

Survival Guide

for your new life as a

Physical Geography Student

at Newcastle University



Written by former third year students, for new first year students.

Introduction

Hello and welcome to your Geography Degree. There's a lot to take in during the first few weeks and lots of changes to get used to. We remember that the first few weeks were daunting for us: getting to know a new place, making new friends, understanding a new course and coping with a little homesickness here and there. Ultimately though for us (and all our friends) it's been the best three years of our life so far. Loads of fun, lots of hard work, but totally worth it. Work hard, play hard and you will have the best few years ever! We hope you enjoy it as much as we have.

The staff will help you loads with the academic stuff — and make sure you talk to your tutor about any personal problems you are having. However, as geography students who graduated in July, we wanted to end our time in Newcastle by also passing on a real insight into the course, university life and the tips and tricks we've learned along the way. So, here we go, our attempt at an A-Z of everything you need to know about — from academic advice, to help with social events and sports. You'll get loads of booklets in the first week but make sure you read this one!!

lackboard

Blackboard is vital. On it you can find reading lists, module guides, announcements, lecture slides, hand-outs, recordings of some lectures and the Turnitin submission portal (see plagiarism). You access it at this webpage using your standard unilogin and password

https://blackboard.ncl.ac.uk





Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to buy lots of expensive books at uni. In fact, for assessments it's better to read little bits from several books, rather than read one book from cover to cover.

You will find that most books you will need are held within the **Robinson Library** free of charge.



Key books or 'essential readings' will be listed within your module guides - but try to go beyond this.

Take books out well before you need them. Key books are in high demand!

Learn how to reserve books using the Library Catalogue www.ncl.ac.uk/library



We know you've just got here, but don't underestimate how long it takes to get a graduate job (we did!!!!)

You HAVE to apply for graduate jobs between September-December of your third year, so start preparing early. Get relevant work experience and try to do internships in year 1 and 2. Do extra-curricula activities too, join the geography staff-student committee, help with open days etc. You need this experience to make a good graduate level application. Getting a graduate job is competitive and others are doing this stuff — so make sure you doing it too!

Also, make friends with **Ailsa**. She specialises in getting geography students jobs, can help with finding work experience placements, internships, CVs, mock interviews etc. Email ailsa:mcleod@ncl.ac.uk or visit Ailsa in the Careers Service in King Gate www.ncl.ac.uk/careers



You will be given a uni login, password and email address in week 1. For any computer problems, contact ISS www.ncl.ac.uk/iss

There are 1400~PCs in almost 40~locations around the campus. You can use any if there isn't a class being taught in the room.



24 hour clusters are in Robinson Library, Students' Union, Old Library Building, Bedson Building, Medical Library. We also have a cluster in the Daysh Building too which is open 9am-6pm.



Quayside: Baltic Art Gallery, Sage Concert Hall, Pitcher and Piano pub, Sunday morning market.

Parks: Jesmond Dene, Town Moor, Northumberland Park.

Beach: Tynemouth, Whitley Bay, Cullercoats.

Theatre: Theatre Royal, Northern Stage, Comedy Club.

Cinema: Empire, Tyneside, Culture Lab.

Sport: Newcastle Falcons RUFC @ Kingston Park,
Newcastle United Football Club @ St James Park,
Basketball @ Northumbria University's Sports Centre,
Ice Hockey @ Whitley Bay.

Shopping: Eldon Square, Northumberland Street and Grey Street, Metro Centre.



If you have been diagnosed with dyslexia at school or college, you need to let the university know asap. You won't be able to receive help until you are registered. If you think you might be dyslexic, but haven't been tested, the University can test you.

To get the ball rolling, you need to tell your tutor and then contact Student Wellbeing in Kings Gate. Once you are registered as being dyslexic with Student Wellbeing, they will formally tell the GPS Office, who in turn will tell your lecturers.

Student Wellbeing can be contacted here www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/

Or email sandy.alden@ncl.ac.uk who is a Student
Wellbeing dyslexia advisor.

Do this quickly, as there is often a queue at the start of term for registering and testing.



You will be given a university login, password and email address when you register with the university in induction week.

This is the main way lecturers will communicate extra information to you, inform you of timetable changes or request meetings with you. So, you need to check your university email (not hotmail or gmail) at least once each day during term time. Also check emails occasionally during the holidays too.

You can access your emails anywhere via

http://office365.ncl.ac.uk

Once you have accessed your account for the first time you will find an e-mail waiting for you with your S3P login/password and registration instructions (see page on S3P later in this guide)



Exams can take place twice each academic year: once in January (at the end of semester 1) and again in May/June (at the end of semester 2).

In first year you will have exams in both January and May/June. In second and third years, if / when you have exams will depend on which modules you choose to study. It is possible to avoid a lot of them with clever module choices!

The exam timetable is normally published before Christmas and before Easter so you know exactly when and where your exams are taking place well in advance. The Exams Office decides the exam timetable, not the School of GPS. More info can be found here

www.ncl.ac.uk/examinations



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You need to apply for extensions BEFORE deadlines pass - ideally giving a couple of days' notice.

You apply in writing by completing a PEC form at the GPS Office (module leaders cannot grant extensions).

You need a very good reason(!) AND written evidence to hand in with your application (eg a doctor's note). Time management problems, work or sport commitments won't be accepted.



Grainger Market in the City centre (near Grey's Monument) is the best and cheapest place to buy vegetables, fruit, meat, bread, cheese, flour, all your staples, sweets...everything! For a treat, go to Slices (Aisle 4) which sells the best pizza in Newcastle.



Another favourite is the **Mistletoe Bakery** in Jesmond (which is probably where you'll end up living in second and third year). Apart from Saturday nights, Mistletoe is open 24 hours a day with a selection of baking at rock bottom prices.



GeogSoc is a society run by geography students, for geography students. It organises loads of socials and outings and so it's definitely the best way to meet other students in Geography.

Becoming a member of GeogSoc is really easy. Sign up during induction week or at any time during the year. Only a very small membership fee needs to be paid.

You can also find GeogSoc on Facebook or email **Stephanie** (the GeogSoc President for 2012-13) **s.sowersby@ncl.ac.uk**



Doctors

Saville Medical Group www.savillemed.co.uk/

Newcastle Medical Centre www.newcastlemedical.co.uk/

Sexual Health Care

New Croft Centre, New Croft House, Market Street East, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6ND Tel: 0191 229 2999

Walk in Centres and A & E

There is a 24 hour Accident and Emergency Department in the RVI hospital (very close to campus and accessible from Richardson Road). For minor ailments, an NHS walk in centre is now on the old Newcastle General Hospital site, on Westgate Road. The contact telephone number is 0191 282 3000. It's open 8am-8pm, 7 days per week.



 $\mbox{\bf GPS Office } (5^{\rm th} \mbox{ floor, Claremont Tower) for all general degree information and handing in assessments for geography modules$

CEGS Office (Cassie Building) for all geomatics info and handing in assessments for geomatics modules

Kings Gate for all student services e.g. finance,
accommodation, careers, counselling, Student
Wellbeing etc.





Reading doesn't just mean books. The quicker you begin reading journal articles the better.

What is a journal article? Basically a short piece of writing by an academic on a very specific topic. They are usually quicker to read, more relevant and more up to date than books.

What is a journal? A journal is basically an academic magazine, published 3 or 4 times each year, containing about a dozen journal articles. Some journals publish articles on any aspect of geography. Other journals are more specialist.

How do you access journal articles? The Robinson Library tends not to keep paper copies of these anymore. Instead, most often they are available free of charge via the Library's e-journal service www.ncl.ac.uk/library



A joint honours degree is one in which two subjects are studied at the same time. Sometimes it is called a dual honours degree. The FH82 Physical Geography degree programme is a joint honours degree, as you benefit from both geography and geomatics teaching. However, there is no more work involved than studying a single honours course - everyone in the uni needs to complete modules worth 120 credits by the end of each year.

There are some minor differences in culture and procedures between the two Schools but you will soon get used to those. Just remember that any module with a code starting CEG is a geomatics module, run by the School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences (Cassie Building). Any module with a code starting GEO is a geography module, run by the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology (Daysh Building).

If you do get confused in the early weeks, ask your tutor or mentor for help.



Alcohol problems call Drinkline on 0800917 82 82

Drug problems call Talk to Frank on 0800 77 66 00

Eating disorders call BEAT on 0845 634 1414

Non-emergency health advice call NHS Direct on 0845 4647 (24 hour)

Mental health problems (urgent) contact *the Ambulance Service* by telephoning 999

Mental health problems (less urgent) contact Mental Health Matters Helpline 0845 601 2457

Pregnancy concerns call Marie Stopes Helpline on 0845
300 8090 (24 hour)

Sexuality issues call the *Lesbian and Gay Switchboard* on 0207 837 7324

Suicidal thinking call the *Samaritans* on 08457 90 90 90 or on 0191 232 72 72 (24 hour). Or you can call *Nightline* on 0191 261 2905 (8pm-8am).



Geography books are all in the Robinson Library, which is open 24/7 during term time. You need your University Smartcard to get in.

Learn how to use the library in first year and get into the habit of reading. It'll save you loads of time later on.

All the info you need, including how to access the Library Catalogue, is here

www.ncl.ac.uk/library/

Take books out well before you need them - key books are in high demand! Learn how to reserve books using the Library Catalogue.

The Geography Liaison Librarian is Louise Gordon. For general probs ask any librarian. For geography specific probs email louise.gordon@ncl.ac.uk



Every first year student is given a student mentor for the first term. Make good use of yours!

Mentors are second and third year students who can provide guidance, point you in the right direction, help you settle in and answer questions that your tutor or lecturers won't be able to - such as which are the best clubs and pubs? Where's the best place to get cheap pizza? How do I address my tutor? (often by their first name!)

It was our positive experience of acting as mentors (while in the final year of our degree) which inspired us to write this guide when we graduated in July - but there is only so much that we can explain in a guide, SO PLEASE ASK YOUR MENTOR QUESTIONS.



Picks you up from the Uni and takes you home - all for just 70p. www.nusu.co.uk/nightbus





Any problems at all, give Nightline a call. Run by students for students (in confidence)



ights Out

It depends what you like and what you are looking for, but there is somewhere to drink and dance every night of the week.

For us the best nights out are Floritas on Monday, Perdu on Tuesday, Tiger or Legends on Wednesday, Ohso on Thursday, The Den on Friday, CCTV on Saturday and Sinners on Sunday. But maybe don't go to all of them every week!



For an unforgettable night out there's also the pink triangle. Composed of many gay bars, this area is popular due to its undeniably friendly atmosphere. Try Eazy Street and then onto Powerhouse.



Use them! Every member of staff will advertise when they will be in their office each week and this is the perfect chance to drop in for a chat, to ask questions, or get advice on assessments, lectures and seminars. Also use your tutor's office hours to discuss any personal problems you are having.





Plagiarism is basically stealing and passing off the ideas or words of another as your own. This is a hot topic in the department and is not tolerated at all. Read and check the referencing guides given to you at the beginning of first year. These guides will become essential to your university life, as correctly referencing what you have read avoids plagiarism.

When submitting your assignments they go through 'TurnItInUK' which is described in all of your module guides. This is a database which compares your work to: every other piece of work ever uploaded to TurnItInUK throughout the country; all online material; and it also measures it against work you have previously submitted. Plagiarism really is a massive issue and in the most extreme cases can lead to failing an assignment or being asked to leave the university. However as long as you reference properly you will be fine!



On hand in days, queues form as students wait to hand in work. If you are in the queue, but haven't got to the front and handed the work in by the deadline, then it's classified as late and will only receive a max mark of 40%.

Don't get caught out - hand work in the day before it is due if possible.

Sometimes you also have to queue for fieldtrip preferences (eg Langdale in a few weeks' time, longer trips in second year). Don't underestimate how early you need to arrive - last year the first people in the queue arrived 2 hours before sign ups started!!!!!!!



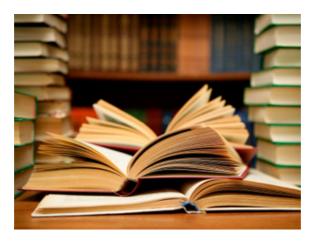
A lot of electronic resources at Newcastle Uni are password protected or only accessible from on campus. This ensures that only people registered with the uni can access them.

RAS (Remote Application Service) provides a method of using University IT facilities - software, printers, internal web pages, journals, and your own documents - 24/7 from any internet connection. This is particularly useful in second and third year when you leave halls.

Log in at $\underline{\textbf{ras.ncl.ac.uk}}$ using your standard uni login and password.



Everyone will tell you (because it's true) that the amount of extra reading you do will be the key thing determining the degree classification you leave uni with. To put it bluntly, if you don't read much then you won't get more than a lower second class degree when you graduate.



Lectures and seminars will only give you so much info and you need to top this up yourself - to add more detail and also to find different opinions on the topic/issue you are studying. For most modules you CANNOT rely on one textbook. Instead you need to be reading different authors' opinions in several books or journal articles.



After all the pizzas and drinking, you might eventually decide you need to do something active. This is where **The Centre for Physical Recreation & Sport (CPRS)** and the **Athletic Union (AU)** come into their own. If you're good, then you can take part in performance sport with the AU and represent the uni. If you just want a hobby, then Inter Mural sport via the CPRS could be for you.

In previous years there has been enough interest for Geography to enter its own Inter Mural hockey, netball, rugby and football teams - ask your mentor or GeogSoc if you are interested in this.

For more info about joining The Centre for Physical Recreation & Sport go to www.ncl.ac.uk/sport

For more info on the Athletics Union go to www.nusu.co.uk/au or speak to the AU President, Laura Mason. Laura graduated with us from Geography in July.



Unlike most schools, the university year starts at the end of September and is divided into three terms (autumn, spring and summer) and two semesters (1 and 2).

You have a holiday at the end of each term \odot but exams at the end of each semester \odot . The year finishes whenever your last semester 2 exam is timetabled. This won't be after 14th June - but could be slightly before.

Autumn: Monday 24 September 2012 - Friday 14 December 2012

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Spring: Monday 7 January 2013 - Friday 15 March 2013

Summer: Monday 15 April 2013 - Friday 14 June 2013

Semester 1: Monday 24 September 2012 - Friday 25 January 2013

Semester 2: Monday 28 January 2013 - Friday 14 June 2013

itles (of staff)

Most of the staff who will teach you have a degree, a master's degree and a PhD (in total about 8 years of study). Having a PhD means that both male and female members of staff are referred to as \mathbf{Dr} (rather than Mr, Miss, Ms).

Some of the older members of staff are referred to as **Professor**. This is a title which they get through experience and promotion. Most professors are world-renowned in their particular field.

However, quite a few members of staff are happy for you just to call them by their first name. Play it safe at first and use titles for everyone. You'll soon work out who is (and who isn't) on first name terms!!



Taxis

NODA Taxis Tel: 0191 222 1888

Blueline Taxis Tel: 0191 262 6666

LA Taxis Tel: 0191 287 7777

Metro

Single and Daysaver tickets - plus monthly and weekly passes available from Haymarket Metro Station.

Buses

Bus Station is next to Marks and Spencers at Haymarket.

Trains from Central Station

Remember to get a Railcard www.railcard.co.uk



Every student at Newcastle University has a personal tutor, who has a vital role to play in your academic and personal development. Your tutor should be your first point of contact for ANY personal or academic problems you are having. They will be able to help or will direct you to other sources of guidance (e.g. to a module leader for academic help, or to Student Wellbeing for emotional support).

You can drop into your tutor's office for a chat during office hours, or you can send them an email and ask for an appointment.

Whether you are having any problems or not, at various times during the year your tutor will invite you to make a 1-2-1 appointment to see them for a catch up chat. THESE MEETINGS ARE IMPORTANT AND YOU MUST ATTEND.

Also remember that it is usually your tutor (and dissertation mentor) who write your references at the end of your degree!!



Newcastle University Students' Union (NUSU) is student-led and is not just a bar and club. The building also houses NSR (Newcastle Student Radio), The Courier newspaper, student campaigns, student printing, computer and study cluster, welfare and advice centres, societies and sport, Students Union Council (where every student has a say) and numerous social events. This is a great place to get involved as it puts you at the heart of student life. See

www.nusu.co.uk







Why volunteer? As a volunteer you can gain valuable employability skills, work experience, potential employment opportunities - and the chance to try something new. It is worth also bearing in mind that some careers are difficult to get into if you have not had previous volunteer experience - for example school teaching, working in development or the environment. In second and third year you can even have your volunteering accredited as part of the career development module!

How to get started? Contact **SCAN** (Student Community Action Newcastle). It's a lively charity based in the uni, which since the 1960s has provided a wide variety of volunteering opportunities.

www.nusu.co.uk/scan



The Writing Development Centre (or WDC for short) is great and it's free!!

You can have an individual consultation with an academic writing tutor to discuss any difficulties you may have with writing assessments.

If you are working on a new assignment, you can see a tutor at any stage in the writing process, from the moment you start researching the topic to the point when you begin to revise your assignment in preparation for submission.

If you already have a marked assignment, take it with you to your first meeting so that the tutor can identify aspects of your work that need improvement.

THE WDC is in the Robinson Library and you can find out more info (or arrange an appointment) at this website

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc

Our advice is USE IT!!



Blackboard www.blackboard.ncl.ac.uk

Careers Service www.ncl.ac.uk/careers

CRPS www.ncl.ac.uk/sport

Module Catalogue www.ncl.ac.uk/module-catalogue

Robinson Library www.ncl.ac.uk/library

School of CEGS www.ncl.ac.uk/ceg

School of GPS www.ncl.ac.uk/gps

Student Progress www.ncl.ac.uk/students/progress

Student Services https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/

Student Wellbeing www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing

Students' Union www.nusu.co.uk

University email https://owa.ncl.ac.uk

Writing Development Centre www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wdc



Student Wellbeing provides CONFIDENTIAL information, advice and guidance on a wide range of issues, including: financial support, mental health problems and counselling (no lying on a couch involved - we promise!), disability support, dyslexia, religion, health information and general wellbeing.

They are in Kings Gate Building (new glass and sandstone building to the right as you leave the Union) and are open 10am-5pm Mon-Fri.

It is always a good idea to tell your tutor if you are having problems. They might refer you to Student Wellbeing. Alternatively, you can visit Student Wellbeing yourself or book an appointment online

www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing



Prof Andy Gillespie is the head of the School of Geography, Politics and Sociology.

Prof Jon Mills is head of the School of Civil Engineering and Geosciences.

Prof Takeshi Nakagawa is your Degree Programme Director. As DPD, Takeshi is responsible for the day-to-day management and running of your degree course.

Prof Darrel Maddy is Chair of the Board of Examiners and responsible for assessments, degree classifications, marking etc.

Dr Simon Tate is Senior Tutor, with responsibility for pastoral care, extensions etc.



OK, it's a very poor pun for which there is no excuse (or should that be x-cuse!) We couldn't think of anything beginning with x, so it was either this or a page devoted to xylophones!!

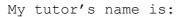
Anyway, fancy doing something different? Then this could be the page for you. The geography department is really keen to encourage expeditions outside of the UK, organised by students to carry out research. Previous student-led Newcastle University expeditions have been carried out in a wide range of countries including those as diverse as Brazil and Bulgaria, Iceland and Indonesia, Kazakhstan and Kenya, Tibet and Tanzania, Norway and Namibia.

Organising an expedition is demanding, especially if you have little previous experience. The **University Expeditions Committee** is able to offer advice and financial assistance. For more info, try this webpage

www.ncl.ac.uk/gps/geography/about/expeditions

Or email emma.pearson@ncl.ac.uk





My tutor's email address is:

My tutor's office hours are:

My mentor's name is:

My mentor's email address is:

000000m!!

University life goes faster than you would ever think possible and each year gets better and better — though first year is pretty good too! Make the most of every opportunity you are given and you will have a memorable and brilliantly fun time at uni (despite a few deadlines in between!)