Programme Description

The SPRING Researcher Development Programme aims to complement the knowledge and skills which LSE PhD students gain through their department- and discipline-specific training by offering additional routes to the acquisition of knowledge, confidence and skills necessary to pursue impactful and collaborative careers and contribute to the betterment of society in a range of research and professional contexts.

The programme is open to all MPhil/PhD students, and MRes/PhD students after they have upgraded to the PhD.

Programme objectives

- To contribute to the development of innovative and creative researchers, able to contribute to research-production, knowledge exchange and impact by expanding the range of training opportunities available at the LSE.
- To equip PhD students with the competences necessary to pursue a range of different careers on the basis of their research training, and to understand the diverse professional environments in which their research skills can usefully be applied.
- In the process, to support cross-departmental and interdisciplinary interaction amongst the LSE's research student community, and thereby to enrich their doctoral experience.

What will PhD students learn?

By the end of this programme, students should be able to:

- understand the variety of settings in which their research skills can be usefully deployed;

- identify opportunities to contribute to knowledge exchange and impact, and to engage in collaborative partnerships with other researchers and organisations in ways which play a positive role in society and to respond effectively to contemporary research needs;

- gain and develop the skills and technical knowledge necessary to operate in a range of professional domains;

- gain the confidence necessary to pursue the career pathways most relevant to their particular research competences and aspirations;

- provide a skills- and development orientated environment in which PhD Students can focus on their transition to post-PhD life.

Why have we designed this programme and what is the value to PhD students?

This programme aims to complement and enrich the LSE's predominantly discipline- and department-centric training by offering a developmental programme which supports PhD students in pursuing research-orientated careers and knowledge exchange opportunities in a variety of settings. This programme responds to:

i)   the increasing prevalence of post-PhD career pathways which are not traditionally well served by core academic training;

ii)   the increasingly tendency for PhD students to conduct research in ways that lead to impact, collaboration, and engagement;

iii)   students' desire for a School-wide sense of belonging amongst the LSE's PhD community by creating a lively programme of activities which fosters the emergence of a close-knit, inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary programme community.

Structure and Commitment

The programme takes place in two parts:

i.   a series of in person and online seminars and workshops during the Autumn, Winter and Spring Terms open to all PhD students across all years, and;

ii.   an off-campus overnight Retreat in the Summer Term for a maximum of ten students.

Seminars and Workshops during the academic year

Seminars and workshops are open to all MPhil/PhD students, and MRes/PhD students after they have upgraded to the PhD. We encourage students to attend the full programme. Students who attend 9 out of 12 sessions will be given a certificate of attendance detailing the training they will have received.

Overnight Retreat

After the completion of the on-campus seminars, Spring offers an overnight retreat which will take place in early summer and is organised in collaboration with LSE Generate and LSE Careers. This off-campus learning experience aims to equip participants with soft skills, such as time management and branding oneself as a researcher. Emphasis will be placed on the transferability of the skills acquired by students during the PhD.

Accommodation and living expenses will be covered.

Places are limited to ten students and priority will be given to the students who have attended the most sessions of the programme.