



2021/22

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# Welcome to the PhD Academy

## Welcome from the PhD Academy Director

Dear Doctoral Students,

Welcome to the PhD Programme at the LSE!

Alongside your home Department, the PhD Academy is here to provide all the support you might need during your studies. We offer a vibrant programme of research training and career development, which we are keen to tailor to your needs; we have a team of people available to answer any questions about regulations, progression and funding, and to help with any other issues you may encounter.

The team and I look forward to working with you over the next few years. Feel free to contact us at any time to tell us how you are doing and how we can help you make the most of your time at the LSE.

Best of luck!

**Professor Rita Astuti**

Director of the PhD Academy and ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships at the LSE

# Information on Welcome Week

In the first few weeks at LSE, you will receive a lot of information about the School and your programme of study. If you miss anything, you can find it all again on the [LSE Welcome](#) page, which provides comprehensive information about what to expect after you arrive, how to open a bank account, what to do if you arrive early or late to LSE, how to set up your LSE IT account, where to find LSE support services and much more.

Specific information and guidance about your PhD programme and departmental activities will be provided by your academic department.

## Finding your way around LSE

To find your way around campus, you will initially need a [map](#). But after a while, you'll become an expert navigator!

## LSE ID Cards

You will be issued with an LSE ID card once you have completed on campus enrolment with the PhD Academy. This will give you access to various School buildings with restricted access (such as the Library). You should contact the PhD Academy if you have any problems in using your LSE ID card.

## International Students

If you are an international student, you should be aware of the [International Student and Visa Advice Team \(ISVAT\)](#), which can provide you with advice on immigration rules and visas.

If you need help with your English, the [Language Centre](#) offers a range of courses and support specifically designed for international students.

# The PhD Academy Team

**Professor Rita Astuti**

Director, PhD Academy and LSE ESRC Doctoral Training Centre

You can contact Rita to discuss any aspect of your experience as a PhD student. Email her at [r.astuti@lse.ac.uk](mailto:r.astuti@lse.ac.uk) to set up a meeting either in person or on Zoom.

**Marcus Cerny**

Deputy Director, PhD Academy

Marcus is available to provide support and advice on all aspects of your PhD journey.

**Matthew Brack**

PhD Academy Assistant Director

**Shuma Begum**

Research Degrees Officer

Matt and Shuma provide advice on all aspects of your registration and progression

**Loraine Evans**

Events and Communications Manager

**Faith Corby**

Events and Communications Officer

Loraine and Faith look after the PhD Academy training and events programme and will send out regular communications.

**Kirsty Rawlings**

Research Partnerships Manager

**Sangeeta Banerjee**

Research Partnerships Officer

Kirsty and Sangeeta provide support to students funded by the ESRC and AHRC

Please check the [PhD Academy website](#) for further information.

## **Where to find us and how to contact us**

We are based on the fourth floor of the Lionel Robbins Building and, during term time, we are available for over-the-counter meetings between 10.30-12.30 Monday-Friday. We also offer one-to-one meetings remotely for purposes of confidentiality and privacy. You can arrange a meeting by following this link: <https://info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/The-Team-and-How-to-Contact-Us> ) Alternatively, you can contact us by using this [portal](#) (see below).

## **How to use the online query form**

You can use the [portal](#) to access the online query form. You will need to use your LSE login details to sign in. The form will sign post you to several frequently asked questions; if your question is still unanswered, you can use the portal to submit your query to us.

## **Letter confirming your registration/student status**

You can generate your own letter confirming your status as a student by using the [portal](#). After logging in, you will need to select “verification document” from the first drop down list and then select the type of letter you require.

# Studying for your PhD

## Your supervisors

Throughout your PhD you will be working closely with your supervisors. Your supervisory team should be made up of at least two academics and its composition should be confirmed by the end of your first term of registration.

Supervision is a highly individualised process and it's impossible to set out rules that apply to everyone. There are differences across departments as well as across individuals. However, there are certain minimum standards that should be upheld by all research students and their supervisors. On the one hand, you are responsible for keeping in touch with your supervisors and producing work on a regular basis; on the other, your supervisors are responsible for reading your work and giving you substantive feedback and advice. At a minimum, if you are registered full-time, you should have at least three supervisory meetings per term; if you are part-time, you should have at least two supervisory meetings per term.

Like any apprenticeship, the relationship with your supervisors will evolve during your studies. In most cases, it will become ever more rewarding for both parties. Sometimes, however, things don't work out, e.g. your project develops in unforeseen ways and you require a different kind of expertise, or there are personal incompatibilities. This can be stressful, but it is normal! If this happens, you should raise your concerns as soon as possible rather than letting the situation fester. In the first instance, you should speak to your supervisors to try to reset the relationship in an amicable way. If this is not possible, you can seek advice from your department's Doctoral Programme Director and Departmental manager (see below). If necessary, the DPD will be responsible for finding an alternative supervisory arrangement. If throughout this process you wish to talk in confidence to someone from outside your department, you can approach any member of the PhD Academy.

## LSE for You and Course Registration

LSE for You is a personalised web portal which gives you access to a range of services.

For example, through LSE for You you can

- view or change your personal details
- register for courses (see below for more information)
- reset your library and network passwords
- access the PhD log (see below for more information)

You can also access online tutorials on how to use and personalise LSE for You via [its login page](#). You'll need your LSE network username and password to login.

## Course registration

As a research student, you will be taking taught courses as part of your research training. Taught course requirements are listed in your [MPhil/PhD programme regulations](#).

You need to register for your courses (modules) using Graduate Course Choice via LSE for You. Guidance on using the system can be found [here](#). Note that if you wish to audit a course (i.e. if you don't want to enter for examination), you must tick the audit-only box.

If your circumstances change after the course selection closing date so that you no longer need to enter for examination, you will need to request a change of registration by contacting the PhD Academy. You can do this by using the [online query form](#).

## Moodle

Moodle is LSE's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is password protected (you will need your LSE log in details to access it) and it contains a range of teaching resources, activities, assignments, information and discussion fora related to your courses and other aspects of your studies at the LSE.

You can [access Moodle](#) on and off campus. If you have any technical problems with Moodle you should contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

The PhD Academy has its own Moodle page where you can access resources, handouts and slides from our training sessions (search for "PhD Academy" on the Moodle main page).

If you are funded by the ESRC, you can also explore the ESRC Moodle page where you can find information specific to your grant.

## PhD Log

The PhD Log is an online facility that enables you and your supervisors to record the content and outcomes of your supervisory meetings, e.g., what was discussed, what action points were agreed, future deadlines, etc. Access to the PhD Log is via [LSE for You](#).

The PhD Log is the formal record of your engagement with your programme of study as well as being a record of the support you receive from your supervisors. It is a School requirement that you ensure the PhD Log has an up to date record of your supervisory meetings. This is especially important if you hold a Tier 4 student visa since completion of the PhD Log is a requirement for the continuing sponsorship of your visa.

You can find further details about the PhD Log [here](#) (under P for PhD Log). If you have any further questions about the PhD Log, feel free to ask the PhD Academy team.

## LSE Life

LSE Life provides a range of academic training sessions, events, and workshops that are open to PhD students. You can find further information [here](#).

## Research Ethics and Code of Research Conduct

Like all other researchers at LSE, you must ensure that your research activities comply with the School's Research Ethics Policy and Code of Research Conduct. You can find both [here](#).

If your research involves human participants or data relating to directly identifiable human subjects (living or recently deceased), you will need to complete an Ethics Review. Your Department and supervisors will advise you on this process.

## Plagiarism, iThenticate and editorial help

The School treats plagiarism very seriously and it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the [regulations](#) pertaining to it.

iThenticate is a software that allows you to check that you are appropriately referencing your work, thus safeguarding you from accidental plagiarism. You can find information on how to set up an account and on how to use the software [here](#) (under iThenticate).

If you need editorial help with your writing, you should be aware of the [Statement on editorial help for students' written work](#).

## **Policy and Procedure on Personal Relationships and Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy**

LSE has put in place these policies and procedures to support members of the School community and to uphold the integrity of everyone's work and study. Both policies play an important part in helping to foster safe, inclusive working and learning environments at LSE. They are also essential in outlining what to do, should a situation arise where guidance is needed.

Please make sure to familiarise yourself with their content by reading them [here](#) and [here](#).

You might also find it useful to access the resources made available by the *Consent Collective*. These aim at helping people understand consent and learn about sexual harassment. You can access the members area and find further information [here](#).

# Registration and progression

The Chair of the Research Degree Sub-Committee (RDSC), Prof Max Schulze, has oversight of most aspects your registration and progression. He and his colleagues on the RDSC are responsible for the degree regulations and for considering applications for changes to your registration status.

## Length of registration

Your PhD registration is for four years (full-time) or eight years (part-time). It is your responsibility to manage the progression and completion of your work within this time frame. Extensions or interruptions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. See the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) for further information.

If you have issues around progression or need additional support, the PhD Academy team can provide advice or signpost you as appropriate.

## Upgrade and progression

You should make sure that you are aware of the requirements for upgrade from MPhil to PhD and for year-on-year progression. Progression and re-registration at the start of each academic session are subject to satisfactory annual review. Please see the [Regulations for Research Degrees](#) and your Department's PhD Handbook for details and further information.

## Attendance and absences during your studies

As a registered MPhil/PhD student, you are expected to be based at LSE so that you can engage with your supervisors, attend courses, and take advantage of training and career development opportunities. During the normal course of your registration, there will be circumstances when you need to be away from LSE to pursue your studies and research.

Prior to undertaking a period of study at another academic institution or a period of fieldwork or other forms of data collection (e.g. archival work), you will have to submit an application form (Study Elsewhere Form or the Fieldwork/Data Collection Form, both of which are available [here](#) under S and F respectively). You must submit your application to the PhD Academy at least one month before the start date of your period away from LSE.

Note that the application process includes undertaking an Ethics Review and a Risk Assessment. You should start these processes at least 3 months prior to the start date of your period away from LSE.

If you plan to attend a conference, you need to inform your department. As this is classed as 'School business', you will need to complete a [Notification of Travel form](#).

If required, advice on studying and researching away from LSE can be obtained from the PhD Academy and all forms can be downloaded from the PhD Academy webpage under the relevant letter on the accordion [here](#).

COVID-19 is continuing to put constraints on the ability to travel. Please make sure to consult the [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#) for up to date information about travel for study, fieldwork and data collection.

## Vacations and working while studying

### Working while studying

As you will find out, working on a PhD is intensive and demanding. We therefore recommend that you do not take on paid or voluntary work which might affect your ability to complete your research by your submission deadline (during term time, this is likely to be anything above 20 hours per week if you are a full-time student).

If you are funded by the ESRC or AHRC, please consult their funding guides to make sure that you don't take on more paid work (including teaching) than is permitted by the conditions of your grant.

If you hold a student visa which allows you to work in the UK, you must be aware of the restrictions on your working hours. You may only work up to 20 hours per week (these restrictions apply whether the work is paid or unpaid). These restrictions do not apply during vacation periods that you have formally agreed with the PhD Academy; during these times, you are permitted to work full-time.

If you have any queries regarding your visa conditions you should seek advice from the [International Student Visa Advice Team \(ISVAT\)](#) and the PhD Academy before agreeing any work arrangement.

You can find the full policy regarding term dates, vacations and working during MPhil/PhD study [here](#).

### Tuition Fees and how to pay them

The School's tuition fee policy can be found [here](#), and information on how to pay your fees can be found [here](#). The breakdown of the tuition fees specific to your programme (MPhil/PhD or MRes/PhD) can be found [here](#).

If you experience any financial difficulties, you should contact the Financial Support Office ([Financial-support@lse.ac.uk](mailto:Financial-support@lse.ac.uk)) to see what help and support is available.

If your financial situation is impacting your ability to study, you should contact the PhD Academy to discuss what options are available to you.

### Email and further communication

You are expected to check your LSE email regularly as this will be the main way the School will contact you. As outlined in the School's Conditions of Registration it will be assumed that you will open, read and act upon emails sent to your LSE email address.

# Pastoral Care for PhD Students

In addition to your supervisors, who are often the first port of call for any issue you might need advice on, you have access to a range of sources of support. These ensure that you can discuss any issue that affect your studies and wellbeing in a confidential and supportive environment.

## Departmental Pastoral Support

In addition to your supervisors, you will be supported by your department's Doctoral Programme Director (DPD) and PhD Manager. The DPD is responsible for your induction into the department and for providing pastoral support (e.g. regarding supervisory arrangements). If the DPD is involved in your supervision, the department will ensure that an appropriate alternative academic is available to you (e.g. the Head of Department).

## Non-Departmental Pastoral Support

### PhD Academy

As well as managing your registration and advising you on issues related to your studies, the PhD Academy can provide advice and guidance on the pastoral support that is available across the School. The PhD Academy also runs a programme of workshops and activities focused on wellbeing and offers one-to-one coaching sessions. Most of these will be taking place on line during Michaelmas term, but you should check [here](#) for up to date information.

You can request to speak to a member of the PhD Academy team for confidential advice on pastoral issues through the [online query form](#).

### Student Counselling Service

This is a free and confidential service which aims to enable students to cope more effectively with personal or study issues they might face while at LSE. You can find further information [here](#).

### Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS)

The Disability and Wellbeing Service is the central hub for all students who have a disability, have a long-term medical condition or have a specific learning difficulty. The DWS is responsible for preparing Inclusion Plans (IP) which record adjustments or resources you may require to meet your individual needs. Mental Health Advisors (MHAs) are available to work with you in assessing how mental health difficulties might affect your studies and to suggest strategies to help overcome problems. DWS can also signpost you to additional services where appropriate. You can find further information [here](#).

### Peer-to-peer support

LSE Peer Supporters are PhD students who have been trained to provide confidential listening support to their peers. You can find further information [here](#).

### Faith Centre

The LSE Faith Centre hosts a wide range of religious and wellbeing activities and provides a quiet, reflective space for all students and staff. You can find further information [here](#).

## **LSE Students' Union (LSESU)**

LSESU offers advice on a variety of issues, including complaints, exceptional circumstances, accommodation or financial concerns. LSESU also supports a range of activities and services including societies, sports, fundraising, social spaces and a gym (the availability of some of these might be restricted due to COVID-19). You can find further information [here](#).

The LSESU is also in charge of organizing the Research Students Consultative Forum.

# Training and Development Programme

The PhD Academy's [Training and Development Programme](#) is designed to be an integral part of your studies at the LSE. It's a tool for enhancing your existing strengths as a researcher, for exploring new skills and for looking after your wellbeing.

## Professional Development sessions

The PhD can be very focused and intense and you will often feel that time is in short supply. But there are several reasons why you should consider making the time to engage with your professional development: first, there are only so many hours that you can productively work on your thesis, and it might actually be more productive to take a break and do something else; second, enhancing your career and professional skills is arguably one of the aims of any PhD programme; third, attending sessions, even remotely, is an opportunity to meet students from other departments, which can be intellectually refreshing.

## 1-2-1 Sessions

We offer a range of 1-2-1 sessions that include coaching and public speaking.

## Wellbeing

We run regular wellness sessions throughout the term. These will help you to maintain a healthy life-work balance and to find ways to relax and look after yourself in the company of others.

# Appendices

## Regulations and Procedures

You are advised to read through the Course and Programme Information and the School and Academic Regulations for your degree as they outline what you can expect from your programme of study and what is expected of you while you are registered at the School. You should direct any questions you have on the regulations to the PhD Academy.

All regulations can be found [here](#) as well as in the [A-Z guide](#) on the PhD Academy website.