Contents
About this handbook
Local contacts
Access to the Building
Postgraduate Workspace
Computers
Printers
Support for Conferences and Fieldwork
Inter-Library Loans
Equipment
Vehicles
Technical Services
Seminars
Reading Groups
Annual monitoring
Upgrade (End of Year One) Procedures
Referencing

About this handbook
This is a supplementary handbook for postgraduate research students in Geography. If your lead supervisor is a member of Geography, this will be your ‘home’ discipline. This handbook should be read in conjunction with the College of Life and Environmental Sciences Postgraduate Research student handbook.

Local contacts
Kath Buckell, College Administrator (Streatham Campus)
Room 252, Amory, Exeter, k.m.buckell@exeter.ac.uk 01392 722257

Hayley McCormack, Programme Administrator (Cornwall Campus)
Room A070, Peter Lanyon, Cornwall, h.l.mccormack@exeter.ac.uk 01326 253786

Professor Stephen Sitch - Director of MPhil/PhD Physical Geography (Streatham campus)
Room 419, Amory, Exeter, s.a.sitch@exeter.ac.uk 01392 723331
Dr Karen Bickerstaff - Director of MPhil/PhD Human Geography (Streatham campus)
Room 303, Amory, Exeter, k.bickerstaff@exeter.ac.uk 01392 722492

Dr Liam Reinhardt - Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator (Cornwall)
Room A082, Peter Lanyon, Cornwall, Liam.Reinhardt@exeter.ac.uk 01326 371868

College contacts

CLES Postgraduate Research Administration Team
C15, Hatherly Laboratories, Prince of Wales Road, Exeter
cles-pgr-support@exeter.ac.uk
Helen Pisarska, Postgraduate Research Manager 01392 723310
Sarah Mudge, Postgraduate Research Administrator 01392 723706
Lindsey Beasley, Postgraduate Research Administrator 01392 725150
Anne Jervoise, Postgraduate Research Administrative Assistant 01392 723706

Access to the Building
There are an increasing number of swipe card access systems across the University. To gain access you must use your student ID card in the swipe card system by the door. Only authorised users are able to gain access. If your ID card does not work, please send your card number and name to your local admin support.

The Amory Building can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by using your ID card. Geography staff, research students and cleaners/porters have been given swipe card access to room 360, the postgraduate suite.

The swipe card system only comes into effect on the Sediment Research Facility, Amory out of hours (5.30pm-8am Mon-Fri and all day on weekends).

The Laboratories in Amory are protected by a keypad. The codes are obtainable on request from your supervisor.

Postgraduate Workspace
All full-time postgraduate research students will have access to a desk. Students have a collective responsibility to keep the rooms and furniture in a decent condition.

Computers
Full time postgraduate research students will have access to a PC or laptop and desk space in the postgraduate research rooms. Your University username & password should be used for logging on to PCs in the postgraduate room. In addition, there will be hot desks available for those students who do not live locally, part-time and writing up students.

For Exeter students only: If there are any problems with hardware or software installations please see Diane Fraser, Computing Development Officer. For any general software or email user difficulties you should seek help from IT Services helpdesk. Email helpdesk@exeter.ac.uk or phone 01392 723934. If alternative software is required please see Diane Fraser (Exeter students only) and the request will be assessed.
For Cornwall students only: If there are any problems with hardware or software installations please see Andrew Cowley, Research Computing Support Officer. For any general software or email user difficulties you should in the first instance seek help from IT Service Desk. Email servicedesk@falmouth.ac.uk or phone 01326 370708. If they are unable to assist within an agreeable timeframe seek assistance from Andrew Cowley.

Printers
New for 2011/12 limited colour printing will be available to Geography postgraduate research students in Exeter. As this is a new, more costly service, usage of colour printing will be reviewed regularly. Colour printing is also available at some of the various Palms print stations\(^1\) across the Exeter campus if you wish to print any personal items in colour.

Support for Conferences and Fieldwork
Some postgraduate students have (limited) fieldwork and conference costs paid by their sponsoring body e.g. ESRC, NERC or an internal studentship. We recognise, however, that there are students who are not funded by an external body or who have particularly high fieldwork costs. Geography cannot meet the needs of all students, and students should not start their research with the expectation that funds can be provided. There is, however, a small fund within the Geography that students can apply to for conference funding or unanticipated fieldwork costs. For example, where a student is attending a conference to present a paper and has no budget for that conference, some money may be made available. Postgraduate students must discuss access to this funding with their supervisors and make an application to the Geography Research Committee. **You must NOT commit to conferences or fieldwork in anticipation of such funding as it is limited.** Deadlines will normally be at the end of November and the end of May. Procedures for application will be circulated via email one month before the deadline (or can be sent on request).

Inter-Library Loans
Postgraduate research students can request inter-library loan\(^2\) tokens. Tokens cost Geography £8.50 each. Where requests are supported in writing by the supervisor and are thought to be reasonable, tokens will be issued by the local Geography office. Please ask your supervisor to email cles-pgr-support@exeter.ac.uk with details of your request. Students will then need to take the token to the library to request the item. Students will need to complete a form from the library giving details of the publication requested.

Equipment
Available for loan to students and staff are:
- digital voice recorders
- transcribing equipment
- digital camera
- digital video cameras (basic models)
To book any of these items please see the local Geography office.

Physical Geography equipment will be kept by the Physical Geography Technicians.

---

1. [http://www.ex.ac.uk/its/printing/](http://www.ex.ac.uk/its/printing/)
2. [http://as.exeter.ac.uk/library/using/borrowing/ill/](http://as.exeter.ac.uk/library/using/borrowing/ill/)
Vehicles
Geography owns a number of vehicles (based at the Exeter campus) for staff and postgraduate use for local journeys (a hire car should be used for journeys further afield). You will need to provide your valid driving license (for photocopying) and get your supervisor to sign a form before you can be considered to drive the Geography vehicles. See Neville England for this.

If you have a driving licence from a non-European Community country you will need to exchange it for a UK licence within 12 months of entering the country.

Signing in/out - There is a whiteboard situated in the Drawing Office (room 439, Amory) where all of the vehicle information is held. Vehicles cannot be booked more than three weeks in advance. When you pick up the keys, please write on the board where you are going and what time you will be back. This is a safety precaution and it is up to everybody to check that fellow colleagues return from fieldwork.

We have three dedicated spaces for the Geography vehicles at the rear of the Amory Building however Campus Services are able to use our dedicated spaces when visiting the building for repairs etc. Please ensure that, when it is necessary to park a Geography vehicle in a space other than one of the dedicated spaces, it does not obstruct the other parking places. Although it is not ideal, in extremis a vehicle should be parked across the front of our dedicated vehicle parking spaces, since it would be possible for us to move it in order to use one of the vehicles parked in the dedicated spaces and we would not be inconveniencing anyone else.

Fuel
Each Geography vehicle is supplied with a dedicated fuel card, kept in the vehicle along with the breakdown services membership card.

When purchasing fuel please be sure the garage accepts our type of fuel card, most do. At the time of payment please ensure that the vehicle registration number and current mileage are included on the sales voucher. Also record the fuel amount and mileage details on the vehicle log sheet.

Vehicle log sheets are kept in each van, and must be filled in clearly for each journey, no matter how short. This enables accurate mileage charges to be made for each 3-month period.

Technical Services
Postgraduates are expected to do the majority of tasks themselves where it is possible and practicable, and this is seen as an important part of the PhD; some technical help is available but we need to use the resources in the best way.

Your supervisor must be aware and approve your use of technical services, firstly for general usage and secondly and more importantly when you have a specific requirement which has greater time and cost implications. Availability of technical staff varies and it may be necessary to prioritise requests according to Geography policies and strategies.

Computing
Dr Diane Fraser, Computing Development Officer
D.P.Fraser@exeter.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1392 725131

- Windows, Linux and HPC at Stratham campus
- Research and teaching support in the specialist areas of GIS, remote sensing and advanced image/data analysis
- IT enquiries
- Systems co-ordination and computing advice in School

Dr Andrew Cowley, Research Computing Support Officer
A.Cowley@exeter.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1326 371879

- Research Computing
- Support on Windows, UNIX/Linux and Apple Mac systems not covered by IT services at Tremough
- Support for GIS, remote sensing, data acquisition, image/data analysis and programme/scripting

Technicians
Jim Grapes, Research Technician
J.Grapes@exeter.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1392 723321

- Technician in charge of the Geography Laboratories.
- Runs AAS, Continuous Flow Analysis, ICPMS and Gamma Spectroscopy systems.

Angela Elliott, Research Technician
A.H.Elliott@exeter.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1392 723321

- Main responsibility pollen preparation.
- Advise and assist academic staff in lab techniques and Pollen preparation.
- Advise and assist undergraduates with lab methods for their dissertations.

Susan Frankling, Research Technician
S.C.Frankling@exeter.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1392 723321

- Advise and assist academic staff.
- Responsible for school surveying equipment and mobile phones- both allocation and upkeep.
- Technician in charge of experimental area.
- Responsible for Particle Size Analysis on soil samples for research purposes and undergraduate dissertations.
- Teaching undergraduate students in methods to enable them to complete their dissertations.

Neville England, Workshop Technician
N.J.England@exeter.ac.uk, +44 (0) 1392 723197
To provide both mechanical and electronic engineering support to the department.
- Design and manufacture of bespoke laboratory and field equipment.
- Repair and maintenance of existing kit.
- Day to day maintenance and servicing of departmental vehicles.

Helen Jones, Senior Cartographer, H.R.Jones@exeter.ac.uk
Sue Rouillard, Cartographer, S.E.Rouillard@exeter.ac.uk
+44 (0) 1392 723245

Cartographic and Graphic Services (Drawing Office)
The Drawing Office is a Geography facility offering specialist services for research, academic publications and teaching.

- Professional cartographic and graphic services
- Bespoke artwork for academic research publications, teaching and presentation material
- Design and print of up to A0 posters
- Advice on basic cartographic design, design techniques and the use of specialised software
- Access to Geography's paper Map Collection and other specialist resources
- Specialist materials and equipment
- Access to postgraduate theses and undergraduate dissertations
- Signage and displays within Geography
- Binding, laminating, trimming and other small equipment available for general staff use

Seminars
Every full-time research student is required to present seminars in their first and, normally, third years. Part-time students will also be required to give 2 seminars during their period of study – these will normally be scheduled in the 2nd and 6th year of study. The first of these seminars will form the upgrade seminar (see Upgrade Procedures). The seminars provide a very important opportunity to discuss your research with members of staff and fellow research students. They are designed to be supportive and to provide feedback on your research ideas and progress. Seminars provide useful opportunity to practice presentation skills.

In addition postgraduates are strongly encouraged to attend the series of Geography research seminars - these are by visiting speakers from external institutions. There is a series of seminars for Human Geography and for Physical Geography, normally scheduled weekly during term time. Emails will be circulated giving details of forthcoming seminars.

Reading Groups
Geography runs a variety of informal reading groups which meet on a regular basis in term time. At each meeting they discuss a recent journal paper or book chapter, suggested by members of the group. The groups are usually open to all members of staff and all postgraduates. At the start of the year the co-ordinator of each Group emails staff & students asking if they wish to join the email list for the group.

4 http://geography.exeter.ac.uk/staffarea/cartographicandgraphicservices/
Annual monitoring
In addition to the details given on Annual Monitoring in the CLES PGR Handbook, Geography students in their second year will be required to provide a chapter outline and a table of contents as part of the annual monitoring process.

Upgrade (End of Year One) Procedures
These are the guidance notes relating to Geography’s procedures for assessing the progress of Year One postgraduates as they move through to Year Two. Please note that there are also University-level “annual review” procedures which operate separately and normally have to be completed by the end of June. First year progress reports to the University will therefore always be subject to subsequent satisfactory completion of Geography upgrade procedures.

Some Year One postgraduates will already be registered for a PhD, while others will initially be registered for an MPhil and will literally need to be upgraded to a PhD registration. In both cases, the “Upgrade” procedure will be a required part of the first year programme.

The Upgrade process is an extremely important part of the PhD. It is regarded by Geography as the most important hurdle that students must go over in their three years as a postgraduate. The purpose of the Upgrade is to ensure that adequate progress is being made, that the students are capable of a viable thesis and that the work can be completed in a realistic timeframe. Additionally, the Upgrade is a good mechanism for identifying and solving problems the student may be experiencing early on in a PhD. For all students, however, the intention of the upgrade process is to ensure that both Geography and Faculty expectations of a doctoral candidate have been met. Upgrading is not an entitlement and is not always appropriate.

The Timing of the Upgrade Procedure
Full time students starting in October are expected to deliver their presentations in early May, with the upgrade report due a few weeks later at the end of May, and the upgrade meeting should take place by the end of June. Part time students will undergo upgrade in their second year of study. Students who start at other times of the year will be provided with appropriate deadlines.

The upgrade materials will be slightly different for human geography and physical geography postgraduates:

HUMAN GEOGRAPHERS

Preparing the Upgrade Materials
The upgrade report (maximum 13,000 words excluding references and appendices) should normally include discussion of:

- A brief description of the research problem, its background and its relationship to existing scholarship/literature, with brief definitions and discussion of central concepts.

---

5 For entrants from 2010/11 academic year onwards
- A review and critique of the existing scholarship/literature (usually around 5000 words)
- A statement of the research aims, questions or hypotheses and an indication of the sort of argument(s) that will be made and the sort of evidence that will be used to reach any conclusions.
- An outline of the proposed methods of data collection and analysis with any key methodological issues, (such as ethical or access) highlighted and with references on methods.
- A brief statement of the way in which the study will use or relate to theory and the theoretical/conceptual framework(s) which will be used for the study.
- An abstract of the thesis and chapter plan. This is to show where the pieces of work submitted (see below) fit into the structure of the thesis as a whole.
- A timetable of the thesis as a whole. This should show the student’s work plan for the remaining period of study.
- One or two pieces of work, which have already been written and which will form substantive parts of key chapters in the final thesis.
- A working bibliography should be included to show the sort of sources being used.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHERS

Preparing the Upgrade Materials
The upgrade report (maximum 13,000 words excluding references and appendices) should normally include discussion of:

- A brief description of the research problem, its background and its relationship to existing scholarship/literature, with brief definitions and discussion of central concepts.
- A review and critique of the existing scholarship/literature (usually around 5000 words)
- A statement of the research aims, questions or hypotheses.
- An outline of the proposed methods of data collection and analysis demonstrating how these will address the research aims. Where appropriate this should include details of the field or laboratory sampling strategy and the role of theory in informing both data collection and analysis. It should also highlight relevant key methodological issues (practical or ethical), and include references to all methods.
- A summary of data collection and analysis conducted during year one, including a critical assessment of the limitations of the proposed methodology and identification of possible problems that may be encountered in years two and three.
- A thesis plan including a brief summary of the material that will be dealt with in each chapter. This is to show how data and/or theory will be presented to address the project aims and research questions.
- A timetable of the thesis as a whole. This should show the student’s work plan for the remaining period of study.

Submitting the Upgrade report
Students will be informed of the exact deadlines for the report early in their programme. They will be informed of the upgrade panel members in advance of the deadline. Students will need to email their upgrade report to the panel members and to cles-pgr-support@exeter.ac.uk by

---

6 For entrants from 2010/11 academic year onwards
the deadline, and also upload their upgrade report to MyPGR as MyPGR should hold your full
document history. Students should add an ad-hoc event titled MPhil-PhD upgrade report on
MyPGR, and upload your upgrade report. Students will not be required to prepare hard copies
of the report unless specifically requested by any member of the panel who should inform you
in advance.

THE UPGRADE MEETINGS

The Upgrade Panel
The Head of the Geography Graduate School, will oversee the membership of the
Upgrade Panel for each student. This should normally consist of the first supervisor
(second supervisor is optional) and two additional, and relevant, members of staff.
External committee members will be recruited if appropriate. The panel will read your
submission and meet with you to discuss the completed and proposed work.

The Upgrade Meeting
The Upgrade meeting should normally occur no later than three weeks after the report
has been submitted, and at least two weeks notice should be given of this meeting.
The Upgrade meeting resembles a viva voce and will usually last for about 60-90
minutes. Supervisors attend the meeting mainly as observers. The staff member
chairing the meeting will ensure orderly questioning and that you get the opportunity to
show your strengths as well as any weaknesses. On the basis of the upgrade
submission and meeting the Upgrade Panel will decide whether or not to recommend
upgrading to the Faculty.

Upgrade Requirements
The Upgrade Panel will consider the extent to which:
● the student has a clearly defined research question which is located within and
  contributes to identified existing bodies of work;
● the data or other information can be collected with the resources available to
  address the question identified;
● it is clear how the data or other information will be analysed;
● there is a coherent conceptual framework and it is clear whether theory is being used
to ‘illuminate’ or theory is being tested/challenged;
● the student has acquired the skills to undertake the research and has the ability to
  write up the thesis to the standards required.

Upgrade Recommendations
The Upgrade Panel may recommend one of the following options:
1. Upgrade to PhD
2. Upgrade to PhD, subject to minor modifications of the upgrade materials (the
   modifications should be approved by the Chair of the panel)
3. Resubmit revised upgrade materials, within a three month period (an additional
   viva will take place if deemed necessary by the Chair of the panel)
4. Do not upgrade to PhD – continue as MPhil
5. Do not upgrade to PhD and consider withdrawal

The decision of the upgrade panel may be communicated verbally to the student at the
earliest possible opportunity, but a report in writing will also be supplied, providing a
clear and detailed statement of the reactions of those present to the work and
performance of the student. The upgrade report will be emailed to cles-pgr-
and should also be uploaded to MyPGR by the student as previously defined.

**Upgrade Resubmissions**
Candidates who are not successfully upgraded following their first upgrade submission (category 3 above) are entitled to resubmit their revised upgrade materials on one further occasion, normally within a three month period. The revised upgrade report should be uploaded to MyPGR as previously defined. An additional viva may take place if deemed appropriate by the Chair of the upgrade panel. Candidates may be allowed to make further minor modifications to the resubmission upon the request of the upgrade committee (category 2 above), but they may not resubmit their upgrade materials more than once. The modifications must be approved by the Chair of the upgrade panel.

**Upgrade Seminars**
Students will also be required to present a seminar (20 minute presentation, 10 minutes for questions) to Geography. Notice will be given of the precise date/s for these presentations. This seminar is NOT part of the formal procedures of upgrade – you will not be scrutinised in terms of the quality of your presentation. However, the seminar IS a compulsory part of your programme, providing an opportunity to tell the rest of Geography what you are doing, and giving you a chance to polish your presentation skills.