Northumbria University
NEWCASTLE

WELCOME PACK

Distance Learning at Northumbria University

ABOUT THIS WELCOME PACK.

This pack contains all the information you'll need to succeed during your online studies. It contains key information about the services we offer to support and enhance your learning, including our Student Success Team, careers, disability, wellbeing services and more. We recommend reading it through carefully, in particular the FAQs and Getting Ready to Start sections.

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WELCOME FROM THE STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM.

We're delighted that you've chosen to study a distance learning course with us here at Northumbria University. We look forward to welcoming you.

Students at Northumbria enjoy first-class teaching as well as the ongoing support of the Student Success Team. As specialists in online student support, we're committed to your academic success.

We will be your first point of contact for any issues that might affect you on your journey. You will receive a dedicated Student Success Advisor who will support you from enrolment to graduation. Access to this support will help you to focus your attention on your studies.

The Student Success Team will help you:
- Navigate your studies
- Find advice and guidance
- Answer any non-academic questions
- Deliver fees and assessments on time

With our support, you'll enjoy a fulfilling, productive study experience.

Your Student Success Advisor will keep in contact with you via your Northumbria University email account. Please check it regularly. We'll check your progress and provide key course information through this address.

Once again, welcome to Northumbria University.

Kind regards

Student Success Team, Northumbria University

GETTING READY TO START.

Flexibility is one of the key benefits of studying as a distance learning student. You'll be able to plan your studies around your existing commitments and study from anywhere in the world.

Before starting your course, make sure you have internet access and a reliable laptop. We want to avoid any technical problems that could hold back your course progress.

You will get the most out of your degree when you fully engage with all aspects of the course. We encourage you to take part in all online activities, interactive exercises and forum discussions, as well as make use of our extra-curricular services.

If you struggle to take part in any activities, please speak to your Student Success Advisor. They will offer support and advice to help you complete your studies successfully. Your course leaders recommend you set aside at least 15-20 hours of study time per week.

Shortly, you'll gain access to the University's eLearning platform (eLP), Blackboard. Familiarise yourself with the platform and work through the induction material. It will help you to prepare for the weeks ahead.

As part of your induction, you will receive an email invitation to attend a welcome webinar where you will:

- Engage with your academic leads
- Meet your Student Success Advisor
- Identify a selection of services available to you
- Interact with the other students on the course
- Ask any initial questions you may have

We encourage you to make time to attend the webinar - it's a great opportunity to get your learning off to the best possible start.

ARE YOU READY TO START?

This checklist will prepare you for your first day on the course. You'll find more detailed information about each step throughout this pack. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your Student Success Advisor.

Please ensure that you have completed the following checklist before the first module start date.

Had a welcome call with my Student Success Advisor

Registered for the upcoming welcome webinar

Completed the enrolment process

Completed the student induction materials

Familiarised myself with the academic calendar

Checked my internet connection and hardware

Accessed my Northumbria University student email account

Marked Northumbria as a safe sender in my personal email inbox

Accessed and explored Blackboard

FAQs.

Here are a few quick answers to questions we're asked all the time. You can find more details about each topic further on in this welcome pack.

Q: Who do I speak to if I have a problem?
A: This depends on the nature of your issue. Speak to your Student Success Advisor first and they will point you in the right direction.

Q: Do I need to apply for a Student Smartcard?
A: No, this is issued automatically. We will generate your Smartcard and post it to your home address once you have enrolled online. Please make sure to upload a photograph.

Q: I'm struggling to finance my course, what should I do?
A: We designed your course to be flexible to suit your circumstances. You can take a break from studying if finance is an issue. Please check what the maximum study time is with your Student Success Advisor, to ensure you won't exceed it. You can also contact the Wellbeing Team if you are experiencing difficulties.

Q: How do I pay my fees?
A: Payments are due on a module-by-module basis (unless you are sponsored by your employer). You can pay your fees via the Student Portal. The Student Success Team will send a payment reminder, along with a payment link, three weeks before the deadline for each module.

Q: What readings do I have to do for each module?
A: Reading lists for each module can be found on Blackboard.

Q: Will there be live seminars in my modules?
A: Yes, your module leader may choose to run live seminars when relevant. Your Blackboard Module site will display the seminar information.

Q: When and how do I submit my work?
A: You will submit your work via Blackboard. Each module assessment has a submission date. We will notify you of this via Blackboard too.

Q: Who do I contact if I need academic help?
A: Your module tutor can help you with any academic challenges you may face during a module. If you aren't sure who that is, get in touch with your Student Success Advisor. They're always happy to help!

Q: When will I receive my results?
A: Our academic leaders release provisional results 20 working days after the assessment deadline.

Q: What happens if I fail a module?
A: You will be given one opportunity to re-sit the assessment. If you fail your reassessment, you can pay to re-sit the full module at a later date.

Q: What do I do if I experience technical difficulties accessing Blackboard?
A: Please contact our IT Helpline in the event of technical difficulties. Support is available 24/7 by calling +44191 227 4242, texting +44 77 81 48 27 86 or emailing it.helpline@northumbria.ac.uk. Contact details can be found in your Student Portal.

Q: How do I organise a break in my studies?
A: Contact your Student Success Advisor. They will discuss your options and help you plan the remainder of your modules. Remember that taking a break will impact your graduation date.

Q: What do I do if I need to request a letter from the University?
A: There are a number of standard letters which students can request, such as:
• Confirmation of enrolment
• Schengen visa
• Bank letters
• Council Tax Exemption
• HC1 benefits
• Invitation for an overseas visitor.

To make a request, please access the Student Portal. Click on the 'My Info' link on the left hand side of the page. Select 'Menu' then the 'Letter Requests' link. You will be presented with a list of letters you can request or print. Follow the onscreen guidance on how to obtain the letter you require.

HOW TO CONTACT THE STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM.

The Student Success Team will assign you a dedicated advisor when you enrol on your course. You'll receive their direct-dial extension number in the form of a six-digit code. Whenever you have a question or a query, your advisor will be ready to help. If they are unavailable for any reason, you can email or call the Student Success Team who will get back to you as soon as possible.

You can also arrange regular support calls with your Student Success Advisor. No matter your timezone, we always try and arrange calls at a time convenient to you. Our advisors are happy to use video calling software, if you like to communicate face-to-face. They can also send communications and reminders via SMS.

Your dedicated Student Success Advisor will be your main point of contact for all non-academic queries. This will include:

- Keeping you updated on key dates associated with your course
- Offering guidance and support
- Helping you with administrative queries.

YOUR STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM

If you need to contact the Student Success Team, you can:

CALL US ON
+44191 276 6392 Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm (BST/GMT)

EMAIL US AT
dlstudentsuccess@northumbria.ac.uk

We have a 24-hour email response time (even on weekends).

All students are given a Northumbria email account when they enrol on their course. This is the email address we will use to communicate with you, enabling us to identify you quickly. Please be aware that we will very rarely send emails to your personal email account once you have enrolled. Make sure you check your Northumbria email account regularly to avoid missing out on crucial information. If we contact you at a time that's not convenient for you, we can arrange a more suitable time using your preferred method of communication. You can also book in a call at a time that suits you by using your Student Success Advisor's YouCanBook.me link. This can be found in their email signature.

WHO SHOULD I ASK?

The chart below illustrates who you should contact when you have a query. If you have a question but are unsure who to contact, your Student Success Advisor is the best first point of contact.

YOUR STUDENT SUCCESS ADVISOR	PERSONAL TUTOR/ PROGRAMME LEADER	MODULE LEADER	STUDENT AND LIBRARY SERVICES	OTHER UNIVERSITY SERVICES
Your first point of contact	Academic advice and guidance	Module content issues	Personal Extenuating Circumstances	IT Services
Assist in connecting with specialist university services	General programme related academic progression/grade concerns	Academic concerns	Applications for extensions to assessment deadlines	Academic Registry – for Graduation Ceremony enquiries, Certificate and Transcript enquiries
Assessment deadline reminders		Assessment queries	Appeals/complaints and causes for concern	
Linking to academic staff	Programme materials	Module related progression/grade concerns	Student wellbeing (funding/disability/welfare)	
Enrolment and progressing to next module	Further reading suggestions	Further module reading suggestions	Careers	
Fee payments and refunds			Finance	
Taking a break from studying			Results queries	
Administration				
Changes to personal information				

ACADEMIC CALENDAR.

We recommend that you familiarise yourself with your relevant academic years and make a note of key dates. Your academic team will make module-specific information available as your course progresses.

The Student Success Team will communicate the exact dates and times of submissions for each module via email. You can also find a week-by-week breakdown of activity for each module on its respective Blackboard site.

If you need to take a break during your studies, you may opt out of a module and rejoin when you are ready. But remember, you are required to complete your studies within a set length of time, which varies depending on your course. To find out more, please speak to your Student Success Advisor.

INTAKE	GETTING STARTED WEEK	TEACHING START DATE	PAYMENT DEADLINE FOR NEXT MODULE
January 2020	6/1/2020	13/1/2020	10/4/2020
April 2020	13/4/2020	20/4/2020	3/7/2020
July 2020	6/7/2020	13/7/2020	25/9/2020
October 2020	28/9/2020	5/10/2020	4/1/2021
January 2021	4/1/2021	11/1/2021	9/4/2021
April 2021	12/4/2021	19/4/2021	2/7/2021
July 2021	5/7/2021	12/7/2021	24/9/2021
October 2021	27/10/2021	4/10/2021	3/1/2022
January 2022	3/1/2022	10/1/2022	8/4/2022
April 2022	11/4/2022	18/4/2022	1/7/2022
July 2022	4/7/2022	11/7/2022	23/9/2022
October 2022	26/9/2022	3/10/2022	2/1/2023

FINANCE.

Before the start of each module, you will be made aware of payment deadlines. However, it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure you pay on time before the start of each module. If you fail to make a payment, you will not gain access to the module. When one module finishes, you will be prompted to select, pay and enrol on the next unless you have informed your Student Success Advisor otherwise. It is your responsibility to let your advisor know of your intentions and they will be very happy to talk you through your options and any implications of having a study break.

Possible methods of funding include:
- Employer sponsorship
- Student Loan Company funding
- Self-funding
- Enhanced Learning Credits Administration Services (ELCAS).

↘ **Northumbria University's Financial Regulations apply.**

UNIVERSITY SERVICES.

Library Services

As a Northumbria student, you have full access to all University Library resources.

The Library collection encompasses both print and online resources, including almost 843,000 ebooks and an extensive ejournal collection of over 110,000 titles.

The Library works in partnership with your module tutors to ensure you have access to the materials you need. As part of this work we purchase material in ebook and print format and digitise articles to give you easy access to reading list material. You can find such material through your readings lists on Blackboard.

Library Search provides a search box through which you can access resources. Find millions of books, journals, newspaper articles, audio-visual material, datasets and other scholarly resources in Northumbria's Library Collection and beyond. You can use Library Search to find books and ebooks. Search for the

book title, by author or by keywords. If you would like to borrow physical items from the Library, we provide a postal service for books and journal articles which can be sent to students worldwide.

If you live locally or would like to visit the campus, you have full access to our three on-site libraries. You must have a University smartcard in order to get access.

Skills Plus is the Library's collection of online learning materials for digital literacy and study skills. Use these resources when you need help with studying or online learning.

Skills Plus has a range of online tutorials with quizzes, video demonstrations and printable help guides. Choose the type of help you need and your preferred format from the available options.

Find out more about Library Services by visiting University Library online.

You can contact the Library through Ask4Help.

Student Progress

The Student Progress Service helps to keep you on track with your studies. We can provide a range of support and administration activities, as well as key information.

For example, if you experience extenuating personal circumstances affecting your work, Student Progress can help you request additional time for assessed work. We will also support you if you are considering taking time out, transferring courses or leaving.

Student Progress will work with you and your Faculty to ensure that any Disabled Student Support Recommendations are implemented. Additionally, we provide advice, guidance and case management for student appeals, complaints or disciplinary issues.

Information relating to Student Progress Services is available through your Student Portal

IT Helpline

If you have an IT problem, you can contact the 24-hour IT Helpdesk.

- Tel: 0191 227 4242
- Text: +44 77 81 48 27 86
- Email: it.helpline@northumbria.ac.uk
- IT Chat: northumbria.ac.uk/itchat
- Online Search: northumbria.ac.uk/knowhow
- Twitter: @NorthumbriaIT

Student Support and Wellbeing

The Student Support and Wellbeing Service understands that, alongside your academic life, you will be managing your day-to-day life. When juggling budgets, relationships and family responsibilities, specialist advice and support can be invaluable.

The Student Support and Wellbeing Service is here to help students with a range of issues. We can help with disability and dyslexia needs, counselling and mental health support, faith advice, finance, welfare issues and international support. You can download our brochure or visit our website for further information, or contact us via the Student Portal.

Once you have enrolled, the Student Portal can provide you with a range of

information, guidance and support.

Counselling and Mental Health
If you feel you need help with a personal, emotional or mental health issue, you can access support through our [Counselling and Mental Health Team](#).

We can offer:
- Online self-help support [(available here)](#)
- Appointments with counsellors
- Appointments with mental health practitioners (which can include identifying possible mental health issues)
- Guided self-help appointments
- Eye Movement Desensitsation and Reprocessing (EMDR) appointments
- Ongoing individual support
- Referrals to other support services inside and outside the University

Student representatives
Your Students' Union is here to make sure that your time at Northumbria is the best it can be. It's our mission to have a positive impact on the lives of all our students.

Northumbria Student Union (NSU) is run by a team of students elected by the student body. They represent their fellow students and speak up on your behalf to the University and beyond. If you have any issues with any part of your University experience, tell them and they'll work to make the changes you want to see.

If you'd like to get involved with student representatives, take a look at our [website](#).

Disability and Dyslexia Team
You will need to register with the University's [Disability and Dyslexia Support Team](#) to access disability and/or dyslexia support.

To arrange an appointment with a Disabilities Advisor and register, please telephone Ask4Help on +44191 227 4646. If you are on campus you can also visit one of the Ask4Help service points.

You may be asked to provide appropriate medical evidence to the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team.

The support team can provide:
- Individual study support strategies
- Advice on applying for [Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA)](#) to cover the costs of the disability support required during study
- Individual or modified exam arrangements
- One-to-one specialist dyslexia tutorials or one-to-one specialist mentoring
- Advice on assistive technology

Congregations
Northumbria University warmly invites eligible students to attend their graduation ceremonies at the University campus.

You can choose which ceremony

you wish to attend so that is can be organised around their other commitments.

Graduation ceremonies take place twice a year, usually in December and July. Graduates who cannot attend their ceremony for personal reasons can apply to defer to a future ceremony.

[The Congregations Office](#) at Northumbria will be happy to work with you to help you decide which ceremony to attend. If you have any questions relating to your ceremony, contact the Congregations Office at rg.congregations@northumbria.ac.uk

Careers and Employment
Northumbria University provides a range of self-help resources designed to boost your employability.

They cover:
- Career possibilities
- Self-awareness
- Workplace skills
- Job-hunting skills
- CVs and applications
- Interview and offers
- Preparing for work

More career tools are [available here](#). You can access additional video content, a digital jobs board and extensive resources about work and study around the world.

If you're able to visit the Northumbria campus, you may like to attend one

of the many careers fairs, workshops or enterprise events that take place throughout the year. More details are [available here](#).

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS.

Here's a list of basic computer system requirements to use Blackboard. We recommend you always use the most up-to-date browsers and the best internet connection you can. Blackboard will still run with the minimum specifications, but you may experience slower loading times.

Screen size
Blackboard is best viewed at a minimum resolution of 800x600.

Computer speed and processor
- Use a computer 5 years old or newer when possible
- 1GB of RAM
- 2GHz processor

Operating systems
- Windows 7 and newer
- Mac OSX 10.6 and newer
- Linux – chromeOS
- Mobile - iOS 7 and newer/ Android 4.2 and newer

Internet speaed
- Minimum of 512kbps

Your Student Success Team will invite you to join webinars and online meetings. You won't have to pay a subscription fee to communicate with the team through these platforms.

You don't need to be a computer expert to take part in your course, but we do expect all students to have a basic level of computer literacy. Support is available for students that encounter any problems. Please contact your Student Success Advisor if you have difficulty accessing your learning and assessment activities or materials.

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NEXT STEPS.

Before your course start date, please complete your student induction module and attend your welcome webinar (you will receive a reminder 48 hours beforehand). If you have any questions during your induction period, please do not hesitate to contact us. We can also support you if you require access to any of the services mentioned in this pack. The Student Success Team wish you all the best for your studies and look forward to helping you along the way.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE COURSE.

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM
Tel: +44191 276 6392 (Monday to Friday, 8am - 4pm BST/GMT)
dlstudentsuccess@northumbria.ac.uk.