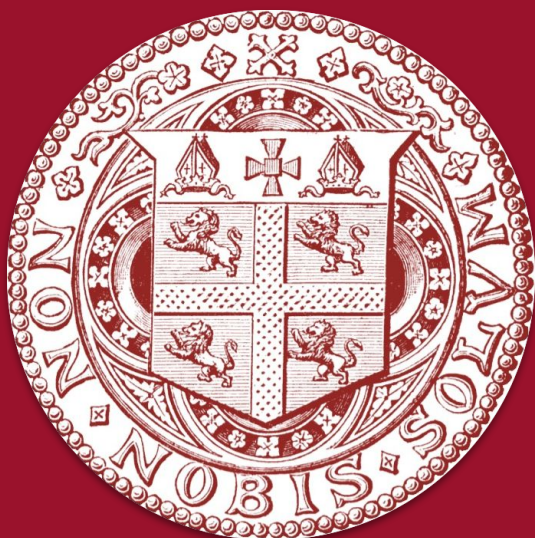


Castle MCR Handbook 2019/20



Welcome to Castle MCR!

Dear **postgraduate**,

Congratulations on obtaining a place at University College, or '**Castle**' as it's affectionately known. The Middle Common Room (MCR) would like to extend our own very warm welcome. We, the MCR, are the thriving, diverse and supportive community of postgraduates that call the castle our home. We hope and trust that you will enjoy your time with us in Durham.

As a college of a traditional university, Castle houses Junior (undergraduate), Middle (postgraduate), and Senior (staff, alumni etc.) common rooms. We, the MCR, meets in the Maurice E. Tucker Room, at the foot of the keep. You'll soon see for yourself that this is a spectacular room. We're immensely proud and lucky to call the Castle our home, and I hope that through eating meals in the Great Hall (available three times a day), working in the College Library (with beautiful views of the courtyard) and socialising in the Undercroft bar (the oldest student bar in the world), you'll come to feel at home here.

You can look forward to a full programme of events run by the MCR throughout the coming year, including **social events, balls, academic seminars and conference, welfare events, volunteering**, and more!

Social events in Castle are a fantastic way to engage with the community. Most popular are our 'Formals'. These are formal dinners in academic dress (a suit/dress and gown) held twice a week. They are great fun, and a chance to indulge in the somewhat quirky traditions of Castle. Moreover, look forward to acoustic and open mic nights in our bar (The Undercroft). College-wide parties are held to celebrate events such as Hallowe'en, Christmas, Burns' Night, St. Patrick's Day, etc.

The MCR provides opportunities to meet & discuss with other academics across disciplines through MCR **seminars and lectures**. We run a yearly **conference** with attendees from all over the UK.

It is our sense of community that makes Castle MCR what we are. The MCR is supported by an elected Executive Committee (Exec) composed of eight postgraduates: **President, Treasurer, Social Chair, Steward, Ball Chair, Secretary, Welfare Officer,** and **Academic Officer**. The exec exists to serve the MCR community, organising events for its members, representing you to the College and University, and overseeing the day-to-day running of the MCR. If you ever have any need of us, or wish to make comments or suggestions, we are always happy to receive them. Anonymous feedback can be submitted via the website. The Exec is supported by a number of non-executive officers and a series of committees. You can join any of the committees at any point of the year to contribute to our society. Elections will be held in the first term, and you are encouraged to stand for election if you so wish.

If you have any questions at all about life at Castle and in Durham, please feel free to email me or any of the members of our Exec, whose details can be found in this handbook. Our welcome committee has been working hard to prepare a fortnight full of exciting activities for your arrival. Please join the Facebook group when you get a chance to keep up to date, all details can be found on our website: **www.castlemcr.co.uk**.

We look forward to meeting you soon. **Floreat Castellum!**

Nicholas Spong



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The Maurice Tucker Room



Located within the walls of the castle, at the foot of the Keep, the **Maurice E. Tucker room** (often simply referred to as '**The MCR**') is the hub of postgraduate life in college, a smart and comfortable space in which to **socialise, relax or work**, 24 hours a day. Access to the MCR is gained by signing out the key from the Porters' Lodge, using your campus card as a deposit. If for any reason you have to leave the room, please ensure that everything is locked.

The Room's Facilities:

- Wi-Fi
- Free Tea and Coffee
- Flat Screen Television
- DVD Player
- Upright Piano
- A Variety of Board Games
- Garden Games
- Croquet Set
- Welfare Supplies
- Academic Gowns

MCR Executive Roles

The MCR is run by an Executive Committee (often simply called the 'Exec') composed of eight postgraduates. They are here to serve the MCR community. If you ever have any need for them or wish to make comments or suggestions, they are always happy to receive them.



Nick Spong - President

Nick is a PhD student in Physics. As President, he is responsible for the overall running of the MCR. It is his job to represent the views and opinions of Castle's postgraduate community. This involves communicating with the Junior and Senior Common Rooms, College Council and the University. Contact Nick at nicholas.l.spong@durham.ac.uk

Dean Slack - Secretary

Dean is a 1st Year PhD Student in the Computer Science Department. As Secretary, his role within the MCR involves the publication of the weekly newsletter, maintenance of the MCR website, taking minutes during MCR meetings, and overseeing the Thursday Formal sign-up. Dean may be contacted at dean.l.slack@durham.ac.uk



Ruth McTiernan - Social Chair

As Social Chair, Ruth's chief responsibility is to create a varied social calendar that spans the course of the year. She is also in charge of coordinating MCR involvement in wider college events. Ruth may be contacted at ruth.b.mctiernan@durham.ac.uk

Robert Leigh - Treasurer

Robert is a 2nd year PhD student in Finance. As Treasurer he is responsible for the sound administration of the MCR's finances. He is also responsible for supervising the MCR bank account and acting as a co-signatory alongside the President. Robert may be contacted at robert.j.leigh@durham.ac.uk





Vicky Fawcett - Academic Officer

Vicky is a 1st year PhD student studying Physics and Astronomy. Her role as Academic Officer is to oversee the organisation of the MCR's annual Castle Conference. She has a number of duties including arranging meetings, planning, organisation, communication, and ensuring the smooth running of the event. Vicky may be contact at victoria.fawcett@durham.ac.uk

Steward - Elected in October

The steward is responsible for the upkeep of the Maurice Tucker Room, ensuring it is clean, tidy, and well maintained. They are also responsible for occasional events and purchases / improvements for the room.



Selin Tuzlan - Welfare Officer

Selin is an MA English Literary Studies student. As the MCR Welfare Officer, together with the Welfare Committee, their responsibility is to hold various events and drop-in sessions to maintain student wellbeing and raise awareness of the issues students might be struggling with. Selin may be contacted at selin.tuzlan@durham.ac.uk

Ball Chair - Elected in October

The role of Ball Chair is to oversee the organisation of the MCR's annual Charity Ball. They have a number of duties including arranging meetings, booking entertainment and ensuring the smooth running of the event.

If you have any questions about these roles, please feel free to contact any member of the executive committee!

What does your money get you?

Levies paid by MCR members are used to run and maintain the MCR. Paying this levy allows you to take part in our vibrant community and fund ventures that enrich your everyday Durham University experience.

Here are just a few of the many things this fee can get you access to!

The MCR & its facilities

Its a great social and work space with a coffee machine, ice cream bar, TV, Xbox, and

Formals

Formals are held in the Great Hall twice a week during term time and are huge part of our college

Priority Ball Tickets

You'll be given an opportunity to buy Ball tickets

Elections

You can run for committee positions and

June Ball Discount

One of the few white-tie balls left in the country and you'd get a

Info

Get the weekly MCR newsletter which lets you know the latest news about event sign-ups & MCR activities

General Meetings

Attend our general meetings with FREE PIZZA & refreshments

Social Events

Our Social Committee run loads of events all year round. Previous highlights have included trips out to trampoline parks & Alnwick Castle, welfare walks, pub quizzes and much, much more!

After joining University College Durham, you will be asked to pay MCR levies, which are currently set at £50 per year. So don't miss out!



Useful Contacts

Below is a list of useful contacts for people in College, and the University

Andrew Tibbs - Acting Master of University College
andrew.tibbs@durham.ac.uk

Dr David Lowther, Assistant Senior Tutor
david.a.lowther@durham.ac.uk

Nick Spong, MCR President
nicholas.l.spong@durham.ac.uk

Paula Furness, College Secretary & Student Support Administrator
paula.furness@durham.ac.uk

Linda Beighton, Admissions & Student Support Secretary
linda.beighton@durham.ac.uk

Durham University Counselling Service
counsel.service@durham.ac.uk

Nightline - 24hr Student Wellbeing Support
nightline@durham.ac.uk

University College Student Support
univcoll.studentsupport@durham.ac.uk

Formals

Formal hall, or just 'formal', held every Tuesday and Thursday during term-time, is a long-standing college tradition. It's a three-course meal held in the Great Hall to which academic dress is worn.

The JCR sit at Low Table (i.e. the majority of the tables in the Hall) and the SCR at High Table (the two or three rows of tables below the stained glass window). On Thursdays the MCR sit at Low Table with the JCR, but on Tuesdays we join the SCR on High Table, and in the SCR before and after formal.

Formal commences at 7.00 pm sharp, when High Table enters the Great Hall. While those at High Table enter, all those who are at Low Table stand. Following this, the College Grace is said, after which all members sit for the meal, served by College staff. Everyone is required to remain seated throughout the meal (go to the toilet beforehand!), which normally finishes by 8.00pm, after which postgraduates retire to the SCR, MCR, or Undercroft, depending on the occasion.

An in-depth guide to everything associated with formals is available at castlemcr.co.uk



FORMAL RULES

1. Stick to the dress code (above) or you may be refused entry.
2. Drinks must be purchased from the Undie or MCR bar.
3. Late arrival will result in no entry.
4. No mobile phones or photos during the meal.
5. Once grace has been said, you must remain seated & cannot leave the room until either the JCR Senior Student bows out (Thursdays) or the Master stands to leave (Tuesdays).
6. Drunkenness will not be tolerated.



Academic Opportunities

One of the great benefits the MCR offers is the chance to share work and learn about interesting topics outside of your own discipline. There are many ways the get involved may it be by attending, participating or even joining the Academic Committee! Here are a few of the Academic ventures you can get involved in as part of Castle MCR

For those wishing to develop their teaching ability, we run a **Student Mentorship Program**, connecting MCR members with members of the JCR who are seeking help with their studies. This is a flexible, voluntary system running as often as you like.

Our monthly **Sunday Seminars** give MCR members an informal platform to give short presentations related to their work. These events are great way to share your research & feature a free glass of wine for all attendees & speakers!

The culmination of the academic year is the MCR run **Castle Conference** in June. A two-day event featuring world renowned speakers and a delicious three course meal for all attending.

The **Castle MCR Lecture series**, allows members to showcase their work to the entire castle community in a more formal setting. These are approximately 40 minutes long and precede Tuesday formals.

For more information on any of the above, don't hesitate to contact our academic officer at:

victoria.fawcett@durham.ac.uk

Study Spaces

There are many places across the university and throughout Durham where students can study and we have a few suggestions:

Libraries

The Bill Bryson ▪ Science Site ▪ Open 24hrs during peak terms

The Lowe Library ▪ Castle ▪ Open 24hrs to Castle students only

The Palace Green Library ▪ Palace Green ▪ Open during the day
to students

Relaxed Spaces

The MCR ▪ Castle ▪ Free tea & coffee available to all members

Minstrels Gallery ▪ Space overlooking the Great Hall ▪ Beautiful view

Cafes ▪ Framwellgate Bridge ▪ Esquires (like some other cafés
throughout Durham) have a relaxed space for people to study with
a good brew!



Welfare

Castle Welfare is the first point of contact for any issues you may have during your time at Castle. Whether this be the loss of a family member, an argument with a friend or suicidal thoughts, the Welfare team is made up of both Staff and Students who are always happy to help out. Everything said is kept 100% anonymous so please reach out. Welfare also keeps the MCR stocked with condoms, dental dams, lube and pregnancy tests, which are free to MCR members.

If you wish to speak to a female member of staff Paula can arrange for you to meet a staff member of another college on request. Rev. Richard Whaite also offers pastoral and spiritual support as well as signposting to other faith chaplains and societies across Durham. Additionally, the MCR Welfare committee run weekly drop-in sessions and can be contacted for 1-on-1 meetings in and outside of Castle.



As a postgraduate you can self-certify for coursework extensions of up to 1 week. For extensions longer than a week you will need to contact your module tutor and/or supervisor.

For more information please visit:

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/learningandteaching.handbook/6/2/6/>

What can we do for you?

Sexual health

The MCR has a supply of sexual health items (condom, lube, dental dams and pregnancy tests) available for free in the MCR, these can be found in the far-right bookcase in the leather compartment. If it is empty please notify the Exec so these supplies can be replenished. Free condoms and lube are also obtainable with County Durham's C Card scheme. People between the ages of 13 and 24 can register for this scheme by going to Boots in the Market Place or on the North Road. The C Card also gives you access to sexual health information, advice and support.

Drop-in sessions

The MCR welfare committee runs several drop-in sessions per week advertised on the MCR Facebook page and on the MCR noticeboard. They take place in the MCR and usually run for an hour. These sessions are designed for any MCR member who wants an informal conversation with a member of the welfare team about an issue that is playing on their mind or even just someone to have lunch with or a friendly chat. If you would prefer to contact us anonymously or arrange a private meeting, then please use the 'Contact Welfare' section of the MCR website: <https://www.castlemcr.co.uk/contact-welfare>. Additionally, the castle staff also carry out welfare drop ins which can be booked through contacting Paula Furness at univcoll.studentsupport@durham.ac.uk

Welfare events

The welfare team also run several events throughout the year such as pub quizzes, movie nights, international food nights and the Eurovision party. Welfare events are great opportunities to relieve the stress of summative season and meet and socialise with fellow MCR members in college. We look forward to seeing you there!

Anything else?

Of course, if you have any suggestions of things you'd like welfare to offer or events you'd like us to run then please get in contact and we'll see what we can do.

Welfare Around Durham



Talking Changes

Talking changes is a self-help and talking therapies service designed to help anyone living in the County Durham and Darlington area to deal with common mental health problems such as stress, anxiety or depression, as well as panic phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and post-traumatic stress disorder. Therapy sessions will be pre-arranged to take place on a weekly basis. You can contact them directly by telephone (self-refer) by calling the Talking Changes team – 0191 3333300



The Durham LGBT+ Association

The Durham LGBT+ Association exists to provide welfare services, campaigns, and socials to anyone who identifies as being under the LGBT+ umbrella. As well as a confidential listening service, sexual health provision and STI testing kits, they organise various campaigns throughout the academic year such as the Trans Awareness Week (19th-25th November). Rainbow Night, their weekly meet-up, takes place on Mondays at 8pm at St. Cuthbert's Bar during term time and is open to members of JCRs and MCRs of all colleges. They also welcome and encourage the involvement of allies, so feel free to bring your non-LGBT+ friends along! Here is a link to their homepage: <http://durhamlgbta.org.uk/about/>

TRIGGER WARNING – RAPE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual Assault Referral Centres



Did you know that County Durham and Darlington have their own Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)? It's called The Meadows and is contactable on 0191 372 9202. The Meadows is located about four miles outside of Durham City centre and supports survivors of rape and sexual assault in a comfortable, non-threatening environment regardless of whether they wish to report it to the police. The services are free and are available to both women and men. Find out more: <http://www.themeadowsdurham.org.uk/Pages/Your-Options.aspx>

It's NOT OK



The It's NOT OK Campaign was created by students focused on working with the SU, Colleges, Associations, Societies and External Organisations to help build a safer Durham for both students and local residents. They work closely with local organisations, as well as nationally on addressing issues around sexual violence, harassment and misconduct and to support survivors at Durham. Find out more on their SU page: <https://www.durhamsu.com/groups/it-s-not-ok-campaign>.

COLLEGE STASH



Once per term (totalling three orders across one academic year) Rob Leigh, the MCR treasurer, will send a weblink to your personal email and post on the MCR Facebook page. The website contains many college branded items such as jumpers, scarfs, ties, and water bottles. These items can be customised with name tags and college crests. Orders can either be sent to the Castle (for free) or for a small delivery charge to your home address. The items will take a few weeks to be made. Rob will send a timetable of pickup sessions.

Find out more: <https://www.castlemcr.co.uk/stash>



Durham Dictionary

Bailey The geographical centre of Durham City surrounded by the River Wear including Cathedral, Castle & Bailey colleges

Battels College bills for accommodation, meals & common room membership

Castleman Gender-neutral term to describe a member of University College

CIS Computing & Information Services

DSU Durham Students' Union

Dunelm Abbreviation for the Latin name for Durham, you can use this after your name when you graduate

DUO Durham University Online

Easter The holiday & 3rd academic term

Ent College parties usually for special occasion such as Christmas

Epiphany The 2nd academic term

Formative Compulsory academic assignments that do not count toward your final degree mark

Fresher: First-year undergraduate

JCR Junior Common Room is the student body of undergraduates. They similarly have a common room called the JCR.

Matriculation Ceremony during Induction week where members are inducted to the University

Michaelmas The 1st academic term of the year

Durham Dictionary

Non Nobis Solum Latin motto for Castle college translating to 'Not for ourselves alone'

Palatinate General descriptor for various things in Durham & the specific shade of purple used by the university

Porter Porters are responsible for the maintenance of college & control the access to keys to Castle spaces

Sconce Fines issued by College Office or MCR President for poor behaviour or damage caused to university property.

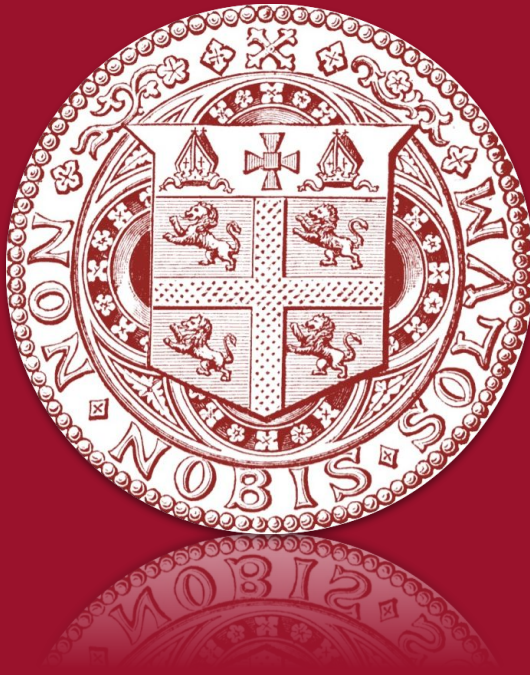
SCR Senior Common Room refers to the room and the group of staff & lecturers that form the common room

Stash Souvenirs of your tenure in Durham, Castle or MCR, such items include hoodies, mugs, pens & badges

Smenergy Castle's College Drink, available from the Undercroft consisting of Smirnoff Ice and an energy drink.

Summative Academic work that does count towards your final marks

Undie The Undercroft bar located below the Great Hall in close proximity to the Toastie Bar, perfect for delicious snacks!



Non Nobis Solum