Business and Law

PhD
Student Handbook
2016 /17

Dear Student,

Welcome to the Faculty Business & Law.

You will be joining a vibrant and diverse group of students and tutors. For some of you, this may be your first experience of living in Newcastle upon Tyne and studying at the faculty of business & law. For others, you may be continuing your studies after graduating from one of our Masters' programmes or you may already be familiar with the faculty of business & law as a member of staff.

This handbook gives you some background information about your programme and the faculty of Business & Law. It has been written on the basis that you are a new student. However, even if you are continuing your studies or are a member of staff, we would encourage you to read the handbook, as it contains information that is relevant *only to PhD students.*

This handbook is designed to provide PhD students with information about how research is conducted and supervised, as well as how you are assessed and progress monitored within your PhD studies. Some further information on issues relevant to doctoral level research study is also provided.

The faculty of business & law is committed to providing its PhD participants with programmes of research tuition, training, supervision and study facilities that will enable them to contribute to the achievement of excellence in research.

The programme and systems are structured to ensure that a competent, suitably qualified and motivated student, with the appropriate infrastructure of supervision and support can produce a doctoral thesis of the required quality within the timescales specified by the University.

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At the Faculty of Business & Law, great emphasis is placed on the learning process to help link theory with practice, and obtain the skills which will prepare you for your chosen career, for further post-doctoral studies or will help you with staff development. The Faculty's mission is to maintain its high standard of teaching and to strengthen its research profile and, as PhD participants, you will have a very important part to play in this. We are proud of the deserved reputation we have for quality but we are not complacent - we hope that you will be proud to belong to the Faculty, making a valued contribution to the Faculty's mission.

For most students, university life opens up new freedoms and opportunities, but it can also bring many new responsibilities. It is important that you get the most out of your time as a postgraduate student at Northumbria. You have made the first step in improving your career prospects. Many students who leave the University having enhanced their qualifications find new opportunities open up to them. They are also more confident and able to meet the challenges of the modern business world. Obviously, this means working hard and doing well in your studies, but also making sure that you enjoy yourself by developing your interests outside your study programme. It is a fact that major employers who recruit postgraduates will expect them both to

have done well in their degrees and achieved other objectives during their time as a student.

The Faculty of Business & Law has people of different gender, race, religion, age, culture, beliefs, sexual orientation and people with disabilities. We do not tolerate discrimination or abuse of any kind towards students and staff and will do all in our power to ensure that everyone at the faculty has the opportunity to develop themselves to the full potential and that we all continue to enjoy our vibrant, diverse and hard-working community.

The PhD Programme Team

Contents

Glossary
of common terms and phrases

AP	Annual Progression	Annual Progression is the key mechanism for monitoring and supporting research student progression and completion
NBS & NSL	Newcastle Business School & Northumbria School of Law	
PD	Programme Director	The programme director is responsible for the strategic development of the PhD programme.
PL	Programme Leader	The programme leader, supported by the PD, is responsible for the day-to-day running of your programme.
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy	This is your programme. The PhD is studied Full- time (up to three years) or Part-time (up to five years).
DBA/ DBL	Doctorate of Business Administration / Doctorate of Business Leadership	As part of your research training, you are expected to attend sessions from the DBA / DBL taught blocks.
PA	Project Approval	This is the planned outline of the project, including the research questions being asked, aims, methods and timescales. Each student (helped by the Principal Supervisor) prepares and submits a Project Application within the first 3 months (full-time) or 5 months (part-time).
eLearning Portal (Blackboard)	Electronic learning portal	The programme has its own eLearning portal (website) containing valuable information, materials and communication mechanisms – it is an integral part of your study
CCE1	City Campus East (Newcastle Business School Building)	This is the home of NBS. All blocks of teaching on the PhD programme will be taught in this building. The second number denotes the floor - e.g. CCE1 414 is on the fourth floor of Newcastle Business School.

Introduction

This booklet is one of the few printed documents that you will receive during your programme of study. Its purpose is to give you some relevant information about your programme and the University. The booklet has been written on the basis that you are a new student and therefore tries to cover the main aspects of the programme. As well as the academic programme, you are also here to expand your life experiences and develop friendships with other postgraduate research (PGR) students (i.e. DBA / DBL / Doctorate in Law and PhD students from other cohorts) as part of our research community. You should enjoy the programme both from an academic view but also from a personal and social perspective.

The PhD is essentially a programme of independent study, supported by supervision and training support and resources. The day-to-day operation of the programme is supported by the University's website and systems, including the eLearning Portal. Nearly all of the documents that you will need to refer to are available electronically via the Internet, apart from academic textbooks. The internet is an essential requirement of the programme and all participants ***must*** have access to a computer that supports the Internet, especially if you are a part-time student without access to our research suite. Additionally, access to Microsoft Office software is also an essential requirement of the programme, as most documents will be presented in this format. Other more specialised software may also be used, although you will be advised of this during your research training.

Management of the PhD programme

This programme is one of the portfolio of Research Programmes offered at the Faculty of Business & Law. The programme Management team is as follows:
PGR coordinator: Sarah Jukes
Telephone: +44 (0) 0191 349 5155
E-mail: mailto:nb.nbs-research-admin@northumbria.ac.uk
Postal Address:
Graduate School
Northumbria University, Room 005, 3 Ellison Terrace,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE1 8ST

PGR director: Dr Sandra Corlett
Telephone:+44 (0) 191 227 4920
E-mail: Sandra.corlett@northumbria.ac.uk

PhD Programme leader: Dr Karim Sorour
Telephone:+44 (0) 191 227 4376
E-mail: karim.sorour@northumbria.ac.uk

Programme information

General information about the PhD

The PhD programme allows students to undertake an individual programme of research development that will enable original research to doctoral level in their chosen field of study. It is designed to build on previous Undergraduate and/or Masters level study, to develop research and enquiry skills to the highest level, and to advance career opportunities through enhancing academic and professional development.

Programme details

The degree of PhD is awarded to a student who has:

1) undertaken a piece of supervised research;

2) critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge and understanding (i.e. worthy of publication and peer review by the academic community);

3) successfully completed training in, and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the field, and has demonstrated understanding of those methods;

4) submitted the work for examination in the form of a thesis, which is presented to a professional standard;

5) defended the submission by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners.

Programme components

The PhD programme has two key components, each designed to develop the student's skills and knowledge in research.

The first component is 'the research stage' of the programme, and the second component is 'the Professional Development and Research Training Programme' and the acquisition, through training and support agreed with your principal supervisor, of relevant research knowledge, skills and experience.

We are committed to enabling students to develop their full potential, both in completing their research degree programme successfully, and in career planning for the future. Research training is therefore central to a student's research programme, and each student has their own individual programme of research skills training.

Training includes both generic skills training (research skills and broader personal skills) and subject-specific research training (e.g. covering the wider context of the research area itself).

For PhD students, a professional Development and Research Training Programme (PDRT) guides them through the training they need. This starts right at the beginning of the programme with an initial training needs analysis, where student and Principal Supervisor together identify the student's current skills, the specific requirements of this particular research programme, and the student's skill gaps.

This is documented as part of the project approval form (available from the Graduate School website), and submitted for approval in month 3 (full-time students) or month 5 (part-time students) and updated subsequently during annual progression as detailed later in this handbook.

As part of your research training, you are expected to attend sessions from the DBA taught module "Advanced Business Research Methods".

This module is designed to develop students' previous knowledge and experience to a level where their skills are appropriate for doctoral level study. The classes for the taught module will be delivered in two study blocks of five consecutive days. The dates for 2015/16 are

Block 1: 17th to 21st October 2016

Block 2: 21st to 25th November 2016

Areas covered in these sessions will include philosophical considerations, advanced quantitative and qualitative techniques and doctoral research skills. In addition, experienced researchers will provide master classes during the taught sessions introducing leading-edge management thinking and research to the programme.

In parallel to research training, students undertake the research stage of the programme. This stage consists of the participant's doctoral research and final thesis. An appropriately qualified and experienced supervisory team, headed by a Principal Supervisor, will supervise each participant. Participants will have the chance to present their research ideas and findings to their colleagues and other researchers in the school on an annual basis (In the doctoral stream of the Faculty research conference).

PhD students will also be invited to attend various sessions of the Research Development programme (RDP) which is another opportunity to support them in their research and career development.

The most up-to-date version of the University Regulations for the PhD can be found at:
http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud_reg_handbk/research/

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Programme information

Mode of study

Candidates are registered for PhD on either a full or part-time basis starting from the date the University formally enrols him/her as a registered candidate. A full-time candidate devotes a minimum of 37 hours per week for 45 weeks per year to the research activity. A part-time candidate formally devotes a minimum of 18.5 hours per week for 45 weeks per year and determines, with the relevant Supervisor, the amount of time he or she will dedicate to the research activity, provided this is consistent with the research project aims, and the University's standard duration for the award.'

Programme content

The standard duration of a PhD (i.e. the period of time in which the completed research work should be submitted) is three years full-time study or five years part-time. PhD Programmes have the following registration 'milestones':

- Admission, initial enrolment and registration for the degree

- Project Approval (PA) within three months of admission and registration for full-time candidates and within five months for part-time candidates

- Annual progression, to review and confirm satisfactory progress, before re-enrolment on the anniversary of the start date

- The submission, presentation and defence at an oral examination of a written thesis.

'Project Approval (PA) on the PhD programme takes the form of an application which is assessed at a panel meeting and will include the following:
1) Provisional title of thesis;
2) A coherent research programme which can be completed within the timescale at the level required for the award and which includes:
   a) Relevant background to the research (literature review),
   b) Research aim/questions,
   c) An indicative research methodology, and
   d) A statement of the project's distinctiveness and likely contribution to knowledge;
3) A research plan with specific detail of year one actions and an indication of the overall plan to completion (e.g. using a Gantt chart);
4) An indication of compliance with University research ethics procedures (demonstrable by submission / completion of the on-line ethics form / reference number);
5) Research skills development (i.e. an initial evaluation of the candidate's past relevant training and current future needs, as aligned to the Professional Development and Research Training programme);
6) Confirmation of supervision team;
7) A full breakdown of essential resources to undertake the research degree programme.
8) Following PA, another important milestone is the AP which is discussed in page (11) of this handbook.

Students can apply to PA via the online system (e-vision). For more guidance on the application process please visit

http://nuweb2.northumbria.ac.uk/library/skillsplus/sublist.html?evpgr

Programme structures

Full-time (three years)

	Full Time PhD Programme Timeline
Programme Start	
Project Approval Submission Deadline	4 Months
Annual Progression 1 Submission Deadline (Document Review)	11 Months
Annual Progression 2 Submission Deadline (Panel Meeting)	23 Months
Nomination of Examiners Form Submission Deadline	30 Months
Thesis Submission Deadline	36 Months

For more details please refer to the university regulations on monitoring, progression points and examiner processes for PGR candidates available at
https://one.northumbria.ac.uk/service/ar/gs/Documents/Guidance%20on%20Monitoring%20and%20Progression%20Process%20Sept%202016.pdf
*Please note that the mock viva can take place within a window of 35-37 months. As such, it is more likely (according to the practice in Faculty of Business & Law) that it will take place after submission.
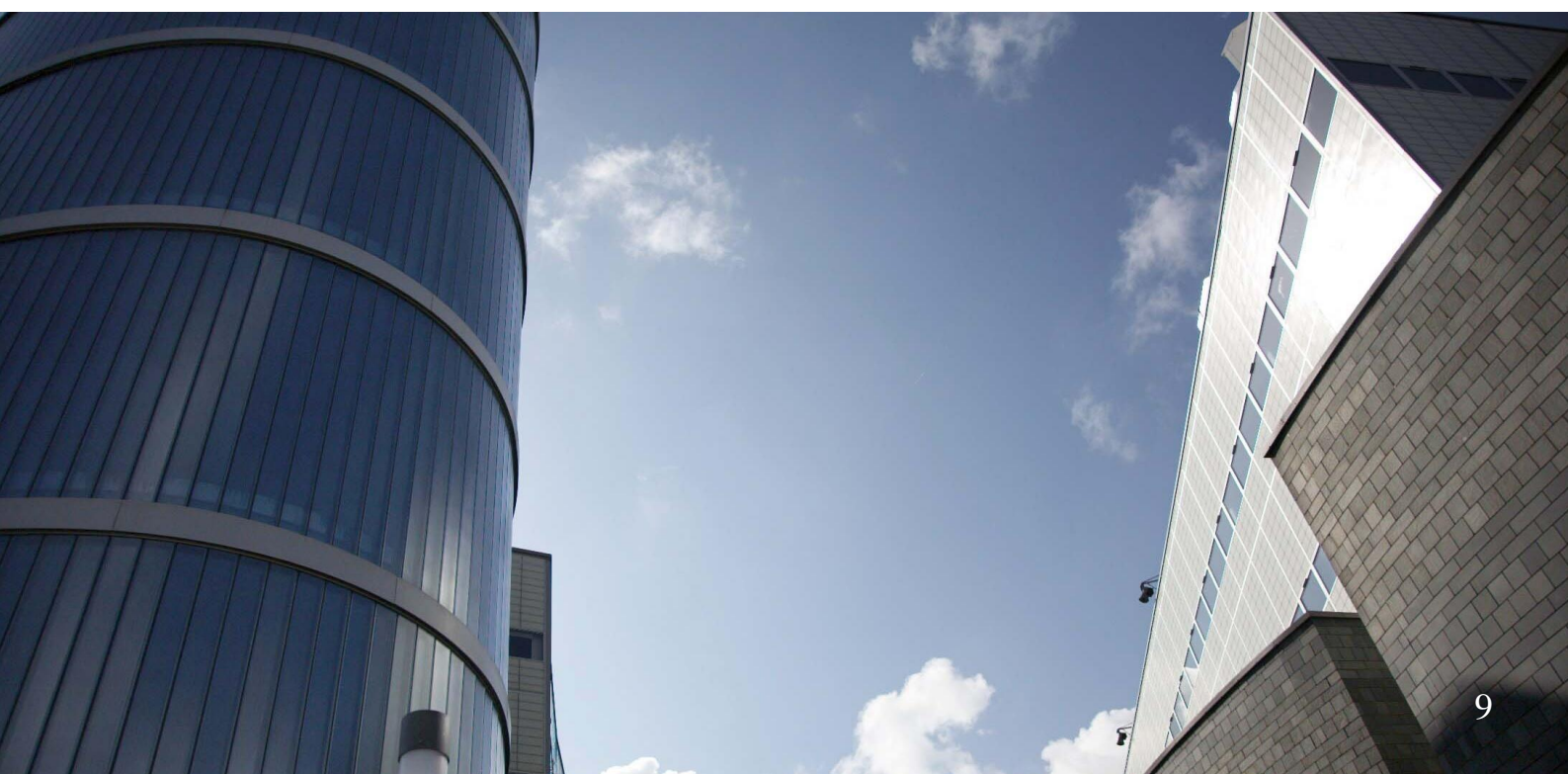
Programme structures

Part-time (five years)

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Programme Start	
Project Approval Submission Deadline	4 Months
Annual Progression 1 Submission Deadline (Document Review)	11 Months
Annual Progression 2 Submission Deadline (Document Review)	23 Months
Annual Progression 3 Submission Deadline (Panel Meeting)	35 months
Annual Progression 4 Submission Deadline (Document Review)	47 Months
Nomination of Examiners Form Submission Deadline	54 Months
Thesis Submission Deadline	60 Months

For more details please refer to the university regulations on monitoring, progression points and examiner processes for PGR candidates available at
https://one.northumbria.ac.uk/service/ar/gs/Documents/Guidance%20on%20Monitoring%20and%20Progression%20Process%20Sept%202016.pdf

 *Please note that the mock viva can take place within a window of 59-61 months. As such, it is more likely (according to the practice in Faculty of Business & Law) that it will take place after submission.

Annual progression guidelines for PhD students
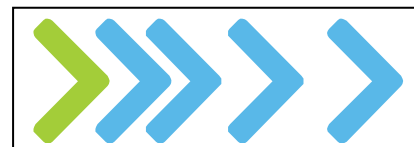
What is the purpose of AP?

The aim is to improve progression and completion, so that the student is awarded the degree in a timely manner.

Satisfactory progress must be made throughout the programme with regard to the required level of timely academic achievement; and progress will be monitored as follows:

▪ through successful completion of Project Approval at 4 months for all PhD students.

▪ by monitoring the Annual Progression process;

▪ the Principal Supervisor monitors satisfactory and timely progress throughout the programme in the normal course of supervision, via monthly meetings/contact with the student.

Annual Progression constitutes the key, formal progression points for research degree students, and the FRDSC determines whether or not the programme may continue.

The Annual Progression application will be assessed by either Documentation Review of Panel Meeting, depending on the stage of the candidate.

The FRDSC is required to ensure that, on an annual basis, each student satisfies the University criteria for progression in order to continue into the next year of the programme. These criteria are:

1) programme of research has been conducted satisfactorily to date;

2) timely progress has been made to date and the research degree programme can be successfully completed within standard the duration of the programme (three years full-time, five years part-time);

3) the programme continues to meet the level required for the award;

4) the programme has the potential to lead to a contribution to knowledge or understanding;

5) the Professional Development and Research Training and supporting studies programme specified at the Project Approval stage is on-going and has been completed satisfactorily to date; and an appropriate planned and relevant programme is in place; and

6) all relevant ethical considerations have been satisfactorily addressed.

What is the procedure for the AP?

AP is submitted via the e-vision online system. For guidance on the application process please visit:
https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/graduateschool/PGR_eAP.pdf

Annual progression guidelines for PhD students

The possible outcomes for Annual Progression

After the meeting, the Chair completes a report form with recommendations. A number of outcomes are possible:

- The recommendation of the Panel will be approved by the Faculty Research Degrees Sub-committee.

- The candidate's Annual Progression is not approved; the candidate may submit a second time. The Faculty Research Degrees Sub-Committee will determine the timescale and deadline for the re-submission.

- For doctoral candidates only) The candidate's Annual Progression on the current programme is not approved and the candidate is required to register for a lower award.

- Fail (Note: this is only applicable in the case of a second submission).

What to expect?

The panel may focus on the following kinds of questions:

- Why are you doing what you are doing? What is the rationale and background for your research?

- How have you implemented your research questions? Issues of design, methodology etc; knowledge of ethical procedures and issues.

- What have you done if things have gone wrong?

- What techniques have you used and do you know why you are using them? Do you understand the results that you have obtained using the techniques?

- Most importantly what does your research contribute that is new and original to the field? Does your research merit peer review - will it get published?

The panel is expected to act in a supportive manner and in the best interests of the student in offering advice. This would normally include advice on the future conduct of the research towards a doctorate. However, where academic progress is deemed to have been unsatisfactory, the panel may recommend, in the extreme case, that the student is withdrawn from the research programme.

In such cases, the panel would normally be expected to offer an opportunity for the student to provide further evidence of capability within an agreed time period. The panel may also request further information within an agreed time period even when recommending continuation on the doctorate and the panel may reconvene for further discussion.

References

Please note that the AP application has to take place through the e-vision system. For more guidance please visit https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/graduateschool/PGR_eAP.pdf

Ethics

The University policy on Ethics in research applies to all those engaged in research. The ethical principles of beneficence and non-malificence are fundamental to all research activity. Beneficence is the requirement to promote the interests and well-being of others. It is the ethical principle of 'doing good' in the widest sense. Non-malificence is the principle of 'not doing harm'. Both principles must be applied to all entities directly or indirectly affected by the research. In practice these principles frequently conflict, for example as in animal versus human welfare.

Ethical conduct in research demands respect for the rights of others who are directly or indirectly affected by the research. In relation to human participants, both their physical and personal autonomy should be respected. Their participation in the research normally should be on the basis of fully informed consent and their right to privacy, according to prevailing standards, should be guaranteed. Respect for rights to privacy are just as important where individuals are unaware that they are being researched, as would be the case when they are mentally incompetent to give permission for their inclusion in the research (or even deceased).

The initial responsibility for ethical issues lies with the research student. All research in the University is subject to ethical considerations concerning purpose, source of funding, methods to be deployed and wider value and impact. It is important that risks in carrying out a piece of research are clearly articulated and weighed against the potential value of it so that those involved (researchers and researched) proceed with informed consent.

Each Faculty will have a process in place for both considerations of ethical issues and giving advice on ethical problems. It is important that these processes are adhered to and that due consideration is given to ethical issues in all research undertaken within the University.

For information on the Ethics policies, go to the University site at:
https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/

Operational details for this year

Research suites / areas

Postgraduate research students have exclusive access to two open-access research suites located in room 415 in CCE1 and room 12 in 3 Ellison Terrace building. Additional shared research areas are in room 439 in CCE1 (shared with associate lecturers). This is designed to foster and support an exciting and dynamic doctoral research community. Also there is a research zone in the library on level 1. Please note that students should follow 'hot desk policy' when using these areas. Storage resources are available at the two suites.

Expectations

To ensure that all participants are aware of what is expected of them and what they can expect from the university, the following guidelines are given:

1) Participants should treat the supervisor and their colleagues with respect.

2) Participants will take responsibility for their own submitted work.

3) Participants are responsible for their own research project. Participants should recognise that supervisors will advise, but will not instruct.

4) Participants will set their own direction. The supervisor's role is to help the participant achieve their own objectives, but to ensure that the project belongs to the participant the supervisor will not intervene in the direction or objectives of the research project.

5) Participants will only contact the supervisor on substantive issues, after having exhausted other legitimate avenues to rectify their query (e.g. libraries, e-resources)

6) Participants will provide written work in draft form by the dates agreed with supervisors/tutors. Adequate time, usually one week, should be allowed between the submission of written work and feedback (or a meeting to discuss it), though this may be varied by mutual consent.

7) Participants will recognise that the supervisor's support will primarily concern process i.e. how the research project is undertaken, rather than the detailed content of the research project which may fall outside the supervisor's area of expertise.

8) Participants should not ask whether their assignment or research project will pass, or what mark it may achieve.

Operational details for this year

Responsibilities

1) Participants should attend all pre-arranged meetings or provide at least 24 hours notice of non-attendance.

2) Participants should undertake all reading requested prior to meetings.

3) Participants should attend meetings with writing and note-taking equipment.

4) Participants will monitor their university accounts regularly and respond promptly to members of staff.

Supervisor

1) The supervisor will treat all participants with respect.

2) The supervisor will support the participant's project but always recognise that the project belongs to the participant.

3) The supervisor will give a similar level of support to all participants, recognising that participants vary in the legitimate demands they may make upon supervisors.

4) The supervisor will give the best advice s/he can in assisting the participant to achieve their objectives.

5) The supervisor will not intervene in the direction or objectives of the research project and will not allow any previous disagreement on this to damage the quality of advice s/he gives.

6) The supervisor will consider all submitted written work usually no later than one week from the date of submission.

7) The supervisor will review excerpts or drafts but will not mark a complete draft.

Meetings/email contact

1) The supervisor and participant will have regular meetings or email contact. The participant will discuss their progress and the supervisor will answer any reasonable question the participant raises. If the supervisor is unable to answer a question, s/he will contact the participant no more than a week after the meeting/email.

2) The supervisor should attend all pre-arranged meetings or provide at least 24 hours' notice of non-attendance, giving the participants a series of alternative dates for the meeting.

3) The supervisor will be fully prepared for all meetings, having considered all submitted participant work.

4) Students will complete the standard Supervision Record Form, within a reasonable time after the meeting, and secure the Principal Supervisor's agreement and signature as an accurate record.

5) The supervisor will regularly monitor their university e-mail and respond promptly to messages (usually within 2 working days).

Student Feedback

As part of the University's Quality Assurance policy, the views and opinions of students are an important and valued part of continuous improvement within our programmes. Formally, we ask for feedback via PGR programmes committee meeting that takes place at the end of Semesters one and two. Additionally, a Faculty Research degrees sub-committee also exists and two PGR students are nominated to represent all the Faculty Research Students. This committee meets four times per year and allows PGR students to contribute to the running of research in the Faculty by providing the students' viewpoints. However, student representatives will be asked to leave the committee when confidential business is discussed.

However, perhaps the most important form of feedback is informal - through discussions with supervisors, administration staff and/or the programme team. We welcome constructive feedback at any time about any aspect of the programme. If you have any issues regarding the programme, we hope that these can be addressed informally wherever possible.

Operational details for this year

Exploring researchers' expectations in supervision

Read each of the statements below and then estimate your position in each. For example with statement 1, if you believe very strongly that it is the supervisor's responsibility to select a good topic you should put a ring round '1'. If you think that both the supervisor and researcher should equally be involved you put a ring round '3' and if you think it is definitely the student's responsibility to select a topic, put a ring round '5'.

You might find it useful to use this as a stimulus for discussion during one of your supervisions.

	1	2	3	4	5	
1. It is the supervisor's responsibility to select a research topic	1	2	3	4	5	The researcher is responsible for selecting their own topic
2. It is the supervisor who decides which theoretical framework or methodology is most appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	Researchers should decide which theoretical framework or methodology they wish to use
3. The supervisor should develop an appropriate programme and timetable of research and study for the researcher	1	2	3	4	5	The supervisor should leave the development of the programme of study to the researcher
4. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the researcher is introduced to the appropriate services and facilities of the department and university	1	2	3	4	5	It is the researchers responsibility to ensure that they have located and accessed all the relevant services and facilities for research
5. A warm supportive relationship between supervisor and researcher is important for successful candidature	1	2	3	4	5	A personal supportive relationship is inadvisable because it may obstruct objectivity for both researcher and supervisor during the candidature
6. The supervisor should insist on regular meetings with the researcher	1	2	3	4	5	The researcher should decide when they want to meet with the supervisor
7. The supervisor should check regularly that the researcher is working consistently and on task	1	2	3	4	5	The researcher should work independently and not have to account for how and where time is spent
8. The supervisor is responsible for providing emotional support and encouragement to the researcher	1	2	3	4	5	Personal counselling and support are not the responsibility of the supervisor - researchers should look elsewhere
9. The supervisor should insist on seeing all drafts of work to ensure that the researcher in on the right track	1	2	3	4	5	Researchers should submit drafts of work only when they want constructive criticism from the supervisor
10. The supervisor should assist in the writing of the thesis if necessary	1	2	3	4	5	The writing of the thesis should only ever be the researcher's own work
11. The supervisor is responsible for decisions regarding the standard of the thesis	1	2	3	4	5	The researcher is responsible for decisions concerning the standard of the thesis

http://www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/14872/Exploring-researchers-expectations-in-supervision.html

Operational details for this year

vitae
realising
the potential
of researchers

Incorporating the UK GRAD Programme and UKHERD

Issue 33 / August 2009

PGR Tips on supervisory meetings

You will get the most out of your relationship with your supervisor by being proactive. This means managing the supervision process rather than waiting for it to happen to you. Your supervisor is likely to be grateful to you for taking the initiative and respect you for it. Here is a list of tips that can make meetings with your supervisor(s) more effective.

Set up regular meetings

By agreeing the frequency and a schedule for meetings from the beginning, meetings are more likely to take place.

Preparation

Aim to produce a written report, piece of written work or coherent set of results for each meeting. Send this to your supervisor ahead of time. This can form the basis for discussion and allow your supervisor to get a good feel for the progress you are making. Producing a piece of work to a deadline is also a potent motivator should one be needed. If you intend to discuss results ensure you think about them in advance and present ideas and hypotheses along with the data.

Agenda

Send an agenda to your supervisor before the meeting. Drawing up an agenda will focus your mind on what you want to get out of the meeting. It can help to put things on the agenda that you might otherwise find hard to bring up in the course of a conversation or are outside the normal run of things. Things you may want to discuss include how your progress compares to expectations, career options, training needs and opportunities, conference or meeting attendance, possible collaborations. Your supervisor may also have items to add.

During the meeting

Take notes during the meeting. Don't be afraid to ask questions or slow down your supervisor if need be. Equally, be prepared to explain things yourself as your supervisor can't be an expert on everything. Be honest about any difficulties you may experience. Work through the agenda you set and use it to avoid going off track.

After the meeting

Write a summary of the meeting, especially any decisions made, include any action points either of you have committed to and an agreed date for the next meeting. Send this to your supervisor to check that you have both understood the same. This will highlight any problems immediately and prevent misunderstandings in the future. Bring this document along to the next meeting to help you review progress.

Operational details for this year

Notification of changes

Change in Address
There will be occasions when the research administration teams both in the faculty and the University's central research unit may have to write to you. Therefore it is important that your address records are up to date. Please can you ensure if you change your home or term address (i.e. your UK address if you are an overseas student) you let us know by informing the PGR programme coordinator.

Returning to your home country (if applicable) to undertake research/for personal reasons

There may be occasions during your programme when, if you are an overseas student, you may have to return to your home country either to undertake research or due to personal reasons. It is required, to comply with UK Border Agency regulations, that you inform the PGR coordinator and your Supervision Team when you will be returning home, how long for and possible return date. If you leave the country and your supervision team do not know or hear from you for a long period of time it may be assumed that you have left the programme.

Suspension

There may be occasions when it may be necessary for you to consider suspending your studies. The main reasons whereby you may request suspension or your supervision team may advise you to suspend are problems with progression or if you have personal extenuating circumstances which are affecting your performance on your programme. You can apply for a suspension up to 12 months from the Faculty Research Committee, by submitting a Personal Extenuating Circumstances claim. Guidance is available to students at
http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/researchandconsultancy/graduateschool/documents/

Changing programme/withdrawal from university

Occasionally students want to leave a programme, or the University. It is essential that you contact the Programme Leader or Programme Director in the first instance, as they will be able to discuss your concerns with you, and offer advice on options open to you. If, however, you still feel that leaving is the best decision for you, then you need to formally withdraw from the Programme in writing. If you fail to do this, you may be liable for fees.

Please note, that there may be financial implications due to change or withdrawal from a programme and you should discuss this with the programme tutor and student services.

Frequently asked questions

I don't think I'm progressing very well. What do I do next?
Discuss this with the Programme Leader or a member of the programme team. If this does not resolve it, contact the Doctoral Programme Director.

I have a problem - who do I talk to?
If you have any problems which you feel are affecting the progress of your studies, such as concerns regarding the supervision you are receiving or personal extenuating circumstances which may delay your progress or prevent you from meeting deadlines, you should approach the Programme Leader in the first instance. The Students Union and Student Support & Wellbeing both have advisers covering different areas of need.

Am I allowed to use the University letterhead during my research?
Yes, but only under the direct supervision of your supervisor i.e. it should carry the name and signature of your supervisor as well as that of yourself. This applies to photocopies of the letterhead too. The total use is subject to PGR student budget limits.

If my supervisor leaves what happens to me?
You would of course be notified of any change to your supervision team and in the event of a member of the supervision team leaving, the Doctoral Programme Director would assign a new supervisor.

If my supervisor does not answer my emails what shall I do?
You should contact the PGR coordinator who will chase up the supervisor and inform the Programme Leader and Programme Director of the communication problems.

Library and student services

As a PhD participant it is vital that you make full use of the appropriate information sources to assist you in your research. It is very important that you make full use of the library provision, accessing books and journals, print or electronic, as you need to read extensively around your chosen research theme. The University's libraries are a rich source of information and you need to learn to use them effectively.

The University Library is a nine-storey building in the centre of the City Campus. Once you have enrolled on a University programme you will be given information about how to register online for a smartcard: this acts as your Library membership card and an access card to many University services, including the CCE1 building.

An introduction to the library and its services can be found at
http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/library/about/

The library provides specific services for distance learners, full details can be found at
http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/info-ptdl

You will find almost 2,000 journal titles on Floor 2 and 350,000 books are shelved on Floors 3-6. All are listed on the Library Catalogue available at
https://librarysearch.northumbria.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=northumbria

Researchers can also use the Inter Library Loans service. Submit an Inter Library Loan request using the online form available at: http://library.northumbria.ac.uk/ill

IT Facilities are available throughout the library, with a large IT suite on the first floor. These give you access to a variety of databases and other electronic resources. Use the search engine to find what you're looking for at

https://librarysearch.northumbria.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/search.do?vid=northumbria

You will find this an extremely useful starting point.

Library staff are available at the Welcome Desk to answer your immediate enquiries.
Information Specialists can advise on more complex enquiries and are available by appointment to advise students on their particular information needs. You will be introduced to your Information Specialist during Block 1 of teaching.

Help in using the Library is also available in the form of a module called Skills Plus: Key Skills for Information Literacy, which is accessible via the eLearning Portal. As well as searching skills you will find help with IT skills, citations, referencing and report writing.

Library Semester opening hours can be checked from the following link:

https://nuweb2.northumbria.ac.uk/library_opening_hours/

University facilities

Banking Facilities

There are cashpoint machines on City Campus West – these are situated on the outside wall of the Students' Union Building and off the foyer of Ellison Building. There is also a cashpoint machine on the ground floor of CCE 1.

Car Parking and Travel Arrangements

Car parking near the centre of Newcastle is not easy. Access to the University car parks is restricted to permit holders only, although a permit does not guarantee a parking space. The Students' Union has a limited number of parking permits available each year, which are allocated according to strict criteria; application forms are available from the Students' Union office.

There is public parking available within a few minutes walk of the University. Multi-storey parking is available on John Dobson Street, but this is not cheap. Cheaper alternatives are the car parks off Sandyford Road; the closest of these is located next to the main site, including Northumberland Building. There is also some pay and display parking on Northumberland Road.

If you are using public transport to get to City Campus East, Manors metro station is directly opposite the entrance. Alternatively, Haymarket bus and metro stations are a few minutes walk along St Mary's Place (cross City Campus West and the inter- site bridge to get to City Campus East).

Catering Facilities

At City Campus, as well as a range of cafeterias and bars in the Students' Union Building, there is a restaurant and coffee bar on the ground floor of City Campus East. There is also a refectory in Ellison Building (just off the main foyer at the Ellison Place end of the building) and vending machines located in various buildings, including the basement of the library and throughout Newcastle Business School.

Information Technology Facilities

PhD students have access to working space as mentioned in page 14 of this handbook. You will be provided with access and details of doctoral suites on induction.

A range of skills development booklets are available for people who wish to develop their computing skills. Some of these booklets have been written by UNN staff and are available for purchase from the library shop.

Sports Facilities

Membership of the University's Athletic Union (AU) provides a wide range of benefits, including recreational use of the University sports facilities over the whole year; free membership of over 40 sports clubs which include a range of traditional team and racket sports, water sports, martial arts and outdoor activities; unlimited and free use of the Paramount Fitness Suite in the Sports Centre; an assortment of supervised aerobics and step classes. If you wish to apply for membership, collect and complete an application form from the University Sports Centre, and return it with two passport photographs and a cheque for the appropriate fee.

Students' Union

As a University student, you are entitled to join the Northumbria Students' Union. Benefits include access to the Union Building at City Campus (which houses cafeterias, bars and shops, and stages regular events). The Students' Union has an office in 2 Sandyford Rd, NE18SB, telephone 0191 227 4757. Please contact them directly should you wish to join or make an enquiry.

Student concerns

Complaints

The University's Student Regulations for research degree students include arrangements for Complaints. The Regulations require an appropriate person to be nominated in each Academic School to deal with research student complaints. I cite below the relevant regulation; the full text of the PGR Complaints process can be found at:

https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/vc/leservteam/stud_reg_handbk/research/?view=Standard

Procedure

1) It is expected that in the first instance complaints will be made directly to the person delivering the service. If for good reason this is not feasible, then the complaint should be directed either to the appropriate person nominated in the Faculty to deal with research student complaints or (where this is not possible, for whatever reason) to the Independent PGR Counsellor, who is a senior person appointed to assist with the swift and effective resolution of difficulties.

2) It is the responsibility of the Executive Dean of the Faculty to ensure that all students are informed of the appropriate person to whom a student may make a complaint. Notices shall be posted in all Faculties, Services and other areas of the University to ensure that students are aware of their rights in this respect. Students off campus should seek advice as indicated at the beginning of this document.

3) In addition, a student may discuss issues of concern with the Director of Student Services; a student welfare and international adviser within the Student Services Department; a PGR student representative on the appropriate Faculty Research Committee or Graduate School Committee; and with the Students' Union.

4) The University hopes that the majority of complaints can be resolved informally. The discussions taking place at this stage shall remain confidential unless both parties agree to the sharing of information with others, or the complaint goes to Stage Two.

'Appropriate person'

The Faculty of Business & Law nominated 'appropriate person' with regards to the complaints procedure is:
Dr Sandra Corlett:
+44 (0)191 227 4920
sandra.corlett@northumbria.ac.uk.

Independent PGR Counsellor

Professor Keith Shaw
+44(0) 191 227 4258
keith.shaw@northumbria.ac.uk

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