantage of these sporting opportunities by joining the Sports Centre for an annual membership fee. There are 2 levels of membership available. Silver entitles members to use all outdoor and indoor facilities with the exception of the Health & Fitness Suites. Gold members have the added use of the fitness suites and free entry to our exercise classes. Members are also able to purchase a swim card providing discounted access to swimming pools throughout the city.

For full details on sports visit; 
www.ncl.ac.uk/sport/
www.unionsociety.co.uk/au/.
PART THREE

Personal Matters

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

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

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Sources of Advice and Assistance for Postgraduate Research Students

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

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

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

The postgraduate tutors are:

- **Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering**
  Professor Sudipta Roy

- **Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**
  Professor Robin Humphrey

- **Faculty of Medicine**
  Professor John Kirby

If you wish to make an appointment to see a postgraduate tutor, you should telephone the relevant graduate school administrator (details in Part One). If the advice you require is gender sensitive, please contact the relevant postgraduate tutor from any of those listed above.

Alternatively, contact the Student Progress Service (details in Part One). See also the faculty or school handbook for more sources of help and advice.
Counselling and Wellbeing
The Student Wellbeing Service provides support and advice to postgraduates:

- A confidential one-to-one counselling and support service to help with a wide range of issues;
- Consultation about mental health issues;
- ‘Signposting’ of students to specialist services according to need;
- Groups & Workshops in Schools throughout the University
- Disability and Specialist Learning support

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

Student Wellbeing Service
Newcastle University
King's Gate
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 7RU
Tel: + 44 (0) 191 208 3333
Enquiries: Current students: https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/enquiries
Web: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing

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

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

Newcastle upon Tyne is renowned as a safe city to live in, and has one of the lowest rates in Britain of students experiencing crime. It’s easy to become frightened of crime when you read the newspapers and hear stories from other students, but these often paint a worse picture than is true. However, as in any city, you must take care to keep yourself and your possessions safe. The following are a few tips on staying safe.

Keeping yourself safe:

- Try not to walk around alone late in the evening or when it is very dark. If you are going to be out alone, stick to well-lit, busy streets and consider carrying a personal alarm (these are available from the Welfare Officer in the Union Society). Let somebody know where you are going and what time you expect to be back;
- Use expensive electrical equipment discretely. Try not to draw attention to your laptop, mobile phone, ipod…!
- If you are going to be working in the University late, make sure that you let one of your colleagues know and if there are porters in your building you must let them know too. If there are no porters, you should ring the University Police on extension 6666 (0191 222 6666 from a mobile/payphone). You’ll need to let them know when you leave too.

Keeping your home and possessions safe:

- Lock all doors and windows every time you leave the house. Make sure that everyone you live with has their own set of keys and locks up too;
- Don’t leave computers, stereos or anything expensive near windows so that they can be seen from the street;
- If you have a burglar alarm fitted on your house, use it!
- If you live in University halls or flats, don’t allow people you don’t recognise to follow you into the building, even if they say they are visiting a friend. If they are genuine, their friends will let them into the building;
- If you are going to be away from your property for a while, try to avoid it looking empty. Use timer switches on lights (these are available from the Union Society) and let your landlord know that you’ll be away so he/she can check on the property.
**Bicycle owners:**
If you own a bike, make sure you have the frame number written down, in case of theft. When parking your bike always lock both the frame and front wheel to a bike rack. Use a rack that is well lit and in a public place (there are plenty around campus). Use a D-lock or heavy cable lock with a key (in preference to a combination lock). U-shaped tubular bicycle racks are far more secure than ‘butterfly’ racks. Remove anything detachable and carry it with you (e.g., lights, the seat etc.). Consider joining the University’s Bicycle Users Group (BUG), whose web pages can be seen at [www.societies.ncl.ac.uk/bug/](http://www.societies.ncl.ac.uk/bug/). BUG members can find you a bicycle ‘buddy’, advise on safe cycling routes around town, tell you where to purchase a second-hand bike and can offer other useful tips.

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

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

**If you would like to report a crime,** you can contact the University Police on 6817 (0191 222 6817) or the city police on 0191 214 555, in an emergency use 0191 222 6666

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

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

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

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

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

The University produces an International Student Handbook each year. This is a comprehensive guide and is available to all new international students, by email, before they arrive at the University.

If you want to receive a copy of the International Student Handbook, please contact:

International Office
King’s Gate
Telephone: 0191 222 6856
E-mail: international.office@ncl.ac.uk
Website: www.ncl.ac.uk/international

The handbook is also available on the web at:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/about/download.htm

Visa Support

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

- Tier 4 applications within the UK
- Tier 4 and Student Visitor entry clearance procedures
- Issues relating to dependant visas
- Police registration requirements
- Working during and after studies
- Travelling within the Schengen space

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

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

For immigration guidance on making an immigration application within the UK refer to the UK Border Agency web guidance for students: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk

For immigration guidance on making an application for a visa to enter the UK from your home country refer to the UK Border and Agency web guidance for students: www.ukvisas.gov.uk

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

**General Policy**

Payments for teaching and demonstrating duties are governed by the need for such teaching and the amount of finance that a school is able to allocate for this purpose.

Normally only full-time registered postgraduate students are eligible for these duties. Part-time postgraduate students are only used for teaching and demonstrating where full-time students are not available. Payments to other persons not normally eligible are subject to Faculty or Executive Board approval.

Full-time postgraduate students may undertake paid duties in the University provided supervisors are consulted about the time devoted to such duties and that they do not contravene the terms of their studentships.

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

**Payment Rates**

All postgraduate students involved in teaching and demonstrating duties must be given a copy of these notes so that they are aware of the ground rules and of the rates of payment. The rates for 2011–12 are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Hourly Rate</th>
<th>Holiday Pay per hour</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>Normal Duties</td>
<td>12.20</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>13.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duties requiring more preparation</td>
<td>22.15</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>24.82</td>
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**Procedures for Payment**

Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) requires the University to pay all full-time and part-time student demonstrators through the payroll system. All postgraduate demonstrators must therefore be issued with appointments by the Human Resources Section.

i) Form TD1/10 needs to be completed for each student and signed by the head of school or an authorized nominee. Students will need to provide the details of their bank account for payment, as well as tax and National
Insurance information and complete a P46 tax form if no P45 is available. This will enable complete records to be set up for payment without having to request further information from most students.

ii) Heads of school need to indicate the length of contract, which should be for the duration of the studentship up to a maximum of three years. The appointment must not exceed the duration of the studentship but will remove the need for annual reappointment.

iii) Human Resources will issue a confirmatory letter of appointment to the student with a copy to the head of school for local records.

iv) Payment will be triggered by monthly returns from schools to the Payroll Section of the Finance Office of the form TD4/05.

Forms TD1/10 and TD4/05 are available on the HR Intranet (search for Postgraduate Demonstrator).

Enquiries concerning this exercise may be made as follows:

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| Teaching and demonstrating rates | Richard Burrow  
  Assistant Director of HR                                      |
| Human Resources procedures and contract matters | Faculty Human Resources Officer or Richard Burrow, Assistant Director of HR |
| Financial payments, tax and national insurance | Simon Wilmot  
  Assistant Director of Finance                                    |
| Funding of teaching and demonstrating | Faculty Head of Administration or Faculty Accountant            |
PART FOUR

Academic Matters

University Guidelines and Policies for Research

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

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

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Newcastle University Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

Introduction

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

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

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

The Research Environment

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

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

6 The University defines provision of facilities to meet the appropriate standard as follows:
   - Working Space
     Doctoral students can expect working space in appropriate shared office/open-plan/hot-desk accommodation, with adequate access, heating, ventilation and security arrangements. Students should be given reasonable space for the secure and safe storage of essential books, consumables, personal belongings and research data. In addition, students undertaking laboratory/studio based research projects can expect access to bench/studio space and associated facilities (see below).
If there is disruption to students’ working space, as a consequence, for example, of maintenance or construction work, then students can expect to be advised by their School/Institute regarding the impact on their study, and can expect reasonable steps to be taken to minimise any such disruption including, if necessary, provision of alternative accommodation.

- **Access to Laboratory/Studio Space etc (where relevant)**
  Doctoral students can expect to be given bench space and facilities to conduct their approved research project, including any laboratory consumables and access to equipment and facilities agreed by the project approval panel to be necessary and within the budget for that project. Equipment approved for the research project will be provided in a timely manner and maintained in good working order throughout the project. Students will receive proper health and safety training in the use of the necessary equipment and consumables, and should receive an induction into the required conduct and working practices of the laboratory/studio.

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

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

- **ePortfolio**
  All students should have access to the ePortfolio and are expected to maintain and record formal supervisions, training and progress.

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

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

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

Pre-Entry Information

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

Entry Standards and Applications

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

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

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

Selection of Research Students

12 In order to assist the match between student, research project, supervisor(s) and institution the University requires that there should be rigorous selection policies and procedures at the faculty or, where appropriate, school or subject levels.

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

- a policy of involving at least two experienced and research-active academics in the selection process, normally one of whom will form part of the supervisory team and one will act on behalf of the Head of School to approve the offer of a place:
who have been informed about selection of research students;
- who are fully cognisant with University and statutory policies on equal opportunities;
- who are aware of the support infrastructure for students with special needs.
- a policy of interviewing shortlisted applicants for doctoral degrees, where practical;
- a policy of taking up two references and, if one or more of these is not available at the time of offer, making the latter conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory references
- clear selection procedures;
- making decisions on applications promptly and keeping applicants informed during the admissions process.

Letters of Offer

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

Induction into the University and the Faculty

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

16 The induction programme should include:

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

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

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

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

17 The University requires that the faculty annually review the induction programme.

**Induction into the Programme**

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

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

**Learning Agreements**

19 The University requires schools ensure that students have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of their research programme. The latter should be set out in a formal Learning Agreement, which should be signed by the student and by the supervisor/s on behalf of the University within one month of starting the programme.

**The Development of Relevant Knowledge and Skills**

20 The University requires that faculties should ensure that research training programmes offer students the opportunity to develop a relevant range of knowledge and skills, including skills for employment. It requires that the learning outcomes of such programmes are consistent with the JRC skills statement.

21 The University requires that, for individual research students, Schools should make appropriate arrangements:

- to identify their training needs;
- to identify gaps;
- to provide opportunities for development;
- to record the development of skills in a Research Training e-Portfolio;
- to ensure that students are introduced to relevant academic networks;
- to advise them on opportunities to attend seminars, and conferences;
- to encourage them to present papers;
- where appropriate, to encourage them to publish;
- to support career development.

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

**Research Students**

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

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

25 The University requires that students should indicate that they have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of their doctoral programme by signing a formal Learning Agreement with their supervisor/s within the first month of their programme starting.

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

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

28 It requires that research students maintain regular contact with supervisors. The normal requirement for full-time students is that they should meet with the academic supervisor monthly, and attend regular progress meetings with the supervisory team with a minimum frequency of three per year. In cases where the student is not able to meet these requirements because they are studying outside the University, e.g. in another organisation as part of a CASE studentship or undertaking fieldwork, the student is required to agree an equivalent schedule of contacts with the academic supervisor, using for example E-mail and video-conferencing. Part-time students and those students engaged in distance learning should agree the frequency of the formal interactions with their supervisor equivalent to full-time students on a pro-rata basis as part of their Learning Agreement. The University requires that research students should record and confirm the outcomes of meetings.
29 Project proposals must be approved by an Independent School Panel and Head of School, before being submitted for approval by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies. Candidates should submit project proposals within three months from registration. Where a candidate’s project proposal has already been reviewed and approved by external peer review, the University still requires the form to be submitted for approval including a project plan and supervisory team list.

30 The University requires that research students take responsibility for listening to, understanding, and accepting feedback from the supervisory team and the panel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Supervisory Arrangements**

37 The University requires that supervision should normally be undertaken by a team consisting of at least two members with the appropriate research skills and knowledge, who should be registered on an approved list of supervisors held by the faculty and therefore demonstrably research active. Where for any reason this is not practical, for example where one supervisor is based outside the university, one supervisor from the approved supervisory list is acceptable provided that they also discharge the responsibilities of the academic supervisor outlined below.
38 Staff who have not previously supervised research students are required to undertake appropriate initial training and development, while experienced supervisors are normally expected to undertake continuing professional development relevant to the supervisory role, for example participate in Faculty supervisory updating sessions.

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

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

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

40 The academic supervisor is responsible for:

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

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

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

Where supervisors share responsibilities more equally than outlined above (joint supervision) they should collectively agree the allocation of tasks while ensuring that one supervisor acts as academic supervisor. The responsibilities of different supervisors should be recorded on the project approval form and any changes communicated to the Graduate School Administrator.

43 The University requires that faculties maintain an up to date register of staff who are qualified to engage in research supervision from information provided by the Head of School.
The University requires that there are regular structured interactions made available to the student to meet with at least one member of the supervisory team at least 10 times per year, normally monthly. In addition, it requires that there should be regular structured interactions with the full supervisory team at least 3 times per year, to report, discuss, and agree academic and personal progress. In cases where the student is not able to meet these requirements for any reason, the supervisory team should agree an equivalent schedule of contacts with the student, using for example E-mail and videoconferencing. For part-time students or those studying their programme by distance learning, regular structured interactions should be agreed that are equivalent to those for full-time student on a pro-rata basis as part of the Learning Agreement. For students who are registered as ‘pending submission’, ‘extended submission’, or ‘under-examination’ should expect to supervision to be reduced to approximately half the standard provision. All these formal interactions, outline above, between student and supervisor should be recorded, preferably in the student’s Research Training ePortfolio.

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

In order to ensure that individual supervisors are not overloaded, the University requires appropriate limits on the numbers of research students who may be supervised by an individual supervisor, subject to a normal maximum of 6 full-time equivalent students. Where Heads of Schools allow supervisors to take responsibility for more than 6 full-time equivalent students, the University requires them to make arrangements to ensure that there will be adequate contact between student and supervisor and that the latter is not overburdened. The Head of School is responsible for ensuring that the overall workload of supervisory staff, including secondary supervisions, is at a level that will allow supervisors to deliver the relevant aspects of the Code of Practice for their students.

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

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

It also requires that all supervisors have access to confidential advice and support from a nominated contact, particularly where they have concerns about a student’s ability or application to the programme. It requires that Schools should designate such a contact, who would normally be the Director of Postgraduate studies, or equivalent, and make this information available to supervisors.
50. Declaration of personal interest: all members of staff are required to declare any personal relationships with any student they are asked to supervise, or are already supervising. A supervisor who declares such a personal relationship prior to appointment as supervisor for the student in question shall not be permitted to undertake supervision of that student.

A supervisor who declares such a relationship after having been appointed as a member of the supervisory team for the student in question, subject to the permission of the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, may continue, but shall not be responsible for, or be involved in, any reports affecting the student's progress and/or assessment.

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

The Development and Approval of Research Project Proposals

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

53 Project proposals must be approved by an Independent School Panel and Head of School, before being submitted for approval by the relevant Dean of Postgraduate Studies. Candidates should submit project proposals within three months from registration. Where a candidate’s project proposal has already been reviewed and approved by external peer review, the University still requires the form to be submitted for approval including a project plan and supervisory team list.

54 Where the research proposal is developed following registration, the University requires that the supervisory team supports the student in the development of the research project proposal. In particular, the team needs to ensure that the project is achievable within the time-scale of the programme, and to confirm that sufficient resources will be available to support it. The University requires that faculties should determine appropriate time-scales within which students are required to submit research project proposals, not exceeding 9 months from registration.

55 The University requires that all research project proposals not previously approved are approved by an independent school panel. It requires that the panel should consist of at least 2 independent members 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.

56 The University requires the panel to evaluate research proposals against the criteria;

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

In order to evaluate these matters, the panel will need evidence in the forms of:

- a research proposal;
- a research plan;
- a supporting statement by the supervisory team.

57 The panel should consider the evidence and make a written report on the proposals, which should be made available to the student and to the supervisory team. In the event of concerns, the report should indicate the steps necessary to address them. The University requires that faculties should establish maximum times for the re-submission of proposals, not exceeding 3 months.

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

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

**Progression and Monitoring**

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

61 But if, at any point during the course of the programme, the supervisory team have concerns about progress, they should inform the student in writing prior to a meeting. At the meeting, the written comments of the team, including any additional work that the supervisors feel are required, should be discussed with the student, and be agreed along with a review date. If progress continues to be unsatisfactory, the student should be informed in writing that this will be referred to the progress panel for consideration. The letter should be copied to the Graduate School Administrator.
62 The University requires that the progress of the student should be formally reviewed annually by the same (or equivalent) panel that approved the research project and the supervisory arrangements.

Such reviews should involve a written progress by both the student and supervisory team and possibly include one or more of the following, as specified by their School:
- submission of a piece of work;
- a presentation on their research
- undergo a viva or interview
- evidence of research training

63 Panels should consider the evidence, including annual reports by supervisory teams, and determine whether progress indicates that the research project will meet the standards for the award.

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

65 If this criterion is not met, the panel should indicate what the student and, where appropriate, the supervisory team must do to put the research project back on track. It should set a date for further review within a period prescribed by the faculty, and not exceeding two months.

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

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

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

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

70 Where it is satisfied that supervisory arrangements are adequate and appropriate but that the student is unlikely to be able to achieve the standards for the award, it may recommend that the student be registered for a lower degree where he or she is likely to be able to achieve the standards or, if students cannot meet the standards for those awards, that their registration be terminated.
Although the final decision with respect to any recommendation made by the school is taken by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, a school may give provisional feedback to the students after the annual progress panel.

**Examination**

The regulations of the University require that all research degrees are examined by two examiners, at least one of whom must be external (except in the case of staff candidates where both examiners are external).

The University requires that examiners should be demonstrably research-active in relevant fields. Examiners should be independent of the project and otherwise meet the criteria set out in the University’s Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees. Members of the supervisory team are explicitly excluded from acting as examiners.

The University requires that Heads of Schools should be responsible for the nomination of examiners for research degrees. Heads of Schools should consult the supervisory team about possible nominees, and the supervisory team should offer the student the chance to comment.

Nominations should be made to the Postgraduate Dean of the Faculty. He or she should check that the examiners meet the requirements set out above and, if so, approve them on behalf of Senate.

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

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

The University requires the supervisory team to advise the student on preparation for the viva and where practical to offer a practice session.

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

The University requires that vivas should be chaired by the external examiner and conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees. When there are two external examiners appointed there should be an Independent Chair of the examination meeting.

Following the viva, the University requires that examiners write a joint report (except in cases where they disagree when they should write separate reports) and make an appropriate recommendation for the award. Where the recommendation is re-submission, the report should include a statement of the work to be done to achieve the award within the period allowed under the University’s regulations.
As well as reporting on the thesis and the candidate, examiners should be requested to provide comments on the broader issues of the research training skills and the research environment.

The examiners’ report should be sent to the Graduate School Administrator for approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The Graduate School Administrator will send copies of the final report to the student and the supervisory team.

Feedback Mechanisms

The University requires that confidential mechanisms are established for research students to feed back on the quality of their learning experiences. Such mechanisms should include; a questionnaire administered within 3 months of enrolment and asking about recruitment, admission and induction procedures; questionnaire evaluations of the research skills training programme; an annual survey (questionnaires and/or focus groups); exit questionnaires and/or interviews about the totality of the learning experience.

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

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

Complaints

The University has established procedures for complaints about a service, member of staff, or another student. A complaint may be made by any student, including a research student. Details of the complaints procedure are set out in the Handbook for Research Supervisors and Students given to all research students and on the University’s Web site (see www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/).

The University requires that, before having recourse to the complaints procedure, a student should attempt to resolve a problem with the individual(s) concerned or consult the personal tutor, research supervisor or advisor, Head of School, Graduate School Administrator, or Dean of Postgraduate Studies for help and advice. Only when these steps have failed or when the student has good cause for not pursuing them should the complaints procedure be invoked.

Appeals

The University has established procedures for appeal against a recommendation by examiners of research degrees. Details of the appeals procedure are set out in the Handbook for Research Supervisors and Students and on the University Web site (see www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/).
Addendum to the Code of Practice for Research Masters’ Degree Programmes

Introduction
i. The purpose of this Addendum to the Code of Practice is to set out the University’s standards for its research masters’ programmes. This refers in particular to MLitt, MRes, as well as some MMus and LLM programmes.

ii. This addendum to the Code of Practice is supplementary to aid staff in interpretation for the University’s research masters’ programmes and should be read in conjunction with the full Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

Selection of Research Students
iii. The University requires that there should be rigorous selection policies and procedures at Postgraduate Admissions or, where appropriate, School or subject levels.

iv. The University requires that selection procedures should be rigorous and involve the following;

- involve at least the Degree Programme Director or PGR Director in the selection process, who will act on behalf of the Head of School/Institute to approve the offer of a place.
- interviewing applicants, where it is deemed appropriate and possible.
- taking up two references and, if one or more of these is not available at the time of offer, making the latter conditional upon the receipt of satisfactory references.

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

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

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

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

The Development and Approval of Research Project Proposals

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

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

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

Progression and Monitoring

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

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

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

Examination

xiv. The regulations of the University require that all research degree projects/dissertations are examined by two examiners, one internal and one external (except in the case of staff candidates where both examiners are external).

xv. The University requires that examiners should be demonstrably research-active in relevant fields. Examiners should be independent of the project and otherwise meet the criteria set out in the University’s Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees. Supervisors are explicitly excluded from acting as examiners for the research project/dissertation.
xvi. The University requires that the Head of School or Degree Programme Director should be responsible for the nomination of examiners for the research project/dissertation.

xvii. Nominations of examiners should be made to the Postgraduate Dean of the Faculty. He or she should check that the examiners meet the requirements set out above and, if so, approve them on behalf of Senate.

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

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

xx. If the examiners determine that a viva is required, this should be chaired by an external examiner and conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees. When there are two external examiners appointed there should be an Independent Chair of the examination meeting.

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**Research Training Portfolio (RTP) ePortfolio**

[https://pf-postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/](https://pf-postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/)

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

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

Your portfolio will include relevant information on the following;
- Research Programme
- Personal Development Plan (PDP)

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

1. **Why keep a portfolio?**

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

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

2. **Research Degree Programme**

This aspect of your portfolio will include a research proposal and plan (including a supporting statement from your supervisory team, where necessary). It is also important that you are aware of regulations and formalities regarding your research degree programme. An induction checklist has been included for your guidance (APPENDIX A), please ensure that you discuss these regulations/ formalities with your supervisor during your first formal meeting and keep a copy of this record within your portfolio.

2.1 **Research Proposal**

If your research proposal has already been developed prior to your recruitment and has been agreed and funded by a research sponsor/ funding body, then it does not require further development or approval. However, if the proposal is developed by you the researcher (e.g. self-funding individuals, overseas government funding etc) it will need to be approved by a panel
appointed by the School to ensure that the project is achievable within the
time-scales and to confirm that sufficient resources are available. If there are
any modifications to your proposal, please keep a record of these changes. It
is your responsibility to ensure that you have a research proposal agreed
either previously by a sponsor/ funding body or by the faculty.

*Keep a copy of your research proposal in your portfolio, with a record of any
approved changes.*

### 2.2 Research Plan

A research plan (APPENDIX B) must be completed for your studies and
updated on a regular basis as discussed and agreed with your supervisory
team. It is your responsibility to ensure that your research project is completed
on time. Regular structured contact with your main supervisor (12 or 6 times
per year minimum for full-time or part-time individuals, respectively) or
supervisory team (3 or 2 times per year minimum for full-time or part-time
individuals, respectively) to discuss academic and personal progress will help
you to meet your targets. If your research proposal is to be agreed by a panel
an in depth plan will be required that meets the ‘Code of Practice’ for ‘The
Development and Approval of Research Project Proposals’ and will need to
include a supporting statement from your supervisory team. Throughout your
studies, you will be monitored by your supervisory team, keep a record of
formal supervisory meetings by completing the appropriate form (APPENDIX
C).

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

### 2.3. Annual Assessments/Reviews

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

*Keep a record of your research programme assessment presentations, formal
meetings and feedback in your Portfolio.*

Keeping records about your research programme will help you to continually
assess, plan and meet the needs of your research project and research
degree requirements. It may also be useful to complete a project specific skill
form (APPENDIX D), to help you focus on research project issues, which will
assist with project planning and supervisory meetings.

### 3. Personal Development Plan (PDP)

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


The PDP will help to highlight areas of strengths and areas for improvement by mapping your current skills against the ‘skills training requirements for research students’ a joint statement by the Research Councils (RCs)/ Arts Higher Research Board (AHRB). This will be achieved by completing the self assessment audit and PDP in APPENDIX E and should be updated at appropriate times during your research. The PDP should be agreed in conjunction with your supervisory team and signed accordingly.

The purpose of the portfolio is to record your skills progress, based upon your PDP, and assessors will want to see evidence of this. Each individual is responsible for their own Research Training Portfolio and should ensure it is up-to-date. The portfolio should include a description of the skills developed and the corresponding skill/ technique within the joint statement of the RCs/ AHRB training requirements. Records can be kept in the form of a diary, learning log, journal or whichever means is most convenient. The professional standard for recording your skills development are set out in APPENDICES F-I and can be used as a guideline if you want to keep a more personalised/ detailed record. The following is a list of ‘essentials’ that must be recorded in the RTP:

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

### 3.1 What Skills?

The following is a summary of the skills defined by the RCs/ AHRB joint statement that you are expected to develop over your research degree. Some of the skills areas will overlap:

- **A 1-6.** Research Skills and Techniques (carrying out research effectively)
- **B 1-7.** Research Environment (awareness of issues regarding research practice)
- **C 1-4.** Research Management (using information, producing and interpreting data)
- **D 1-7.** Personal Effectiveness (developing and identifying personal and
skills opportunities)

- **E 1-5.** Communication Skills (communicating effectively in oral and written formats)
- **F 1-3.** Networking and Team working (working as part of a team and networking with others)
- **G 1-4.** Career management (continual professional and career development)

In conjunction with the skills above, the University encourages you to: develop relevant academic networks, attend seminars and conferences, present papers, publish papers, support your own career development, and contribute to your research environment by attending appropriate internal and external events.

### 3.2 Creating a PDP

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

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

### 3.3 Timescales: When to use your RTP

Your role is to reflect on and evaluate your progress, therefore it will be important that you maintain and keep appropriate records. The PDP should be started at the beginning of your research, building on the information, experience and results you gain within each stage. Each researcher will have their RTP assessed annually by a panel during their research studies, which will normally coincide with your research programme assessments. All individuals will be advised to complete a plan at induction, which you will be able to reflect upon during your first assessment. At assessment you will be required to bring along your research training portfolio, which will be rated on a satisfactory/ unsatisfactory basis.
Please remember the generic/ transferable skills aspect of your portfolio is not a test – it is your assessment of your development. It will be assessed but only on a satisfactory/ unsatisfactory basis.

4. Feedback
To assist and improve the provision and quality of your training it is important to provide feedback on your experiences. A feedback form can be found on the internet/ Blackboard for your completion. At each formal assessment the panel will also discuss barriers/ recommendations for self-development and training.

A paper version of the Research Training Portfolio and associated forms can be found at the following web page: www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/index.htm

However, you are recommended and encouraged to use the on-line version called the ePortfolio which provides an easy format for storage and access via the following link; https://pf-postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/

Guidelines for Research Students

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

2. At the commencement of your proposed programme of work you must have a detailed discussion with your supervisor. You need to have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of your research programme. Following this discussion a formal Learning Agreement should be signed by the student and by the academic supervisor or supervisors. The Learning Agreement can be found at the following web site; www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/. This Learning Agreement will be copied, one copy of which should be retained in your Research Training Portfolio (RTP) and one copy sent to your Graduate School Administrator to be placed in your student file. You should ensure that the meeting takes place and that following points are covered in the discussion:

(a) the scope of your proposed programme of work and an initial definition of the subject of study with particular emphasis on:

(i) the importance of completing the programme in the time available;

(ii) the standard of work that will be expected from you (you would be well advised to read successful theses available in the Library as a guide to what is expected);

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

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

(c) any programme of training and guidance in research methods, again listed in the RTP;

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. You will be expected to maintain regular contact with your supervisor, to seek his/her advice on the planning of your work and other matters including the use of suitable techniques. You will also be required to present written work as appropriate. It will also be your responsibility to raise any problems and difficulties you think should be drawn to the attention of your supervisor. This includes any factors – domestic, social, financial or health factors – which you believe may have an effect upon your progress.

4. If you are following a research programme which will take more than one year to complete (e.g. full-time PhD, Integrated PhD, Professional Doctorate or any part-time research degree), your progress will be formally monitored through annual reports. Supervisory teams will monitor progress and report to an independent school panel which will use evidence from a variety of sources to determine whether each individual student’s progress is satisfactory for the award in the time available. Therefore, you will be required by your supervisor to produce at least one substantial piece of work (e.g. literature review, experimental write-up), in order to help assess your ability to proceed successfully through the subsequent years of your programme. You may be required to make a presentation of this work to other staff and/or students.

5. Approximately once a month you will have a formal meeting with your supervisor/s to review progress at which the details of your discussions need recording in the RTP.

6. Students should, within the guidelines identified by the School/Institute, submit a project proposal for approval. Progression on the programme will be dependent upon acceptance of the project proposal by an independent school panel.
7. Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will normally be approved conditionally. Conditional approval shall be subject to you being admitted initially as a candidate-elect. Doctoral candidature status will be confirmed provided satisfactory progress is made (usually within 12 months, see University Regulations) and the relevant school progress panel so recommend.

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

9. Each year you will also be required to submit an annual report on your progress and evidence of achievement as specified by your school. It is probable that you will be asked to complete your progress form via the ePortfolio. [https://pf-postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/](https://pf-postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/)
Alternatively forms can be found at the following website; www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/progression.htm

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. If at any stage throughout the period of study you feel that the standard of supervision that you are receiving is inadequate or that you are unable to establish an effective working relationship with your supervisor, and it has not proved possible to resolve these difficulties in discussion with your supervisor,
school director of postgraduate studies/ tutor or head of school, you should inform the relevant Graduate School Administrator or the Head of the Student Progress Service, without delay. The annual report form will also offer an opportunity for you to raise such issues.

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

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

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

(c) You may be unclear as to what use may be made of the work of others in the field without raising concerns about plagiarism. If you are in doubt on this matter, you should consult your supervisor. In most cases, the adoption of appropriate standards of scholarship will avoid such concerns. The following general guidelines may assist you:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The following guidelines will assist you in this regard:

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

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

(c) Pages should never be removed from notebooks containing records of research data. If any alterations are made to records at a later date they should be noted clearly as such and the date of the alteration should be indicated.

(d) Machine printouts, photographs, tapes and other such records should always be labelled with the date and with an identifying reference number. This reference number should be clearly recorded in the notebook referred to above, along with other relevant details, on the day the record is obtained. If possible, printouts, photographs, tapes and other such record should be affixed to the notebook. When this is not possible (e.g. for reasons of size or bulk), such records should be maintained in a secure location in the University for future reference. When a ‘hard copy’ of computer-generated primary data is not practicable, the data should be maintained in two separate locations within the University, on disk, tape or other format.

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

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

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

Guidelines for Supervisors of Research Students

1. These Guidelines provide the broad framework of acceptable practice within which there are bound to be variations and diversity appropriate to different disciplines. Individual faculty documents may contain more detailed guidance but must be consistent with these Guidelines approved by Senate.

2. It is the responsibility of each head of school or nominee (usually the school director of postgraduate studies/ tutor) in consultation with the proposed supervisor to decide whether to recommend the admission of an applicant to undertake postgraduate research in his or her school. In reaching this decision the head of school or nominee should consider:
   
   (a) whether the candidate is appropriately qualified for the proposed subject of study and whether adequate academic references have been received;
   
   (b) whether the appropriate resources (e.g. library, computing, laboratory facilities, technical assistance) will be available;
   
   (c) whether, on the information available, the subject of study is suitable for the degree for which the candidate is to be registered;
   
   (d) whether it can reasonably be expected that the subject of study will be completed within the timescale prescribed;
   
   (e) whether proper supervision can be provided and maintained throughout the research period;
   
   (f) whether an appropriate programme of training and guidance in research methods can be offered to the candidate.

3. At the commencement of the proposed research programme the supervisor must have a detailed discussion with the student. The student needs to have received, understood, and accepted the expectations of the research programme. Following this discussion a formal Learning Agreement should be signed by the student and by the supervisors. The Learning Agreement can be found at the following web site www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/index.htm

This Learning Agreement will be copied, one copy of which should be retained in the student’s Research Training Portfolio (RTP) and one copy should be
sent to the Graduate School Administrator. The details of this discussion should be recorded by the supervisor and a copy given to the student. It should normally cover:

(a) the scope of the proposed programme of work and an initial definition of the subject of study with particular emphasis on:

(i) the importance of completing the programme in the time available;
(ii) the standard of work expected (students should be referred to successful theses in the Library as a guide as to what is expected of them);

this should form the basis of the project proposal which will need to be approved before the student’s Candidature is confirmed

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. The supervisor should maintain regular contact with the student and should give advice on the planning of work and on other matters, including the use of suitable techniques. He/she should request written work as appropriate and make constructive comments on it. If the student is following a research programme which will take more than one year to complete (e.g. full-time PhD, any part-time research degree), the supervisor shall during the first year of study require the student to produce at least one substantial piece of work (e.g. literature review, experimental write-up), in order to help assess his/her ability to proceed successfully through the subsequent years of his/her research programme. The student may be required to make a presentation of this work to other staff and/or students.

5. A record of the student’s progress should be kept in the Research Training Portfolio (ePortfolio) and approximately once a month formal meetings with the student should be held to review progress. In addition there
should normally be three meetings during the year with the full supervisory team. The details of the meeting must be recorded in the RTP.

6. Students who are pursuing a course of study without a previously approved and/or peer reviewed project are required to submit a project proposal for approval by a school panel. Progression on the programme will be dependent upon acceptance of the project proposal by the dean of postgraduate studies.

7. Students registered for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy will normally be admitted conditionally. Conditional approval will be subject to the candidate being admitted initially as a candidate-elect. Doctoral candidature status will be confirmed provided satisfactory progress is made (see University Regulations) and the relevant progress panel so recommend, and that decision is confirmed by the dean of postgraduate studies.

8. Each year the supervisor must submit an annual report on the progress of the student’s programme of work to the school progress panel. This report should take into account the review procedures detailed in paragraphs 4 to 5 above. This can now be done via the ePortfolio system www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/portfolio.htm

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. If at any stage throughout the period of study the supervisor feels that the
progress of the 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 of this opinion and the student shall be given the opportunity of an interview with the supervisory team. Following this notice and any interview, the supervisory team may decide to monitor progress and/or attendance; additionally or alternatively, the supervisory team may require the submission of written work in addition to that already prescribed by their project proposal and plan. If the student's progress has not improved within such a period as shall be specified in the written notice, the supervisory team shall notify the dean and submit a report concerning the candidate’s progress for review by the appointed Progress Panel. The Progress Panel will make a report to the dean of postgraduate studies via the ePortfolio system.

12. Where it becomes impossible for a school to continue to provide direct supervision – for example because of the departure of the only member of staff able to supervise a particular topic – the head of school or director of postgraduate studies/tutor should consider alternative arrangements in good time and inform the relevant Graduate School Administrator so that formal approval may be sought from the appropriate Postgraduate Sub-Dean and/or faculty committee.

13. The supervisor should advise on the manuscript of the thesis in general and on content, presentation and organization. He/she should not act as a proof reader and should make this clear to the student. He/she should read all of the first draft and thereafter continue to offer advice. It must be made clear to the student that it is his/her responsibility to revise the thesis manuscript and to decide when it is ready for submission.

NOTE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that students under their supervision follow the agreed University and, where appropriate, School, safety policy and procedures. Full details of the University’s safety policy are contained in a booklet on Health and Safety available in all schools.

Guidelines on Good Practice for Research Students

Introduction

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

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

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

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

The Guidelines attempt to set out good practice in:

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

1. Establishing and Maintaining a Good Relationship with Your Supervisor(s)

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

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

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

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

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

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

So what your supervisor(s) might do is to say that he or she or they will:

♦ where appropriate, help with the choice of a topic
♦ advise on sources for the literature search
♦ advise on methodology and/or methods
♦ facilitate data collection in terms of access or equipment
♦ discuss results
♦ read drafts on grounds of substance
♦ advise on progression and submission
♦ assist you to develop your career

But they will expect you to:

♦ undertake the actual research
♦ write or re-draft chapters
♦ proofread the thesis

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

Particularly where research projects are multi-disciplinary and/or involve extended study outside the University, e.g. in industry, there may be two supervisors, one who is a member of the academic staff of the University, the other from the 'outside' institution in which the student will be studying. In such cases, the University requires that one supervisor should be the 'primary' supervisor, with overall responsibility for supervision, while the other is the 'secondary' supervisor. Normally in such cases there is a division of labour between the two supervisors, and it is important for the student to be aware of who will 'lead' on which aspects of the research project.

As well as having clear expectations about your respective roles, it is also important that you and your supervisor(s) discuss ground rules for working together. These might be as below:
You agree to:
♦ turn up on time for supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations
♦ be properly prepared for your supervisions
♦ write regularly and share the draft materials
♦ maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, as set out in paragraph 10 of the University's Guidelines for Research Students
♦ maintain contact with your supervisor(s), particularly when studying outside the University
♦ undertake the tasks agreed to the best of your ability within the allotted time

Your research supervisor(s) agree to:
♦ hold regular supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations
♦ read work submitted promptly
♦ give written feedback.

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

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

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

Very rarely, research students find that they are unable to work effectively with their supervisors, and the relationship is in danger of breaking down. Procedures for dealing with this eventuality are set out in Paragraph 9 of the University's Guidelines for Research Students.
Reviewing Practice

Are you clear about what you can expect of your supervisor(s) and what he or she or they can expect from you? Have you established ground rules for your future professional relationship? Do you have arrangements for regularly reviewing your relationship with your supervisor?

2. Approaching a Research Degree

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

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

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

It is therefore worth spending some time looking at what will be the end product of your studies. Your starting point should be to unpack the University's and, where appropriate, the faculty's formal requirements for whatever research degree you are registered, and which are to be found in the Faculty Section of this Handbook. You should read these carefully and, preferably, discuss them with your supervisor so that you have a clear idea of what they mean.

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

3. Preparing for Research

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

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

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

You also need to be familiar with what is involved in the research process and with good practice in doing research in your field. In the faculty, this is laid on for you through a programme of research training. In some cases, for example ESRC awards, the successful completion of such a training is a condition of support, whereas in others it may be a faculty requirement. You must find out about the research training programme and attend; this is your opportunity to be informed about what is involved in research in your discipline by academic staff who are not only knowledgeable about the processes of research but also about the practice. As well as attending faculty events and, where appropriate, school training programmes, you will also find it helpful to read through one or more of the general texts about research (see for example Cryer 2000; Leonard 2001; Phillips and Pugh 2000; Wisker 2001) or ones relating to specific disciplines where your supervisor may be able to help with references.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

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

### 4. Choosing a Topic

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

This can be a very difficult time for research students; as one of the research students interviewed by Delamont *et al.* (1997 p 27) said about their search for a topic:
‘...the whole thing seemed very daunting, you don’t know where your niche is, or even if there is one for you.’

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

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

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

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

5. **Producing an Initial Research Proposal and Plan**

It is a requirement of the University (Guidelines for Research Students, Section 2) that research students should, in conjunction with their supervisors, produce and agree an initial research proposal and plan. In science and engineering subjects, this has usually been done previously as part of the bid for research funding, but this may not be the case in others. At their simplest, research proposals and plans set out what research students are proposing to do in their research projects, and when they are proposing to do it by.

With regard to an initial research proposal, a simple guide to drafting one might be to try and address the eight key questions of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the topic of my research?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What have others written on this topic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where appropriate, what conceptual/theoretical frameworks might be useful in approaching my research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What method or methods might be useful in undertaking that research?

How could I go about designing the research?

How could I collect my data?

How could I analyse my data?

How might my findings contribute to knowledge in this field?

In addition, there may be specific guidelines from your school and/or your supervisor(s) which should be followed in writing a research proposal. The draft proposal should then be shown to, and discussed with, your supervisor and amended in accordance with his or her comments.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Research tasks</th>
<th>Writing tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reading around for suitable topics</td>
<td>Mini-reports on identified topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Narrowing down topics</td>
<td>Short-list of topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Selecting a starting topic</td>
<td>Justification of topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reviewing literature</td>
<td>Outline research proposal and plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reviewing literature</td>
<td>Literature evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reading on concepts and methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Deciding concepts and methods to be applied</td>
<td>Outline research design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Preparation of pilot study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Administration of pilot</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Preparation of main study</td>
<td>Evaluation of pilot study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Progress reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Data coding</td>
<td>Progress reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Progress reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Data interpretation</td>
<td>Preliminary results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Reformulate knowledge</td>
<td>Preliminary conclusions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td>First draft of thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td>Revised draft of thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Submit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you have an initial research plan, then it is important to discuss it with your supervisor, check that it is realistic in terms of the allocation of time to
task, and if necessary, amend it.

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

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

6. **Writing Regularly**

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

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

One way of ensuring that you write regularly is, as Blaxter *et al.* (1996* pp 5-59) have suggested, to keep a research diary on a daily basis recording what you have done, time spent on it, analysis, and speculation. This gets you into the habit of writing regularly, recording, and reflecting, and can provide a useful basis upon which to construct longer pieces of work.
In constructing longer pieces, you can make what may seem a Herculean task more manageable by breaking it up into smaller ones. So, initially, you might write a one-page abstract of the chapter setting out its aim (purpose), content (what it would cover), and possible conclusions (what it would add). With that thought through and discussed, the next stage would be to write a synopsis fleshing out the abstract and setting out headings and sub-headings to be used. Then, with a framework established, you can to fill it in piece by piece until you have a draft chapter.

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

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

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

It may be noted that, while writing is a necessary task for all research students, it is inherently a more difficult one for students whose first language is not English and who have perhaps been educated within different styles of academic discourse. Your supervisor may be able to assist by discussing example of writing with you, your faculty may offer a programme and, of course the University Language Centre runs regular courses on academic writing in English and offers a range of other forms of support.

**Reviewing Practice**

Have you started writing as early as possible in the research project? Are you writing regularly? Are you showing your written work to your supervisor? Would you find it useful to have some assistance with academic writing in English?

### 7. Dealing with Academic Problems

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

♦ **Drifting from the topic**

As the research progresses, highways and byways of new exploration open up which just have to be investigated because they could be vital. So you become lost in the maze of possibilities and unable to establish where you should be at that stage of the project.
Difficulties with the methodology/methods

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

Problems with the substantive research

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

Drowning in data

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

Unexpected results

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

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

‘...students are seen...as the best and the brightest. Significant academic achievement has led them to their current place. They are thus unable to admit faults or shortcomings for fear of ‘showing themselves up’ in the...academic community. It becomes better to struggle on with barely a clue about what is going on than to admit...that one does not know what is happening.’

If you have problems, you should acknowledge them secure in the recognition that this happens at one time or another to all researchers as well, i.e. it is all part and parcel of doing research.

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

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

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

Reflecting on Practice
What academic problems might you expect to meet in the course of your
research project?
How would you go about resolving them?
What sources of support are available to help you resolve academic
difficulties?

8. Dealing with Non-Academic Problems

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

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

‘...you are suspended between a student who just absorbs things and an
academic who produces [them], and that [leads to] all kinds of paranoias
or neuroses.’

Self-doubt often takes the form of anxiety about whether you will be able to
successfully make the transition from being primarily an absorber of to
contributor to knowledge, and it can be associated with a reluctance to write or
at least to submit written work to your supervisor(s) in case it is 'not good
enough'.

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is no simple neat solution to this problem – if you want to complete you have to continue the research – but it can be beneficial to either do something else (write or re-write an earlier chapter) or even take a short break and then come back to it with a fresher mind. But, if you contemplate a break, do ask your supervisor and agree with him or her to stick to a defined time – there are many ex-research students who took a breather from their studies and then procrastinated about returning until it was far too late.

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

9. Reviewing the Progress of the Research

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

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

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

One way of doing this is to use the pro-forma such as Appendix C in the Research Training Portfolio, which will provide a record of the supervision.

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

Do you have a strategy for personally reviewing the progress of your research project at regular intervals? Do you approach supervisions to review your progress in a business-like way? What review procedures are there in your school and/or faculty?

**10. Framing Your Thesis**

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

'The thesis is the culmination of [the] research student’s entire research programme, and it is on the thesis that he or she will be examined and judged.'
This, of course, raises the question of ‘what is a thesis?’ While there is no objective definition of a thesis and there are variations between what is expected in different disciplines, one common factor is, as Barnes cited Blaxter et al. (1996* p 27) has put it, that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

With, hopefully, a stripped-down and clear route, you can then begin to fill in each stage of the journey in terms of key topics which you have to address, which you use to flesh out your map. You can then apply the same tests as above - are they vital, important, or neither - and go through a similar iterative process. Then, within the topics, this can be repeated with sub-topics until, eventually, you have a complete map of the thesis.

Such an approach has a number of advantages. Firstly, it gives you an overall framework for your thesis; secondly, it divides the writing into manageable tasks; thirdly, and vitally, it can be discussed with your supervisor(s) before writing up; fourthly it highlights the key things you need to bring out in terms of discoveries (originality), added knowledge and understanding (the differences between the start and end point), and future research in the area (where we
go from here); and finally may translate into the structure for a thesis. So, for example, in the case of many PhDs, the translation is:

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

11. Writing Your Thesis

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

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

‘The crucially important audience for theses are external examiners. Think of them as individuals who are exceptionally busy and grossly underpaid and who therefore have to read theses quickly. They will expect them to be well-structured and to be argued coherently to make the case for certain solutions to specific research problems. Irrelevancies will irritate, as will having to tease out meaning that research students should have extracted themselves. Think of them also as individuals who are very able and experienced in the general area, which means that the background material should be as concise as is consistent with showing that it is known.

‘However, no external examiner can be an expert in your work. By the time you finalise your thesis, you and you alone are the world’s expert. So the aspects that make your work significant and original and worthy of a PhD…need to be argued coherently; each step needs to be spelled out, the outcomes must be stated unambiguously, and all their implications identified and discussed in depth.’

So, for your examiners, the thesis needs to be (i) well-structured (ii) argued coherently (iii) relevant (iv) concise in the literature review (v) expansive and detailed on areas in which the thesis makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge. Clearly (i) to (iv) above apply to all research degrees, while (v) applies particularly to the PhD/MD.

(i) and (iii) above clearly have a bearing on what you write; (ii) has a bearing on what you include when you write, and (iv) and (v) have a bearing on the
portion of the thesis taken up by each heading. So, for example for PhD/MD, you should certainly not aim for half of your thesis to be taken up by the literature review, a further quarter by the methodology, and only a quarter for the original scholarship.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of thesis</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research findings</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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

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

You should:

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

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

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

Assuming that you do decide to submit, before actually doing so you should check the University's regulations about submission. Usually, you are required to give notice of submission, and you may have to conform to a range of stylistic regulations, e.g. concerning page margins and layout, as well as provide an abstract, a contents page, and meet any other requirements, including a count of the number of words. Only when you are satisfied on this score can you print off copies to be bound and submitted to your examiners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewing Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you clear about the audience for which you are writing? Have you decided upon an appropriate balance between the lengths of the various parts of the thesis? Have you reviewed your thesis using the Handbook for Examiners? Has your supervisor seen the draft? Have you taken their comments on board? Have you asked their advice about submission? Have you checked the University's regulations about giving notice of submission? Have you checked the University's requirements in terms of the submission of theses?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 12. Preparing for Examination

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Following Cryer (2000 p 197), you should:

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

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

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

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

But, in the vast majority of cases, you should only need to do one thing after the viva — celebrate.

13. Publishing, Networking, and Developing Your Career

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

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

Last, but by no means least, you should, from the beginning of your research studentship, be conscious of the need to develop skills and plan for your future career. Your primary objective as a research student is, of course, to gain a research degree, and this will be valuable in seeking employment. But, in today's labour market, you also need to have the key – transferable – skills which are demanded by employers.

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

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

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

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

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

**Reviewing Practice**

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

**Conclusions**

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

**References**

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


Guidelines on Good Practice in Research Supervision

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

1. Establishing and Maintaining a Professional Relationship with the Research Student

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

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

One way to do this is to establish, implicitly or explicitly, an agreement between the supervisor and the student setting out expectations of each other, as in the example below.
The **research student** agrees to:

- turn up on time for supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations
- be properly prepared
- write regularly and share the draft materials
- maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, as set out in paragraph 10 of the University's *Guidelines for Research Students*
- maintain contact
- undertake the tasks agreed to the best of their ability within the allotted time

The **research supervisor** agrees to:

- hold regular supervisions and give as much notice as possible of cancellations
- read work submitted promptly
- give written feedback.

**Both** agree to:

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

Supervisors may wish to go further than this and indicate more precisely what they can or cannot do to assist the student. So, the supervisor may say that he or she **will**:

- help with the choice of a topic
- advise on sources for the literature search
- advise on methodology
- facilitate data collection in terms of access or equipment
- discuss results
- read drafts on grounds of substance
- advise on submission

But he or she **will not**:

- undertake the actual research
- write or re-draft chapters
- ‘proof’ the thesis

At this stage also, you may wish to make it clear in what circumstances you would or would not expect credit to be given in any publications arising from the research.

While this process of establishing a professional relationship is important for all students, it may be particularly helpful to international students, who may have culturally defined notions of what they can expect from their supervisor. As Ryan (2000, p: 69) has put it:

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

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

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

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

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

### 2. Inducting Students into Research

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

Firstly, students are often still not fully aware of what they are letting themselves in for, i.e. a research degree. Again, the point is well made by one of the PhD students interviewed by Delamont et al. (1997, p 16):
‘A lot of mistakes I’ve made are the result of not asking questions and people not putting me right. They presume I must know…I didn’t know the PhD was meant to be an argument…[that] it’s meant to say something. I thought it was one of those old-fashioned monographs, a collection of information. When I was an undergraduate I used to think a PhD was one of those articles you read in the journals, a 10,000 word article, I used to think they were PhDs.’

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

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

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

Thirdly, students may not be aware or fully aware of what is entailed in maintaining the highest standards of academic conduct in undertaking their research, in particular with regard to the fabrication of results or plagiarism. A few minutes spent discussing Section 10 of the University's Guidelines for Research Students with the student can be helpful, and it is recommended that this be done in the comparable Guidelines for Supervisors (3(c)).

Fourthly, the Guidelines for Supervisors (3(d)) also recommend that supervisors spend some time at the start of the project discussing the storage and retention of research data with their students. Failure to store and retain data can, at worst, mean that experiments etc have to be replicated, at best that progress is halted until missing data is eventually found. In this context, it can also be useful to encourage students right from the start to take full references for everything that they read in such a form that they can later be easily transferred to the text or the bibliography of their thesis. Again, this can save many hours hunting for page numbers etc. at the writing-up stage.

Fifthly, the University (Guidelines for Supervisors, p 3) makes supervisors responsible for ensuring that research students follow agreed University and, where appropriate, school health and safety policies and procedures, and these should also form part of the student's induction into research.
Again, on international students, it is worth quoting Ryan, (2000, p 73):

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

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

Reflecting on Practice

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

3. Assisting with the Choice of a Topic

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

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

4. **Producing an Initial Research Proposal and Plan**

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

With regard to the research proposal, faculties may have guidelines for writing a research proposal, or supervisors may be left to come up with their own. The latter can consist of a fairly simple series of questions to be answered by the student. For example: What is the topic?; Why is it important?; What have others written on it?; What would the research seek to add?; What method or methods would be useful in undertaking the research?; How could the research be designed?; How will data be collected?; How will it be analysed?; How, in principle, might results add to knowledge and understanding in this field? It may be noted that, whether the guidelines are institutional or supplied by the supervisor, it is still useful to show students a good research proposal and take them through it step by step so that they have a clear exemplar to follow.

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

Here, the supervisor can help students to appreciate the pitfalls of planning a research project. One method for doing this has been developed by Delamont *et al.* (1997). Students are given Gantt charts for research projects in their subject which deliberately over-represent the time to be allotted for some aspects of the research process and under-represent the time needed for others. They are then asked to consider the realism or otherwise of these projections, to discuss them, and to re-plan the research. This technique can be extremely effective in stimulating students to think about the relationship between time and task and in enabling them to plan their own research.
If, by these means, students can be assisted by supervisors to produce research proposals and research plans, the supervisor has at least one other key responsibility, namely to encourage students to frequently revisit and update both. Research topics can change markedly over the course of a project, and research plans need to be modified in response to this and other factors. Indeed, it can be beneficial to periodically devote a supervision to discussing and updating the research proposal and the research plan, so that both supervisor and student are clear about where the research has got to, and what needs to be done to complete it.

Reflecting on Practice
Does your faculty have guidelines for research proposals? If not, can you supply your students with a simple guide? Is there a good research proposal you could show to research students? Could you develop research plans for discussion with students?

5. Supporting the Initial Stages of the Research Project

Again in science and engineering, students may be able to step into ready-made research projects. But, in disciplines where students have created their own research project, they are then faced with the detailed preparatory work on the literature, the methodology, and the design of the research.

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

Such matters are dealt with in general through faculty research training programmes, and it is clearly important for supervisors to be aware of the content of these in ascertaining the support needs of their students. If faculty training programmes do not cover these matters, then supervisors may have to point students in the direction of other courses or modules available within the institution or provide a programme of study.

But even if they do cover them, the supervisor still has a role to play in relating general features of literature evaluation, methodology, and research design to the student's topic. For example, setting an exercise for students to find a key reference in their field, produce a critical review, evidence it from their notes, and cite sources correctly, can help them to evaluate the literature; pointing students in the direction of good discussions of methodologies in books, theses and papers in their topic area can assist with the adoption of a methodology; and asking for short briefing papers on the advantages and disadvantages of different designs can provide a basis for discussion and clarification of the options.
By these means, students can be supported through what can be the very difficult initial stages of their research project. The avoidance of mistakes at this early stage, e.g. in the design of the research, can save much time and grief further down the line.

**Reflecting on Practice**

Is there a training programme for research students in your faculty? Does it fully support the student to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in terms of evaluation of the literature, methodology and research design? How can you assist the student to acquire these in the context of their project?

**6. Encouraging Students to Write**

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

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

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

With regard to writing longer pieces, supervisors can help students to make the task more manageable. So, initially, they might request a one-page abstract of the chapter setting out its aim (purpose), content (what it would cover), and possible conclusions (what it would say). With that thought through and discussed, the next stage would be to ask for a synopsis fleshing out the abstract and setting out headings and sub-headings to be used. Then students can be encouraged to fill in the framework piece by piece until they have a draft chapter.
With regard to academic writing, students can be variously referred to books on the subject (e.g. Dunleavy (2003), (Murray 2002)), given examples of such writing from the literature in their field, or even paired with a mentor in the form of a student further on with their research who will undertake to read drafts and suggest improvements.

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

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

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

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

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

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

7. Assisting with Academic Problems

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

The appearance of such problems can pose a dilemma for supervisors.
Should research students be left to dig their own way out of the hole? Or should the supervisor pull them out, dust them down, and send them on their way again? The first way accords with the view that a research degree should be entirely the student's own work, and that the view that part of the exercise should be building self-reliance; the second recognizes that the researcher is inexperienced and that he or she needs help to recover the position and complete the thesis.

This is a matter of fine judgement, and the answer varies from case to case and from supervisor to supervisor. But it can be suggested that, if at all possible, supervisors should try the middle way, namely suggesting a way in which the student can, by their own efforts, resolve the crisis.

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

What sorts of academic problems are research students likely to come up against in your subject? In what ways do you think that you could help without compromising the independence of the research?

**8. Assisting with Non-Academic Problems**

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

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

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

Reflecting on Practice

What additional support is available to research students in your school, the faculty, and the University? Do you actively seek to encourage your research students to mix with others? Do you pay particular attention to the needs of international students and, where appropriate, their families?

9. Giving Feedback

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

- to enable them to appreciate standards

  Feedback gives the student a feeling for the standards against which their work will be judged. Students are unlikely at the start or in the early stages in particular to be fully aware of the standards that they are expected to attain (see Becher et al. 1994, p 134) and even reading successful theses in cognate areas may given them little indication of what to aim for at an intermediate stage of the research project. One of the key functions of the supervisor is to enable students to appreciate the standards which they are expected to attain. As Phillips and Pugh (2000, pp 23-24) have put it:

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

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

- to improve their skills

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

- to give them a sense of achievement

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

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

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

- to deepen their understanding

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

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

Suggestions include:

- thinking about an appropriate setting for the feedback

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

- opening by setting out expectations for the session

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

- summarizing your understanding of the material submitted

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

- checking your understanding with the student

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

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

- identifying the areas for attention

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

- inviting the student to respond

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

- summarizing the discussion

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

- maintaining a record

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

By extending the work of Partington et al. (1993, p 78) to the case of supervisor feedback, it can be said that you should avoid acting:

• as an inquisitor

This supervisor behaves like a TV interviewer quizzing a politician during an election campaign, rapidly shooting out hostile questions, interrupting the answers, and generally trying to score points. Such an approach may intimidate the students so that he or she is unable to respond or anger them to the extent that the session becomes an adversarial confrontation.

• as a committee person

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

• as a hobby horse rider

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

• as a kite flyer

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

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

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

10. Monitoring Progress

Clearly, one of the key tasks of the supervisor is to formally monitor the progress of the research project. This normally has three aspects, namely monitoring progress with the student, monitoring it in line with faculty requirements, and monitoring in accordance with University requirements.

With regard to monitoring progress with the student, the University requires that supervisors should hold a formal meeting at least once per term with the student to review their progress and that the details should be recorded (Guidelines for Supervisors, 5). Such formal supervisions should be undertaken in a business-like way, with a date, time and agenda agreed with the student. Supervisors should ensure that, as far as possible, they should not be disturbed while they are meeting with the student.

Both to structure the meeting and to provide a record, it can be helpful to use Appendix C from the Research Training Portfolio. The pro-forma or similar can be completed by the supervisor and/or the student, but should be signed by both as a permanent record of the meeting.

In addition to formally monitoring progress with the student, supervisors normally also have to meet faculty requirements for progress reports. So, for example, the Faculty of Medical Sciences reviews progress at 9, 18 and 31 months into the research project, and supervisors are required to send reports to independent panels at those junctures.

Finally on monitoring, it is currently a University requirement (Guidelines, Para 6) that supervisors submit an annual report on the student's programme of work, now via the ePortfolio https://pf-postgrad.ncl.ac.uk/eportfolio.

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

11. Assisting Students to Complete

After students have persevered through academic and possibly personal problems and completed the basic research, they then enter a new tunnel called 'writing up'. While students may have conscientiously written up draft sections and chapters as they have gone along, they now face the task of putting it together as a whole and creating a thesis.
This would be easy if it were just a matter of throwing together what has already been written and adding linking sections, but demand rather more. As Barnes (cited Blaxter et al. (1996, p27)) has pointed out, ‘...a thesis is far more than a passive record of [the] research and generally involves presenting an argument or point of view. In other words it must say something and be substantiated with reasoned argument and evidence’.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In terms of drafting, even with a framework students can find this a daunting task. One way of assisting them is to encourage them to write their first draft ‘as it comes’, and then work with you to polish and re-polish it into its final form.

Again, this can pose a dilemma for a supervisor in so far as there can be a fine line between helping the student clarify what they want to say and writing it for them. There is no simple solution to this dilemma, although it can sometimes be avoided by directing students to look at other work in which similar problems have been overcome.

In the context of advising on drafts, it is worth noting that the University’s Guidelines for research supervisors (paragraph 12) state that the supervisor should not act as a proof reader and should make this clear to the student.

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

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

Reflecting on Practice

How do you help your students to translate their research materials into a thesis? How do you help them to write? Does your institution have a policy on the supervisor's role in writing? What constitutes helping as opposed to writing it for students? Are there exemplars you can point students towards to assist their writing up?

12. Advising on Submission

The completion of the first serious draft is usually an immense relief for students. But it can be a major headache for supervisors, who need to advise students whether what they have done has the potential to meet the standards for the award, and if not what needs to be done to bring it up to scratch. Giving such advice to students can be particularly difficult at the start of a supervisor's career, when their own experience may only be as an examinee and they are unsure about what is looked for by an examiner.

In such cases, the starting point for supervisors is to try to determine the
criteria for success or failure. Here, published sources may include professional associations which have set out criteria for research degrees (see for example. British Psychological Society/UCoSda, 1996; Royal Economic Society 1992; Royal Society of Chemistry 1995) or failing that more general statements of criteria (see e.g. Partington et al. (1993)). A further useful source may be examiners' reports on theses previously submitted in the school. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, supervisors should seek the guidance of colleagues with experience as examiners.

Once the criteria are reasonably clear, the supervisor can then read the draft and try to identify the strengths of the thesis (the area where the criteria are clearly met) and the weaknesses (those where criteria are not met). The latter can then be divided into weaknesses which are minor, major, or which constitute potentially fatal flaws. Again here it is very useful to have a second opinion from experienced colleagues.

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

Reflecting on Practice

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

How, in principle, could you give constructive feedback to a student on a draft?

13. Advising on Examination

Once the final title has been submitted, the process of arranging the examination begins. Supervisors will normally be consulted about the nomination of examiners, usually one internal and one external. The latter in particular can, as various studies (see for example: McWilliam et al. (2002); Mullins and Kiley (2002)) have shown, involve some heart-searching by supervisors; should they suggest Professor X who is a leading authority in the field but is known to be fiercely critical of the offerings of lesser mortals, or Dr Y who is less distinguished but more likely to take a balanced approach to examining the student's work? The ideal is, of course, an external examiner who is distinguished and who will take a balanced approach, and if at all possible, supervisors should suggest the names of examiners of this ilk.

With examiners appointed and the thesis forwarded to them for scrutiny, the supervisor then normally has to arrange the date, time and place of the final examination, the viva. In the past, this has signalled the end of the supervisor's involvement in supervision itself as opposed to examination, but in recent years the view has grown that the supervisor should play a part in preparing the student for the experience of the viva.

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

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

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

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

♦ Firstly, by de-mystifying the viva through explaining its purposes, procedures, and outcomes. In the case of Newcastle, these are set out in the University's Handbook for the Examiners of Research Degrees (2003), and it can be helpful for supervisors to take students through the relevant parts.

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

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

Reflecting on Practice

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

14. Assisting with Career Development, Networking, and Publication

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

At one time, students undertaking a research degree, particularly a PhD, were destined predominantly for the groves of academe, and career development took the form of socializing them into the values and rituals of the relevant academic ‘tribe’ (see e.g. Delamont et al. (2000)). But it is no longer the case that successful research students necessary become academics – a majority do not – and even those who do follow an academic career require a wider portfolio of skills. Part of the job of the supervisor is, from the very start of the studentship, to encourage the student to actively acquire the key skills necessary to give them an edge in the labour market.
While all skills are important, it is perhaps worth highlighting one, namely the need to encourage research students to acquire the skills to give effective oral presentations. Such skills are vital in the academic context (a number of faculties include oral presentations as part of their procedures for progression and of course students need them to make presentations to seminars and conferences) and in employment. It is worth making inquiries about whether training in presentation skills forms part of the faculty research training programme, directing students' attention towards the relevant literature (e.g. Cryer (2000)), and offering opportunities for students to give mini-presentations and receive feedback.

Under the heading of skills, supervisors also need to encourage students to record the skills that they acquire over the course of their research programme for later use as evidence to prospective employers. This can be done by the student in the ePortfolio record.

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

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

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

**Reflecting on Practice**

Do you encourage students to think about career development at the start of their studentships? Do you encourage them to assemble an appropriate portfolio of skills for employment over the course of their studentship? Do you assist them to acquire effective presentation skills? Do you encourage
15. Working with Supervisory Teams

So far, these Guidelines have predominantly been concerned with good practice of the main supervisor. This is very much in line with the historical model of the British PhD which has normally involved undertaking a research project on a narrowly-focused topic within a single discipline or sub-discipline. For this reason, the main requirement for research supervision has been the possession of the highly-specific subject expertise necessary to be able to guide and support students’ work within their chosen field of enquiry. Within any particular university, such expertise has normally resided in a single member of staff, and consequently the dominant mode of research supervision has been one supervisor to one student.

In recent years, however, there have been strong pressures, not least from the research councils, for research degrees to become multidisciplinary and/or involve a mix of academic research and practical application in an industrial or commercial context. Given this, requirements for research supervisors have broadened significantly to include expertise from a range of relevant disciplines and sub-disciplines and/or industrial and commercial experience. Such expertise may not normally reside within a single member of staff, with the consequence that, increasingly, students have more than one supervisor, i.e. there is a supervisory team.

But this shift has also been apparent in older forms of doctoral studies, including traditional PhDs, where team supervision has become much more common (see e.g. Joint Funding Councils (2002)).

The reason why co-supervision is becoming all but ubiquitous is the perceived benefits that it offers to both supervisors and students. The former can offer each other mutual support and learn from each other’s disciplines and experience, while students have two sources of support and advice for their research. So, for example, a student survey by the Wellcome Trust (cited Frame and Allen (2002, p 101)) found that co-supervision was valued:

‘...primarily to ensure accessibility at any time to at least one senior researcher with knowledge and involvement in the research and as a back-up, providing a second person or team, with whom ideas could be discussed.’

But, as any reader of the student-based literature on supervision by committee in the US (see e.g. Peters (1997), Fitzpatrick et al (1998)) will be aware, it can also lead to problems with potentially serious consequences for doctoral students. Co-supervisors may disagree as to the aims and objectives of the research project which, as Cryer (2000, p 70) suggests:

‘...puts tremendous burdens on the research student who has to integrate the understanding of both and satisfy both. The research student all too often ends up satisfying neither, and each co-supervisor can tacitly abdicate responsibility to the other.’

So, if there is co-supervision, it is good practice for supervisors to spend some time discussing how to establish a professional relationship with each other,
as well as with the student. Such a discussion should encompass agreeing notions of what they are supervising, deciding they are to work with each other to integrate their own understandings of the topic and give consistent advice to students, and determining what their respective roles should be.

It should be noted that, where there are co-supervisors, it is a requirement at Newcastle that one supervisor who is a member of the academic staff should be designated as the primary supervisor, and the other as a secondary supervisor. While the University prescribes that the former should ultimately be responsible for supervising the student's work, at present it does not offer further guidance as to precisely what the division of labour should be between the primary and secondary supervisors. Particularly in cases where the student spends part of their time outside Newcastle studying under a second supervisor, it is necessary to specify who is responsible for what. Here, a useful template which could be adapted for use at Newcastle, has been developed at City University, and is set out overleaf.

**Reflecting on Practice**

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

**Conclusions**

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

**References**


The internal supervisor:

Accountability
♦ represents the institution making the award and is accountable...for the satisfactory completion of the project.
♦ clarifies to the student and external supervisor, prior to commencement of the research, the University’s requirements regarding scope, content, structure, timing and intellectual level of a research thesis appropriate to the target qualification.
♦ confirms any financial arrangements, and modus operandi for information exchange, progress review, production of interim reports and papers and relevant inter-vivos meetings.
♦ discusses with the student the general role of an external supervisor, and any characteristics peculiar to a supervisor for the proposed research, and requests nominations from the student.
♦ discusses with potential external supervisor their role, and the student’s proposed programme, and confirms any changes agreed by both supervisors and the student.
♦ progresses the student’s application and liaises with the School/School Senior Tutor/Director of Research and Board of Studies on the required formalities for progress and annual report.

Knowledge
♦ agrees with the student a potential research question or proposition that meets the University’s requirements and fits the student’s interests and opportunities.
♦ gives guidance about: the nature of research and the standards expected; the planning of the research programme; literature and sources; requisite techniques; and the avoidance of plagiarism.
♦ gives advice on the structure and layout of the thesis.
♦ ensures that the student is aware of appropriate health and safety regulations.

Training
♦ arranges training on subject-specific material and skills and generic skills as appropriate.
♦ arranges, as and where appropriate, for the student to talk about his/her work to staff or graduate seminars and to have practice in oral examinations.

Time and Contact
♦ reviews student submissions, and discusses content and timing with student and external supervisor, with recommendations of any general
changes needed to meet the University’s standards.

♦ ensures that the student is made aware of any inadequacy of progress or standards of work below that generally expected, confirming this in writing to the student and arranging any supportive action necessary.

**Introduction to the Field**

♦ arranges, as and where appropriate, for the student to talk about his/her work to staff or graduate seminars.

**Reporting**

♦ provides an annual report through the Senior Tutor/Director of Research to the Board of Studies on the student’s progress, with a copy to the student.

♦ provides comment on the research student’s learning experience and support infrastructure at the University as part of the Research Study Annual Report Exercise.

**Arrangements for Examination**

♦ makes the initial recommendations for examiners and makes arrangements for the student’s oral examination.

**Guidance for the Future**

♦ provides, in conjunction with the external supervisor, guidance, encouragement and counsel regarding the future career plans of the research student.

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**The external supervisor:**

**Accountability**

♦ acts as coach and counsellor to help the researcher to meet the goals agreed between them and the internal supervisor.

**Knowledge**

♦ possesses sufficient knowledge of the research area to provide accurate advice and guidance on the project.

**Time and Contact**

♦ prompts a regular review of the plan and setting agreed targets.

♦ possesses sufficient available time, after all other responsibilities have been taken into account, to dedicate to the needs of each individual research student he/she is supervising.

♦ maintains contact through regular tutorial and seminar meetings in accordance with School policy and in the light of discussion of arrangements with the student.

♦ is accessible to the student at other appropriate and reasonable times when he/she may need advice.

♦ requests written work, as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism and within reasonable specified time.
Introduction to the Field
♦ takes an active role in introducing the student to other workers in the field, and the appropriate academic bodies and societies.

Reporting
♦ maintains a record of formal supervision meetings for each supervisee to include: date of meeting duration of meeting, summary of discussion and any specific advice given. It is desirable for the student to produce the summary of discussion. The record should be signed by both the supervisor and student and any dissent recorded.
♦ monitors the student’s attendance as appropriate and informing the relevant bodies through the internal supervisor of absence or withdrawal.

Guidance for the Future
♦ provides guidance, in conjunction with the internal supervisor, encouragement and counsel regarding the future career plans of the research student.

University Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses

Introduction
The University is, of course, responsible for the quality and standards of postgraduate research awards made in its name. The function of examiners is to assist the University to discharge that responsibility by ensuring that the standards of postgraduate research awards at Newcastle are at least comparable to those in similar subjects in other Universities in the UK. The purpose of this Handbook is to set out (1) procedures for the nomination of examiners (2) criteria for selection (3) procedures for appointment (4) the duties of the external examiner of research degrees and (5) guidelines on good practice in the performance of those duties followed by (6) conclusions. The Handbook covers research degrees by thesis only, i.e. the degrees of MPhil, DDS, DBA, MD and PhD. For examination of the Integrated PhD programmes offered by Newcastle University or the more practice-based PhDs in the Arts and Humanities, please see the additional guidance at the end of the Handbook.

For further information on the Research Degree Examination procedure and forms see:
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/exam.htm

1. Nomination
Candidates for postgraduate research degrees must complete the minimum period of registration required for the award and formally submit the exact title
of their thesis for approval to the postgraduate dean of their faculty not less than one month before they intend to submit it.

At the same time as the title is submitted, the head of the school in which the candidate is studying should nominate examiners for the thesis on the approved form for this purpose. Heads of school should consult supervisors about nominations. In the case of student candidates, heads of schools should nominate one external and one internal examiner who is not the candidate's supervisor. In exceptional cases where the University is unable to appoint an internal examiner a second external examiner will be appointed. Where two external examiners are appointed, the dean of postgraduate studies will also appoint an independent member of University staff who will chair the viva.

*It should be noted that the independent chair is not an examiner of the thesis but provides guidance on University regulations and procedures to ensure that the oral examination is conducted in accordance with normal University practice.*

2. Criteria

In making nominations, heads of school should, in consultation with supervisors, seek to identify prospective examiners who:

♦ are fully cognisant with standards for the award of research degrees in the subject in comparable institutions
♦ have significant experience and knowledge of research in the subject area within which the candidate is working
♦ command authority in the field and the respect of their subject community
♦ have played no personal part in the research undertaken by the candidate
♦ and, in the case of the external examiner(s), have not been a member of staff at Newcastle for at least five years
♦ are able and willing to examine candidates and to complete the process of examination within a specified period, usually within three months of submission of the thesis.

Heads of school should present evidence, e.g. a short CV and a list of recent publications, that nominees fulfil these criteria. Subject to the presentation of satisfactory evidence, postgraduate deans make recommendations to Senate.

3. Appointment

Examiners are appointed by the dean of postgraduate studies on behalf of Senate. Following appointment examiners are sent:

♦ a letter setting out the terms and conditions of appointment with an abstract of the thesis to be examined
♦ the University's *Handbook for Examiners of Research Degrees by Theses*
♦ a copy of the work submitted by the candidate in fulfilment of the requirements for the award
♦ a copy of the University's Regulations and Examination Conventions governing the relevant research degree
♦ Information about the programme, if relevant
♦ forms for reporting on the examination

4. Duties
The core duties of examiners for research degrees are:

- care fully to consider the written work submitted by candidates
- to arrive at an independent evaluation of whether the work submitted meets the standards of the award and, if not, in which aspects it is deficient
- to write a preliminary report and send it to the graduate school administrator for forwarding to the relevant postgraduate dean
- to consult with other examiners and compare preliminary reports
- in the case of research degrees where vivas are optional, to decide if it is appropriate to use this means of determining a candidate's suitability for the award
- to agree with the supervisor a date and time for the viva
- to prepare for the viva before the viva, to compare independent reports with the other examiner and agree an agenda for the examination
- to conduct the viva examination
- following examination of all written and, where appropriate, oral evidence, to decide whether the candidate has met the standards for the award
- to decide upon an appropriate recommendation to the dean of postgraduate studies (the full list of recommendations allowed under University regulations is set out later in this document)
- to write a final report with other examiner(s) on the candidate's performance and submit it on the approved form to the graduate school administrator.
- in all cases where the recommendation is that the thesis be revised before award or re-submission for the original or a lesser degree, to agree with the other examiner(s) a full list of the changes to be made and/or work to be undertaken. This should be given to the candidate and supervisor, via the graduate school administrator, as soon as possible after the viva and a copy attached to the final report.
- in the case of external examiners, to comment upon any aspects of a candidate's experience or the examination process which they have judged to be particularly good or which have raised problems. This should be forwarded to the graduate school administrator for forwarding to the relevant dean of postgraduate studies.
- In exceptional circumstances, and two or more weeks in advance of a scheduled viva, if the external examiner is unequivocally of the view that the thesis is not worthy of defence with out significant rework, the external examiner should contact the graduate school administrator. If approved by the dean of postgraduate studies the examiners can be permitted to prepare a joint report giving the candidate the recommendation of resubmitting in twelve months, with an oral examination at that time.

5. Good Practice

The purpose of this section is to try to outline good practice in the examination of research degrees by thesis. There is no intention to be prescriptive, just to give a view of the processes involved. These processes are divided into pre-examination, examining written work, the preliminary report, oral examinations, and post-examination.
5.1 Pre-examination

Before reading the work submitted, examiners should consider the criteria against which to evaluate theses. Such criteria may relate to individual chapters, the whole thesis and the award.

5.1.1 Criteria relating to chapters of the work

Criteria relating to specific chapters of the work will vary considerably between subjects and, within subjects, between topics. But they may include, for example:

- The context
  ♦ that the research question(s) have been placed in their academic and, where appropriate, industrial or commercial contexts
  ♦ that, in the case of a thesis undertaken as part of a team project, the relationship of the research to the overall project is set out along with the contribution of the candidate relative to that of other team members

- The literature
  ♦ that the relevant literature or an appropriately justified section of it has been covered
  ♦ that the literature is reviewed in ways which are critical and analytical and not just descriptive
  ♦ that the thesis demonstrates clear mastery of the literature
  ♦ that explicit links are made between the literature and the topic of the thesis
  ♦ that there are explicit links between the literature and the design of the study
  ♦ that there is a summary of the literature in so far as it relates to the thesis topic

- Methodology/methods
  ♦ that there is an awareness of the range of methodologies/methods which have been or might be used to tackle the topic
  ♦ that there is adequate justification of the methodology(ies)/methods adopted for the research
  ♦ that the methodology/methods are related to the design of the research
  ♦ that practical problems and issues are identified and discussed
  ♦ where applicable, that ethical considerations are outlined and discussed
  ♦ where applicable, that matters of reliability and validity are identified and discussed

- Design of the study
  ♦ that the design of the study is appropriate to the topic
  ♦ that there is awareness of the limitations of the design adopted

- Substantive research
  ♦ that the research design has been properly implemented
  ♦ that the relevant sources of evidence have been explored
- **Analysis**
  ♦ that appropriate theoretical and, where applicable, empirical techniques are used to analyse evidence
  ♦ that the level and form of analysis is appropriate to the evidence

- **Outcomes/Results**
  ♦ that the outcomes/results identified relate to the topic
  ♦ that the outcomes/results are justified on the basis of the analysis of the evidence
  ♦ that the outcomes/results are presented clearly
  ♦ where applicable, that patterns and trends in the outcomes/results are accurately identified and summarized

- **Discussion**
  ♦ that the main points emerging from the outcomes/results have been picked up for discussion
  ♦ that there is an awareness of the limitations of the outcomes/results

- **Conclusions**
  ♦ that the conclusions relate to the initial focus of the study
  ♦ that the conclusions drawn are justified by the study
  ♦ that the implications of the conclusions for the field of knowledge have been identified

5.1.2 **Criteria relating to the thesis as a whole**
For all research degrees, the University requires that work presented for examination should be:

- **Authentic**
  The thesis should be the candidate’s own work and not plagiarized from the work of others, published or unpublished. All sources used should be appropriately acknowledged using a recognized form of referencing.

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

- **Professional**
  The thesis should demonstrate that the candidate has acquired or extended a repertoire of research skills appropriate to a professional researcher in his/her field and has a clear understanding of the role of such a researcher.

- **Well-structured, written, and presented**
  The thesis should be clearly structured and orderly in arrangement, and well-written and presented. Similarly, any composition, exhibition, artefact(s) or other products of practice arising from the research should be arranged and presented in an orderly and coherent way.
5.1.3 Specific criteria relating to the award:

- **MPhil**

In addition to the above, for the MPhil the University requires that the thesis should demonstrate an advanced knowledge of the subject including a satisfactory knowledge of the literature. It does not require that it should be original or worthy of publication.

- **DDS/MD/PhD**

The criteria here are that the thesis:

- should show evidence that the subject has been studied with adequate industry and application
- demonstrates an ability to conduct original investigations and to test the ideas of the candidate and those of others
- shows that the candidate understands the relationship of the theme of his or her thesis to the wider field of knowledge
- exhibits substantial evidence of original scholarship
- contains material worthy of publication

5.2 Examination of Written Work

While it is good practice to have clear criteria in mind prior to reading the thesis, it is recognized that different external examiners will have their own methods. What follows below are simply suggestions which may be of interest to those new to examining (experienced examiners may wish to skip to this section).

In their Handbook for Examiners, Brown, Partington and Gordon (1993) suggest that examiners should:

- **Start by gaining an overall impression of the substance of the thesis or dissertation**

Examiners can start by reading the full title, the abstract, and the introduction and then turn to the final chapter(s) to see what conclusions were reached. This should enable them to gain an overall impression of what the thesis is about and what has come out of it.

- **Reflect and re-formulate criteria relating to sections of the thesis**

Examiners may then reflect and consider how the criteria relating to the sections of the thesis (5.1.1 above) might be applied to the topic in question, e.g. the literature the candidate might be expected to have read, which methods would be appropriate, etc. etc. By the end of this examiners should have effectively translated the criteria into a set of clearly-defined questions to be asked of the specific piece of work before them. In addition, their reflection may have led to new questions about the research.

- **Read and note**

Examiners can then carefully read each chapter of the thesis or dissertation with the relevant questions in mind. They can note where questions have been answered satisfactorily, where clarification is needed, and where answers are not satisfactory. As, in the course of reading, additional questions occur, these may be noted and views recorded on how well the candidate has
answered them in the present chapter or in subsequent ones.

♦ **Reflect and summarize**

Examiners should now have a clear idea of how far each section of the thesis meets the relevant criteria. These may be summarized to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis and to highlight issues where clarification is required.

♦ **Consider whether the thesis meets the general criteria**

In the process of reading the thesis section by section, examiners will have begun to formulate an impression of how it meets the more general criteria concerning authenticity, scholarship, and structure, presentation and citation (5.1.2 above). They may now consider how far the work meets these criteria and note where the work does fulfil them, where there is doubt, and where they are not met. This may involve re-reading all or part of the thesis and would normally include checking a sample of citations.

♦ **Consider whether the criteria for the award have been met**

The last area for consideration is whether the thesis meets the award specific criteria. It can be helpful here for examiners to refresh their memory of the University's regulations, in particular in the case of the PhD to consider the definition of originality. Again examiners should note in what respects the thesis meets the criteria, where this is unclear, and where it does not meet them.

If examiners follow the above, they should have notes on the extent to which the criteria are met for sections of the thesis, the latter as a whole, and in relation to the award. These notes should form a basis for writing a preliminary report.

5.3 The Preliminary Report

Examiners should then independently write a preliminary report which will indicate their provisional assessment of the thesis and of the issues to be explored in the viva. The University recognises that these reports will vary considerably depending upon the discipline and the subject matter of the thesis. But it would normally expect that, if the criteria have clearly been fully met, the report will normally be very brief. But, on the other hand, if examiners have serious doubts or concerns about whether criteria have been met, a fuller account would be expected.

A copy of the preliminary report should be sent to the graduate school administrator a week prior to the oral examination taking place for forwarding to the relevant dean of postgraduate studies. The preliminary report should not be shown to the candidate or supervisor.

5.4 Oral Examination

The purpose of the viva is to gather further evidence from the candidate about their suitability for the award, in particular:

♦ to ask the candidate to clarify issues relating to meeting criteria relating to specific parts of the thesis, to the thesis as a whole, and to the award

♦ to ascertain that the thesis is the candidate’s own work, that he or she has developed research skills at this level, and that he or she understands the relationship of the thesis to the wider field of knowledge
♦ in cases where the thesis and/or the candidate for the award clearly does not meet the criteria, to find out the reasons. These may include the abilities of the candidate or other factors affecting the research, e.g. deficiencies in research training, the quality of supervision, the availability of resources, disruptions to the research process, or personal circumstances

It is normally the supervisor who arranges the date, time and place of the viva. The supervisor should normally be available for consultation if necessary prior to and after the viva although they are not normally present (except in cases where the student has requested their presence but they will make no contribution to the examination).

Examiners should have a meeting, normally a couple of hours before the viva, to exchange and discuss preliminary reports. Examiners should then, bearing in mind each other's comments upon the written work, jointly determine:

♦ the key issues to be raised with the candidate
These will be those identified in the initial reports where clarification is required or where criteria have not been met.

♦ the order within which they are to be raised
In order to encourage candidates to talk, it can be helpful to raise relatively uncontroversial/factual issues at the start and then proceed to ones which are likely to be more difficult/conceptual when he or she is in the swing of things.

♦ who will 'lead' on each issue
Examiners usually decide upon a division of labour based upon their expertise in the topic, with one leading on each issue and the other asking supplementary questions.

Normally, the external examiner chairs the proceedings and has overall responsibility for conducting the viva. In cases where there is more than one external, an independent chair will have been appointed.

Good practice in conducting a viva is:

♦ to ensure that the room is appropriately laid-out
The viva is a formal occasion, and the room should be appropriately laid out.

♦ to introduce the examiners to the candidate
It is courteous to the candidate for the chair of the examiners to introduce him- or herself and the other examiner(s) to the candidate.

♦ to explain the purpose of the viva to the candidate
It can be useful to explain to candidates that the purpose of the viva is to provide them with the opportunity to defend their thesis in high-level debate with experts drawn from the relevant research community.

♦ to explain the process of the viva to the candidate
As many candidates will not have previously undertaken a viva, it has been pointed out (see UCoSDA/British Psychological Society, 1995) that it can be helpful to explain the process to them. This involves the examiners asking questions about their work and supplementary questions based upon their answers.

The chair should make it clear that the examiners have a duty to thoroughly
explore both the work presented and the candidate's knowledge and understanding of both it and the wider field and that persistent questioning is a normal and necessary part of the process.

If he or she wishes, the chair should also say that no information about recommendations will be given until the examiners have conferred after the end of the viva but make it clear that this again is part of the process and that no inferences should be drawn.

The candidate should also be told that he or she may, if they wish, consult with their copy of the thesis throughout the viva.

♦ to start by commending the candidate

Candidates can be extremely nervous, and it is important to try and settle them down at the start of the viva by saying something commendatory but non-committal, e.g. 'We found your thesis very interesting', 'we particularly enjoyed...'.

♦ to question the candidate

Examiners should then start the questions. Normally, the external examiner begins the questions, and he or she should choose ones to start with which candidates should be able to answer without undue difficulty, e.g. why did you decide to do this topic?, what aspect of the work have you most enjoyed? Further questions should then be asked covering the key issues and in the order previously identified. In questioning the candidate, examiners should:

- ask questions in a constructive and positive way

Examiners should try to ask questions in ways that are constructive and positive rather than destructive and negative, e.g. 'why did you try to solve the problem using method X rather than method Y?' rather than 'Didn't you realise that you could have avoided these difficulties with method Y?'

- use an appropriate range of questioning techniques

Questions may, as Murray (1998) has noted, be general ('How did you come to study this topic?'), open ('tell me about your methodology?) or closed ('why did you think that the confidence limits were unimportant in this case?).

General or open ones are useful in encouraging the candidate to reflect upon their work, while closed ones lead to specific answers. Examiners should try to tailor the type of question to the type of answer required and, if possible, aim for a mix of general and open questions (which are harder to answer but can reveal much more about the candidate) and closed ones (which may reveal less but are easier for the candidate to answer).

- recognize that candidates may need time to answer

Particularly when asked general or open questions, candidates may need some time to gather their thoughts together and produce a coherent answer. Examiners need to recognize this and encourage candidates to reflect, e.g. by telling them to 'take your time'

- praise a good answer

When candidates give a particularly incisive or interesting answer, it can be helpful to their morale to praise them

- give candidates a chance to recover from a poor answer
When candidates give a poor answer, this may be through misunderstanding or nerves. Rephrasing a question and asking it again gives the able candidate the opportunity to recover the position or may confirm the inability to respond of a weaker one.

♦ to conclude the viva

After you and your co-examiner(s) are satisfied that you have gathered the relevant evidence, you should indicate this to the candidate, thank them for answering your questions, ask whether there are any concluding comments which they wish to make, explain again that the examiners will now consult about the outcome, and tell them how the recommendation will be communicated to them. While this may be done informally after the viva, candidates should be informed that formal notification of the result will be sent to them by the graduate school administrator.

Poor practice in conducting the viva (see Partington, Brown and Gordon (1993: p 78) would be for an examiner to act throughout as:

♦ an inquisitor

This examiner behaves like a TV interviewer quizzing a politician during an election campaign, rapidly shooting out hostile questions, interrupting the answers, and generally trying to score points. Such an approach may intimidate the candidate so that he or she is unable to respond or anger them to the extent that the viva becomes an adversarial confrontation.

♦ a proof reader

This examiner takes candidates line by line through their theses asking questions about errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. If these are exceptionally poor, instead of proof reading in the viva, examiners can make it a requirement that the thesis is re-typed or hand the candidate a list of corrections after the viva.

♦ a committee person

The committee person takes the candidate through the thesis page by page questioning each matter as it arises rather than synthesising points into key issues relating to the trigger for the study, the methodology, the design, etc.

♦ a hobby horse rider

This examiner has strong feelings or prejudices about one area of the thesis and keeps returning to questions on this while neglecting other aspects of the research.

♦ a kite flyer

The kite-flyer has identified a – usually fairly tenuous – link between the thesis and another subject and persists in exploring this to the detriment of the examination of the topic as defined by the candidate, i.e. effectively examines a thesis which the student did not write.

♦ a reminiscer

This examiner continually regales the candidate with stories of their own research career to the detriment of the examination of the candidate's work.

5.5 Post-examination

After reading the thesis and, if appropriate, conducting the viva, examiners have to decide upon a recommendation, write a report on the examination,
and decide what information should be given to candidates required to amend or re-submit theses or dissertations. External examiners are also invited to make comments on any aspect of candidate's experiences which they have judged to be particularly good or which have raised problems.

5.5.1 Deciding upon a Recommendation

Following the first submission and examination of a candidate, the examiners may make the following recommendations:

(a)(i) That the candidate be **admitted immediately** to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

(a)(ii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(a)(iii) That the candidate be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.

(b)(i) That the candidate's thesis be deemed to be of a satisfactory standard, but that the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners in the oral examination** and that the candidate therefore be required to attend within six months either for a second oral examination or for a written examination, as the examiners shall determine in their written report.

(b)(ii) That the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners in the thesis** and the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis** within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners, without a further oral examination.

(b)(iii) That the candidate be adjudged to have **failed to satisfy the examiners in the thesis** and the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis** within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be re-examined orally.

(c)(i) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should immediately be awarded that degree instead.

(c)(ii) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should be awarded that degree instead **subject to minor corrections** of the text made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of one month of receiving formal notification of the corrections to be made.

(c)(iii) That the candidate has reached the **standard required for the appropriate Master's Degree** and should be awarded that degree instead **subject to minor revisions** being made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, normally within a period of six months of receiving formal notification of the revisions to be made.
(d) That the candidate be permitted to **revise and re-submit the thesis for the appropriate Master's Degree** within twelve months for re-examination by both examiners and be re-examined orally if the examiners so require by indication in their written report.

(e) That no degree be awarded and that the candidate be **adjudged to have failed**.

**Recommendations for award ((a) above)**

In cases where examiners are satisfied that all of the criteria for the award are fully met, they should recommend the award of the degree immediately or subject to making minor textual corrections or minor revisions to the satisfaction of the internal examiner.

**Other recommendations ((b) to (e) above))**

In cases in which examiners are not satisfied that all of the criteria are fully met and are unable to recommend award, then there is a range of other recommendations which can be made. In deciding which of these to make in a given case, examiners should take into account:

- **the potential to meet the standards for an award**
  
  A recommendation to revise a thesis for resubmission and re-examination should only be made if, in the judgement of the examiners, it has the potential to meet the standards for the original award submitted for or for another award. If it does not, then it should be failed.

- **the amount of work entailed in revising the thesis**
  
  It is possible to recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted within either six or twelve months, and examiners have to make a judgement about the amount of work entailed. If this is a re-writing of sections of the thesis, then normally six months is appropriate; if it is a complete re-write, then twelve months would be appropriate. If further research is required, this should normally be secondary, e.g. discriminating data or recalculating statistics, and not primary, e.g. gathering new data.

- **external factors relating to the research**
  
  While, of course, external factors relating to the research must not generally be regarded as extenuating in the context of recommending award, examiners may wish to take them into account when considering the time within which a candidate should have the opportunity to revise and re-submit their thesis, subject to the maximum of twelve months.

  Such factors may include:

  - the quality of supervision received by the candidate, e.g. problems between students and supervisors, disrupted supervision
  
  - facilities available for research, e.g. inadequate resourcing of equipment, unexpected non-availability of equipment, problems with technical support, inadequate library facilities research procedures, e.g. access to participants/clients, patients who have withdrawn unexpectedly, delays in gaining ethical approval for experiments
  
  - the personal circumstances of the candidate
While personal circumstances must not generally be regarded as extenuating in the context of recommending award, examiners may wish to take them into account when considering specifying the time within which a candidate should have the opportunity to revise and re-submit their thesis, subject to the maximum of twelve months.

Such personal circumstances may include illness, pregnancy, personal stress, linguistic or cultural difficulties in undertaking and writing up the research. There should normally be documentary evidence covering such circumstances.

Additionally, in the rare cases of candidates whose thesis is satisfactory but who fail the viva examination, personal circumstances may be taken into account in considering whether to hold a second viva or to hold a written examination. So if, for example, there are medical reasons why the candidate will viva poorly or in cases where candidates are returning overseas and will find it difficult to return for a second viva, examiners may consider substituting a written test.

Where the examination has been conducted by two external examiners, they should agree between themselves who will receive the revisions before the award is finally recommended.

5.5.2 Writing the Final Report

The final report should be written, ideally, immediately following the viva or as soon as possible thereafter.

In the vast majority of cases, examiners independently arrive at the same verdict and concur in the recommendation. They should then jointly complete the supplied final report form. This involves completing a checklist of how far the criteria for the award have been met by the candidate and stating the recommendation to Senate. Final reports should be sent to the graduate school administrator which will, subject to approval by the relevant postgraduate dean, forward them to the candidate and the candidate’s supervisor.

In a few cases, examiners may be unable to agree upon a recommendation. In this case, they should complete the form indicating their recommendations and the grounds for disagreement, and forward it to the graduate school administrator. (This report will not be made available to the candidate but will, if the candidate should subsequently appeal, form part of the formal record of appeal). The University will then appoint a new external examiner who will re-examine the thesis, if necessary conduct a further viva, and make a recommendation which is final. The additional examiner shall be told that the previous examiners had failed to reach agreement but will not have sight of the report. On the occasion of the second oral examination the candidate’s supervisory team (and where appropriate the Internal Examiner) shall be available to be consulted by the additional external examiner. The dean of postgraduate studies shall appoint a member of University staff as an independent observer, who will report on the conduct of the viva. The main supervisor shall co-ordinate the arrangements for the oral examination. After the conclusion of the oral examination, the additional examiner shall make a recommendation which shall be final. He/she shall submit a final report to the relevant graduate school administrator which will, subject to the approval of the relevant dean of postgraduate studies, forward it to the candidate and the
candidate's supervisory team in the normal way.

5.5.3 Giving Information to Candidates Required to Revise or Resubmit Work

In cases where the recommendation is that changes need to be made to the thesis before resubmission, it is the responsibility of the examiners to provide full details of all changes and revisions required. The list of revisions required should be given to the candidate and the candidate's supervisor as soon as possible after the viva and a copy attached to the final report which is forwarded to the graduate school administrator. The latter then communicates these in writing to the research supervisor and to the candidate. It should be noted that the presumption is that if the candidate makes these changes and revisions to the satisfaction of the designated examiner this will lead to a recommendation for award. Normally it is the internal examiner who examines any revisions required to the thesis for students, but where there are two external examiners it should be agreed who will undertake the role to examine the revisions.

It is therefore important that, before they part after the viva, the examiners agree exactly what the student is required to do before resubmission. Where the recommendation is that the degree be awarded subject to minor textual changes, this will simply consist of a list of the corrections required, but where the thesis is referred for resubmission within six or twelve months, a more substantial list of changes/work to be done must be provided. It is vital that this is comprehensive – a student who has made all of the changes required by the examiners but who is then denied the award because of further deficiencies would have good grounds for appeal.

5.5.4 Commenting upon the Candidate's Experience

External examiners are invited to make any relevant comments upon aspects of a candidate's experience or the examination process which they feel have been particularly good or which have raised problems. These comments will be sent to the relevant dean of postgraduate studies for consideration.

6. Conclusions

The examiners are key figures in ensuring that the standards of research degrees meet the University's criteria and are at least comparable with those in other UK Universities.

The University ensures that examiners of research degrees are of high standing in their discipline, and that they bring a knowledge and understanding of discipline-specific standards to their duties.

In performing those duties, the University expects that examiners will be rigorous and fair and that they will follow good practice, as set out above or in other ways.

By undertaking their duties in this way, examiners not only maintain standards at Newcastle but, of course, also act as effective gatekeepers for the research community of which they are a part by ensuring that candidates meet the academic criteria for membership.

References

Guidelines for Assessment of the PhD in Psychology and Related Disciplines
Integrated PhD programmes consist of two components:

1. **Taught Component (200 credits):**
   This consists of taught modules including a choice of specialist modules and research methods modules. An individual programme of study is agreed between the student and the Degree Programme Director. All assignments are subject to moderation by an external examiner for the programme.

2. **Research Component:**
   Every student submits a thesis of approximately 50,000 words. A formal written research proposal is approved by an independent school panel and supervisor/s are allocated. There is a formal progression meeting to approve progression from the taught to the research element. An independent school panel makes a recommendation on progress on the research element of the programme annually.

According to the University’s regulations: “Candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated) are required to demonstrate:

(a) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;

(b) the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;

(c) the general ability to conceptualize, design, implement and adjust a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications, or understanding at the forefront of the discipline. Where appropriate, also to demonstrate the ability to formulate and test hypotheses and to generate alternative explanations for the data available;

(d) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry;

(e) a range of advanced professional and key skills related to their likely employment context including the ability to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences.

A doctoral thesis should exhibit substantial evidence of original scholarship and contain material worthy of publication.”
An acceptable Integrated PhD thesis will therefore meet the same criteria as those laid down by the University for a traditional PhD thesis, namely original scholarship, methodological rigour and the inclusion of material of publishable quality. The length of the thesis will be around two-thirds of the length of a traditional PhD thesis, approximately 50,000 words. It is therefore likely that the Integrated PhD thesis will be more tightly focused, the literature review less broad in scope and the quantity but not the quality of data collected less than might normally be expected for a traditional PhD. Nevertheless, the rigour of the methodology, its validity and reliability, and the quality of analysis will match that of a traditional PhD thesis.

Students are encouraged to use their assignments from the taught element of the programme to help formulate their ideas, construct the methodology and explore the literature for their thesis. For many students, therefore, some of the work that might normally be found in a traditional PhD thesis will already have contributed to the assessed work for the taught component. These assignments are subject to external examination. They can however, be made available to both internal and external examiners of Integrated PhD theses prior to the viva voce examination should the examiners so require.

Additional Information for Examiners of Theses Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of practice-based Doctor of Philosophy degrees in Arts and Humanities

1. Fine Art practice-based PhD

In the field of Fine Art, candidates whose area of research is not covered by the normal PhD regulations will undertake the following:

i. Research in creative Fine Art practice, leading to a final submission of a substantial body of creative art work which demonstrates coherence and originality and constitutes a recognisable contribution to the development of contemporary Fine Art practice. And

ii. A critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 50,000 words. In this the candidate will document and demonstrate in relation to the issues and questions identified and examined in the research project, a critical and reflective understanding of his/her creative processes, and demonstrate a critical and informed understanding of the contexts in which the artwork has been made. It will explain how this field has been expanded or developed through the candidate’s research. This component of the submission will also include thorough visual documentation of the creative work.

2. Music practice-based PhD

In the field of music, candidates whose area of research is not covered by the normal PhD regulations may undertake one of the following:

i) submit a portfolio of original compositions in an agreed format

ii) carry out substantial research in creative practice, leading to a final submission that includes documented performance as supplementary material
The expression "in an agreed format" is intended to accommodate a broad definition of composition where innovative modes of presentation are given equal consideration to submissions in conventional formats.

In both categories above, the final submission should constitute a substantial body of work demonstrating originality informed by contemporary practice, and demonstrating cohesion, command of existing technique and a recognisable contribution to the development of the discipline. A self-critical commentary normally between 20,000 and 40,000 words should be submitted demonstrating an ability to situate the candidate's creative practice within the broader context of the discipline. The submission should be supported by relevant audio and, if appropriate, audiovisual material.

3. PhD in Creative Writing

The PhD in Creative Writing has two components

(1) The most significant part of the PhD and its main focus will be a substantial, original piece of creative work: a novel, a collection of short stories, a collection of poetry, a play script or screen play written specifically for the degree. The criterion laid down for the traditional PhD that a thesis should include ‘material of publishable quality’ should be interpreted in relation to creative work as a statement about quality and not marketability. It is hard to set word limits because of the different requirements of the different genres (counting the words in a collection of poems would not account for its substance). Normally we would expect this part of to be equivalent to two thirds of an academic PhD thesis (of 100k). However see ‘the hybrid thesis’ below.

(2) An academic thesis which explores some topic, genre, theme, writer or group of writers, which has some relationship with the creative work being undertaken. This should be written in tandem with the creative practice. It is expected that this part of the PhD will account for about one third of the whole. Key to this part of the PhD is a serious body of reading, careful and correct referencing, and a bibliography.

A student may decide to use their own creative process as subject, and reflect upon their own work. They may also decide to depart from the formal literary essay by, for instance, using interviews, or employing a more experimental style which encompasses different voices (by using autobiographical writing for instance or extracts from a diary). The style and structure of the resulting essay, however, needs to be as carefully thought about as any other literary thesis. It is expected that the topic chosen for this part of the thesis, and worked on at the same time as the ‘creative’ part, should have some relation to it. This relationship should be made apparent at some place in the thesis in an introduction or conclusion, but need not be written about at length.

The Creative Writing Hybrid Thesis (only to students who started before September, 2008)

Because the key to the PhD in Creative Writing is flexibility, we also want to leave open the possibility of writing a more 'hybrid' type of thesis, where the proportions of creative work to critical work are not strictly adhered to as
above, and where the critical part of the dissertation takes on some of the aspects of creative work or even incorporates creative work into the body of critical writing. This type of thesis is an exception, however, and should only be embarked on with the agreement of both supervisors. Where the thesis departs from the norm indicated in paragraphs 1 and 2 above this will be clearly stated in a Preface to the thesis so that the examiners have a clear indication of the format of the thesis.

4. Practice-based Research Degrees in Architecture, Planning and Landscape

**PhD**

In the fields of Architecture, Planning and Landscape, candidates whose area of research is not covered by the normal PhD regulations may undertake a PhD in Creative Practice. This entails:

a) Carrying out substantial research in creative practice in Architecture, Planning or Landscape, leading to a final submission of a significant body of creative work which demonstrates originality, coherence and understanding and makes a recognisable contribution to the development of the discipline. The research should develop through creative and sophisticated engagement with appropriate media and technologies (drawings, models, photography, installations, digital media, etc.). This material must be incorporated in the hard copy thesis document (see paragraph [b] below), but may also – by arrangement with the research supervisors – be presented in its original form (e.g. digitally, in a portfolio, in an exhibition, by installation, etc.).

and

b) The submission of a hard copy thesis document that records, curates and presents the research carried out by creative practice and contains a critical commentary on it of between 20,000 and 50,000 words. This must frame the overall project, intellectually situating it in relation to relevant texts and practices and providing an extended critical and reflective analysis which situates the student’s supporting research within the broader disciplinary context.

**NB.** As an alternative to the standard format, students undertaking research by creative practice may submit their hard copy thesis as a bound A3 document, with pages printed on both sides. The design of the thesis document is itself an important concern, which can work in concert with the research, and therefore theses do not have to observe the normal font and line-spacing requirements providing legibility is maintained.

**MPhil**

A thesis submitted for a practice-based MPhil in Creative Practice must incorporate an 8,000 - 20,000 word commentary together with full documentation of the practice-based research output. Formatting requirements correspond to those set out for the practice-based PhD in Architecture, Planning and Landscape.
Standards of Academic Conduct

The University requires all students to maintain high standards of academic conduct and, in particular, to avoid conduct amounting to cheating in examinations, the fabrication of research results or plagiarism.

Cheating in examinations includes: copying from or conferring with other candidates; the possession or use of unauthorized material or equipment; and the impersonation of an examination candidate. Candidates who knowingly permit themselves to be impersonated, or their work to be copied, will be regarded as cheating. Any student suspected of having cheated in examinations will be dealt with under the University's Assessment Irregularities Procedure and may also be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Academic Registrar in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures approved by Council.

The fabrication of research results includes: claims, which cannot reasonably be justified, to have obtained specific or general results; false claims in relation to experiments, interviews, procedures or any other research activity; and the omission of statements in relation to data, results, experiments, interviews or procedures, where such omission cannot reasonably be justified. Any student who is suspected of having fabricated research results in relation to submitted and assessed work which contributes to an examination or degree result, will be dealt with under the University's Assessment Irregularities Procedure and may also be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Academic Registrar in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

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

Students are sometimes unclear as to what use may be made of the work of others in the field without raising concerns about plagiarism. Any student who is in doubt on this matter should consult his or her tutor or supervisor. In most cases, the adoption of appropriate standards of scholarship will avoid any such concerns. The following general guidelines may assist:

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

2. Students must always give due acknowledgement to the sources of ideas or data which are not their own and are not truly in the public domain...
(for example, because they are novel or controversial) or are not widely held or widely recognized.

3. Ideas and data which are the student's own or are truly in the public domain may be included without attribution, but should be expressed in the student's own words.

4. Students must take care to distinguish between their own ideas or work and those of others. Any ambiguity in such a distinction could give rise to a suspicion of plagiarism. Further guidance can be found at the following website: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/right-cite/

5. Where the student's work is the result of collaborative research, the student must take care to acknowledge the source of data, analysis or procedures which are not their own.

Students who are suspected of having made the unacknowledged use of another person's ideas, words or work in submitted and assessed work which contributes to an examination or degree result, will be dealt with under the University's Assessment Irregularities Procedure and may also be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the Academic Registrar in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

Code of Good Practice in Research

The University expects all its researchers and students to adhere to the highest standards of integrity in research. This statement addresses the issues involved in the proper conduct of research and provides guidance on the standards expected. It applies to staff, honorary staff, students and visiting workers.

Within this overarching framework there may be specific discipline requirements in areas such as ethics, clinical governance, data protection, legal requirements, home office and other government requirements, in addition to health and safety and other good laboratory practice requirements. Some disciplines may also be subject to specific good practice requirements of external funding agencies or professional bodies.

1 Integrity and honesty

1.1 Researchers should be honest in respect of their own actions in research and their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research work, including experimental design, generating and analysing data, acting as a reviewer or referee on grant applications or research papers etc, applying for funding, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

1.2 Plagiarism, deception or the fabrication or falsification of results, are regarded by the University as serious disciplinary offences.
2 Research misconduct

2.1 The University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct and has a written procedure for investigating and resolving such allegations.

2.2 Researchers are encouraged to report cases of research misconduct and to do so in a responsible and appropriate manner. (Please refer to the University's Policy on Research Misconduct.)

3 Leadership and co-operation in research groups

3.1 The Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Provosts, deans of research, heads of schools, directors of research institutes and centres, professorial and all other senior staff are responsible for creating a climate which allows research to be conducted in accordance with good research practice.

3.2 Leaders of research groups have responsibility to ensure that a climate of mutual co-operation is created in which all members of the research team are encouraged to develop their skills and in which both the open exchange of ideas and supportive criticism is fostered.

3.3 Research group leaders must also ensure that appropriate direction of research and supervision of researchers and research students is provided.

4 Openness

4.1 While recognizing the need for researchers to protect their own and the University's research interests in the process of planning their research, obtaining and publishing the results, and seeking to develop the outcome of their research into application (where relevant), the University encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers, and with the public.

4.2 Once results have been published the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers on request, provided that this is consistent with any ethics approval and consents which cover the data and materials and any intellectual property rights in them.

5 Guidance from professional bodies

5.1 Researchers are expected to observe the standards of research practice set out in guidelines published by funding bodies, scientific and learned societies and other relevant professional bodies.

5.2 All researchers should be aware of, and comply with, the legal requirements which regulate their work.

6 Ethical approval

6.1 Researchers whose work involves human participants or human biological samples are expected to comply with local or multi centre research ethics committee requirements and to understand any other requirements of regulatory bodies relating to their work. For further information see the staff handbook.

7 Documenting results and storing primary data

7.1 There should be clarity at the outset of the research programme as to the ownership of, where relevant:

- data and samples used or created in the course of the research; and
• the results of the research.

7.2 Researchers should keep clear and accurate records of the procedure followed and the approvals granted during the research process, including records of the interim results obtained as well as the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained.

7.3 Data generated during the course of research should be kept securely in paper or electronic format as appropriate and retained for a minimum of 10 years (or longer where there is a legal requirement governing retention).

7.4 Back up records should always be kept for data stored on a computer.

7.5 Data collected and stored must comply with any legal requirements such as the Data Protection Act.

8 Publishing results

8.1 Results should be published in an appropriate form, usually as papers in refereed journals or other publicly accessible form.

8.2 Researchers should have regard to the commercialization potential of their work and take appropriate steps to advise the University of any inventions and, where appropriate, take steps to protect any intellectual property prior to publication.

8.3 Whilst the publication of the results of research may need to be delayed for a reasonable period pending protection of intellectual property arising from research, such periods of delay in publication should be kept to a minimum.

8.4 Anyone listed as an author on a paper should accept responsibility for ensuring that he/she is familiar with the contents of the paper and can identify his/her contribution to it. The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable.

8.5 Whilst the University encourages the communication of research to the wider public, any disclosure to the popular media should endeavour to place the research in its appropriate context and care should be taken not to exaggerate the impact of any findings.

9 Use of results

9.1 Where appropriate, researchers are expected to maximize the prospects of research being taken into practice through the commercial route by protecting intellectual property (IPR).

9.2 Where a commercial route is not appropriate then it is expected that researchers will take appropriate steps to ensure that research findings are transferred to relevant user communities.

10 Acknowledging the role of collaborators and other participants

10.1 The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the work should be properly acknowledged.

11 Managing Research Projects

11.1 Researchers have a responsibility to ensure that they, and all those involved in the project, are fully aware of the terms and conditions of grants and contracts and the implication of these in relation to their research projects.

11.2 Lead researchers have a responsibility to ensure that all staff and
students working on projects are made aware of, and adhere to, this *Code of Good Practice*.

12 Conflict of interest

12.1 Researchers should declare and manage any real or potential conflicts of interest, both financial and professional. These might include:

♦ where the researchers have an existing or potential interest in the outcome of the research;

♦ where there is a private or private practice benefit significantly dependant upon the outcome of the research;

♦ where the researcher's professional or personal gain arising from the research may be more than might be usual for research.

What to do when your research nears completion …

Submission of Thesis

Approximately three months prior to the completion of your thesis you need to submit a form for the approval of your thesis title to your supervisor. (The form can be found on the Student Progress website:

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/pg-research/exam.htm

Your supervisor will also use this form to begin the process of appointment of your examiners. You are advised to ensure that debts are cleared in advance of submitting this form.

When you submit two soft bound copies of your thesis to the graduate school administrator, you will be required to complete a Research Degree Examination Entry form. This form has a declaration from you regarding your work and will be used to check that all your financial obligations to the University have been met.

Once your soft bound theses have been received by the graduate school administrator they will be forwarded to your examiners with copies of regulations and forms for their reports.

Your supervisor will arrange the viva date, in consultation with the examiners and yourself. The graduate school administrator will inform you of the result of your examination, and give details of any revisions that may be required along with the deadline for your resubmission.

Once you have been informed in writing by the graduate school administrator that the examiners have agreed that you have met all the conditions for your award, you will be asked to submit one hard bound copy of your completed thesis along with an electronic version. You will need to also complete the British Library forms at this time. When these are submitted to the graduate
school administrator your passlist will be produced and you will be asked to complete the forms to attend your congregation ceremony.

**Congregation**

When passlists have been produced, students will be invited to apply to attend at the next available congregation ceremony. Congregations are held in May, July and December each year. Students need to apply to be included in a particular ceremony. For further information on any aspect of Congregations, please refer to the Congregations website: www.ncl.ac.uk/congregations or contact the Congregations Administrator, telephone: 0191 222 6225.
PART FIVE

Academic Matters

Policies and Procedures

The University has a range of policies and procedures which exist for the purpose of protecting and supporting the highest standards within the University.

Readers are encouraged to be familiar with their existence.

The full policies and/or procedures are not included below – only key points are highlighted. Policies and procedures are subject to annual review. You should therefore check the University’s website for the latest and full version.

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Academic Appeals Procedure for Students

A student who wishes to challenge the decision of the Examiners must make a case on one of the following grounds:

(i) You were adversely affected by illness or other relevant factors, of which you were previously unaware, or which for a good cause you were unable to disclose to the Examiners in advance.

(ii) Procedural irregularity on the part of the examiners.

(iii) Bias or prejudice on the part of an examiner or examiners.

Challenges to the academic judgement of the examiners on an assessment outcome or the level of award recommended cannot form the basis of an appeal.

Given the existence of procedures for complaint and redress during the study period, alleged inadequacy of teaching or supervision shall not constitute grounds for an appeal. Separate policies and relevant information are contained in the following documents:

- Student Complaints Procedure
- Policy on Dignity at Work and Study
- Guidelines for Research Students
- Newcastle University and You
- Postgraduate Newcastle
- Public Interest Disclosure (‘Whistleblowing’) Policy

The full Academic Appeals Procedure is available at; www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm

Procedure for Assessment Irregularities

The University’s Standards of Academic Conduct (see Part 4 of this handbook) must be maintained. Students who are suspected of being in breach of these standards will be subject to the University’s Procedure for Assessment Irregularities and may also be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the University's Disciplinary Procedures.

For the purposes of the Procedure for Assessment Irregularities, an assessment irregularity involves the use of improper means by a candidate in the assessment process. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying from or conferring with other candidates or using unauthorised material or equipment in an examination room;
- Impersonating or allowing another to impersonate a candidate;
- Introducing examination scripts into the examination process otherwise
• Permitting another student to copy work;
• The falsification (by inclusion or suppression) of research results;
• Plagiarism. This is defined as the unacknowledged use of another person's ideas, words or work either verbatim or in substance without specific acknowledgement. For the avoidance of doubt, plagiarism may occur in an examination script as well as in assessed coursework, projects, reports and like work and may involve the use of material downloaded from electronic sources such as the internet. Further, the inclusion of a source in a bibliography is not of itself a sufficient attribution of another's work.

The full Procedure for Assessment Irregularities is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm

Note that for research students, responsibility for investigation lies with the Dean of Postgraduate Studies.

Dignity at Work and Study - Code of Practice for Staff and Students

1 Policy Statement

The University is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity. We aim to provide a working and learning environment which is free from unfair discrimination and which will give staff and students the opportunity to fulfil their potential. All individuals should be treated with dignity and respect whether at work or study.

The purpose of this Policy is to promote a working and learning environment and culture in which harassment and bullying are known to be unacceptable and where individuals have the confidence to deal with harassment and bullying without fear of victimisation. This policy aims to ensure that if harassment or bullying does occur to staff, students or visitors, adequate procedures are readily available to deal with the problem with support and sensitivity so as to prevent it recurring.

Harassment and bullying can have a detrimental effect on a person’s health, confidence, morale and performance and on the working and learning environment. The University undertakes to ensure a prompt response to all complaints and to treat them with due respect, relevant confidentiality and fairness (see Procedure, Appendix 1). In some instances they may be dealt with informally. In others there may be grounds for disciplinary actions, including dismissal or expulsion from the University.
The University undertakes to:

- Treat incidents of harassment or bullying as serious;
- Publicise the Policy as widely as possible in order to ensure that all staff and students are aware of its existence;
- Include information in staff induction and appropriate staff development sessions (e.g., awareness training);
- Monitor the number of cases arising and the effectiveness of the Policy.

2 Rights and Responsibilities

The 1991 European Commission code ‘Protection of Dignity of Men and Women at Work’, highlights the need for employers to develop and implement coherent policies to prevent harassment. In addition, various laws place responsibilities on employers to protect employees and these are outlined in Appendix 2.

Everyone has a responsibility to respect the feelings and sensibilities of others and to behave in a way which does not cause offence. In some instances individuals may be genuinely unaware that their behaviour is causing offence, but it is the duty of each individual to be sensitive to the impact their conduct may have on colleagues.

All those in authority, whether managers, supervisors, leaders etc have a responsibility to issue reasonable instructions and expect them to be carried out. The legitimate supervision of staff and students should be distinguished from harassing or bullying behaviour. However, it is important that consideration is given to style of dealing with others - those exercising authority should not behave in a way that would generally be considered unreasonable.

Staff and students should discourage harassment and bullying by making it clear that they find such behaviour unacceptable and by supporting colleagues who experience such treatment. Anyone who sees harassment or bullying happening in their area has a responsibility to take action. It is possible to bring a complaint forward if you witness harassment or bullying.

All complaints of harassment or bullying will be taken seriously by the University and thoroughly investigated. The aim is to provide the support needed to help individuals decide the best course of action, and to resolve the issues raised.

The Procedure, (Appendix 1) provides a framework for dealing with complaints confidentially, fairly and in a consistent manner. It will also help to resolve problems quickly and informally wherever possible, without fear of victimisation or retaliation.

Serious breaches of the Policy may lead to the relevant disciplinary procedures being used.

3 What are harassment and bullying?

Harassment, in general terms, is unwanted conduct affecting the dignity of men and women. It may be related to race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, political belief,
trade union membership, or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident. The key is that the actions or comments are viewed as demeaning and unacceptable to the recipient.

The following are some examples of what is unacceptable behaviour in the University:

- Physical Conduct - Unwanted physical contact, including unnecessary touching or brushing against another employee/student’s body, assault, coercing sexual intercourse, physical threats, insulting or abusive behaviour or gestures;
- Verbal Conduct - Unwelcome advances, propositions or remarks, innuendoes, lewd comments or abusive language, which is sex or race based or which refers to a person’s age, disability, sexuality, religion or personal appearance;
- Non-verbal Conduct - Making abusive or offensive gestures, displaying of offensive written or visual material, other unacceptable non-verbal conduct which denigrates a person for whatever reason;
- Bullying - Offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, including by electronic means, abuse of power or unfair sanctions, which make the recipient feel threatened or vulnerable, which undermines self confidence and which may cause stress.

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face, they may be by written communications, electronic email (so called ‘flame-mail’) and phone. More subtle forms of bullying and harassment, often not recognised, include persistently ignoring a person, isolating or excluding them.

4 Responsibilities

All Staff and Students

Everyone has a responsibility to comply with this Policy and all staff and students should ensure that their behaviour towards colleagues does not cause offence and could not in any way be considered to be harassment or bullying.

Differences in culture, attitudes and experience, or the misinterpretation of social signals, can mean that what is perceived by the person experiencing the behaviour as harassment and bullying, may be perceived by others as normal. It is important to be sensitive to the feelings and reactions of others and adjust behaviour as necessary.

Unresolved incidents of harassment or bullying need to be progressed and can be raised with any one of the people listed in the Procedure.

Those with responsibility for implementing the Policy should:

- Set a good example by treating all staff and students with dignity and respect;
- Understand the Policy and make every effort to ensure that harassment and bullying do not occur, particularly in work or study areas for which they are responsible;
• Respond sensitively and supportively to any members of staff or students who make an allegation of harassment or bullying; provide clear advice on the procedure to be adopted; maintain confidentiality in accordance with this Policy; monitor the work or study environment to ensure that there are no problems of harassment or bullying, or of victimisation after a complaint has been made;

• Be alert to unacceptable behaviour and take appropriate action: do not wait until complaints are brought to their attention if they are aware of behaviour of other managers or staff or students which might cause offence. If the incident is not serious then calling the individual aside and carrying out some ‘awareness-raising’ may be sufficient to stop the behaviour;

• Ensure that staff and students know how to raise problems, are aware of the Policy and procedures, and of sources of help and advice.

Dignity at Work and Study Advisers

Dignity at Work and Study Advisers are members of staff who have volunteered and have been trained to undertake this role. Any of the Advisers, listed in Appendix 3, will be prepared to discuss incidents or problems with you in complete confidence, however sensitive these may be. An Adviser will listen carefully to the problem and then inform you of possible courses of action. The Adviser may be able to suggest strategies for dealing with the harassment or bullying and will help you reach a decision about what, if anything, you wish to do, or have done, about the harassment.

If you are being accused of harassment or bullying the Adviser will also be able to offer you advice.

Support and advice can also be obtained from the Equal Opportunities Adviser.

Any discussions will be confidential within the confines of the University’s legal obligations. In some cases the first person you contact may need to consult further in order to find the best way to help you: this will be done in confidence.

Trade Union Representatives

Trade union members who are raising a complaint, or have a complaint made against them, can also talk confidentially to a representative of their trade union for advice and support.

The full Policy on Dignity at Work and Study, with the procedure to follow for making and dealing with complaints of harassment and bullying, is available at www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity/info/dignity/dignitystudents/index.html

Students who wish to make a formal complaint under this Policy, should follow the Student Complaints procedure.

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm
Equal Opportunities Policy

1. Policy Statement

Newcastle University confirms its commitment to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities for all employees and all students in which individuals are selected and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities and are given equal opportunities within the University. The aim of the policy is to ensure that no job applicant or employee, prospective student or student, should receive less favourable treatment on any grounds which are not relevant to good employment practice for staff or to academic ability, potential and attainment for students. The University is committed to a programme of action to make the policy fully effective.

It is the University's policy to treat all people equally irrespective of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, age, political belief or trade union membership and activities.

In order to promote practices which will ensure equality of opportunity, all staff and students should be made aware of the University's statement of policy and of this code of practice.

Staff and students are encouraged to assist in the removal of any discriminatory practices that may exist in the University by drawing them to the attention of the Chair of the Equal Opportunities Committee via the Director of Human Resources for staff or the Academic Registrar for students.

2. Responsibility for the Policy

All staff, students, visitors and others associated with the University, without exception, have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with the requirements of the Policy, namely to treat all people equally irrespective of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, age, political or trade union membership or activities.

There are a number of individuals and groups with specific responsibilities:

University Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the Equal Opportunities Policy and its procedures are in place.

The Vice-Chancellor has ultimate executive responsibility for:

- The effective development and implementation of Equal Opportunities Policies.

Managers (including Provosts, Heads of Schools, Heads of Service and all other line managers) are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is implemented and maintained within their own Schools/Services
• Ensuring all staff are fully informed about their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying them out.

• Taking appropriate action against staff or students who discriminate for reasons of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, age, political belief or trade union membership or activities. This may include invoking appropriate University disciplinary or grievance procedures, and initiating procedures for dealing with complaints.

• Ensuring that the equal opportunities policy and its procedures are followed within their areas of responsibility.

The Director of Human Resources and the Academic Registrar have responsibility for:

• The implementation and monitoring of the policy as it pertains to staff and students respectively.

• Reporting to the Equal Opportunities Committee and Council on progress and plans in an Annual Report.

• Ensuring that appropriate staff training and development is carried out.

Equal Opportunities Committee has responsibility for:

• The formulation of equal opportunities policies and procedures and for overseeing their implementation. The Committee reports to the Council of the University which has the authority to approve the policies.

Staff or students who act to obstruct efforts to promote the Equal Opportunities Policy or are the perpetrators of acts of discrimination may be subject to the University’s disciplinary procedure, which, if proven, may result in oral, written or final written warnings or suspension or dismissal/expulsion from the University.

3. Implementation of the Policy

Codes of practice and appropriate procedures will be developed and introduced to implement the Policy. The University will ensure that all students and staff and, so far as is practicable, others associated with the University are informed of the Policy, any associated policies and procedures and their responsibilities with respect to implementation.

The necessary training and support will be provided to those persons responsible for the implementation of the Policy.

The University will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Policy through the Equal Opportunities Committee which will report, as appropriate, to Council.

4. Reporting Breaches of the Policy

Any student or member of staff who believes he/she has been discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, sex, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, age or political belief or trade union membership may invoke the University’s Student Complaints Procedure or Staff Grievance Procedure, as appropriate.
Where necessary, advice for staff on procedural matters may be obtained from Human Resources and advice for students may be obtained from the Student Progress Service.

Complaints of discrimination from applicants for staff posts or student places, from visitors and from others associated with the University should be addressed to the Registrar who will ensure that they are investigated and that the complainant receives a written response, and where appropriate that action is taken.

Acts of unlawful discrimination by an employee or a student will, if appropriate, be dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedure.

The University will seek to protect individuals from any form of victimisation arising from their taking action in relation to their rights under the relevant legislation or making any complaint under these procedures.

5. Explanatory Notes

Sexual Orientation

This policy seeks to protect everyone i.e. gay, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual people. Protection would occur where discrimination takes place because of an individual’s actual or perceived sexual orientation or for those treated less favourably because they associate with LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender) people.

Religion or Belief

The legal definition of religion or belief is broad and defined as being any religion, religious belief or similar philosophical belief (not political belief). Whether a religion or belief falls within this definition will be for the courts to decide.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 defines disability as a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal, day to day activities’.

Further information

Equality Challenge Unit
Third Floor
4 Tavistock Place
London
WC1H 9RA
020 7520 7060
www.ecu.ac.uk
Race Equality Policy

1. Aims and values

Newcastle University is a ‘community of communities’: national, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and many more. The University is unequivocally committed to the goal of fostering mutual respect and understanding between its constituent communities and to promoting equality of opportunity among staff and students alike. It encourages all staff and students to enjoy and celebrate its diverse culture. The Race Equality Policy commits the University to the elimination of unlawful discrimination, the promotion of equality of opportunity and to the promotion of good relations between people of different racial groups. Through this policy the University aims to make race equality central to the way the University carries out all its public functions, so that it becomes an integral part of its policy development, the curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, staff recruitment, training and career development, management, student support and guidance, admissions, access and participation, partnerships and community links, behaviour and discipline, service delivery, outsourcing, procurement and any other function.

2. Background

2.1 Institutional Racism

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 (RRAA) came into effect on 31st May 2002, as an amendment to the existing Race Relations Act 1976. This legislation was a direct outcome of the inquiry into the racist murder of teenager Stephen Lawrence. In his report, Sir William McPherson identified widespread institutional racism as “The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people” (Home Office, 1999: 6.34).

Some common manifestations of institutional racism can be found in appendix A.

2.2 Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 has placed a statutory general duty on all Public authorities to promote race equality and in particular:

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

The Act has placed further specific duties on Higher Education Institutions to:

- publish a Race Equality Policy and an Action Plan for its implementation
- assess the effect of University Policies on staff and students from different racial groups
- Monitor, by racial group, the admission and progress of students and the recruitment and career development of staff
- Set out arrangements for publishing a race equality policy statement and the results of assessments
Take reasonable and practical steps to publish the results of monitoring each year.

The University Race Equality Policy has been developed by the Race Equality Sub-Committee with regard to the guidance and code of practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality. It has been considered and approved by the Equal Opportunities Committee, and should be read in conjunction with the University Equal Opportunities Policy.

3. Responsibilities

All staff, students, visitors and others associated with the University, without exception, have a responsibility to ensure that their actions comply with the requirements of the Policy, namely to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote race equality and promote good relations between people of different ethnic groups. There are a number of individuals and groups with specific responsibilities:

University Council is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the University acts within the requirements of the Race Relations Act and meets all its general and specific duties
- Ensuring that the race equality policy and its procedures are followed.

The Vice Chancellor has ultimate executive responsibility for:

- The effective development and implementation of Equal Opportunities Policies, including the Race Equality Policy.
- Ensuring that effective procedures are in place.

Managers (including Provosts, Heads of Schools, Heads of Service and all other line managers) are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policy is implemented and maintained within their own Schools/Services
- Ensuring all staff are fully informed about their responsibilities and receive support and training in carrying them out
- Taking appropriate action against staff or students who discriminate for reasons of race, colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins. This may include invoking appropriate University disciplinary or grievance procedures, and initiating procedures for dealing with complaints
- Ensuring that the race equality policy and its procedures are followed within their areas of responsibility

The Director of Human Resources and the Head of the Student Progress Service have responsibility for:

- The implementation and monitoring of the policy as it pertains to staff and students respectively.
- Ensuring that appropriate staff training and development is carried out.

Equal Opportunities Committee has responsibility for:

- The formulation of equal opportunities policies and procedures and for overseeing their implementation. The Committee reports to the Council of the University which has the authority to approve the policies.
Race Equality Sub-Committee has responsibility for:

- Advising the Equal Opportunities Committee on the development and implementation of the Race Equality Policy.

Staff or students who act to obstruct efforts to promote race equality or are the perpetrators of racial discrimination may be subject to the University’s disciplinary procedure, which, if proven, may result in oral, written or final written warnings or suspension or dismissal/expulsion from the University.

4. Specific Duties

Newcastle University will comply with the specific duties of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 by:

Planning and Developing Policy

Preparing and publishing a written statement of our Race Equality Policy and an Action Plan for its implementation.

Ethnic Monitoring

- Establishing an infrastructure to monitor, by racial group, the policies or functions relating to students including:
  - Admissions and access
  - Achievement, progress and assessment
  - Student Welfare
  - Accommodation
  - Teaching and learning
  - Curriculum
  - Dignity at Work & Study

- Establishing an infrastructure to monitor, by racial group the policies or functions relating to staff including:
  - Recruitment & selection
  - Appraisal
  - Reward
  - Professional development
  - Staff support
  - Staff retention

- Establishing an infrastructure to monitor, by racial group, the policies or functions relating the community and general public including:
  - Working with community groups
  - Procurement and outsourcing
  - Use of consultants

Impact Assessment

- Conducting an assessment to establish the effect of the University Policies on students from different racial groups including:
  - Admissions and access
  - Achievement, progress and assessment
  - Student Welfare
  - Accommodation
  - Teaching and learning
• Curriculum
• Dignity at Work & Study

• Conducting an assessment to establish the effect of the University Policies on staff from different racial groups including:
  • Recruitment & selection
  • Appraisal
  • Reward
  • Professional development
  • Staff support
  • Staff retention

• Conducting an assessment to establish the effect of the University Policies on community groups including:
  • Working with community groups
  • Procurement and outsourcing
  • Use of consultants
  • Comparing ethnic monitoring data with qualitative data.
  • Consultation with representative groups of staff and students, including racial minority groups.
  • Consultation with community groups from outside the university.
  • Prioritising functions where action is required
  • Setting a three year action plan with key performance indicators, which determines frequency of monitoring
  • Formulating an evaluation process

Publishing
  • Setting out arrangements for publishing the race equality policy statement to all staff, students and the wider community.
  • Setting out arrangements for publishing the results of assessments and monitoring each year.

Further details about arrangements for complying with the specific duties of the Act are available in the Newcastle University’s Race Equality Action Plan.

5. Review of the Policy

In order to ensure that the University is making progress towards its Race Equality targets an appropriate reporting structure will be established which will set out how the Race Equality Sub-Committee can report on progress to the Equal Opportunities Committee and the University Council.

Consultation with staff and students will take place in order to raise awareness of the policy and to gain feedback on its contents. Feedback given will be considered when updating the Policy. The Race Equality Policy and Action Plan will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

6. Training and development

Staff development and training will be extremely important to the successful implementation of the Race Equality Policy. A training plan will be devised to ensure that senior managers are made aware of the implications of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and their roles and responsibilities. The plan will also provide for race equality training to be rolled out across the campus, and embedded in other appropriate training and development
activities, such as the Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice and the Management Development Programme.

7. Publishing the Policy

To support the implementation of this policy, it will be widely published, and will be made available to all new staff and students. It will be published on the internal and external University websites and available in hard copy format from the Human Resources Department, Student Office, Admissions and the International Office. A communication programme will be established to publish this policy, its associated action plan, results of assessments and monitoring.

8. Reporting alleged breaches

Alleged breaches of the policy, or incidents of racism or racial discrimination, should be reported. The most appropriate reporting mechanism will be dependent on the nature of the alleged incident. A quick guide to incident reporting is given in Appendix B, however if you are unsure please contact the following:

Staff related issues
- Julie Bullimore  Equal Opportunities Advisor  0191 222 3440  
  julie.bullimore@ncl.ac.uk
- Richard Burrow  Assist. Director of Human Resources  0191 222 6306  
  richard.burrow@ncl.ac.uk

Student related issues
- Alison Oldam  Head of Student Wellbeing Service  
  0191 222 5870  
  a.oldam@newcastle.ac.uk

Sources of additional help and support can be found in appendix C.

8.1 Incidents of Racial Harassment or Bullying

Incidents of alleged harassment or bullying (including racial harassment & bullying) of University staff or students should also be reported via the procedure attached to the Dignity at Work and Study Policy, available on the University Intranet at www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/hr/policy/dignity.htm or from the Human Resources Section or Student Wellbeing Service as above. Alleged perpetrators of racial bullying or harassment may be subject to the University's disciplinary procedure, which if proven, may result in oral, written or final written warnings or suspension or dismissal/expulsion from the University.

Racist harassment or bullying are criminal offences. They should be reported to the University and you are strongly encouraged to report such incidents to the police. Reporting an incident to the police does not necessarily require a formal statement or appearance at court - you don't even have to give your name unless you choose to. By reporting incidents you can help the police to build up information about patterns of crime and help them catch the offenders.

You can report a racist incident in a number of ways:
- Through the University who will file the report on your behalf 
  Julie Bullimore  0191 222 3440 (staff)
- Richard Burrow  0191 222 6306 (staff)
Appendix D gives some practical advice about reporting a racist incident to the police. These guidelines have been produced by the Racial Harassment Support Group in conjunction with Northumbria Police.

8.2 Racial Discrimination

Any student or member of staff who believes he/she has been discriminated against on the grounds of race may invoke the University's Student Complaint Procedure or Staff Grievance Procedure as appropriate. These procedures should also be followed by staff and students who witness incidents of racial discrimination.

Complaints of discrimination from applicants for staff posts or student places, from visitors and from others associated with the University should be addressed to the Registrar who will ensure that they are investigated and that the complainant receives a written response, and where appropriate that action is taken.

Acts of unlawful discrimination by an employee or a student will, if appropriate, be dealt with under the relevant disciplinary procedures.

The University will seek to protect individuals from any form of victimisation arising from their taking action in relation to their rights under the relevant legislation or making any complaint under these procedures.

8.3 Personal complaints and grievances

Staff and students also have access to personal complaints and grievance procedures. Details are available on the University Intranet or from the HR Section or Student Wellbeing Service as above.

8.4 General breaches

Any more general breach of the policy should be reported to the HR Projects Assistant or to the Director of Human Resources or Student Progress Service as appropriate or to the Chair of the Equal Opportunities Committee.

Any racist incident whether or not it occurs on campus and irrespective of whether university staff or students are involved may be reported to the local Agencies Against Racist Crime and Harassment (ARCH), of which the University is a member. ARCH is a multi-panel agency which is committed to:

- Developing an effective inter-agency response to racist incidents in Newcastle.
- Reducing the number of racists incidents experienced in the city.
- Improving and increasing support available to victims.
- Improving the safety and welfare of those who live, work, study in and visit Newcastle.

Definition of a Racist Incident

The definition used by Newcastle University is that recommended in the Stephen Lawrence Report:
“A racist incident is any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”. (Recommendation 12)

Examples may include (this list is not exhaustive)

- Verbal abuse
- Unprovoked assaults
- Damage or threats of damage to property
- Sending of threatening and/or abusive correspondence (including email)
- Making threatening and or abusive phone calls or text messaging
- Graffiti

The full Race Equality Policy, is available along with sources of advice and further information about reporting an incident, at www.ncl.ac.uk/diversity/info/race/

Students who wish to make a formal complaint under this Policy, should follow the Student Complaints procedure.

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm
Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure

1 Introduction

1.1 The University is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs in a responsible manner taking into account the requirements of the funding bodies, the standards in public life set out in the reports of the Nolan Committee, and the principles of academic freedom embodied in its Statutes and enshrined in the Education Reform Act 1988.

1.2 The Public Interest Disclosure Act, which came into effect on 1 January 1999, gives legal protection to employees against being dismissed or penalized by their employers as a result of disclosing in the public interest certain serious concerns. It is a fundamental term of every contract of employment that an employee will faithfully serve his or her employer and not disclose confidential information about the employer's affairs. However, an individual within the organization should have the right to disclose certain matters of public interest without fear of reprisal.

1.3 This policy and procedure is intended to guide and assist members of the University who believe they have discovered malpractice or impropriety and to assist the University in the maintenance of appropriate standards of propriety and good practice. Members of the University are expected to use this policy and procedure in the first instance rather than report their concerns to a third party outside the Institution. There is, however, no intention to interfere with individuals' civil duties and rights and to prevent them, for example, from reporting criminal activity to the police.

2 Scope of Policy

2.1 This policy and procedure provides for employees and students who believe that they have evidence of malpractice or impropriety which it would be in the public interest to disclose to bring their concerns to the attention of the appropriate University officer.

2.2 Instances of malpractice or impropriety might include:

- financial malpractice or impropriety or fraud
- failure to comply with a legal obligation or with the Statutes and Regulations of the University
- dangers to health and safety or the environment
- academic or professional malpractice
- miscarriage of justice
- improper conduct or unethical behaviour
- criminal activity (not covered by the above)
- attempts to conceal any of the above.

2.3 The University already has in place a number of policies and procedures for such matters as grievance, complaints, discipline and harassment. This policy and procedure should not be used where a matter of concern should more appropriately be addressed through other approved University procedures. However, investigation of matters raised under this policy and procedure may subsequently lead to the invocation of other University procedures (see sections 4 and 6 below).
3 Safeguards

3.1 Protection
This policy is designed to offer protection to those employees or students who make a disclosure of the kind described in 2.1 above provided that the disclosure is made:

- in good faith
- in the reasonable belief that the disclosure is substantially true
- without a view to personal gain
- to an appropriate person/body (see section 4 below).

3.2 Confidentiality
All disclosures made in accordance with this policy and procedure will be treated in a confidential and sensitive manner. The identity of the individual making the disclosure will be kept confidential to the extent that the maintenance of such confidentiality does not hinder or frustrate any related investigation. However, the individual making the disclosure may need to provide a statement as part of the evidence required and the investigation process may lead to the identity of the individual being revealed.

3.3 Anonymous Allegations
This policy encourages individuals to put their name to any disclosures they make. Concerns expressed anonymously will be considered only at the discretion of the University.

In the exercise of this discretion, the factors to be taken into account will include:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

3.4 Untrue Allegations
Where investigation reveals that the allegation had no substance, no action will be taken against the individual who made the allegation provided that the allegation had been made in good faith and in the reasonable belief that it was substantially true. However, disciplinary action may be taken where clear evidence of malice has been established or where an individual persists in a vexatious or otherwise unreasonable use of this policy and procedure.

4 Procedures for Making a Disclosure

Initial Step
4.1 The individual should make the disclosure to the Registrar, as Secretary to Council, who will inform the Vice-Chancellor and the Chairman of Council unless:

(i) requested not to do so by the discloser, or
(ii) if the Chairman of Council is likely to be involved at any subsequent appeal.

In cases involving financial malpractice or impropriety, the Registrar will act in
close consultation with the Vice-Chancellor, as the Accounting Officer for the University's public funding. If the disclosure is about the Registrar then the disclosure should be made to the Vice-Chancellor. If the individual does not wish to raise the matter with either the Registrar or the Vice-Chancellor, then he or she may raise it with the Chairman of the Audit Committee, if the issue falls within the purview of that Committee, or with the Chairman of Council.

**Process**

4.2 The Registrar will acknowledge receipt of the disclosure and will consider the information contained within the disclosure. He will determine whether prima facie the disclosure properly falls for consideration within the terms of this policy and procedure or whether the matter should more appropriately be considered through other approved procedures. If the Registrar determines that the disclosure is a matter for consideration within this policy and procedure, he will decide on the form of investigation to be undertaken.

This may be:

- to investigate the matter internally
- to refer the matter to the police
- to call for an independent inquiry

In some cases, a matter disclosed might be dealt with by agreed action without the need for further investigation. In determining the above the Registrar shall take such advice or undertake such consultation as may be necessary.

4.3 The Registrar will, as soon as is reasonably practicable, inform the person making the disclosure what action, if any, is to be taken and the envisaged timescale for consideration of the case. The procedure will be implemented as expeditiously as is reasonably practicable.

4.4 Where the matter is to be the subject of an internal inquiry, the Registrar will consider who should undertake the investigation and its terms of reference. Internal audit will normally be instructed to investigate disclosures relating to financial malpractice or impropriety. In other cases, the investigation will be carried out by a senior member of staff independent of the area in which malpractice or impropriety is alleged to have occurred. In all cases no one having any part to play in reaching a decision on any matter raised through disclosure will take any part in investigating matters contained in the disclosure. Investigations will be conducted as sensitively and speedily as possible.

4.5 If a disclosure is to be referred to the police, the University will co-operate fully with the police in the course of police enquiries, but will take no action itself pending completion of police enquiries and possible action.

4.6 If a disclosure is to be referred for independent enquiry, internal investigation, other than that undertaken as part of such enquiry, will normally be suspended, pending completion of such independent enquiry.

**5 Feedback**

5.1 If no action is to be taken, the Registrar will inform the person making the disclosure of the reason in writing. In such event, the person will have the opportunity to request the Chairman of Council (or the Chairman of the Audit
Committee if the subject of the disclosure is financial malpractice or impropriety) to review the disclosure and the reasons given for not taking further action. The Chairman of Council (or of Audit Committee, as the case may be) will consider the matter and will either confirm the decision that no further action be taken, or determine what further action is to be taken and through what process.

5.2 Where a decision is made to conduct an internal investigation into a disclosure, the person against whom the disclosure is made shall be provided with a copy of the disclosure and any evidence supporting it, and shall have the opportunity to make a full response to the disclosure during the course of the investigation. No investigation shall be concluded or action taken without the person against whom the disclosure is made having had a copy of the disclosure and any evidence supporting it, and an opportunity to make a full response to the disclosure. In making such a response, a person against whom an allegation is made has the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, or a Union Society Officer in the case of a student, or another member of the University not involved in the area of University activity to which the allegation relates.

5.3 In the event of a decision to call for an independent enquiry, the person against whom the allegation is made will be provided with a copy of the disclosure and any evidence supporting it.

5.4 In the event of a decision to refer the matter to the police, the provision of a copy of the disclosure and any evidence in support of it to the person against whom the allegation is made will be at the absolute discretion of the police.

6 Subsequent Action

6.1 Upon completion of an internal investigation, a written report will be made to the Registrar. The outcome of an internal investigation or an independent enquiry or referral to the police will determine whether further action should be taken and, if so, the nature of the action, which might include the invoking of other approved University procedures such as disciplinary, grievance or complaint and harassment procedures, or reference to an appropriate external authority.

7 Reporting of Outcomes

7.1 A report of all disclosures and any subsequent action will be made by the Registrar to the Chairman of Council and the Audit Committee. The Chairman of Council, the Chairman of Audit Committee, and the Registrar will have joint responsibility for maintaining and overseeing this policy and procedure and for making appropriate reports to Council.

This policy and procedure will be the subject of periodic review and, if necessary, revision in light of experience and in consequence of any further advice which may be issued in the higher education sector.
Student Disciplinary Procedures

1(a) Introduction

These procedures seek to ensure that student disciplinary matters are dealt with fairly and promptly at the appropriate level by those with clear authority from the University. The procedures apply to persons who are subject to the discipline of the University as prescribed in the General Regulations.

The purpose of the procedures is to regulate student behaviour in order to secure the proper working of the University in the broadest sense. As serious consequences may follow a finding of misconduct, it is necessary in every case for it to be shown that the conduct in question falls within the general definition before it may be characterised as misconduct.

(b) Definition of Misconduct

A breach of discipline is, for the purpose of these procedures, called an "act of misconduct", and this will include, but not be limited to, failure to observe all University rules and regulations including local regulations for the governance of Academic Schools, Academic Service Departments and University Residences. The essence of misconduct under this code is improper conduct or improper interference, in the broadest sense, with the proper functioning or activities of the University, or those who work or study in the University. It also includes conduct which otherwise damages the University.

(c) Scope

These procedures apply to student behaviour in the University, and this extends to all buildings and grounds belonging to the University, including University Residences, Sports Grounds, the University Farms and the University Research Vessel. The procedures shall also apply to acts of misconduct committed outside the University when a student is away in a University context, or when it is found that there is some link to the University or its reputation. Discipline of students within the Union Society building shall be the responsibility of officials of the Union Society nominated by the Society. The Union Society has an agreement with the University which identifies matters which it will report as a matter of course to the University and matters which it will report to the Police. The agreement is subject to annual review.

Examination and other assessment irregularities are dealt with in accordance with the University Procedure for Assessment Irregularities.

(For the avoidance of doubt, the University may proceed under Student Disciplinary Procedures notwithstanding the instigation of any criminal proceedings.)

The full Student Disciplinary Procedure is available at

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm
Student Complaints Procedure

Introduction

1. The Complaints Procedure described below should be followed in cases where a student wishes to make a complaint about a service or member(s) of staff or another student within the University where it has not been possible to resolve the problem with the service or individual(s) concerned.

2. Before having recourse to the Complaints Procedure, a student should attempt to resolve a problem with the individual(s) concerned or consult his/her tutor or supervisor or head of School for help and advice. Only when these steps have failed, or when the student has good cause for not pursuing these means of resolving the issue, should the Complaints Procedure be invoked.

3. The University has complementary policies about expectations in respect of dignity at work and study, racial equality and equality of opportunities (See www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/hr/policy/policies. Students wishing to make a complaint about actions which are contrary to these policies shall do so by completing the student complaint form/procedure. They should also make it clear that their grievance relates to one of these specific policies.

Appeals resulting from Student Disciplinary Procedures are dealt with under separate arrangements.

There are also separate procedures for dealing with complaints relating to tenants, staff or service in University accommodation. The procedures are contained in the relevant information booklets supplied by the respective student residences.

The Complaints Procedure shall not apply to cases in which an individual wishes to appeal against an academic decision; in such instances the applicant should follow the Academic Appeals Procedure for Students. In order to avoid duplication of effort, the Academic Registrar shall determine whether a complaint shall proceed if an appeal has also been made in connection with the same/similar matter as the complaint.

Students shall not be disadvantaged for lodging a complaint in good faith.

Further Information

Further advice and guidance can be obtained from the Student Progress Service, Student and Academic Services, King’s Gate or from the Student Advice Centre in the Union Society.

The web source for the procedure and form is:

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress/staff-resources/procedures.htm
Policy for Intellectual Property and Research Studentships

Introduction
The University has become concerned that heads of School and supervisors may not be fully aware of the pitfalls that can accompany our attempts to protect and commercialize Intellectual Property (IP) arising from work carried out during an MPhil or PhD programme, or during an undergraduate research project or during a working visit by a member of staff from another institution. Where supervisors believe that a project involving a student or an academic visitor is likely to generate potentially commercialisable IP, they should note carefully the position outlined below.

Intellectual Property generated by members of staff in the University is automatically vested in the University, provided that it relates to work that the member of staff would normally be expected to carry out as part of their day-to-day activities. However, undergraduate and research postgraduate students and academic visitors are not members of staff, and there may be considerable variation in the nature and source of their funding. This is a complex situation. This note explains the IPR position of different types of studentships. It details where positive action is taken by University Research Office (URO) to protect IP and identifies where schools need themselves to take specific action.

Where a student or a visitor is joining a large research effort with considerable and possibly highly commercialisable IP, supervisors must ensure that the IP position is reviewed immediately with the student, that the student is aware of the position with regard to IP, that he or she understands the problems that will arise for the University should the IP associated with a project be disclosed prematurely, and that the IP generated in the course of the grant is properly vested in the University in exchange for an undertaking to treat the student as if he or she were a member of academic staff with regard to intellectual property. A corollary of this is that where the student has clearly been responsible for ‘inventive’ steps in the prosecution of his or her research, and that research has led to a patent being filed by the University, the student’s name shall appear on the patent.

Case Students and Commercially Funded Studentships
For students on CASE awards, or awards that are funded in whole or part by Industry, URO will issue a standard letter to the student, a copy of which can be seen on the Web. In this letter it is made clear that the IP generated by the student during his or her research will be owned by the University and that in this regard the student will be treated as if the student were a member of the academic staff. URO will normally negotiate the ownership and exploitation conditions of any IP arising from the work with the company before the research project begins. It is very much in the interests of supervisors to ensure that such an agreement is in place; failure to do so may have very serious consequences at a later date.

Studentships Supported from Charitable Foundations
For students on charitable foundation grants, the situation is more variable:
with some charities, such as the Cancer Research Campaign, the University has a framework agreement; many other charities impose conditions on IP and its exploitation as part of their standard conditions of grant, and supervisors are strongly advised to consult URO to establish the situation in each case. Where such agreements exist, or where conditions attached to the grant vest the IP with the charity or with a third party acting on behalf of the charity, the supervisor should liaise with URO to ensure that the student receives and signs an appropriate assignment letter. Where no agreement is in place, and/or the charity makes no disposition of IP arising from its grants, the difficulties are similar to those described in the next section.

**Research Council Funded and Quota Studentships**

For students funded by the Research Councils alone, the precise situation will depend on the nature of the award. Many awards are made as 'earmarked' studentships i.e. the studentship is part of a larger grant; the conditions of such grants normally vest the exploitation of the IP generated with the University, and supervisors should seek the advice of URO over the assignment of the student's IP to the University, using a standard letter available on the website. Students on this type of grant will for the purposes of intellectual property be treated as if they were members of staff. For students funded by normal Research Council Quota studentships, the responsibility for exploitation of any IP arising from the studentship is vested with the University, but IP arising during the studentship remains, in principle, the property of the student unless explicit steps are taken. It is of the highest importance that supervisors and heads of school recognize this fact.

**Self-funded Students**

A more complex situation arises where students are self-funded. Under these circumstances, students are free agents, and no assumption can be made that IP generated during the course of the research project will vest solely with the University. Where the creative step can clearly be traced to the supervisor, and documentary proof of this can be produced, then there is no problem, but real-life situations are usually far from being so clear-cut, with both the supervisor and the student likely to claim some of the credit. The University does not believe that it would be feasible to introduce a general condition into the PhD regulations automatically vesting IP derived from a PhD or MPhil project with the University; such a clause, affecting those who are essentially 'self-employed' would be unlikely to survive scrutiny by the courts. On the other hand, ownership of only some of the IP is also of little intrinsic value to the student. We believe, therefore, that the most effective way forward would be for the supervisor to agree with the student, in writing, before the research starts that any IP arising from the work carried out, and any which is additional to that provided before the start, should be assigned to the University, with the student being assured by the University that his or her interests will be taken fully into account. A draft letter for this purpose can be found on the website. All background IP of relevance should be properly documented, so that the starting position is clear, and the student invited to agree that any IP arising from his/her work would be added as appropriate to that background IP. A signed statement to this effect should be obtained.
Students Funded Directly by Third Parties

A student funded directly by a third party, such as an overseas government or agency, may claim that no agreement over IP is possible without consultation with his/her sponsor(s), and an opportunity should be given for such an agreement to be obtained. However, where such an agreement proves impossible to obtain, supervisors should consider carefully the nature of the project, recognizing that it may not be possible under these circumstances for the University to obtain protection for any IP generated.

Visiting Researchers

The position of visiting academic staff is similar, in principle, to students, in that funding for their visit may arise from a large number of sources, and clear conditions with respect to IP are the exception rather than the rule. As for studentships, much depends on whether the funding agency has an explicit agreement with the University.

Where this is the case, the visiting academic member of staff must agree to be bound by those conditions, and this agreement should be in writing. As is the case with studentships a more complex situation arises where the visitor is either self-funded, or funded by an agency with which we have no agreement. The position outlined above also applies in this case, with the added risk that the reports often required by such agencies may lead inadvertently to premature disclosure. This is a particular problem where, as is often the case, the visitor joins a research group which may seek to protect IP accumulated over some time, and which could be jeopardized either by disclosure or even by disagreement as to the author of the decisive inventive step. Where a visitor joins a group actively engaged in research likely to lead to commercialisable intellectual property, the group leader must seek to rationalize the IP position with the visitor before work starts. In particular, the visitor must agree in writing to be treated during his/her stay, as a member of the University's staff, with all IP generated during the stay vested with the University in return for agreement that his or her interests will be protected in the same way as for University staff. This requirement is already imposed by the University with regard to safety, and reflects the most reasonable way in which the University can deal with a situation that otherwise would become both complex and potentially very costly.

Practicalities

Schools should use the standard letter which can be accessed from the URO website. Two copies of each letter should be signed both by the supervisor and the student. The student should be given one copy and the other signed original must be deposited with URO, since any legal steps needed will have to be undertaken by URO. Further general guidance about studentships is available in University Research Office. See http://www.ncl.ac.uk/business-directorate/
### Summary Table for Action on IPR of Students and Visiting Researchers

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### Policy and Procedure for Investigating Allegations of Research Misconduct (for staff)

**General Policy**

1.1 The University expects all staff who engage in research to observe the highest standards of integrity at all times. The Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life identified seven principles that have relevance to best practice in the conduct of research. These are: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Together these principles provide a foundation for personal integrity that should be reflected in the professional conduct of research by every individual who contributes to research at the University.
1.2 All researchers should be familiar with, and conduct their research in accordance with the University's *Code of Good Practice in Research*. Research misconduct is least likely to arise in an environment where good open research practice is encouraged and where there is effective supervision at all levels. Heads of school and directors of research institutes are responsible for establishing and communicating the standards, protocol and ethics for research relevant to their area, to all academic and research staff, and for ensuring adherence to these standards.

1.3 Allegations of research misconduct are fortunately rare, but the University takes any allegation very seriously and will ensure that all allegations are investigated in accordance with the policy and procedures set out in this document. The University is also committed to protecting its researchers from malicious accusations and will take action against any individual(s) responsible for such allegations.

1.4 This policy complements the University's policy on Public Interest Disclosure ('Whistleblowing policy'). Allegations of research misconduct made under Public Interest Disclosure will be referred by the Registrar, or, in his absence the Director of Business Development, to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) (PVC(R)), or if more appropriate to another senior officer following consultation with the Vice-Chancellor or, in his absence, the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor, and investigated in accordance with the policy and procedure set out in this document.

**Scope**

2.1 This document applies to all employees, honorary or visiting researchers and fellows conducting research within or on behalf of the University at the time the misconduct is alleged to have occurred. Where allegations of misconduct are made by an individual or organization external to the university such an individual or organization will be informed of the University's policy and procedures and of the University's expectations with regard to compliance.

2.2 In this document the masculine gender includes the feminine gender and singular nouns and verbs include the plural and vice versa.

**General Principles**

3.1 Key definitions are presented in Annex 1.

3.2 All University employees or individuals working within the University have a responsibility to both the University and to the wider research community to report observed, suspected or apparent research misconduct as set out in these documents.

3.3 An individual reporting apparent misconduct has a responsibility to do so in good faith, to maintain confidentiality and to co-operate with any subsequent assessment or investigation.

3.4 The PVC(R) will, to the maximum extent possible, respect the privacy of those who in good faith report apparent misconduct and will make diligent efforts to protect their positions and reputations.

3.5 The PVC(R) will be supported in this procedure by a member of the Human Resources team, who will be responsible for ensuring that both the complainant and the respondent are kept fully informed of progress.
Preliminary Action (Stage 1)

4.1 Any member of the University who believes that an act of research misconduct has occurred or is occurring should report the allegation (with all relevant background) to the relevant Head of school or director of research institute. If an individual is unsure whether a suspected action constitutes research misconduct, s/he may discuss this informally with the head or director. If the head or director believes that the circumstances described do not meet the definition of research misconduct, s/he will advise the individual and if necessary take other appropriate action to address any specific issues. If the Head or Director decides that the circumstances described meet the definition of research misconduct then s/he will request that the individual submits a formal allegation in writing to the Provost of the Faculty referencing this procedure.

4.2 If the individual is not satisfied with the response from the head of school or institute director or if, for any reason, the individual does not feel it appropriate to raise the matter initially with the head or director s/he may instead discuss the allegation direct with the research dean for the faculty. If the research dean believes that the circumstances described do not meet the definition of research misconduct, he will advise the individual and if necessary take other appropriate action to address any specific issues. If the research dean decides that the circumstances described meet the definition of research misconduct then he will request that the individual submit a formal allegation in writing to the Provost of the faculty referencing this procedure.

4.3 A complaint from a source external to the University will be referred direct to the Provost of the faculty concerned to carry out a preliminary assessment as described in the following paragraphs.

4.4 The Provost, assisted where appropriate by the head or director and the research dean, will review the allegation and will inform the individual against whom the allegation is made of the substance of the allegation and give him an opportunity to respond. If he is not satisfied with the response or believes that the reputations of any of the parties (including the University) will remain in jeopardy if the matter is not subject to independent assessment, he will proceed to the next stage of the procedure. As part of this preliminary action the Provost will also identify any funding source(s) for the research which is the subject of the complaint and identify whether there are any external parties such as collaborators who may be affected and notify this information to the PVC(R).

4.5 At this stage, all possible steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the complainant and respondent until such time as a formal investigation is warranted under stage 3.

4.6 If the Provost decides that an assessment is warranted he will ask the head or director to arrange for all relevant research records and materials (including computers and computer discs) to be secured.

4.7 If the Provost decides that an assessment is not warranted, he will record his justification for that decision and inform the complainant and respondent of this outcome. This record must be copied to the PVC(R).

4.8 If the Provost has an interest in the matter this preliminary action will be carried out under the direction of the Provost of another faculty appointed
Initial Assessment (Stage 2)

5.1 Purpose

The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether there is prima facie evidence of research misconduct, not to reach a final conclusion as to whether misconduct occurred or who was responsible.

5.2 Notification Requirements

If the Provost decides that an assessment is warranted he will notify both the respondent and complainant in writing, and remind them of their obligation to co-operate in the assessment and to observe the confidentiality requirements. He will also inform the PVC(R) of the proposed action.

If the PVC(R) has a conflict of interest in the matter, the Vice-Chancellor or, in his absence, the Deputy-Vice-Chancellor, will appoint an alternative senior member of the University to fulfil the role of the PVC(R) set out in this procedure.

5.3 Appointment of Assessment Committee

The PVC(R) will appoint an assessment committee of three individuals (which should not include himself) with no conflicts of interest in the case and who have the appropriate expertise to evaluate the technical or academic issues. Normally at least one member of the committee will be appointed from a school or research institute outside the faculty concerned. The committee shall be chaired by a member of the committee external to the faculty concerned appointed by the PVC(R).

5.4 Assessment Committee Terms of Reference and Procedure

The assessment committee should specifically limit its scope to that of evaluating the facts only to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of research misconduct to warrant an investigation.

Assessment will normally involve the committee in interviewing the complainant, the respondent (who may be accompanied by a friend, who may be a trade union representative, a work colleague, or other appropriate person), and key witnesses, including, if appropriate, external expert witnesses, and examining the relevant research records and materials. The Respondent may submit evidence to the committee.

The Assessment Committee should keep proper records of their proceedings. A written report should be prepared which states what evidence was reviewed, summarizes relevant interviews and includes a conclusion as to whether an investigation is warranted.

5.5 Time Limit for Completing Assessment Report

The assessment committee will complete the assessment and submit its report in writing within 30 working days starting from the date the committee was set up. Where circumstances clearly warrant a longer period, the PVC(R) may approve an extension of this time limit. The reason for the extension will be entered into the records of the enquiry and the report. The respondent and complainant will also be notified of the extension.
5.6 Comments by Respondent
The respondent against whom the allegation was made will be given a copy of the report and evidence considered by the assessment committee. The respondent must submit written comments on the report within 20 working days of receipt of the report. These comments will be attached as an addendum to the assessment report.

5.7 Decision by PVC(R)
After receiving both the report and the written comments of the respondent, if any are made, the PVC(R) shall determine whether to conduct a formal investigation, conclude the matter or take some other appropriate form of action. The PVC(R) shall inform the Vice-Chancellor of his decision, and shall send him a copy of the assessment report, and any comments submitted by the respondent, within five working days of receiving the report.

The PVC(R) will inform both the complainant and the respondent of his decision in writing.

Formal Investigation (Stage 3)

6.1 Purpose
The purpose of the formal investigation is to examine and evaluate all relevant facts to determine whether research misconduct has occurred and if so, the responsible person and the seriousness of the misconduct.

6.2 Notification Requirements
If the PVC(R) decides that a formal investigation will be conducted, he will notify both the respondent and the complainant in writing and remind them that they are expected to co-operate in the investigation. Failure to do so may render themselves open to disciplinary action by the University against them.

The PVC(R) shall, where required to do so under the terms of any funding conditions, notify any bodies that provide funding related to the research of the individual concerned, that an investigation is to take place. Similarly the PVC(R) shall also notify any other body related to the research concerned in the event that the University is contractually obliged to notify that body at this stage in the investigation.

6.3 Appointment of Investigation Committee
The PVC(R) will appoint an investigation committee consisting of at least three persons (which should not include himself), and a member of the Human Resources directorate. None of the investigation committee shall have served on the assessment committee or have been previously involved with the case. Normally at least one member of the committee will be appointed from a school or research institute outside the faculty concerned. The committee shall be chaired by a member of the committee external to the faculty concerned appointed by the PVC(R). Membership may include appointees external to the University if no qualified or competent members can be appointed from within the University. Members of the investigation committee must not have any conflicts of interest with the respondent or complainant or the case in question, and they must have the necessary expertise to examine the evidence, interview the witnesses and conduct the investigation. The investigation committee will keep written records and the committee will be provided with secretariat support by the Registrar.
The PVC(R) will notify the respondent of the proposed constitution of the investigation committee. If the respondent submits a written objection to any of the persons appointed to the investigation committee, the PVC(R) may replace the challenged person with a qualified substitute. If the PVC(R) does not replace the challenged person, the reasons for the objection and its overruling should be part of the investigation report. Not more than two challenges to the constitution of the investigation committee may be made by the respondent.

6.4 Investigation Process

The investigation will be initiated within 30 working days of the completion of the assessment if findings from that assessment provide sufficient basis for conducting an investigation.

The investigation will include examination of all documentation including relevant research data materials, proposals, publications, correspondence, memoranda, and notes of telephone calls, and any other documents deemed by the committee to be pertinent to the Investigation. The investigation committee may call upon witnesses to be cross-examined and invite expert witnesses to comment and be cross-examined. The respondent will have the opportunity to be interviewed and may be accompanied at interview by a friend such as a trade union representative, a work colleague or other appropriate individual. The respondent or his/her friend may submit evidence to the committee and cross-examine witnesses. Whenever possible interviews should be conducted of all individuals involved in making the allegations, and other individuals who might have information regarding key aspects of the allegations. A verbatim record of these interviews should be prepared by the committee secretariat to ensure factual accuracy, and included as part of the investigation report.

6.5 Time Limit for Completing Investigation Report

An investigation should normally be completed within 60 working days of the appointment of the investigation committee. This includes conducting the investigation, preparing the report of findings, making the report available for comment by the respondent and submitting the report to the PVC(R). An extension in this time may be approved by the PVC(R) where it is impracticable for the full process of the Investigation to be carried out within this time-frame.

6.6 Investigation Report Contents

The final investigation report must state how the investigation was conducted, describe how and from whom the information was obtained relevant to the investigation, state the findings and explain the basis for the findings. It must also include the full verbatim reports of the interviews. The report must state explicitly whether in the view of the investigation committee research misconduct has occurred.

6.7 Comments by the Respondent

The PVC(R) shall provide to the respondent a copy of the report and evidence considered by the investigation committee and offer the respondent an opportunity to comment on the report. Comments from the respondent must be submitted to the PVC(R) within 20 working days of receipt of the report and shall be attached as an addendum.
7 Outcome and Subsequent Actions (Sanctions/Disciplinary procedures)

The PVC(R) shall pass the investigation report together with comments if any, from the respondent, to the Vice-Chancellor or whoever is authorized under the University Statutes and Ordinances concerning staff discipline, to determine what action should be taken in accordance with the University's disciplinary procedures as set out in the Statutes. If it is decided that a formal disciplinary panel should be set up, the report of the investigation committee will form part of the evidence to be considered by the disciplinary panel.

If there is a finding of research misconduct at the conclusion of any disciplinary process, or if the respondent admits any research misconduct, the University may convey the findings to appropriate bodies. These may include the General Medical Council, or other professional body, any relevant grant-awarding body or any other public body with an interest, the editors of any journal which have published articles by the person against whom the allegation has been upheld, or any other body which in the opinion of the University is likely to be affected by the research misconduct in question. All such disclosure must be limited to misconduct upheld in relation to research relevant to such bodies or published by such journals. Where an appeal is lodged this fact will also be conveyed to the bodies concerned, as will the outcome of the appeal.

8 Restoration of Reputations

If the allegations are not upheld and especially in the event that the University becomes aware that the allegations have become public, the University will take all reasonable steps to restore the reputations of persons alleged to have engaged in misconduct. This will include taking appropriate steps to inform all parties previously notified of the alleged misconduct, of the outcome of the disciplinary procedure and to publish a notice stating the outcome of the investigation where so requested to by the respondent.

9 Appeal by the Complainant against a decision not to pursue the allegation.

If the complainant is not satisfied with any decision reached during this procedure, s/he may have recourse to the University's Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosures.

10 Malicious Accusations

Where the outcome of a preliminary action, assessment or investigation indicates that an allegation has not been made in good faith, the University may decide to pursue disciplinary action against the complainant where s/he is employed by the University, and appropriate civil action through the courts against an external complainant.

11 Maintenance of Records

Records of assessments or investigations will be maintained for not less than seven years after the termination of the Investigation. Where required to do so the University may make these records available to external organizations.
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Policy on Postgraduates Who Teach

Introduction

This policy covers practices in relation to teaching and learning for postgraduates teaching or demonstrating on modules. Appointment practices, employment terms and conditions are covered in more detail by separate Human Resources policies.

Postgraduates eligible for teaching and demonstrating duties include any student registered for a postgraduate programme invited by a School to undertake such duties. Any student engaging in teaching and demonstrating must have already obtained a qualification at the level they are teaching. Postgraduates may support teaching by:

- Taking small groups such as seminars, tutorials or workshops
- Helping with fieldwork
- Demonstrating in laboratories
- Providing occasional lectures on their own specialism
- Assessment under the conditions indicated in this document.

General

1. All recruitment of postgraduate students to teaching and demonstrating posts will be fair and transparent, made on the basis of their academic ability or relevant experience and regardless of age, religion or belief, ethnicity, gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation or disability.

2. Normally only fulltime registered postgraduate students are eligible for teaching and demonstrating duties. Parttime postgraduate students are only used for teaching and demonstrating where fulltime students with the appropriate expertise are not available and the student has the required knowledge of the institution.

3. Payment for teaching and demonstrating is determined by Human Resources annually and the demand for such teaching is governed by the needs of the School.

4. All postgraduates who teach must satisfactorily complete formal training before they begin to teach. Training will be available for all postgraduates who teach from the Staff Development Unit.

5. Postgraduates cannot teach on any module which contributes to the programme they are currently registered on.

6. Schools must not make excessive demands on the student’s time. Tutors and supervisors must be consulted about the time devoted to such duties and teaching hours must be consistent with the requirements of the student’s project, the terms of their studentship and any visa arrangements. Any disagreements should be resolved by the Postgraduate Director or the Head of School’s nominee.

7. Postgraduates who teach can first or second mark assignments provided they have received guidance in this area, including a clear marking criteria, and moderation and second marking processes are in place.
8. Module Leaders remain ultimately responsible for the quality of teaching of postgraduates on their module, including ensuring second marking and moderation of the module assessment where postgraduates are involved in this activity.

Training and Support

All postgraduate teachers should normally successfully complete Introduction to Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (ITLHE), Part A of the Higher Education academy accredited Certificate of Academic Practice (CASAP), before they teach. Though not mandatory, on completion of Part A participants can also complete Part B when they receive Associate Status of the Higher Education Academy. It is necessary to have teaching experience before signing up to Part B.

If specialist postgraduate training is required, not provided by the ITLHE, an alternative can be proposed by the relevant Faculty Dean of Postgraduate Studies and approved by the Chair of UTLC, provided that this training is at least equivalent to that provided by ITLHE.

Postgraduate Deans are responsible for granting and keeping a record of individual exemptions for postgraduates from University training, based on the criteria below. Exemption from attending the programme will normally apply if:

- A postgraduate already has a teaching qualification comparable with the relevant modules of the ITLHE (e.g. PGCE).
- The HoS, or their nominee, recommends exemption for some other reason such as: a postgraduate has 3 years teaching experience at this level; at least 1 years prior teaching experience at this level combined with evidence of learning (e.g. professional development activities such as workshops and seminars on teaching).

Responsibilities of the Postgraduate Teacher or Demonstrator

1. Postgraduates who teach should attend and participate in all training and briefings provided by the University and School.

2. Postgraduates who teach must demonstrate a good standard of English equivalent to at least IELTS 6.5-7.0.

3. Postgraduates who teach should participate in the student feedback mechanisms that the School employs to monitor teaching.

4. Postgraduates who teach should attend appropriate Boards of Studies, Staff Meetings and other meetings as specified by the School e.g. teaching away days relevant to their teaching.

5. Postgraduates are responsible for consulting with tutors or supervisors concerning their teaching and ensuring that it is consistent with the requirements of their project and studentship.

Responsibilities of the School

1. Postgraduates who teach should be provided with School resources, course materials and support, adequate to fulfil their teaching /demonstration responsibilities.
2. Postgraduates should be told how much time they are expected to spend on their duties and the hours for remuneration.

3. It is the responsibility of the module leader to provide support and guidance to postgraduates undertaking teaching.

4. The School should organise appropriate induction and briefing sessions for postgraduates who teach.

5. The School is responsible for ensuring that postgraduate teachers participate in the training necessary to carry out their teaching.

6. It is the School’s responsibility to ensure that postgraduates are aware of any relevant health and safety procedures.

7. There should be clear and regular procedures for the evaluation and review of postgraduates’ performance, using standard student feedback procedures. Schools should take appropriate action if the feedback is negative.

8. Postgraduates who teach should be provided with an opportunity to give feedback on both their teaching and the support available for teaching to the School, and procedures for raising any issues should be made clear to them.

Withdrawing from the University

Occasionally students decide for a variety of reasons that they wish to withdraw from the University. If at any stage you begin to have doubts about continuing with your studies, you are advised to discuss the matter with your supervisor as soon as possible as it may be the case that something you perceive as a problem can be overcome. If you do decide to withdraw, you should inform your sponsor, your supervisor and the relevant graduate school administrator. If you are liable for tuition fees or for any or all of the tuition fee contribution, you should contact the Finance Office to find out how much you owe to the University or whether any refund is due to you. Even if you withdraw before the first instalment of a tuition fee contribution is due, you may still be liable to pay a certain amount to the University (see also Payment of Tuition Fees in Part Two of this Handbook).

If you are in University managed accommodation, you must also notify the Accommodation Office of your withdrawal. You will remain responsible for the rent charges for the full termly billing period. You will only be released from this if the room is re-let to another student who is not already committed to University accommodation.