



PhD Programme Handbook
Academic Year 2023-24

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About this Programme Handbook

This programme handbook provides you with information about how your programme is taught and managed, and how you will be assessed. It also provides information about key programme details and Northeastern University London (the University) facilities and services that will assist you while studying.

If any changes are necessary, the Programme Handbook will be updated and the most recent version will be available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Comment

If you would like to comment on the handbook contents, or have any ideas on how to improve the information provided, please send your comments by email to [Quality Assurance](#).

PhD Programme

Degree Award Body

The University has collaborated with the University of Kent to deliver this PhD programme. The University of Kent is the degree awarding body for the programme and as such, their regulations, policies and procedure will be followed (see below).

You will be registered at Northeastern University London, and will be a student of Northeastern University London. You will be part of the University's community and Northeastern University's global network.

Programme Specification

The programme specification is the definitive record of your programme. It is approved by the University, and it can only be amended by following strict processes. The full document can be found [here](#).

Who's Who on My Programme?

Faculty

The profiles of the University's faculty can be found [here](#).

NU London Graduate and Researcher School

The Graduate and Researcher School oversees PhD provision at the University, including training and assessment.

Research Services

Research Services manages research at the University, including ethics, research funding, research integrity and compliance and impact.

Registry

Can be viewed [here](#).

Student Support and Development (SSD)

Can be viewed [here](#).

Mental Health Adviser mentalhealth@nulondon.ac.uk

Quality Team

Can be viewed [here](#).

Operations Team

Can be viewed [here](#).

Student Visa or TIER 4 Visa Students

The University is required to report to the United Kingdom Visa & Immigration (UKVI) if a Student visa or Tier 4 Visa student interrupts, change programmes (if approved by the University) or withdraws from their studies. The UKVI will curtail your visa to 60 days and you will be required to return home. To ensure the break in studies or withdrawal complies with the University and the UKVI regulations you are required to make an appointment with the Visa and Immigration Compliance Manager.

Student visa or Tier 4 visa students who began their undergraduate or postgraduate degree programme **before** September 2020 are not eligible to transfer to another programme from within the UK. They will need to leave the UK and make a new visa application from their home country for the new course. Please contact the Visa and Immigration Compliance Manager for further details.

New Student visa students who started their course from September 2020 and onwards, can only change their course after getting permission from the University to start their new course if all of the following apply:

- Your new course is at degree level or above.
- Your new course is not at a lower level than the current course.
- You will be able to complete your new course within your current period of leave (visa).

Registrar confirms either of the following:

- Your new course is related to the previous course for which you were granted leave as a Student visa student, meaning that it is either connected

to your previous course, part of the same subject group, or involves deeper specialisation

OR

- Your previous course and your new course in combination support your genuine career aspirations.

Please note that if you change your course, you must complete your new course within your existing period of the visa.

How We Will Communicate With You

The University email system, newsletters, and Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) will be the main methods of relaying important information to you. Emails will be sent to your University email address, which you need to check regularly. Any hard copy correspondence will be sent to the address on your student record. It is important that you keep this up to date via your account details held by Registry.

Timetables

For optional taught courses (decided between you and your supervisor), timetables can be viewed via CELCAT, the University's timetable platform. Training sessions on how to use CELCAT are available, and a 'how to' guide can be found on the VLE.

Postgraduate Research at the University of Kent

This PhD programme is jointly delivered by the University and the University of Kent's Graduate and Researcher College, with involvement of academic staff from the University of Kent as co-supervisors on doctoral projects.

The programme will follow the University of Kent's research supervision, progression monitoring, and submission and examination procedures. For more information on these procedures, please see the GRC Postgraduate Research Student Handbook, [here](#).

Research Supervision

Initial Meeting

Upon arrival at the University, you should make arrangements to meet with your main supervisor and other members of your supervisory team as soon as possible. You may well have been in contact with your supervisors prior to arriving, but it is important to set up an initial meeting to discuss your research project and plan future meetings

which will suit your research topic and individual circumstances. All postgraduate research students are appointed a supervisory team, which means that you have more than one supervisor to assist you with your research project. Initial discussions should include an agreement of how you will liaise with and make use of the expertise of each of the members of your supervisory team.

For this joint programme, you will have a University supervisor and a University of Kent Supervisor.

The Role of Your Main Supervisor

Your main supervisor is the person responsible for you and to the University for your academic progress. This is also the person you should first consult about any problems relating to your work or general circumstances. Your main supervisor will be from the University, your other supervisor will be from the University of Kent.

Supervisory Meetings

At the University, you are required to make a record of your supervisory discussions at least every four weeks during the year if you are a full time student and at least every eight weeks as a part time student. This may be a record of a meeting either online or in person, a telephone conversation or emails you have exchanged with your supervisor. It will be your responsibility to complete the record and the responsibility of your main supervisor to provide any clarification and to sign it off. The record will cover the following areas:

- Progress since the last meeting
- Points discussed at the meeting
- Work agreed

Records of supervisory meetings are important as they provide a useful aide-memoire for you and your supervisory team. These records also provide an evidence trail of your supervision to date, which can be used at progression reviews. Supervisory meetings are recorded and postgraduate researchers are sent reminders to complete this record on a monthly basis (bi-monthly for part-time students). These monthly records are a way of ensuring that you and your supervisor are clear about your progress and the steps that should be taken to progress your research.

They do not need to be in perfect prose, nor should they take very long to complete. You are simply asked to keep a record of what has been discussed and what needs to be done next. These brief records provide an opportunity for clarification that might not arise during conversation and help to demonstrate the progress you are making.

The Supervisory Relationship

Your supervisory team will provide you with specific details about how supervision will work within your academic school. There may be differences in supervisory styles

between academic schools depending on the nature and requirements of the subject area.

An effective relationship with your main supervisor is essential for ensuring that you make good progress with your research. One model of supervision does not fit all research candidates so it is advisable to use your first few meetings with your main supervisor to discuss: (i) your expectations of how the supervisory relationship will work and (ii) review whether the current level of supervisory support you are receiving is helping you to progress. If you have concerns or consider that you require more guidance in certain areas, raise this with your main supervisor as soon as possible.

Supervisors will not be aware that there is a problem unless you raise this with them and having done so they will be keen to help you to identify a solution.

Your main supervisor is there to help you to identify parts of your research and development where you require further training or support so you should be ready to discuss skills areas where you feel less confident. Identifying areas for development at an early stage and taking action to improve your skills will set you in excellent stead for the remainder of your PhD journey. New PhD students will assess their skills at a 'Kickstart your PhD: Guidance, Skills, and the Researcher Development Assessment' workshop (provided through the Graduate and Researcher College's Researcher Development Programme). This workshop is only obligatory for PhD students to attend.

The Graduate and Researcher College also provides workshops which will assist you with your supervisory relationships such as 'Getting the most from your Supervisor Relationships'. The University will provide more information and the links for take the workshop.

Supervisors and students are expected to treat one another with courtesy and discuss any problems at the earliest opportunity to allow any issues to be resolved quickly and effectively. In cases where there is a more serious breakdown in the main supervisor/student relationship, the matter should be brought to the attention of the University's Director of Graduate and Researcher College who will review the situation. In cases where there is an irreparable breakdown in the student/supervisor relationship, an alternative main supervisor may be provided.

Preparing for a Supervisory Meeting

Postgraduate researchers need to be very well organised when managing their research projects. This includes being well prepared for supervisory meetings. You should ensure that you bring your notes from any earlier supervisory meetings, your research project plan and any drafts of your thesis along to the meeting for discussion. It is important that you record details of every meeting with your supervisor online as soon as possible. In order that a clear progression is agreed in a timely manner, students are expected to complete their report within one week of the meeting and supervisors are expected to provide written feedback within two weeks.

The value of producing early drafts of your thesis cannot be emphasised too strongly, even if the exact timing of when you start to produce written work will depend largely on the nature of your research topic and other individual circumstances. A piece of written work allows both you and your supervisor to see how your ideas are developing, constitutes a good basis for discussion and criticism and provides your supervisor with hard evidence of progress made or difficulties encountered. It also provides your supervisor with a valuable opportunity to give you some advice on your academic writing. The Graduate and Researcher College provides workshops and one-to-one sessions on academic writing as part of its Researcher Development Programme (please see the Researcher Development Programme Handbook and online booking system for further details). In order to give you considered feedback, supervisors require written work to be handed in several days in advance of scheduled supervision meetings. Supervisors will expect any work submitted for their consideration to be word processed. Please ensure that your work is backed up properly to avoid any loss through computer failure.

Progression Monitoring

In order to ensure that your research project is on track and that you have all the necessary support and resources required to successfully complete it, there will be a series of review stages during your period of registration. These reviews include induction, probation, end of year reviews and submission reviews. In cases where there are concerns about progress, your supervisors may schedule a mid-year review.

Type of student	Review Stage
FT Postgraduate Researcher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Induction review (6 weeks) 2. Probation review (10 months) 3. End of Year 2 review (24 months) 4. Submission review (33 months) 5. Continuation year review 1 (41 months) 6. Continuation Year review 2 (46 months)
PT Postgraduate Researcher	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Induction review (6 weeks) 2. Probation review (12 months) 3. End of Year 2 review (24 months) 4. End of Year 3 review (36 months) 5. End of Year 4 review (48 months) 6. Submission review (57 months)

Type of student	Review Stage
	7. Continuation year review 1 (65 months) 8. Continuation Year review 2 (70 months)

Submission and Examination

Thesis Submission

Full information about the submission of your thesis is available in the [Instructions to Candidates for the Examination of Research Degrees](#). You will have a Submission Review meeting with a review panel (which normally takes place a few months prior to the end of the minimum period of registration) to discuss your readiness to submit your thesis for examination.

Submitting your Thesis for Examination

Candidates must give at least two months' notice of their intention to submit a thesis for examination. The forms you need to notify your intention to submit and for submission of your thesis for examination can be obtained from the University's Graduate and Researcher College.

Examination Guidance

Full information about the examination of your thesis is available in the [Instructions to Candidates for the Examination of Research Degrees](#).

The viva voce or oral examination is an important stage in the process of being awarded a PhD. For most, the opportunity to defend your thesis in front of a panel of examiners is the end of the doctoral journey. Doctoral theses are examined according to the University of Kent's [Academic Regulations for Research Programmes of Study](#).

On successful completion of a PhD you will have:

- met the Framework for Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level descriptor for a doctorate degree,
- met any subject specific assessment criteria outlined in the programme specification (if applicable), and
- shown appropriate ability in the organisation and presentation of your material in the thesis.

You will be examined by two or more examiners of whom at least one shall be an external examiner. The examiners may, at their discretion and subject to your agreement, invite your supervisor to attend as a silent observer.

Final Thesis Submission

After examination, successful theses must be submitted electronically to the [University of Kent's Library](#). The University will store an electronic copy within its own research outputs repository.

Providing Feedback on Your Research Experience

Postgraduate researchers have a number of mechanisms which they can use to provide feedback on their research experience. You can provide feedback via your supervisory team and postgraduate research student representatives. The annual Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (circulated in spring/summer) provides you with an excellent opportunity to provide feedback on a range of different areas. The results of this are anonymous and the information is used by the University to make improvements to the postgraduate experience.

Researcher Development

Researcher development is the personal development and training you undertake to help you manage your PhD project. This development can help you capitalise on opportunities during your PhD, equip you for the challenges of the research process, as well as prepare you for employment after the PhD.

Research Skills Training

The University is responsible for ensuring that research students are provided with the research skills required to complete their research projects. Your main supervisor will be able to provide you with individual help on subject-specific research techniques and will advise you of any taught courses you should follow to develop these skills.

Researcher Development Programme

The University of Kent's Graduate and Researcher College coordinates the Researcher Development Programme of over 200 workshops for researchers. Our Researcher Development Programme is designed to equip researchers with a full range of skills which will improve their effectiveness as researchers, and ensure that they are not only highly qualified but also employable in a variety of careers by the end of their research project.

Further information about the Researcher Development Programme is available on the University of Kent's [Graduate and Researcher College website](#).

Required Training

All postgraduate researchers are **required** to complete the 'Kickstart your PhD' workshop. The University will provide you with the information and links to the platform.

Academic Writing

Academic English Skills Service (AESS)

Our English and Academic Writing Adviser offers academic writing workshops, webinars and short recorded videos focusing on key academic writing skills to all students studying at the London campus. Areas covered include writing and reading critically, how to structure essays, avoiding plagiarism and referencing. Meera also offers drop ins and one-to-one consultations (in person or virtual appointments) with a particular specialism in supporting multilingual learners. Students can book an appointment or secure a place at a workshop or webinar via TargetConnect.

Academic Writing Support Sessions

The writing team at the University offers one-to-one drop-in appointments on a first come first served basis to support students with their academic writing. They can help with any issues around academic writing, including but not limited to structuring essays, paragraphing, logic and reasoning, and referencing. Students can book your appointments on CELCAT.

Learning Resources

Libraries

The University's students have full membership access to the City of London's research libraries including [Guildhall Library](#), the [London Metropolitan Archives](#) and the [Small Business Research + Enterprise Centre](#), as well as its lending libraries at the [Barbican Centre](#), [Shoe Lane](#) and [Artizan Street](#).

This includes full access to all facilities offered at these libraries, including study space, WiFi, printing, book borrowing privileges and access to digital resources.

The University can also provide students with a membership to Senate House Library, one of the UK's largest academic libraries for arts, humanities & social sciences. Located in central London, it is home to over two million books and over 1800 archives and special collections.

Students have full access to its borrowing, digital, and print services. The University Collection has its home in one of the most spacious and beautiful reading rooms within Senate House Library. The Collection contains classic texts and contemporary commentaries which have been chosen by the University's faculty for their direct relevance to the degree syllabi taught at the University.

In addition to the above resources, students are also eligible for a reader's card to use the British Library – one of the greatest research libraries in the world. As it is a copyright library, it has copies of all new books published in the UK, and many of

those published abroad, making it an excellent resource when more detailed research is required.

Online Resources

Students have full access to the digital resources available from [Northeastern University's Library](#). Northeastern University is redefining the library service in the 21st century with over 800,000 e-books and over 100,000 electronic journals. It also offers a number of helpful resources including a 24/7 LibChat service, one-to-one assistance from subject specialist librarians and workshops and events throughout the year.

Assessment and Feedback

The purpose of this section is to provide you with all the information you need to support you for the assessment of your PhD programme. The University is committed to providing you with support, enabling you to perform at your best.

Theses Related

The purpose of the theses is not only to assess the students' ability to construct a substantial and self-directed piece of research, but as the culmination of their studies, to demonstrate their ability to reflect on advanced aesthetic, theoretical and cultural issues in the context of a case study, and their ability to find and deploy evidence with intellectual integrity and maturity. It is an opportunity to express themselves at length with fluency, clarity, and coherence.

In preparation for their theses and viva, time will be spent also individually, in supervisions, in response to the student's specific research challenge.

University of Kent Regulations

For this programme, the University of Kent's regulations are to be followed by all students. The University of Kent's Code of Practice can be found [here](#).

Postgraduate Researcher Responsibilities

Undertaking a research degree is both an exciting and challenging experience. In order to ensure that everything goes as smoothly as possible during your time as a postgraduate researcher, you have a range of specific responsibilities which are outlined in the University of Kent's Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance for Research Programmes of Study.

How is postgraduate research managed between the University and the University of Kent?

There is a network of staff members across both providers dedicated to the management of postgraduate education and the safeguarding of the interests of our postgraduate researchers.

The Associate Dean for Research at the University is responsible for the research programmes at the University, and collaborates closely with the University of Kent's Graduate and Researcher College.

There is a joint PhD Programme Management Board, which is responsible for the quality management of research programmes of study and monitoring the progress of research students at the University.

Intermission, Transfer of Registration, Change of Status and Withdrawal from the University

The University and the University of Kent acknowledge that students might consider intermitting, transferring your registration to another programme of study, changing from full-time to part-time (or vice versa) or withdrawing from the programme. If this is the case, you should first discuss this with your Supervisor who will be able to provide you with support. You will need to complete a Change in Circumstance Form, which can be found [here](#). The University will then liaise with the University of Kent colleagues about your registration status.

Fieldwork and Absence from the University

Permission to be absent from the University for fieldwork should be sought from the University's Director of Graduate and Research College, who should be satisfied that the appropriate facilities for research is available and arrangements for supervision are satisfactory. Requests for a reduction in fees for periods spent away from the University must gain approval from the NU London - UoK Programme Management Board.

Please check with the University about arrangements which should be put in place prior to a period of fieldwork, including the Visa Team should you be on a study visa.

Thesis Completion, Submission and Examination

Information about the procedure surrounding the completion, submission, and examination of your research thesis is available in:

- [Regulations for Research Programmes of Study](#) (please see section 8 (examination)).
- [Instructions to candidates for the Examination of Research Degrees](#).

External Examiners Reports

It is a statutory requirement that providers make external examiner's annual reports available in full to all students. The university makes these reports available to students on the University's Virtual Learning Environment.

Academic Appeals

An academic appeal is a request for a review of a decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on a student's progression, assessment and awards.

The procedures for appeals brought by postgraduate researcher students are outlined in the University of Kent's Standing Orders Governing Research Appeals which can be found [here](#), in the Appeals section.

Postgraduate researchers should note that they may not submit an academic appeal:

- Against academic judgement.
- On the grounds of poor or inadequate research supervision. Such a matter would be the subject of an academic complaint, which should have been raised and resolved at the earliest opportunity through the academic complaints procedure.

Complaints

All postgraduate researchers at the University are entitled to receive satisfactory academic supervision and support. Should you have problems during the course of your research, you will in most cases be able to sort these out straightaway and easily with members of your supervisory team.

However, it does occasionally happen that there are more serious grounds for dissatisfaction which can be dealt with only by someone other than the supervisory staff concerned. If an individual or group of students feels that their basic requirements of good supervision are not being met, or that there are other issues relating to postgraduate research support which they feel give grounds for complaint, the matter should be raised immediately with the Registrar or postgraduate research student representative.

The complaint will proceed through the University's [Complaints Procedure for Students](#) through the Early Resolution stage. If the complainant still remains dissatisfied, the complaint will progress to the University of Kent's [complaints procedure](#).

Plagiarism and Duplication of Material

Plagiarism is the act of presenting the ideas or discoveries of another's as one's own. To copy sentences, phrases or even striking expressions without acknowledgement in a manner which may deceive the reader as to the source, is plagiarism, to rephrase in a manner which deceives the reader is likewise plagiarism.

A student must not reproduce any work previously submitted for an assessment (for example, examination answers, essays, project reports, dissertations or theses) or any material derived from own work authored by another without clearly acknowledging the sources.

Duplication of material means the inclusion in coursework (including extended essays, projects, and dissertations) of a significant amount of material which is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted for the same or any other course at the University or the University of Kent, or elsewhere, without acknowledgement that such work has been so submitted.

The University and the University of Kent does not accept plagiarism or duplication of material and imposes severe penalties if it occurs in coursework, dissertations, projects, examinations and theses. If you need guidance on the correct use and presentation of quotations and source material, you should consult your supervisor.

Further University of Kent guidance on plagiarism, academic integrity and good practice is available [here](#).

Ethics

The University and the University of Kent expects that all research carried out by postgraduate researchers is conducted to the highest level of ethical standards and in accordance with current legislation and policy requirements. University of Kent regulations can be found [here](#). Northeastern University London regulations can be found [here](#). This sets out the required standards of research integrity and also explains the appropriate routes for ethical review for different types of research. Advice and guidance in all aspects of research integrity and governance is available from the University's Director of Graduate and Researcher College.

Intellectual Property Rights

All ideas, materials, or work produced and submitted as part of the requirements of a programme of study or research, and all intellectual property (IP) within, belongs to the University, who may pass these on to third parties, such as, for example funders.

Student contributions are acknowledged and, as part of the IP Policy, students are entitled to a share of the financial benefits that the University may receive arising from exploitation of this IP.

In order to familiarise yourself with IP, and the University's approach to IP, you are encouraged to read the University's IP Policy, which you can find [here](#). The University of Kent Intellectual Property Policy can be found [here](#).

Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy

The University's Anti-bribery and Corruption Policy applies to all students in their activities as students of the University and to the full range of the University's activities, both in the UK and overseas. The University is committed to conducting its business fairly, openly, and honestly, to the highest standards of integrity and in accordance with all legal requirements. The Anti-bribery and Corruption Policy provides a clear statement that the University will not permit any form of bribery or corruption and outlines the procedures to prevent employees or students from engaging in bribery. The policy can be found [here](#).

Student Support and Learning

The University recognises that supporting students throughout their studies is paramount if they are to achieve their highest potential and be successful in their studies and their future career paths.

All staff at the University are committed to supporting students/learners and, as such, the University has a dedicated team who focus on student welfare. This is the Student Support and Development Team. The team comprises the Head of Student Support and Development (HSSD), Student Wellbeing Coordinators (SWCs), Student Support Coordinators (SSCs), and the Mental Health Advisers (MHAs).

The HSSD provides departmental leadership and oversight, policy guidance and pastoral care for students. The SWCs provide students with learning and disability support. The MHAs offer confidential, impartial advice and information on concerns relating to mental health and emotional well-being. The SSCs provide students support with finances as well as general living advice.

The Student Support and Development team work alongside other members of the University, and this will include your University supervisors.

For more information regarding campus facilities, campus health and safety, please see the Postgraduate Student Handbook, which you can find [here](#).

Employer Links

All students will have access to the University's [Careers Advisory Service](#). This includes Industry speaker events with representatives and NCH Alumni from a wide range of sectors and our electronic Careers Centre, containing features and functionality for careers guidance, interview advice and job searching.

Students will be guided through the creation of a CV, LinkedIn Profile, Interview training and job applications.

All students depending on programme and career aspirations will be assigned an advisor who will work with them to maximise their employability potential.

In addition, Careers Advisers, supplemented with support from tutors, offer advice, often one-to-one, on securing a professional future tailored to students' skills and ambitions.

Members of the Careers Team and contact details can be found in the Programme Information section on the VLE faculty homepage.

Version History

Title: PhD Programme Handbook				
Approved by: The Quality Team				
Location: Academic Handbook/ Programme Specifications and Handbooks/ PhD				
Version Number	Date Approved	Date Published	Owner	Proposed Next Review Date
23.2.0	September 2023	September 2023	Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange	August 2024
<i>Version numbering system revised March 2023</i>				
1.0	January 2023	January 2023	Director of Graduate and Researcher College	August 2023
Referenced documents	Programme Specifications; Complaints Procedure for Students; Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy; Intellectual Property Policy.			
External Reference Point(s)	University of Kent Code of Practice for Research Courses; University of Kent Academic Regulations for Research Programmes of Study.			