

Undergraduate Research Assistantships 2019-20



The New Politics of Inequality: How it works – and fails – in America

Faculty: Lloyd Gruber, International Development
Research Assistant: Colin Vanelli, International History

"My research position was relatively unique in that it filled a gap in my program. This helped me to develop more serious literacy in terms of political science and mathematical models that are used within politics at large." - Colin

US Aid and international drug policy – evaluating the US role in the global drugs and development debate

Faculty: John Collins, International Drug Policy Unit (IDPU)
Research Assistant: Karen Torres, Social Policy

The failure to restore the international financial system after World War I

Faculty: James Morrison, International Relations
Research Assistant: Anna Cooper, International History and Katherine Bennet, LSE General Course

"I'd like to thank the donors that made this possible for me. Not all undergraduates get the chance to work one-on-one with academics, and the experience has been invaluable in creating opportunities and shaping my own career path." - Katherine

The changing role of high culture in American social stratification over the 20th century

Faculty: Fabien Accominotti, Sociology
Research Assistant: Nicholas Robben, LSE General Course

Race and Gender in US politics in Historical and Contemporary Perspective

Faculty: Imaobong Umoren, International History
Research Assistant: Eileen Gbagbo, International Relations

"I would like to say thank you for your donation. The Research Assistantship program was one of the highlights of my LSE experience and has given me a myriad of personal, academic and professional skills." - Eileen

"I am deeply grateful for the opportunity provided by the donors and the US Centre. Research Assistantships are unfortunately rare at LSE; the US Centre's stands in its own league in terms of the serious research being done, and in the fact that it is generously remunerated. I am very appreciative that I was not asked to make a choice between work and research, but instead I was able to gain skills in a manner which so profoundly complemented my studies" - Colin



Left to Right - Research assistants: Eileen, Karen, Anna and Colin

Integrating Experience

The UGRA program continues to be an integral part of participating students' experience at LSE. This year, the Research Assistants celebrated the wide range of projects available, their contemporary relevance and impact on their personal research and academic skills. This improved the confidence of the students and enabled them to engage deeper with areas of interest to them.

"I've developed an insight into the process of academic research, which will be helpful for my dissertation and postgraduate study. I have also gained the confidence that I need to approach professors for assistance and for developing lifelong research skills." - Colin

Applications in numbers:

218 applications received

1 out of 25 LSE undergraduates applied

Applications received from **83%** of all LSE Departments that have undergraduate students

Outstanding Achievements

Research Assistants highlighted how the experience has positively informed and shaped their future prospects with some considering further academic studies as well as translating the skills learnt on the program to areas such as politics and policy.

"I'm planning to apply for graduate study, either in law in the US or in a Master's in the UK. I hope that after further study, I will be able to enter into a policy creation position and work on the same issues which Dr Gruber has installed such a keen appreciation for." - Colin

The achievements of the Research Assistants both within the program and at LSE reflects the brilliant structure of the Program. Students and Project Mentors won a variety of awards outside of LSE, had academic papers published, an even ran in the LSE Student Union Elections. The unique collaboration between bright undergraduate students and faculty gives these projects their cutting edge.

"The future is definitely looking positive for me. The program gave me the opportunity to meet with different staff and students at LSE which has enriched my network. It also gave me the confidence to run to be elected as the LSESU's Education Officer and one of my manifesto points was to increase the number of Research Assistantships across LSE." - Eileen

Q&A with LSE US Centre Research Assistants 2019-20

How do you feel you have benefited from the program in terms of opportunities and skills gained?

"I have gained insight into the inner workings of the research process, as well as the opportunity to build a relationship with a researcher at LSE which may ultimately provide future opportunities."

"I have been able to work closely with a Black Female academic whose work I admire, which has given me a much more intimate understanding of the process of researching and academic writing. I have also learnt how to source different materials from archives and how to evaluate the value of each source. Overall, the program cemented my desire to pursue academia as a career option."

What was your favourite part/aspect of the program?

"My favorite aspect of the program was getting to know Dr. Morrison as well as my fellow research assistants and the rest of the US Centre. I loved attending US Centre events and the sense of community the US Centre provided."

"Meeting often with Dr Gruber in his office and seeing how the process of academic brainstorming and research preparation comes together through discussion and refutation – and getting to play a central role in that brainstorming – was certainly a favourite moment."

"I have two. Meeting the US Centre team at the Meet and Greet at the start of the year and working on the seminar series looking and Race and Gender."

How has the program complemented your learning experience at LSE?

"The program gave a real-world application to the theoretical knowledge I built in the classroom. It gave me a sense of how the topics I'm studying can be taken and applied to creating new knowledge."

"The program has enriched my learning experience at LSE as it has enabled me to expand my learning and understanding of race and feminism beyond an International relations perspective and towards a more intersectional understanding."



Research assistant Nico Robben asking a question at the US Centre's "Shaping America's Future"

What does the future hold for you and do you feel the program helped to shape that?

"I believe the future holds an advanced degree for me with the goal of someday conducting my own economic research. The program has reinforced this plan, giving me greater confidence in my passion for research."