

**PhD Handbook**

 **2015**



**Welcome from the Director**

The NCG aims to be a place in which world-class research can be undertaken in a friendly and supportive environment. Our postgraduate community plays a fundamental role in this process primarily through the research postgraduates undertake, but also though involvement in the full spectrum of the NCG’s activities. We see both of these features as core to our success, and a vital contribution to enhancing our international profile. We aim to be internationally renowned for our research but also a great place to work.

The purpose of this handbook is to specify an environment where learning is maximised: both individually, through your own research, and as a group through participation in seminars and related activities. Research postgraduates are unique in the student community in that their work has to attain the highest international standards to merit publication, and it is very important to us that we provide the appropriate environment to support this. The hand book outlines NCG-specific arrangements, and should be read in conjunction with the relevant NUIM policy and regulations, available from the Graduate Studies web pages [http://graduatestudies.nuim.ie/].

You will find all the staff at the NCG very friendly, approachable and supportive. Please feel free to come and talk to me or any other staff member if you have any sort of problem. I wish you a very rewarding and enjoyable time as a postgraduate.



Professor Chris Brunsdon

1. **NCG staff.**

**Professor Chris Brunsdon, Director**

*Research interests: spatial statistics; data visualisation; computational methods; open source software and reproducibility*

**Martin Charlton, Deputy Director**

*Research interests: GIScience, spatial data analysis, spatial modelling, geographically weighted regression, large scale data handling.*

**Dr Tim McCarthy, Senior Research Fellow**

*Research interests: mobile mapping systems, intelligent transportation systems, disaster management systems.*

**Dr Jan Rigby, Centre for Health Geoinformatics**

*Research Interests: health geographies, GIS, poverty*

**Contact information**

**[External telephone number of Main Office is 01 708 6455]**

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**Support Staff**

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**2.0 Getting started**

At the time you register for a PhD, you should agree the main points of your research with your supervisor; specifically:

* The topic of your research (in general terms – we do not expect everyone to have a plan of action immediately upon starting as a postgraduate student!)
* The amount of funding available, and how it is allocated
* An outline timetable for the three years of your research
* Research Training Courses
	1. **Availability**

To complete in the time available, you need to be working a minimum of 40 hours per week. We recognise that each PhD student will have his or her own working patterns. However, particularly for your first two years, we expect you to be in the NCG during core hours of 11am-4pm. Any variations on this must be agreed with your supervisor. In return, your supervisor will provide the required interaction and level of contact for the duration of your studies, will inform you in advance of any intended sabbaticals or other long periods of absence, and if necessary will arrange alternative supervision arrangements.

We expect all research postgraduates to participate fully in the NCG Research Seminar programme and other academic activities.

* 1. **Holidays**

It is important that PhD students take time away from their work! However, it is a matter of courtesy that you notify your supervisor of any other extended periods of time away from the university (or more than two days) outside the public holidays and university closure dates. Please complete a leave form in the office (Ann-Marie has these).

If you are away because you are unwell, do please inform your supervisor.

* 1. **Changes**

Please note that you cannot extend the duration of your research, or switch from full-time mode to part-time without your supervisor’s agreement. The department cannot guarantee the continuing availability of facilities or supervision in the event of a unilateral change. However, the department will do all it can to accommodate changes in a student’s circumstances; the student should alert the supervisor as soon as possible in such situations.

**3.0 Facilities and resources.**

All full-time research postgraduates will be allocated a desk within the Iontas building. Part-time students, and those remaining beyond the three year PhD period, may be asked to share desk space. 24/7 access is available, and you should ensure you are familiar with fire alerts and other relevant Health and Safety procedures. The University security number is 01 708 3929. Please ensure you do not place your own, and other people’s, belongings at risk by leaving office doors unlocked: even for a very short space of time. Please also show consideration to those you share an office with e.g. by going outside the office for mobile phonecalls.

You will be provided with a PC for your sole use; other equipment is at the discretion of the NCG Director. You are responsible for backing up your work, and we cannot over-emphasise how important this is. Try to ensure you have at least one copy of work held outside the University. You are reminded to consult and comply with the University Code of Conduct for the use of computing facilities. The primary means of contact will be through your university email address – please ensure you check this regularly, and keep inboxes within quota. The department reserves the right to unilaterally reallocate desks, and also to dispose of equipment or other materials in the event of a student failing to respond to requests to do so. At present the department does not charge students for printing or for photocopying, but reserves the right to do so should the volume become excessive. Telephone calls can be made from one of the support staff’s offices.

Many of the references you need are likely to be available to you electronically. It is worth checking the Library’s webpages and, if you are new to Maynooth University, attending relevant training sessions, particularly for advice on how to use web-based search-engines. It is possible to obtain research literature that the University does not stock either in hard copy or electronically, but there is a cost associated with this, which can be quite high [Please check with your supervisor before ordering anything.] There is a small collection of books and journals available in the GIS Lab; please make sure you don’t take this material away for more than one or two days.

**4.0 Supervision arrangements**

You will usually be allocated a primary supervisor from within the NCG. There may be situations where you have two supervisors, particularly if your work ranges across the research interests of more than one person, or is a new member of academic staff with little previous supervisory experience. It is possible for a co-supervisor to be from another academic department, or from outside NUIM. Your primary supervisor will meet with you on average once every two weeks in years one and two, and less frequently in Year 3 assuming good progress. You should agree the date and time of the next supervisory meeting at the end of the current meeting. You are entitled to receive feedback on written work promptly, usually within one week if it is less than a chapter of a thesis. Please note that you are responsible for getting work to your supervisors in good time for them to read it before a supervisory meeting: this should be interpreted as several days beforehand rather than several hours! Discuss with your supervisor how s/he would like work to be presented i.e. whether electronically or as hard copy.

1. **Monitoring Progress**

There are several stages to this to try to help you keep your research on track. About nine months into Year One, you will be asked to write a detailed report on your research plans. This will summarise findings from literature reviewed, discuss, with justification, your choice of research methods, and provide a clear timeline for the remainder of the PhD. You will also be required to give a seminar to the NCG on your research plans. Your report will be reviewed by a Research Committee comprising three of the academic staff, and you will meet with your Committee to review progress.

Should the Committee raise serious concerns about your progress, you may be asked to resubmit your report for subsequent review. This will normally be within one month of the review meeting. Should serious concerns remain, the Director of the NCG may recommend that your registration be amended to an MSc by research.

Towards the end of Year Two you will be asked to produce a short report on progress thus far, which will again be reviewed by your Committee. If considered satisfactory, you will proceed to the final stages of your PhD. If not, the Committee will meet with you to discuss progression requirements.

1. **External participation**

It is very important that PhD students participate in academic events outside the university, most commonly by attending national and international conferences and workshops. The general expectation would be that postgraduates would give at least one presentation to a major conference in their second and third years and that they would attend at least one conference in their first year. Funding will be provided to support your participation where possible but students are also encouraged to apply for travel funds from other sources.

1. **Complaints Policy**

If you have concerns with aspects of your PhD and working environment, you should first raise these with your supervisor. If for some reason this is neither desirable nor possible, then you should arrange to meet with the NCG Director. Should a solution not be forthcoming, then an appointment should be sought with the Dean of Graduate Studies.

1. **Intellectual property**

You should be aware that the university asserts certain intellectual property (IP) rights in relation to your work here and your funding sources may also have additional requirements. In all cases, you should inform yourself of the relevant constraints and policies in advance of undertaking research. The NUIM Commercialisation Office is responsible for protecting and exploiting NUIM-generated intellectual property, and further information is available from the website:

 <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/research/commercialisation-office> .

1. **Ethics**

If your research involves data relating to people in any way, you need to consult the university’s ethics policy to ensure that you comply with the guidelines –

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/research/research-development-office/research-ethics>

If you are at all unsure whether any ethical issues may be involved, please talk with your supervisor.

**10. Graduate Studies Office**

For further details of Graduate Studies Policies please visit:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/graduate-studies/graduate-studies-policies>