LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Welcome to the
PhD Academy

Student
Handbook

2024/25

info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy

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Welcome to the PhD Academy

Welcome from the PhD Academy Director

Dear Doctoral Students,

Welcome to the PhD Programme at 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 research training and career development programme, 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 LSE.

Best of luck!

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

Information on Welcome Week

In your 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 in this dedicated **Your First Weeks** webpage, 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**. You can find a helpful list of PhD contacts in your academic department **here**.

A PhD Academy welcome session will also take place on **25 September**. You will receive an invitation with the details in due course.

Finding your way around LSE

To find your way around campus, you will initially need a **map**.

LSE ID Cards

You will be issued with an LSE ID card once you have completed on campus enrolment at the PhD Academy. This will allow you to enter the various School buildings, such as the LSE Library, which restrict public access. If you have any problems in using your LSE ID card, please contact the PhD Academy for assistance.

International Students

If you are an international student, you should be aware of the **Student Advice and Engagement Team**, which can provide you with advice on immigration rules and visas.

For support in strengthening your English language skills, the **Language Centre** offers a range of courses and support specifically designed for international students.

The PhD Academy Team

The PhD Academy

The PhD Academy provides a dedicated space and services hub for doctoral students at LSE. We act as a friendly source of specialist advice and individualized, expert support for staff and students in relation to PGR matters, and a venue through which doctoral students can access other School services, such as those provided by the Financial Support Office, the Student Advice and Engagement Team, LSE Careers, and Student Wellbeing Services. We also directly deliver a programme PGR skills training, manage core School-level PGR administrative processes, act as the secretariat for the Research Degrees Sub-Committee, and manage the LSE ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership and other relationships with external partners and PGR funders. Alongside the Pro-Director for Research, the PhD Academy Director is responsible for strategic leadership of the School's PGR provision. As such, we are directly or indirectly involved in almost everything related to doctoral study at the School, and almost every aspect of the LSE doctoral experience, from registration through to award and beyond.

PhD Academy leadership

Professor Bingchun Meng

Director, PhD Academy and LSE ESRC Doctoral Training Centre

Professor Meng is the senior LSE faculty member responsible for postgraduate research study, and oversees the work of the PhD Academy. You can contact Professor Meng to discuss any aspect of your experience as a PhD student.

Professor Meng is a Professor in the Department of Media and Communications at LSE, where she co-directs the LSE-Fudan Global Public Policy Research Centre. Her research interests include political economy of media industries, communication governance, gender and the media, and comparative media studies. She is mainly concerned with how institutional forces shape media and communication, and how communicative activities and digital technologies are implicated in the formation of culture, identity and political engagement. Focusing on China as her main empirical site, she aims to advance related academic debates by historicising and retheorising state-market and state-society relations in non-liberal contexts through the lens of media and communication.

"At the LSE, I have supervised many Media and Communication PhD students; this is the aspect of my academic job that I enjoy the best, because that is how I learn the most. As Director of the PhD Academy, I have responsibility for enhancing the PhD research environment, for overseeing the activities of the Academy's team, and for liaising with funders. In addition, I have the privilege of meeting and exchanging ideas with PhD students from across the School."

Dr Peter Mills
PhD Academy Manager

Pete's role is to lead the PhD Academy professional staff team, overseeing all PhD Academy operations. Pete works with the Director of the PhD Academy, the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub-Committee and the Pro-Director for Research in developing and implementing strategy and policy relating to postgraduate research (PGR) students, and in representing PGR interests in committees and working groups across the School.

PhD Academy teams

Research Degrees Management team

Freya Grisoni
PhD Academy Assistant Manager (Casework and Records)

Liudmila Pliner
Research Degrees Officer

Shuma Begum
Research Degrees Officer

Freya, Liudmila and Shuma are here to advise staff and students on all aspects of research degree procedures and regulations, from first enrolment through to final examination, and can advise on topics including fieldwork, interruptions, extensions, appeals, tuition fees and more. They also compile statistics and data for internal and external purposes, for instance the School's submission and completion rates, REF student data and ESRC/AHRC submission rate surveys. Freya is also the Secretary of the Doctoral Programme Directors Forum.

Events and Communications Management team

Loraine Evans
Events and Communications Manager

Faith Langley
Events and Communications Officer

Loraine and Faith deliver the PhD Academy's communications, including the Academy website, newsletters and other media, manage the professional development programme, including developing opportunities for LSE students to undertake training with partner institutions and organisations.

Research Partnerships Management team

Kirsty Rawlings
Research Partnerships Manager

Dr David Tiedemann
PhD Academy Assistant Manager (Research in Practice)

Joe Macdonald
Research Partnerships Officer

Kirsty and Joe manage processes to ensure compliance with reporting and accreditation requirements associated with the School's doctoral-level research partnerships, including the LSE ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP), and the London Arts and Humanities Partnership. They lead the LSE ESRC DTP's Training Needs Analysis process, and the ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowships recruitment process, and are responsible for developing relationships with the wider ESRC DTP network. They
are available to provide advice, guidance and support to students, academics and administrative staff on key research council initiatives, workshops, conferences and events.

David leads on Research in Practice a core component of skills training for PhD students funded by The ESRC. Research in Practice, through placements in industry, individual support, and professional development opportunities, works to improve students' awareness of the career paths open to them and helps them to develop the skills to progress to academic and non-academic careers.

Please check the **PhD Academy website** for further information.

Where to find us and how to contact us

The PhD Academy is located on the fourth floor of the Lionel Robbins Building. Information about how and when our team are available to meet with you can be found **on our website**. You can also use this **portal** (LSE login credentials required), which provides answers to frequently asked questions about doctoral study at LSE, and allows students to self-generate commonly requested documents, such as certificates of registration and confirmation of status letters.
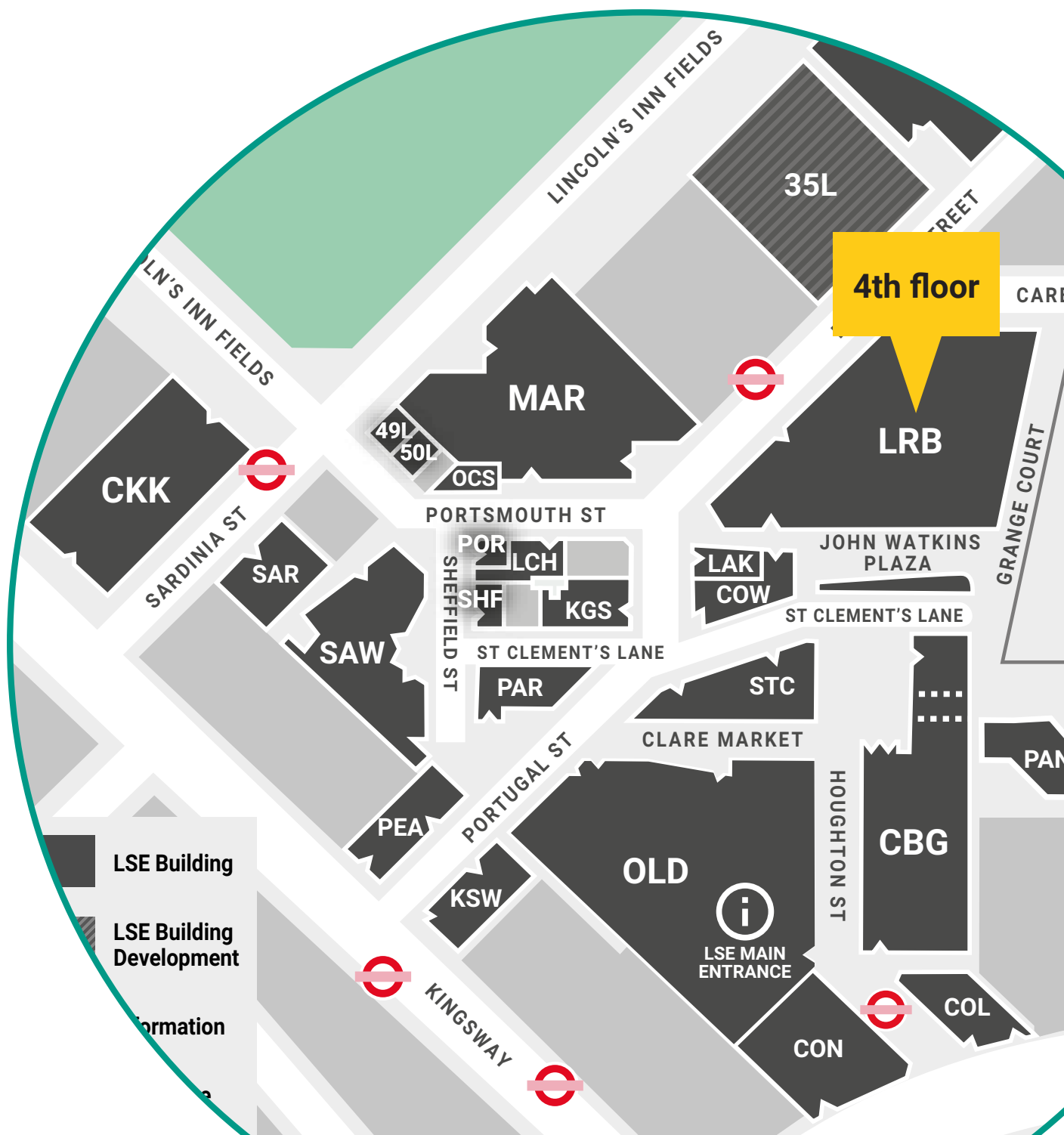
Studying for your PhD

Your supervisors

Throughout your PhD, you will work closely with your supervisors. All students are entitled to a team of at least two supervisors to provide academic support. At least one supervisor will be designated your 'lead' supervisor for administrative purposes, but the nature of your supervisory relationship is to be agreed between you and your supervisors. Your department is responsible for allocating your supervisory team. This should be confirmed by the end of your first term of enrolment.

Supervision is a highly individualised process. The School's academic departments span a range of different disciplinary domains, and the optimal working relationship will be different for each combination of student and supervisors. As such, students and supervisors are not required to follow binding rules which govern the minute details of their relationship. However, the School does set out minimum standards and requirements that should be upheld by all research students and their supervisors. On the one hand, you are responsible for maintaining contact with your supervisory team, and for producing work on time for agreed deadlines, and in the form, quantity and quality required. On the other hand, your supervisors are responsible for reading your work, and for providing substantive feedback and advice in a form that can be acted upon. At a minimum, if you are registered full-time, you are entitled to at least three supervisory meetings per term. If you are part-time, you are entitled to at least two supervisory meetings per term.

During your doctoral studies, you will be expected develop to a point where you are able to direct your own research, to work as an independent research professional without detailed oversight, and to be a leading expert in your particular field. This will inevitably involve a series of personal and professional transitions and transformations. One such transformation might play out in your relationship to your supervisors, so that by the time that you graduate you have become a disciplinary peer to your supervisors, rather than a student.

In most cases, the supervisory relationship will become ever more rewarding for both parties. Sometimes, however, the relationship does not play out in this way. For example, your project might develop in unforeseen ways, meaning that you require a different kind of expertise than your original supervisory team are able provide, or you and your supervisors' personalities may simply not be compatible or conducive to research. This can be stressful, but it is important to remember that this is the same as any other professional relationship, and in that sense, is also normal!

If this happens, you should raise your concerns as soon as possible. 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 (DPD) and the professional support staff member responsible for your research degree programme. If necessary, your DPD will be responsible for determining whether your supervisory team should change, and for finding an alternative supervisory arrangement. If your DPD is involved in your supervisory team, you can discuss your issues with your Head of Department or seek advice from the Director of the PhD Academy. If you are experiencing difficulties with your supervisory relationship, you are also always welcome to speak in confidence to any member of the PhD Academy team.

In 2021, we recorded two videos on supervision, which you may find useful to watch as you set out to meet and start working with your supervisors. The first one, which you can find **here**, is a frank conversation between Professor Tarak Barkawi (International Relations), and Dr Rishita Nandagiri (a former PhD student in Social Policy), chaired by Sarah Gerwens, a current PhD student (European Institute). This was followed by a discussion on supervisory relationships, which you can find **here**, between Professor Rita Astuti (former Director of the PhD Academy), Professor Stephen Jenkins (Social Policy, Professor Claire Mercer (Geography and Environment), and Makena Micheni (International Relations), with questions from other students who attended the Q&A session.

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; and,

- 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 **programme regulations**.

You need to register for your courses (modules) using Course Selection 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 enrolment from the PhD Academy. You can do this by using our **online query form**. Please make sure that you discuss this with your supervisors before submitting your request.

Moodle

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

You can **access Moodle** on and off campus. If you have any technical problems with Moodle, you should contact the **IT Helpdesk**.

If you are funded by a research council , you can also explore the **LSE ESRC DTP Moodle page** and the **London Arts and Humanities Partnership page**, where you can find information specific to your grant
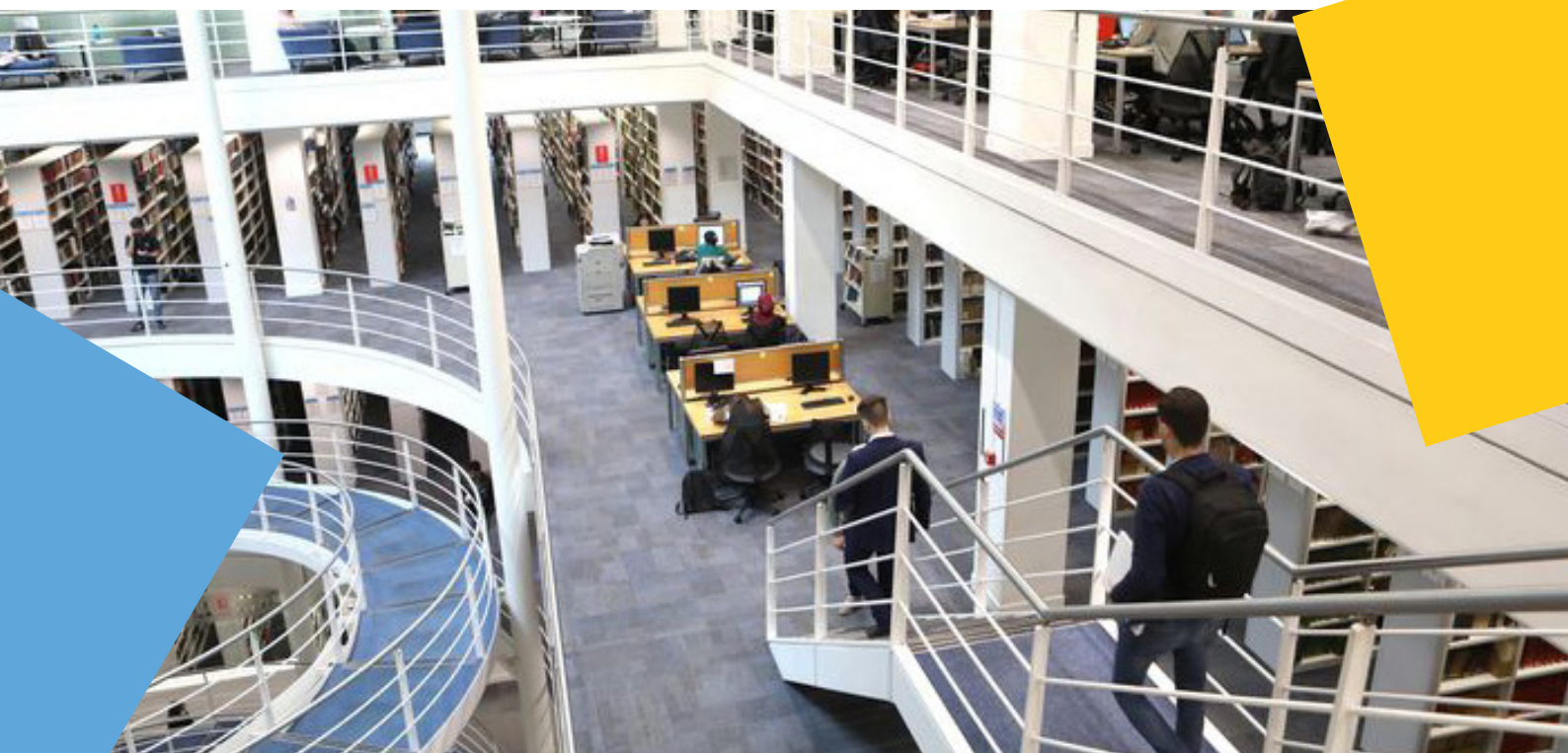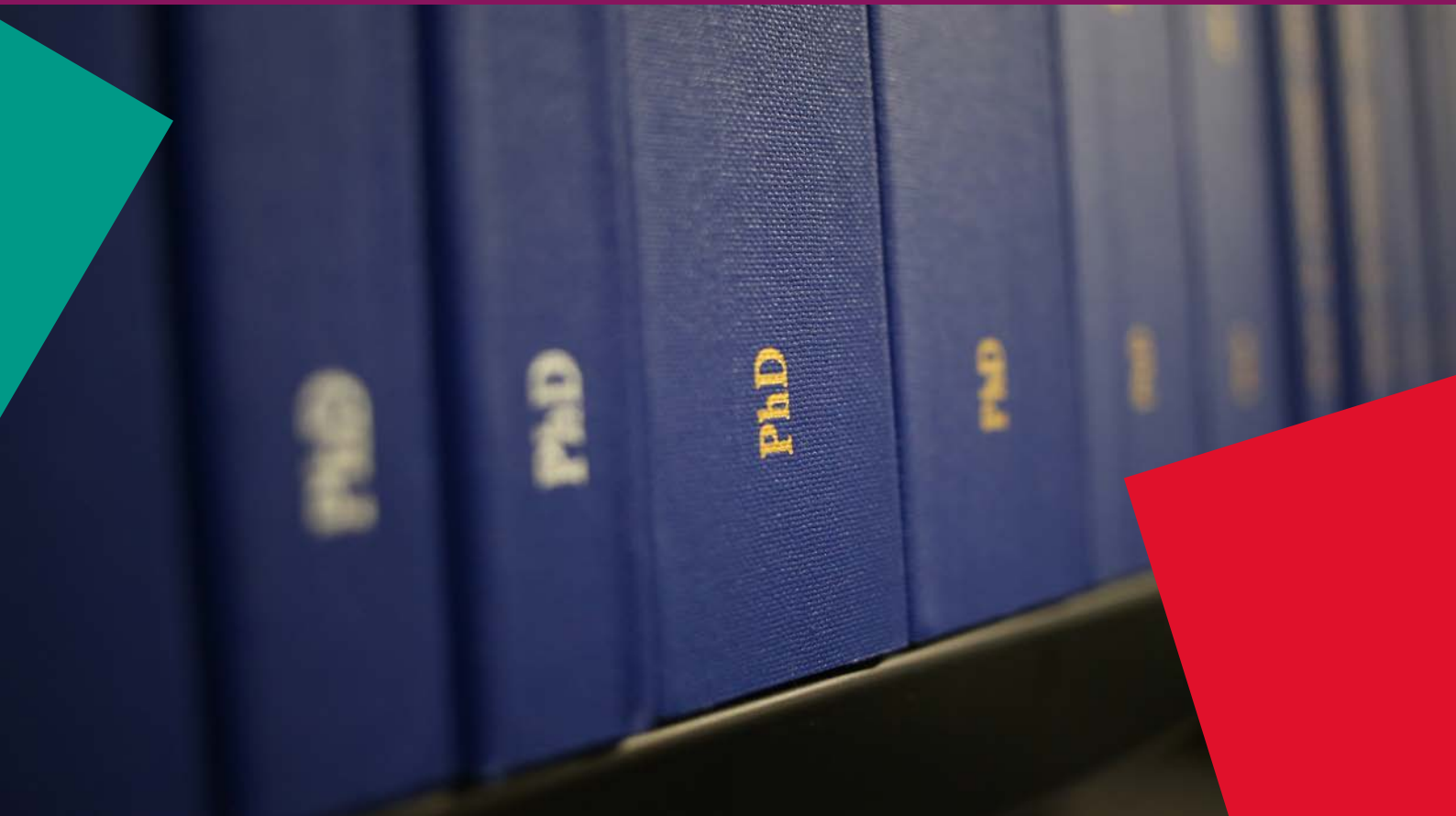
The PhD Log

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, and which action points and deadlines were agreed. 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, and the support you receive from your supervisors. It is a School requirement that you maintain an up-to-date record of your substantive supervisory interactions via the PhD Log. This is especially important if you hold a Student visa, as completion of the PhD Log is a requirement for the School's continued sponsorship of your visa.

You can find further details about the PhD Log **here**. 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 designed for undergraduates and taught master students, but are also open to PhD students, who often find them useful. 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 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, and the School's guidance on artificial intelligence, assessment and academic integrity**.

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 the **LSE Policy and Procedure on Personal Relationships** and **The Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy**.

You might also find it useful to access the resources made available by the *Consent Collective*. These aim to help people to understand consent and learn about sexual harassment. You can find further information **here**. You can also find information about LSE's Safe Contacts and other sources of support **here**.

Enrolment and Progression

The Chair of the Research Degree Sub-Committee (RDSC), Professor Joan Roses, has oversight of most aspects your enrolment and progression. Professor Schulze and the members of the RDSC are responsible for the regulations which govern your degree programme, and for considering applications for changes to your enrolment status, such as interruptions and extensions.

Length of Enrolment

The length of your enrolment will depend on your programme. If you are enrolled in an MPhil/PhD programme, your enrolment will be for four years. If you are enrolled in an MRes/PhD programme, you will be enrolled as a taught student for the duration of your MRes studies, and as a research student after you upgrade. The length of these stages will depend on your particular programme. For confirmation, please check your **programme regulations** and seek confirmation from your department.

It is your own responsibility to manage your progression and to complete and submit your thesis within this time frame. Extensions and interruptions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. See the **Regulations for Research Degrees** for further information. If you experience challenges with your progression, or need additional support, the PhD Academy team can provide advice or signpost you as appropriate.

Upgrade and progression

You must ensure that you are aware of the requirements for upgrade, and for year-on-year progression. You can find the details of these requirements in the Departmental Handbook for your degree programme. Progression and re-enrolment at the start of each academic year are subject to completion of the annual review process to your department and the RDSC's satisfaction. Please see the **Regulations for Research Degrees** and your Department's PhD Handbook for details and further information.

Attendance and absences during your studies

Attendance

As a doctoral 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. However, during the normal course of your enrolment, there will be circumstances when you need to be away from LSE to pursue your studies and research.

Before 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**). You should start planning your fieldwork as early as possible, and you must submit your application to the PhD Academy at least one month, but ideally earlier, before the start date of your period away from LSE. These processes will include a risk assessment and/or an Ethics review.

If you plan to attend a conference somewhere other than LSE, you must 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 **here**.

Breaks

Working while studying

As you will discover, doctoral study is intensive and demanding. We therefore recommend that you do not undertake paid or voluntary work which might affect your ability to complete your research by your submission deadline. If you hold a student visa which allows you to work in the UK, you must also be aware of the restrictions on your working hours.

If you are funded by the ESRC or AHRC, you must also 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 have any queries regarding your visa conditions you should seek advice from the **Student Advice and Engagement Management Team** and the PhD Academy before agreeing any work arrangement.

You can find the full policy regarding term dates, vacations and working during study **here**. This applies to all MPhil/PhD students, and to all MRes/PhD students who have upgraded to PhD status.

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 can find more information on what help and support is available **here**.

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, at least once per day during the working week, as this is the main way the School will contact you. As outlined in the School's Conditions of enrolment 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 usually the first port of call for any issue you might need advice on, you have access to a range of other sources of support. These give you the opportunity to 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 programme manager or administrator. The DPD is responsible for your induction into the department and for providing pastoral support. If the DPD is involved in your supervision, the department should ensure that an appropriate additional academic is available to provide you with pastoral support.

Non-Departmental Pastoral Support

PhD Academy

As well as managing your enrolment and advising 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. 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. Most of these will take place online, 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

The Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS) is the central hub for all students who have a disability, a long-term medical condition, or specific learning difficulty. The DWS is responsible for preparing **My Adjustments** (MAs) which record adjustments or resources you may require to meet your individual needs. Mental Health Advisors (MHAs) are also available to work with you in assessing how mental health difficulties might affect your studies and to suggest strategies to help overcome problems. The 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

The LSE Student's Union (LSESU) **offers advice on a variety of issues**, including complaints, exceptional circumstances, accommodation or financial concerns, and supports the Research Students Consultative Forum. The LSESU also supports a range of activities and services including societies, sports, fundraising, social spaces, and a gym. You can find further information **here**.

Research Students' Consultative Forum (RSCF)

The Forum considers research students' opinions on matters affecting their research at the school, for example by considering issues arising from the reports of

departmental student-staff liaison committees. Students in each department select a representative to sit on the forum.

You can find further information **here**.

Training and Development Programme

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

Professional Development sessions

Doctoral study can be very intense. You will often feel that time is in short supply. However, there are several reasons to consider engaging in **professional development activities**.

Firstly, as there are only so many hours that you can productively work on your thesis, it may be more productive to work on other aspects of your professional development. Secondly, developing professional- and career-orientated skills is a core aspect of any PhD programme. Thirdly, attending sessions, even remotely, is an opportunity to meet students from other departments, which can be intellectually refreshing.

1-2-1 Sessions

The PhD Academy offers **1-2-1 coaching sessions** that students can sign up for to help with a range of issues.

Appendices

ERSC

The PhD Academy is home to the LSE ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) it is one of 14 ESRC recognised advanced training centres for postgraduate students in the UK.

The Doctoral Training Partnership team, which is split across the PhD Academy co-ordinates ESRC activity at LSE and the distribution of ESRC funding for around 30 studentships a year across 25 pathways. ESRC students can also receive additional funding in the form of the Research Training Support Grant (RTSG), Overseas Fieldwork Expenses, Difficult Languages Training, Overseas Institutional Visits and Collaboration activity (for example internships). More information about funding is on the Financial Support Office **webpage**.

Like all LSE research students, our ESRC students follow a programme of core and advanced research training throughout their doctoral studies. Working with their supervisors they will identify their training and professional development needs and carry out an annual Training Needs Analysis (TNA) to meet these needs. Training opportunities are promoted on the PhD Academy webpage and the ESRC Moodle page.

We encourage students to share their own expertise and suggestions for training, workshops and conferences and welcome proposals to access ESRC Cohort Development Funding to support these. More information is available on our **webpage**.

AHRC

The PhD Academy is the point of contact for the London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP). This Doctoral Training Partnership is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).LSE is one of eight members of the partnership. More information about LAHP funding can be found **here**.

LAHP students can also receive additional funding in the form of the **Placement Scheme**, and the **student led activities fund, fieldwork funding and funding to attend conferences.**

The LAHP partnership provides training opportunities and events that are open to all Arts and Humanities postgraduate research students at LSE. An annual schedule of events is available on the **LAHP webpage**.

Regulations and Procedures

You are advised to read through the programme- and course-specific information provided by your department. You should also read through the School's general and degree-specific regulations, as these outline what you can expect from your programme of study, and what will be expected of you while you are registered at the School. If you have any questions about School-level policies, procedures, or regulations, please contact the PhD Academy. If you have any questions about department-level matters, please contact your department.

All regulations relevant to research degree students can be found **here**. An **A-Z of documents** is also provided on the PhD Academy website, to help you to find guidance and regulations relevant to your studies.

LSE Campus

Key

35L	35 Lincoln's Inn Fields	**CLM**	Clement House	**LAK**	Lakatos Building	**PAN**	Pankhurst House	**SAW**	Saw Swee Hock Student Centre
49L	49 Lincoln's Inn Fields (Coopers)	**COL**	Columbia House	**LCH**	Lincoln Chambers	**PAR**	Parish Hall	**SHF**	Sheffield Street
50L	50 Lincoln's Inn Fields	**CON**	Connaught House	**LRB**	Lionel Robbins Building, Library	**PEA**	Peacock Theatre	**SAL**	Sir Arthur Lewis Building
CBG	Centre Building	**COW**	Cowdray House	**MAR**	The Marshall Building	**PEL**	Pethick-Lawrence House	**STC**	St Clement's Clare Market
CKK	Cheng Kin Ku Building	**FAW**	Fawcett House	**OLD**	Old Building	**POR**	1 Portsmouth Street		
		KGS	King's Chambers	**OCS**	Old Curiosity Shop	**SAR**	Sardinia House		
		KSW	20 Kingsway						

All buildings have wheelchair access and lifts, except, KGS, KSW*, POR* and SHF.
*KSW 20 Kingsway (Language Centre only), *POR 1 Portsmouth Street (Shop only).

Disabled Access

After 6.30pm, please call Security Control on **020 7955 6200** to ensure that any disabled access doors are open. Also see:
Accessibility map [PDF] For access to 20 Kingsway, please call security staff on **020 7955 6200** to set up the portable ramp in the entrance foyer.

Access Guides to LSE buildings

AccessAble have produced detailed access guides to the LSE campus and residences, and route maps between key locations. These access guides, and route maps, are now **available online**.

info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy

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**This information can be made available
in alternative formats, on request.
Please contact phdacademy@lse.ac.uk**