

# University and Academic Terms Crib Sheet

## Section 2: General Terms about University Environments

Disclaimer: The aim of these resources is to ease the transition for international students into UK higher education and to bring clarity to some of the terminology that is used in this institution. However, the aim is not to imply that UK higher education is the 'correct' way to conduct education, that international students should feel the need to 'assimilate', or that international students are necessarily all in need of such. This is simply a practical tool that may be useful for some students to help navigate the UK system.

## Section 2: General Terms about University Environments

### Lectures/Seminars/Workshops

Lectures: These are large-group sessions where an instructor presents information to students.

Seminars: These are smaller, interactive classes where students engage in discussions and interact with course material.

Workshops: Workshops are practical, hands-on sessions where students learn through activities and exercises. At Newcastle University, there is a website called 'NCL Workshop Booking' where students can book workshops. You can access it here: <https://workshops.ncl.ac.uk/>

**Note:** Differences between seminars and workshops

Seminars tend to be information-focused, one-way communication events with limited audience interaction. Workshops can emphasize hands-on participation, collaboration, and skill-building through activities and discussions. Seminars are often shorter, while workshops tend to be longer and more interactive.

### Marking Rubric

A Marking Rubric is a set of guidelines or criteria used to assess and grade assignments or projects, providing a clear explanation for how work is evaluated.

### Term/Semester/Academic Year

Term: A term is a part of the academic year, typically lasting a few months, during which classes are held. Normally, there are three terms during the academic year: Autumn, Spring, and Summer.

Semester: A semester is one of the three divisions of the academic year. Some educational institutions (such as Newcastle University) operate on a trimester system with three semesters in an

academic year. The semester system allows for a structured and organized approach to course scheduling and academic planning.

Academic Year: The academic year encompasses the full span of time during which academic activities occur and typically consists of three semesters. It begins in September each year.

Note: For specific term and semester dates, please refer to the Newcastle University website <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/term-dates/#currentandfutureyears>

### Chaplaincy/Pastoral Care Service

Chaplaincy: The university's chaplaincy department or service provides spiritual guidance, counselling, and support to students, often led by religious leaders.

Pastoral Care Service: This service offers assistance and counselling to help students with personal and emotional concerns. The term 'pastoral' originates from spiritual guidance given by the Christian church to people (e.g. the guidance a pastor would give you). In educational contexts, this term now usually means support and guidance around personal/emotional concerns to someone (for example, a PhD supervisor or tutor gives you academic guidance, but, where appropriate, also gives you personal/emotional support).

Peer Pastoral Support: This is support provided by fellow students to help others navigate personal challenges and emotional well-being within the university community.

### Intellectual Property

Intellectual Property refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary or artistic works, and symbols, which are protected by law. This protection is often used in academic contexts to safeguard original research and content.

## Duty of Care

Duty of Care is a legal and ethical obligation for universities to ensure the safety, well-being, and support of their students and staff while on campus or engaged in university activities.

The University owes a Duty of Care to students who are undertaking fieldwork off-site as part of their research.

## Lecturer/Professor/Teaching Assistant (TA)/Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA)/Reader

Lecturer: An instructor who delivers lectures and teaches specific courses.

Reader: An academic title used in some countries for a senior academic position, often associated with research and teaching.

Professor: A senior and highly qualified academic who typically engages in teaching, research, and university governance.

Teaching Assistant (TA): A postgraduate research student or graduate who assists with course-related tasks, such as grading, tutoring, conducting lab sessions, or leading seminars.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA): GTAs are postgraduate research students who support academic and faculty staff members with their teaching responsibility.

**Note:** Graduate Teaching Assistant and Teaching Assistant have similar meanings in most contexts.

## Reservation/ On Hold/ On Loan

Reservation: In a library context, a “reservation” typically refers to a service that allows library users to request a book or other library materials that are currently checked out by another user. A reservation is a way to ensure that you will get access to a book or resource you want, even if it's currently in use by someone else. It's a system that helps manage the distribution of popular or in-demand materials.

When a book is reserved, it means that someone else has already borrowed it, but another person has requested to borrow it as soon as it's returned.

On Hold: When something is “on hold”, it is temporarily reserved for someone or some purpose. It is similar to saving something for a short time, like reserving a seat at a restaurant. In a library context, it means someone else is borrowing a book, but you have requested to borrow it next once they are done.

On Loan: When something is “on loan”, it is borrowed or lent to someone for a specified period. This often refers to library items like books that can be borrowed for a few weeks. If a book is “on loan”, it means someone else is currently borrowing it, and you'll have to wait until they return it to read it.

## Acknowledgments

This project is the collective effort of Chang Liu, Heather Proctor, and Jerome Ruddick. We are deeply thankful for the opportunity to work together and for the support we've received.

For any feedback, we welcome you to contact us at:

Chang Liu: [c.liu20@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:c.liu20@newcastle.ac.uk)

Heather Proctor: [h.proctor2@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:h.proctor2@newcastle.ac.uk)

Jerome Ruddick: [j.m.l.ruddick2@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.l.ruddick2@newcastle.ac.uk)

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to Jen Tarr and Laura Leonardo from the Researcher Education Development (RED) Department at School X. Their support - both moral and financial - along with their guidance and advice, has been a cornerstone of our progress.

We are grateful to our translators: Chang Liu, Liyuan Liu, and Zheng Li. Their commitment to meticulous translation and their care in ensuring the accuracy and appropriateness of terms have been invaluable to our work. We would also like to thank our focus group participants for highlighting to us the learning obstacles that these materials, at least in part, aim to assist with.

Our thanks also go to the Research Institutes award - specifically the Institute for Social Science - for granting funding for this project.