

Welcome

Northumbria University is one of the largest and most successful universities in the UK. We place research at the very core of our academic community. Research is what is so very special about a university and at Northumbria we pride ourselves particularly on research that makes a difference; research that has application and affects people's lives, as well as on driving forward new knowledge and understanding across all our disciplines.



Effective Researcher Conference

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Postgraduate students are a vitally important part of our research landscape. With over 500 students studying for research degrees (MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate) across the University, we have a vibrant community of postgraduate researchers, supported by excellent facilities in the Graduate School, which oversees all aspects of postgraduate research programmes and provides resources to support them.

The University has invested significantly to improve support for postgraduate study, with dedicated high-quality spaces and facilities available throughout the University. Financial support for postgraduate study comes from a number of sources, including Northumbria's own research scholarships, scholarships funded by the Research Councils, and scholarships funded by external sponsors. Details of current opportunities can be found on the website www.northumbria.ac.uk/researchstudentships.

Opportunities for postgraduate research are available in all parts of the



Northumbria Research Conference

University, with supervision provided by acknowledged experts.

In the most recent national Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), more than two-thirds of our research was judged to be of an international standard, with almost half of this assessed as excellent or outstanding. We are investing further to build and strengthen our research base, through the appointment of almost 100 new, research active, academic staff. I hope very much you enjoy your time at Northumbria and the rich research environment the University provides.

Professor John R. Dean
Head of the Graduate School

ANNUAL PROGRESSION FOR ALL RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

The University has revised academic regulations governing MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate programmes to introduce Annual Progression for all research degree students. Annual Progression entails students demonstrating to their Academic School that they are making timely academic progress in their research degree programme. This change will enable the University to provide more feedback and support to students towards the timely completion of their research programme. Annual Progression is recommended as good practice by the Quality Assurance Agency, and is a key feature of research degree programmes at many other UK Universities.

It will take some months to introduce Annual Progression for all students. Interim arrangements will therefore be in place for the period September – early 2012. The University will ensure flexibility over the coming months, so as to provide effective support to students and to avoid sudden changes in deadlines or duplication of effort.

Each Academic School will publish guidance on format, process and the local procedures for Annual Progression in October 2011. For more information visit

www.northumbria.ac.uk/researchandconsultancy/graduateschool/ap/

Northumbria Students' Union News

Northumbria Students' Union was crowned Higher Education Students' Union of the Year in the National Union of Students (NUS) Awards 2011, held this July at the University of Leeds – a remarkable achievement that is testament not solely to the Union's facilities and buildings, but more crucially to the strong tradition of partnership with the University, and to the outstanding quality of volunteers in all areas of the Union. Northumbria is only the fourth Students' Union to win the award, and the first from a post-92 institution. Even more significantly, this was the first time that a PGR student – our very own Beth Fazackerley, PGR School Rep for Life Sciences until February 2011 – was shortlisted in the NUS Course Representative of the Year Award category.

Though we unfortunately weren't able to win the hat-trick in this category – with Northumbria students having previously won in 2008 and 2009 – this did constitute the fourth consecutive year that a Northumbria student has been shortlisted in the top three of student representatives in the UK. We'd thus like to extend our huge thanks to the whole PGR community at Northumbria for supporting Beth's nomination and our congratulations to Beth for blazing a trail for the status of PGR students in NUS!

This has been a fantastic year for the profile of PGR study and PGR Reps at Northumbria Students' Union. No fewer than three PGR Reps have made an impact on the national stage, with Beth's shortlisting for the NUS Awards, Sagar Malsane's (former PGR School Rep for Built and Natural

Environment) contribution to NUS Postgraduate Conference and Xirong He's (PGR School Rep for HCES) SHINE Award nomination. We have a full complement of PGR School Reps in each of the eight Schools. PGR School Reps supported the record 59% response rate to the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) 2011, and have made substantive contributions in each of their Schools in the development of the PGR student experience. PGR School Reps have also been involved more closely than ever in the development of Research Degree Student Regulations and assessment processes, including Annual Progression Monitoring, through our PGR School Rep Forum and Graduate School Committee.

Richard Buckley
Advice & Representation Manager

Postgraduate Researcher Development Programme

For 2011/12 the PGR Development Programme has been refocused around the new Researcher Development Framework (RDF) which was launched this summer by *Vitae*. The RDF also provides the background for the new PGR Development Portfolio (PGR DP) which replaces the Training Needs Plan for new students.

The PGR development programme is advertised in a more structured and coherent way to better allow students to plan their training. The PGR development programme has also been mapped

against the PGR DP to assist students when reflecting on their skills and achievements and will provide an extra tool with which to chart their development. New sessions for this year include Ethics Essentials courses, a revamped induction that focuses on the notion of doctorateness, as well as more workshops on publishing and writing following feedback from PGRs.

The PGR development programme, PGR DP and information on *Vitae* can all be found at:

www.northumbria.ac.uk/researchandconsultancy/graduateschool/dev/

PGR School Reps: If you need advice, or would like an issue to be raised, then one way to address this is to contact your PGR School Reps. Your Rep works closely with the Students Union to ensure that PGR voices are heard across the University. Currently the Reps are:

Conall Mallory (Law)
Richard Cutter (LS)
Anna Hope (SASS)
Joshua Fong (BNE)

Malcolm Jones (Design)
Xirong He (HCES)
Andrew Burton (CEIS)
Chrysostomos Apostolidis (NBS)

Congratulations to Gillian Davison, who has been offered a 12 month placement at Percy Hedley School, through the Knowledge Transfer Partnership arrangement with Northumbria.

The post is half funded by Northumbria and half funded by Percy Hedley.

This follows a three month bursary and placement awarded to Gillian from the Entrepreneur in Residence Scheme. "This wouldn't have happened without having the placement from yourselves, so thank you - I really, really appreciate it!"

University Library Research Zone: Supporting Research Excellence



A fantastic new facility for post-graduate research students and academic staff was opened on the 28th September by Vice Chancellor Professor Andrew Wathey, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) Professor Peter Golding and Professor Jane Core, Director of Academic Services. The opening event was attended by over 80 post graduate research students and academic staff from across the university.

Open 24/7 in term time, the Re-

search Zone was developed in response to feedback and comprises of scholarly, group and social learning spaces.

The variety of spaces on offer will facilitate peer support and stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration and support by creating a physical research community adjacent to the Library's extensive collections of print and electronic materials.

The Zone's spacious design is attractive and comfortable, intended for lengthy visits where required, with a breakout area and hot drink facilities on hand. As well as permitting 24/7 access its position within the Library enables Library staff to work alongside researchers to advise on resources and assist with skills development.

The success of the Zone will be evaluated in consultation with researchers to inform any similar developments at Coach Lane.

Find out more at www.northumbria.ac.uk/library or e-mail ask4help@northumbria.ac.uk

“The Research Zone is a really wonderful place for research students to work. Well done, it is a perfect idea that is now a reality.”



Supervisors can find more support by visiting the Vitae website which includes tools on managing your researchers and OVERview the publication for PIs and PGR Supervisors. Visit www.vitae.ac.uk

Supervisor Development Workshops

The Graduate School runs a series of workshops every year to enable supervisors to maintain their accreditation. Supervisors should attend one session every three years. Upcoming dates are as follows:

Regulations update:

19 October 2011, 14.00 – 16.00

12 January 2012, 10.00 – 12.00

New Supervisors Workshop: 23 November 2011, 10.00 – 16.00

To book please contact angela.cheetham@northumbria.ac.uk

Supervisor Conference Bursary Scheme

The PGR Supervisor bursary is another way the Graduate School aims to support PGR Supervisors. This scheme runs continuously throughout the year and is designed to support supervisors in their attendance at conferences to ensure

that they remain at the forefront of their research.

Applications for conferences between 1 August 2011 and the 31 July 2012 can be made from 4 July 2011 until the 31 May 2012.

Applications should be made to Laura Smailes at The Graduate School Room 510, Wynne Jones Building or via email on laura.smailes@northumbria.ac.uk using the application form available at www.northumbria.ac.uk/researchandconsultancy/graduateschool/dev/

Upcoming Meetings

PGR School Reps Forum

7 November 2011
19 December 2011
30 January 2011

Graduate School Committee

9 November 2011
1 February 2012

Research Degrees Committee

6 October 2011
3 November 2011
8 December 2011
19 January 2012
16 February 2012

PGR Contact Group

11 October 2011
8 November 2011
13 December 2011
10 January 2012
7 February 2011

Upcoming Events

Induction for Postgraduate Research Students at Northumbria

6 and 7 October 2011
Northumbria University

Getting to Know the REF (ARMA Event)

17 October 2011
Newcastle University

How to be an Effective Researcher

7 and 8 November 2011
Northumbria University

PT Researchers day

17 November 2011

Final Year Conference

December 2011
Northumbria University

Doctoral Completion Rates

(UKCGE Event)
18 January 2012

Researcher Development Programme ... at the Library

The University Library has devised a researcher development programme particularly tailored towards expanding your knowledge base and increasing your engagement and impact as identified in Vitae's Researcher Development Framework.

A week of workshops and bite size briefings will be available at both City Campus and Coach Lane venues week beginning the 7th November 2011.

Pick up a leaflet or visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/libtraining

All sessions are open to PG Researchers and University staff and can be booked through ask4help@northumbria.ac.uk

PGR Student Conference Bursary Scheme

Bursaries are available to post graduate research students (including Graduate Tutors and staff registered as research degree students) to attend conferences, where the student is contributing to the conference and will feed back knowledge and experience gained from the conference to their supervision team and research group. Grants up to £200 are available on a competitive basis, with two deadlines each year (usually November and April).

Applications for conferences between 1 August 2011 and the 31 July 2012 can be made from 4 July 2011 until the 31 May 2012. Applications should be made to Laura Smiles at The Graduate School, Room 510, Wynne Jones Building or via email on laura.smiles@northumbria.ac.uk using the application form available at www.northumbria.ac.uk/researchandconsultancy/graduateschool/dev/

GRADUATE SCHOOL CONTACTS

Professor John R. Dean, Head of the Graduate School
john.dean@northumbria.ac.uk

Hilary Dixon, Graduate School Manager
hilary.dixon@northumbria.ac.uk

Tim Baxter, Data management and student experience enhancement
tim.baxter@northumbria.ac.uk

Audrey Fenwick, Studentships and Graduate School Committee and Research Degrees Committee support
audrey.fenwick@northumbria.ac.uk

Laura Smiles, PGR induction and training
laura.smiles@northumbria.ac.uk

David Duckworth, Submission and exam arrangements
david.duckworth@northumbria.ac.uk

The Graduate School

5th floor,
Wynne-Jones Building,
City Campus West,
Ellison Place,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE1 8ST.

Tel: (0191) 227 4060

Fax: (0191) 227 3989

Email:

graduateschool@northumbria.ac.uk

Opening hours

Monday - Thursday

08.30 – 17.00

Friday 08.30 – 16.30