Welcome to the Department of Methodology

MPhil/PhD Social Research Methods Handbook

lse.ac.uk/methodology
Look after yourself. Look after others.

- Wear a mask
- Wash or sanitise hands regularly
- Keep a safe distance and follow advice on campus
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Use learning spaces safely
- Let LSE know if you feel unwell

Do you have symptoms?

- 37.5°
  - High temperature, fever, shaking or chills
- Loss of sense of smell, taste, or breathing difficulties
- Dry cough

Get a COVID-19 test, DO NOT go out and you MUST self-isolate for two weeks.

Thanks. Together we help make LSE COVID-secure.

Campus safety, testing information and more: lse.ac.uk/coronavirus
Contents

3 About LSE and the Department of Methodology
   3 Introduction
   4 LSE
   4 The Department of Methodology
   6 Key contacts

7 Overview of the doctoral programme
   7 Introduction
   9 Being a research student in Methodology
   9 The student-supervisor relationship
   11 Staff-Student Liaison Committee
   12 PhD day and Department seminars
   12 Part-time teaching
   12 Financial support
   13 PhD work opportunities
   15 Key dates of the doctoral programme

Connect with the LSE community
studenthub.lse.ac.uk/welcome
Contents (continued)

16 Rules and regulations
   16 Introduction
   16 First year: The first progress review
   18 Second year: Upgrading from MPhil to PhD status
   19 Third year: The second progress review
   20 Fourth year: Submission and examination of the PhD thesis
   23 Guidance on academic conduct

24 Key information

25 Term dates and LSE closures – Academic Year 2020/21

26 The PhD Academy

27 Registration

30 LSE Campus
About LSE and the Department of Methodology

Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Methodology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. We hope your time here will be both rewarding and stimulating. The Department of Methodology is one of Europe’s leading centres in the study and development of social research methods. The Department owes much of its distinctive character to its commitment to both quantitative and qualitative methodology and its interdisciplinary staff from political science, sociology, social psychology, criminology and statistics, among other disciplines. LSE is one of 14 advanced training centres for doctoral students in the UK (known as Doctoral Training Partnerships) recognised by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), and the Department is central to the provision of methods training for MSc and PhD students from across the School. Each year there are approximately 40 Masters students and 10 MPhil/PhD students.

The Head of Department in 2020/21 is Professor Jonathan Jackson. For more information about the Department and its activities, please see its website and for a list of the staff, their contact details and areas of interest, please click here.

This handbook aims to provide you with all the vital information you need to settle into LSE and the Department and then progress through the PhD. We require all students to familiarise with this handbook and enrol themselves on the Methodology PhD Portal on Moodle, which will be of considerable use to you. It will also be assumed that you familiarise yourself with LSE regulations that are relevant to research students. These general regulations are not replicated in this handbook.
LSE

LSE is a major world centre of research and teaching in the social sciences. It has an outstanding reputation, not only in Economics (where twelve former staff members have won Nobel Prizes), but also in all the Social Sciences and closely related subjects such as History, Law and Philosophy. LSE’s location in central London is central to its identity. Its buildings form part of the skyline of a cosmopolitan capital city, crowded and bustling, rather than part of a peaceful rural campus. There is a constant interchange of ideas and knowledge between teachers and students, and between the School and the world of many of its studies. Many LSE students and staff come from outside the UK; over half of the students are postgraduates, making LSE one of the largest concentrations of advanced study in its various fields. In its lively variety, LSE thrives on an atmosphere of openness to new ideas, discussion and debate. The LSE Library is one of the world’s major collections of social science material – over 3 million items are on open access.

You can find out more about the School through its [website](#).

We strongly recommend that all new MPhil/PhD students attend the **School Welcome Presentations for new research students** at the beginning of Michaelmas Term (23 September 2020, 12:30-2pm). The session provides an important introduction to how the School functions and what the academic experience of a research student looks like at LSE. Information about the time and location of this event is available [here](#).

The Department of Methodology

The Department of Methodology was in large measure founded in response to government concerns about the quality of methodological training for social scientists in the UK. This concern was first voiced in the early 1990s, particularly though not exclusively relating to quantitative methods, and while the School took steps to improve the so-called "methodology gap" identified by the ESRC, worries about training in research methods in Britain as a whole have not been allayed, leading most recently to the introduction of the ESRC Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTP), one of which is at LSE.
The Department of Methodology's teaching has evolved in six phases, as follows:

- Training in research methods for PhD students in various departments of LSE (1992).
- Training in research methods for MSc programmes carrying the ESRC's RT weighting, i.e., for mode A entrance to PhD programmes (1993).
- Training for MSc programmes that required a skills component, in particular the Government Department (1994).
- MSc in Social Research Methods (1994).
- MPhil/PhD in Social Research Methods (2006).
- Contribution to the training under the LSE Doctoral Training Centre (2012).

Since there is not a well-established pedagogical tradition for the teaching of research methods in an interdisciplinary context, the following sections set out what lies behind the aims and objectives for our teaching. Research methodology is not an end in itself, but a means to the end of supporting and improving the quality of empirical research in substantive areas of the social sciences. To this extent the Department of Methodology has had a diverse and substantively focused approach and actively seeking to avoid the "ghettoisation" of research methodology. Most of the Department of Methodology staff would not define themselves purely as methodologists but as social scientists of varying disciplinary identities whose claims about social phenomena are warranted on the basis of empirical evidence. The staff teach and conduct research in one of the social sciences and their research output is submitted to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) assessment through other LSE departments because the REF is organised around academic disciplines and there is no REF unit of assessment for methodology in its broadest sense.

Our approach to high quality teaching is founded on the assumption that understanding research methodology is not merely the accumulation and critical evaluation of knowledge from library sources. To gain a practical and useful knowledge of research methods, what might be called a researcher's tacit knowledge, requires a combination of lecturing, worked examples, engagement in class activities and individual academic advise and support. The Department of Methodology has a strong and continuing commitment to course evaluation and improvement.
The Department of Methodology takes the view that social scientific research methods comprise the quantitative and qualitative approaches, and their integration. A well-trained social scientist, though likely specialising in one of these traditions, will have a firm grounding in both. This is exemplified in our MSc Social Research Methods, in which the compulsory courses cover methods for the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative empirical evidence.

**Key contacts**

**Professor**  
Patrick Sturgis  
Doctoral Programme Director  
Room: COL 8.11  
Email: p.sturgis@lse.ac.uk  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 6835

**Camilya Maleh**  
Doctoral Programme Administrator  
Room: COL 8.02  
Email: methodology.research@lse.ac.uk  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7107 5012

**Caroline Thurtle**  
Department Manager  
Room: COL 8.08  
Email: c.thurtle@lse.ac.uk  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7639

**Professor**  
Jonathan Jackson  
Head of Department  
Room: Col 8.05  
Email: j.p.jackson@lse.ac.uk  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7955 7652
Overview of the doctoral programme

Introduction

A PhD in Social Research Methods emphasises original research in any discipline that is either methodologically innovative or substantively important (and preferably both). This means, at the very least, the application of a technique or methodology not previously applied to a particular body of substantive research, or the improvement of methodology within a body of substantive research. As long as the thesis incorporates methodological innovation, the research may cover any substantive area of the social sciences. The final thesis should build a coherent argument that addresses one research problem or a small number of connected research problems.

The MPhil/PhD is designed to produce sophisticated empirical researchers from different disciplines. Individuals who receive an MPhil or PhD in Social Research Methods will therefore have demonstrated strong methodological skills in the social sciences and will have contributed methodologically and/or substantively to a particular research literature. This will enable students to go directly into both academic careers as teachers and researchers, and non-academic careers (eg, government, the voluntary sector, international organisations, business and the media), and to become articulate, clear-thinking individuals who are able to analyse complex bodies of material critically and with imagination.

The major milestones and targets for progress during the programme are the following:

- **Year 1**: First-year progress review and presentation at the PhD day
- **Year 2**: Upgrade from MPhil to PhD status
- **Year 3**: Third-year progress review
- **Year 4**: Completion.

These will be discussed in more detail in Section 3 below. The rest of this section describes other elements of your life as a research student.
Being a research student in Methodology

As a relatively small department, we aim to foster an informal, friendly and supportive atmosphere that encourages a lively intellectual culture in which creative ideas from many perspectives can be discussed. Research flourishes in such an atmosphere. The arrangements for the MPhil/PhD programme are correspondingly aimed towards

• providing a sound environment that is conducive to research

• encouraging students to take full advantage of the range of advice and specialist knowledge available in the Department and in the School as a whole

• monitoring and assisting student progress in a regular way so as to help students to complete their theses within reasonable time

In return, we expect students to do their part. Conducting research is a collaborative venture, with rights and responsibilities on both sides.

Key to completing your research successfully and on time is the network of support and advice available to you. On the informal side, probably the most important support resource is other research students; students who have experienced the same challenges that you face, who work in the same area or with the same methodologies, can provide invaluable advice on how to avoid pitfalls, how to respond to obstacles, and so on. The staff of the Department, both academic and administrative, can also provide informal support and advice.

The student-supervisor relationship

More formally, your central support will be provided by your supervisors whose task it is to oversee your academic and personal welfare. The single most critical element in conducting successful MPhil/PhD research is the relationship between student and supervisors. Each student has two supervisors, but the relative sizes of their roles may vary from being nearly evenly divided between the two supervisors to a situation where the day-to-day supervision is conducted by the primary supervisor alone and the secondary supervisor one has an advisory and oversight role.
The initial allocation of supervisors to student is based on ensuring that the supervisors have the requisite knowledge in your chosen field, though is also subject to the supervisors’ consent. The supervisors will help to define the area of research, advise on sources and choice of materials and methods and on attendance at courses and seminars. Later on, the supervisors will discuss the preparation and writing of the thesis.

It should be understood that potential supervisors are entitled to decide what subjects they can usefully supervise, so the School cannot guarantee that students will be able to work with any particular supervisor they choose. The Department of Methodology accepts the responsibility for a student’s supervision once admitted, and it will do everything possible to ensure the best possible outcome in the unlikely event of difficulty.

The principal supervisor’s role is both academic and pastoral, providing support that ranges from the intellectual through the practical to the personal. This relationship can take different forms for different students and supervisors, and also different forms for a single pairing over time.

It is important that the relationship that you develop with your supervisors is the right kind of relationship for the way that you and the supervisors work, and for the subject matter of your research. In managing this relationship, there are certain issues that you might usefully bear in mind:

• You should be proactive in the relationship – supervision is a joint responsibility. So, be active in arranging meetings and frame ideas and issues for discussion so as to ensure that you derive maximum benefit from the meetings.

• Always go into a meeting with your supervisors with a clear idea of what you want to gain from that meeting (a formal or informal agenda) and leave it with an equally clear idea of whether you have achieved what you wanted to do.

• Soon after each meeting with your supervisors, you should write notes about what was discussed and agreed for further action and share them with your supervisors. These notes serve both as a reminder to you and the supervisors, and as record of your discussions. You are required to make and share these notes through the PhD Log feature of the LSE for You system (accessible here). You should familiarise yourself with this system and discuss the use of it with your supervisor at the start of the year.

• The style of working that you adopt with your supervisors should be made as explicit as possible in your initial meetings. Try to be clear about what you can expect from them, and what they can expect from you.
• The feedback that you receive will also depend on the nature of your relationship with your supervisors. Remember that criticism is a vital part of developing research and that the value of a discussion may not be evident until some time later.

• The communication between you and your supervisors will depend on the specifics of your relationship. It is important to establish ground rules for communication with your supervisors at the outset. Further, the flow of information between you and your supervisors is crucial to a fruitful working relationship. Please let your supervisors know of any problems that might impact on your research (eg, financial, relationship, health or other difficulties) or difficulties in carrying out an aspect of your research.

• If your research touches on areas outside the supervisors’ areas of expertise, they can help to put you touch with specialists who could help you. Likewise, if you do receive advice and feedback from someone other than your supervisors, you should let the supervisors know about this, and discuss lines of demarcation of responsibility for advice.

The LSE PhD Academy runs various useful workshops under its Academic and professional development programme.

If you feel that the feedback or direction that you are receiving from your supervisors does not meet your expectations, then it is vital to raise this with your supervisors. They may decide to alter their approach, or they may put you in touch with someone else whose approach more closely mirrors your expectations.

If it is too difficult to raise these matters directly with your supervisor, or if you wish to transfer from one supervisor to another, you should consult the Doctoral Programme Director. He has an oversight role to all research students and can offer an independent view of your progress or advice on any difficulties that you might experience, including uncertainties about supervision.
Staff-Student Liaison Committee

The Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) for MPhil/PhD is an official forum for participation and feedback from students, for purposes of quality assurance of the programme. It consists of the Doctoral Programme Director, the Doctoral Programme Administrator and all registered MPhil/PhD students. SSLC meets once a term. The Programme Director will circulate an agenda for each meeting, but students may also add items to the agenda or raise them under Any Other Business. Any student or group of students can of course discuss any matters of concern with the Programme Director or any other member of staff also outside the SSLC.

Research students can also elect a representative to the Research Students’ Consultative Forum of the School, which meets once a term.

PhD day and Department seminars

Each MPhil/PhD student must give a presentation at the Department PhD day in every year of their registration. The PhD day takes place in the Summer Term.

MPhil/PhD students are also expected to attend Department research seminars and other specialist workshops and seminars related to their interests as well as to look for opportunities to attend seminars and events in other School Departments and Institutes.

Part-time teaching

Teaching experience is increasingly important for those who wish to pursue an academic career and can be a useful additional source of income for many students. The Department strongly encourages MPhil/PhD students to engage in teaching and offers a number of opportunities as part-time teachers on the methodology courses it offers.

Research students can certify their teaching experience through the LSE Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCertHE) offered by the Teaching and Learning Centre.
Financial support

A good source of information about financial support available to research students at LSE is the School’s Financial Support Office. For up-to-date and authoritative information on this area, please consult their website.

Broadly, financial support can be divided into two types. The first is the main funding for your studies (including the fees and/or living expenses), typically for a period of 3 or 4 years. The main sources are

- LSE PhD scholarships
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) studentships
- Scholarships from non-LSE sources.

The selection of students for LSE and ESRC scholarships is based on the PhD application to the School, so no separate application is required. These scholarships can only be awarded before a student starts his/her first year. More information on external funding sources is available here.

The Department has modest funds to provide support for doctoral research activities. These funds are designed to support with fieldwork and data-collection costs over the course of your PhD studies. All funding requests are competitive and considered on a case-by-case basis and approved by a funding panel.

The third type of financial support consists either of limited amounts of general support for short periods or support for specific purposes such as conference attendance.

The main examples of this are:

- Postgraduate Travel Fund (School)
- In-course financial support for final-stage PhD students (School)
- Research Training Support Grant (ESRC scholarship holders only).

Please ask the Doctoral Programme Director or Doctoral Programme Administrator for more on these if needed.
PhD work opportunities

There are four main types of paid work that PhD students can do as part of their research training, in the form of providing teaching or other work in their department. For the Department of Methodology, this work typically involves teaching and/or research assistance, but may also involve support for conferences, staffing the Methodology Surgery, and similar tasks.

Broadly speaking, there are four main types of work that PhD students can do for the Department.

1 **Teaching.** Teaching experience is valuable both in itself as well as for securing postdoctoral fellowships and faculty positions. Every year, the Department recruits a large number of Graduate Teaching Assistants for the introductory quantitative methods courses MY451, MY452, MY464, and MY465. The total number of hours depends on the teaching roles in these courses, which vary across and within courses. Based on a typical mix of these roles, teaching about 10 classes over the course of the PhD is sufficient to reach 250 hours. This could be met by teaching, for example, 3 classes in each of the two teaching terms of year 2 and 2 classes in each of the two teaching terms of year 3. The Department does not currently have teaching opportunities in its qualitative methods courses.
2 **Research.** Faculty in the Department have ongoing research projects that can benefit from research assistance and providing research assistance is a good way to get involved in the intellectual life of the Department. PhD students who are interested in arranging a research assistantship should discuss potential projects with both their supervisor and the faculty member whose research is being assisted (if the latter is not the supervisor). The faculty member whose research is being assisted must obtain approval for the number of hours and the nature of the work to be conducted from the Doctoral Programme Director.

3 **Methods Surgeries.** The Department runs a walk-in “surgery” where members of the School community (students at the MSc and PhD levels, as well as staff) can ask for methodological advice on their research. More information is available [here](#).

4 **Administration.** At certain times of year, there are opportunities to assist with the administration of the Department (Moodle updates, data checking, web-based research, etc.) or to assist with conference/event organisation.

**Key dates of the doctoral programme**

**7 May 2021**

- Deadline for first-year students to submit the 10,000-word first-year progress review document. Please send an electronic copy (as a PDF file) to your supervisor by 5pm, with a copy to the Doctoral Programme Director and to the Doctoral Programme Administrator.

- Deadline for second-year students to submit the materials for their upgrade to PhD status. Please send an electronic copy (as a PDF file) to your supervisor by 5pm, with a copy to the Doctoral Programme Director and to the Doctoral Programme Administrator.

- Deadline for third-year students to submit the materials for their progress review. Please send an electronic copy (as a PDF file) to your supervisor by 5pm, with a copy to the Doctoral Programme Director and to the Doctoral Programme Administrator.

**10 June 2021**

- Department of Methodology PhD Day, where all students present their work to an audience of faculty and peers

---

1 Supervisors do not have a particular entitlement to the research assistance of their supervisees, however the necessary overlap in research interests implies that they are likely to be a good match for research assistance work.
Rules and regulations

Introduction
The LSE Calendar is the authoritative collection of the School's regulations, policies and codes of conduct. The part of the Calendar that is relevant to MPhil/PhD students can be found here.

Apart from the regulations that govern research degrees, these rules cover such issues as editorial help, research ethics, plagiarism and other academic misconduct, appeals, complaints and disciplinary procedures.

You are strongly advised to read these regulations thoroughly. Please see also the webpages of the PhD Academy for additional information.

The information on the PhD Academy pages covers such important topics as changes between full-time and part-time study, interruptions of study, extensions of the maximum period of registration, and procedures for submitting the PhD thesis.

The rest of this section expands on these general School regulations for research degrees to give some further information on the specific procedures in the Department for key stages of the MPhil/PhD programme.

First year: The first progress review
In the first year, students will typically spend a large portion of their time taking a range of methods and substantive courses. These are selected in discussion with supervisors dependent on assessed needs. The courses will normally be some of those taught by the Department of Methodology (course code MY) but may also include ones from other LSE departments. The supervisors may advise or require that the student be formally assessed for such courses, and the results of these assessments may be included as part of the conditions for progression to the second year. Any such conditions will be communicated to the student in writing early in the Michaelmas term of the first year. In the first year, students will typically spend their remaining time developing plans for and beginning work on their thesis. For students collecting their own data, once a plan for data collection has been formulated and before data collection has begun, students will need to submit a completed Research Ethics Checklist (and if necessary, the longer Research Ethics Review Questionnaire). These forms can be found alongside the LSE Ethics Code. The application form and any accompanying documents (including the Informed consent documentation) must be submitted for scrutiny by the Research Ethics Committee through the online review system called My Research. A full guide to submitting an ethics review application can be found here.
In the Summer Term of their first year, students will submit a **10,000-word first-year review document** that outlines the aims, methods and theoretical motivation of their thesis, and provides a plan for the programme of work leading to the final thesis. In essence, this document is the extended, in-depth research proposal for the PhD research, in a form which takes into account the student’s work in the first year. The review document should be submitted by the deadline in the Summer Term which is published in the PhD handbook each year. The Research Ethics Checklist must be attached with the submission if it has not already been submitted earlier.

Students will also give an **oral presentation** of this document at the PhD day. The presentation is an official part of the requirements of the first-year review.

The written review document and oral presentation will be assessed by a review panel of two academics who are not on the supervisory team, normally members of the Department staff. **This work has to reach an acceptable standard to enable the student to progress to the second year.** If the panel deems the first-year review to not be of an adequate standard, they will give the candidate up to a month to revise and resubmit it. The decision on the revised document will be taken a maximum of one week after the end of the Summer Term. If the revised review document is still judged to be unsatisfactory, the review panel will organise an additional oral examination where the student will be asked to defend his/her review document. The final decision will then be continued registration to the second year, with or without additional conditions, or termination of registration.

In general, a satisfactory first-year research review document should provide a convincing argument for why the PhD research can be expected to produce work which will meet the requirements of a PhD thesis, as stated in the **LSE Regulations**

In particular, it should include the following elements:

- A general introduction and statement of the problem or question under investigation, and of the reasons why this is theoretically and/or empirically important and interesting.
- A comprehensive literature review of relevant previous empirical and theoretical work. This should also motivate the specific research questions, highlight gaps in the literature, and explain the planned contributions of the thesis.
- A statement of the specific research questions of the PhD research.
- An explanation of the theoretical concepts and frameworks that will be employed.

---

2 Throughout this handbook, deadlines are stated for full-time students who begin their registration in Michaelmas Term. These should be translated in obvious ways for part-time students and for students who begin in another term. So, for example, `Summer Term of their first year’ should be read more generally as ‘their third term of full-time equivalent registration’. An exception to this is the PhD day, which takes place at the same time for all students.
• A statement of a clear, appropriate and feasible research design for empirical work which will be used to answer the research questions. This should include a description of the types and sources of empirical data to be collected, and of the methods to be used for their analysis.

• A general timetable and project management plan, showing the major tasks to be completed and a schedule for their completion.

• A proposed outline of the structure and format of the PhD thesis.

An unsatisfactory first-year review document is one which fails to provide this information. Examples of unsatisfactory work include (but are not limited to):

• Not stating clear research questions;

• Not adequately reviewing the specific literatures that the empirical work is contributing to;

• Providing insufficient methodological detail, showing how the design will produce data that allows the candidate to address the research questions in a systematic and rigorous way.

**Second year: Upgrading from MPhil to PhD status**

From year 2, research students will spend more time on independent study under the guidance of their supervisors. This will likely include collection, acquisition, organisation and analysis of empirical data to address the research questions and writing up of the results. In the Summer Term of their second year of registration, students will submit a document for consideration for upgrade from the MPhil to the PhD programme. This document should consist of a minimum of three draft chapters of the thesis, plus a detailed plan and timetable for the completion of the remainder of the PhD and a short introduction which links together the other parts of the document. The three draft chapters will typically include a detailed literature review with a specification of the research questions, and two empirical chapters (or two empirical papers in a draft form, if the student is pursuing a paper-based thesis).
The upgrade materials will be evaluated by an upgrade panel which will consist of two academics, not necessarily from the Department of Methodology. In some cases, panel members will be external to the LSE. Supervisors will not be members of the upgrade panel. The panel will conduct an oral examination where the student will have an opportunity to defend the upgrade materials. The panel will then recommend transfer to PhD registration if in their judgement the student's progress and plans for the remaining work are of a sufficient quality and quantity that the work can reasonably be expected to lead, by the end of the student's fourth year of registration, to a thesis which will meet the requirements of a PhD thesis as stated in the LSE Regulations.

Students who, at the upgrade meeting, fail to satisfy the upgrading panel that they have reached the required standard will be permitted to revise and resubmit the upgrade document. The supervisors and the student will agree a fixed deadline for the resubmission, which will be within 6 months of the day of the upgrade meeting. The revised document will normally be examined by the same upgrade panel, who will also conduct a new oral examination.

A student who does not meet the criteria for upgrade to the PhD programme on resubmission, or who fails to submit an upgrade document by the end of the Summer Term of their second year of registration without an extended deadline approved by the Doctoral Programme Director, will normally be permitted to continue in registration and submit for the degree of MPhil.

**Third year: The second progress review**

The normal maximum period of registration of a PhD student at LSE is four years (full-time). The focus of the third-year progress review is not the academic quality and feasibility of the PhD project (these have been assessed in the upgrade) but whether the student is making timely progress towards the goal of finishing the work and submitting the PhD thesis the maximum four years of registration. The decision of the progress review will be termination of registration if the student has not made adequate progress and does not have sufficient reasons for this. If progress is judged to be adequate, the student will be permitted to continue to the fourth year, although this may be conditional specified conditions.

In some cases, progress may be delayed due to exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. In these circumstances, students may submit a request to the Chair of the School’s Research Degrees Subcommittee for an extension of the thesis submission deadline beyond the normal maximum of four years. It should be clearly understood that such an extension will be granted only in exceptional cases and is likely to be denied otherwise. If the request is denied, the student will be expected to submit the thesis by the end of the standard four-year registration period. If the thesis is not submitted by the end of the (standard or extended) registration period, registration will lapse without a degree being awarded.
The best time to submit a request for an extension is during the third year or early in the fourth year, in cases where the request refers to any circumstances which have occurred by then. One role of the third-year progress review is to assess whether this may be necessary, and to instruct the student and the supervisors to prepare an extension request immediately if it is.

The following materials should be submitted for the third-year progress report:

- A copy of the detailed plan and timetable for the completion of the thesis which was included in the PhD upgrade document.
- A copy of the report of the PhD upgrade panel.
- A statement of how the student has taken into account the comments of the upgrade panel (up to 1 page).
- Report of the progress of the work since the PhD upgrade, explicitly matched against the plan and timetable given in the upgrade document (up to 1 page).
- A detailed plan and timetable for the completion of the thesis (up to 1 page).
- A summary statement of the progress of the work so far, including comments on any changes of plans and differences between the plans stated in the upgrade document and subsequent progress of the work (1-2 pages).

These materials should be submitted by the specified deadline in the Summer Term published in the PhD handbook each year. The progress report will normally be assessed by a review panel which consists of one of the supervisors, the Doctoral Programme Director (replaced by another member of DoM staff if the programme director is also a supervisor), and one other member of DoM staff. They will also conduct an interview with the student and may invite further clarification from him or her. The panel will then make their final decision about the result of the third-year progress review by the end of the Summer Term.

**Fourth year: Submission and examination of the PhD thesis**

(For an MPhil thesis, these requirements should be adjusted where appropriate. Please consult the LSE regulations and the Doctoral Programme Director for more information.)

The PhD thesis may be a traditional monograph thesis or a series of papers with supporting material, as prescribed by LSE regulations.

For a papers-based thesis, we encourage a short introduction and conclusion (2,000-4,000 words), a literature review (8,000-10,000 words), somewhere between 3 and 5 empirical papers (8,000-12,000 words each) and linking material between papers. The introduction, conclusion, literature review, linking material and at least one of the empirical papers must be single-authored. Other papers can be co-authored with the supervisor(s) and/or other researchers.
Please note that the very definition of the word “thesis” implies an (extended) argument. Students are encouraged to present coherent material which addresses one or a small number of linked research problems. This is good scholarship. It is also what examiners will be looking for, and what they are familiar with.

Before you submit your thesis, it is advisable to produce one or more draft versions, for discussion with your Supervisor, so that the structure of the argument can be clarified, the flow of your narrative smoothed, and the phrasing made as felicitous as possible. The precise way in which this is achieved should be discussed with your Supervisor.

Please consult the webpages of the PhD Academy at PhD journey for information on the submission procedures. Note, in particular, that the Examination Entry Form on which, among other things, the examiners are proposed, should normally be submitted at least two months before the thesis itself.

**Selecting the examiners**

The thesis is examined by two examiners. Final choice of the examiners is made by your supervisors, but they will ask for your views and you should discuss the choice carefully with them. Both examiners should be specialists in your field of research, and at most one of them may be from LSE. You may well know them both, but you should not have collaborated with them on research or received substantial advice from them on your PhD work. Members of the first-review panel and the upgrade panel should not be used as examiners of the final thesis. For more on the selection and appointment of the examiners, please see the LSE regulations for research degrees and the webpages of the PhD Academy.

**Final Viva Voce Examination**

Your two Examiners will read your thesis and then you will be examined by an oral (viva voce) examination. The viva voce is designed to test your ability not only to express your ideas on the specifics of your research, and to defend the viewpoints that you advance in your thesis, but also to debate the implications and scope for future development of those ideas, and to consider where and in what form the ideas might be published. It can be an arduous experience, but and it can also be enjoyable – often both, at the same time! You should discuss your preparations for the viva voce with your Supervisor well in advance of it taking place.
Useful suggestions to prepare for the *viva voce* include:

- Prepare brief oral summaries of your key arguments beforehand;
- Try to look over the thesis with a dispassionate eye, and note what might appear to others to be weak links or vagueness in your argumentation;
- Be ready to defend your ideas;
- But also, be prepared to be flexible: think in advance about which aspects of your argument are essential to your view, and which might be modified after discussion;
- Think about theoretical and empirical alternatives to the view you have developed both within your particular field and in other fields;
- Think about the theoretical and empirical implications of your work;
- Bear in mind that the Examiners may not share your view of the field.

**The outcome of the examination**

The outcome of the *viva voce* will be a judgement by the Examiners, who compile a final examiners’ report and make one of several recommendations, as detailed in the School regulations.
Guidance on academic conduct

It is very important that the way you work in your research and the outputs of that research conform to the rules of correct academic conduct and the LSE regulations about research degrees. These regulations can be found at [here](#).

In particular, here we want to draw your attention to the following areas:

- **Guidelines on research ethics:**

  A completed Research Ethics Checklist (and if necessary, the longer Research Ethics Review Questionnaire) is required at the time of the first-year progress review or before any new data collection is carried out, whichever is earlier. In addition, where the body of data, intended research population or data collection strategy change significantly over the course of the research, the checklist, and if necessary, the questionnaire should be filled in again and resubmitted. If new researchers are added to the team who will have access to personal or sensitive data, the section on data protection and confidentiality should be updated and resubmitted.

- **Guidelines on plagiarism in written work:**

  [Click here](#) for definitions and information on the procedures which will be followed if plagiarism is suspected.

  [Click here](#) for guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable editorial help for written work:

  These may need to be considered at any stage of the research process, including (but not limited to) the selection of the research topic, research design, research execution, conducting interviews, data collection and analysis, and the literature review. PhD students are encouraged to seek advice on the different aspects of their research in the form of “peer review” (for example, by presenting at conferences). It is also legitimate for a student to seek outside help with particular aspects of their research, for example, in using research organisations to facilitate fieldwork trips. But it is important that external input of this kind is not excessive. Also, there will be aspects of research that students are expected to conduct themselves, within the context that their eventual thesis is expected to be their own original work. To ensure that any outside help that you might seek is within acceptable norms, it is very important that

  - you should discuss with your supervisor(s) any help that you are considering using with any aspect of the research process;
  - you should discuss with your supervisor(s) any advice that you are seeking from other departments at the School or from sources outside of the School; and
  - any help you have received should be credited appropriately within your work.
Key information

Term dates and LSE closures – academic year 2020/21

The PhD Academy

PhD Academy Advice Team

PhD Academy Director

Registration

Term dates, vacations and working during MPhil/PhD study

Inclusion plans

Student status documentation

Interruption

Change of mode of study

Fieldwork (UK and overseas)

Residing outside of the UK

Withdrawal

“
At LSE, you don’t just get to study our changing world, you can see it and experience it. With history being made every day, why would you want to be anywhere else?”
# Term dates and LSE Closures

## Academic year 2020/21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term dates</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Michaelmas Term (MT)</strong></td>
<td>Monday 28 September – Friday 11 December 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Week:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 2 – Friday 6 November 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lent Term (LT)</strong></td>
<td>Monday 18 January – Thursday 1 April 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>January Exams:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 11 – Friday 15 January 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Week:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 22 – Friday 26 February 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Term (ST)</strong></td>
<td>Tuesday 4 May – Friday 18 June 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Exams:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 10 May – Friday 18 June 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LSE will be closed during the following periods:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christmas Closure</strong></td>
<td>Wednesday 23 December 2020 – Friday 1 January 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easter Closure</strong></td>
<td>Friday 2 April – Thursday 8 April 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>May Bank Holiday:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 3 May 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spring Bank Holiday:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 31 May 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Summer Bank Holiday:</strong></td>
<td>Monday 30 August 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The PhD Academy

The PhD Academy is located in the Lionel Robbins building and can be contacted via the online Enquiry Desk at lseportal.force.com/studentservices/s/enquiry-form

The PhD Academy is responsible for organising research and career development training to complement what is offered at departmental level. It is a hub for students from different disciplinary backgrounds to meet and interact, both socially and academically.

The PhD Academy is also responsible for managing degree registration and advising students and Academic Departments on rules, regulations and other issues that students face during their programme of study. We also provide support and advice to Research Council (ESRC and AHRC) funded students.

The PhD Academy works closely with other services relevant to research students, and therefore acts as an information hub, for example on financial support, visa regulations, careers advice, etc.

PhD Academy Advice Team

The PhD Academy has a dedicated advice team that can provide advice on academic matters (particularly around progression, interruption, withdrawal, regulations and exams). If you are not sure who to contact about a query please contact the advice team via lseportal.force.com/studentservices/s/enquiry-form

Further information on accessing our services can be found on our website at info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy

PhD Academy Director

The PhD Academy Director, Prof Rita Astuti, is available for informal discussions about your student experience and your research and training needs. Feel free to contact her at r.astuti@lse.ac.uk

“The PhD Academy is a hub for students from different disciplinary backgrounds to meet and interact, both socially and academically.”
Registration

During your time at the LSE, you must be registered. Details of the registration process can be found on the PhD Academy web page at info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/phd-journey

Term Dates, vacations and working during MPhil/PhD study

You can find information on term dates and vacations, and advice on working while studying at info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/assets/documents/Statement-on-term-dates-and-vacations-for-MPhil-and-PhD-Study.pdf

Inclusion plans

If you have a disability, long term medical or mental health condition you are advised to apply for an Inclusion Plan (IP) as soon as possible. The sooner you let the Disability and Wellbeing Service (DWS) know about your condition, the sooner they can work with you to put appropriate support in place. For example, advisers in DWS might set up one-to-one learning support, mentoring, or help you access assistive technology designed to remove barriers to studying. To find out how to apply for an Inclusion Plan visit info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/student-wellbeing/inclusion-plans

Student status documentation

If you need a letter that proves that you are a student (eg, for organisations such as council tax offices, embassies or banks), you can produce one yourself by using the online query form at lseportal.force.com/studentservices/s/enquiry-form
** Interruption **

Your PhD programme is expected to be a continuous programme of study. However, you can apply for interruptions to study on the basis of exceptional circumstances such as illness or parental leave. Forms and guidance on how to apply for an interruption of study are available at [info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/phd-journey/a-z-guidance](info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/phd-journey/a-z-guidance).

You can find information about parental leave in the LSE Parental Leave Policy for Research Students (MPhil and PhD) at [info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/assets/documents/LSE-Parental-Leave-Policy-for-Research-Degree-Students.pdf](info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/assets/documents/LSE-Parental-Leave-Policy-for-Research-Degree-Students.pdf).

** Change of mode of study **

If you wish to switch from full-time to part-time registration, you need to ensure that you meet certain requirements and criteria. You can find the guidance and application form at [info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/phd-journey/a-z-guidance](info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/phd-journey/a-z-guidance).

** Fieldwork (UK and overseas) **

If you intend to carry out a period of fieldwork (including digital ethnography and archival research) you will need to complete:

- A fieldwork application form
- A Research Ethics Review
- A Risk Assessment

You start all of these processes at least 3 months prior to the fieldwork start date (4/5 months if the fieldwork is planned for a Higher Risk Area).

You can find information and advice at the PhD Academy web pages ([info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy](info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy)) and the Health and Safety web pages ([info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Risk-and-Compliance-Unit/Health-and-Safety](info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Risk-and-Compliance-Unit/Health-and-Safety)).
Residing outside of the UK

In exceptional circumstances, you can apply to reside away from LSE, ie, for non-resident registration status. Permission is not normally granted in the first year, if you are required to attend classes, or if you need access to on-campus resources and facilities in order to progress with your research.

You can get advice on studying and researching away from LSE the PhD Academy team; you can download the application for at info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/phd-journey/a-z-guidance

Withdrawal

If you withdraw from your programme, you will not be able to resume your studies programme at a later date. The withdrawal is permanent and irreversible. For this reason, before withdrawing you may wish to discuss your situation with your Academic Department, the PhD Academy, or other support services in the School (such as the Wellbeing Service) to consider whether other options, such as interruption, may be more appropriate.

Forms and guidance on how to apply for withdrawal are available at info.lse.ac.uk/current-students/phd-academy/phd-journey/a-z-guidance
KEY INFORMATION

LSE Campus

Key

| 95A  | 95 Aldwych | 5LF | 5 Lincoln’s Inn Fields | PAN  | Pankhurst House |
| 95A  | 95 Aldwych House | 32L | 32 Lincoln’s Inn Fields | PAR  | Parish Hall |
| ALD  | Aldwych House | 35L | 35 Lincoln’s Inn Fields | PEA  | Peacock Theatre |
| CBG  | Centre Building | MAR | The Marshall Building (44 Lincoln’s Inn Fields) | PEL  | Pethick-Lawrence House |
| CLM  | Clement House | 50L | 50 Lincoln’s Inn Fields | POR  | 1 Portsmouth Street |
| COL  | Columbia House | LRB | Lionel Robbins Building, Library and The Women’s Library | QUE  | Queens House |
| CON  | Connaught House | NAB | New Academic Building | SAR  | Sardinia House |
| COW  | Cowdray House | OLD | Old Building | SAW  | Saw Swee Hock |
| FAW  | Fawcett House | OLD | Old Curiosity Shop, Portsmouth Street | SHF  | Sheffield Street |
| KGS  | King’s Chambers | LSE  | LSE Building |
| KSW  | 20 Kingsway | LSE Building Development | STC  | St Clement’s |
| LAK  | Lakatos Building | Information | CAM  | Cambridge House |
| LCH  | Lincoln Chambers | Cycle Hire Station |

All buildings have wheelchair access and lifts, except 95A, KGS, KSW*, 5LF, 50L, 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.