



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Research for the World strategy



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Foreword

“To know the causes of things” is not merely the motto of the London School of Economics and Political Science; it captures the timeless purpose of a university — to advance the frontiers of knowledge, deepen understanding of the world and share that knowledge for the public good. From our earliest days, LSE has been guided by the founding principle of advancing knowledge “for the betterment of society”.

LSE stands as the world’s leading social science university, with a proud tradition of excellence and influence. Our academic departments consistently rank among the very best globally. Around a quarter of Nobel Memorial Prizes in Economic Sciences have been awarded to scholars who studied or worked here. And through our public engagement and partnerships with governments, international organisations, business and civil society, LSE has become a global force for ideas that inform decisions and shape a better world.

The School has expanded significantly in recent years and continues to build on its global standing. We now need an ambitious research strategy that matches our scale, reputation and aspirations. Through an extensive consultation process involving staff, students, leaders and external partners, we have examined every aspect of our research ecosystem and reflected on our future from multiple perspectives. The resulting strategy offers a holistic view of research at LSE — what it stands for, what we can achieve, and how we can realise our full potential for the benefit of our community and the wider world.

In the pages that follow, you will find the result of our shared ambition — a strategy to power world-leading social science that informs, inspires and transforms. It sets out how we will sustain research excellence, amplify our impact and influence, and nurture a research environment where creativity, collaboration and purpose thrive. By investing in people, partnerships, innovation and infrastructure, we aim to generate the knowledge and insight the world needs to build a more sustainable, prosperous and equitable future.

Quite simply, higher education institutions exist to broaden and advance the frontiers of knowledge, and then share the benefits with society through teaching, knowledge exchange, collaboration, and innovation.



Professor
Susana Mourato,
Vice President
and Pro-Vice
Chancellor (Research)

Context

LSE is unique in our dedication to the social sciences. The School brings together 30 departments, institutes and associated research centres, spanning the full breadth of the social sciences. These underpin all of LSE's research activity and our global reputation. Our British Library of Political and Economic Science – one of the largest social science libraries in Europe – further strengthens this foundation, supporting a vibrant community of enquiry, discovery and debate.



LSE is one of the most internationally diverse universities in the world, with around 70 per cent of our students and nearly half our staff coming from outside the UK and representing some 140 countries. This global community is our greatest strength – bringing a richness of perspectives, ideas and experiences that fuel creativity and innovation, making LSE a truly vibrant and inclusive place for research and discovery.



In keeping with our name, we are a community of people and ideas at the heart of London – one of the most dynamic and globally connected cities in the world. We are physically and intellectually embedded in the centre of international politics, finance, media, business and culture. This unique position gives LSE both an extraordinary opportunity and a responsibility: to convene the world in London, bringing ideas and people together to shape debate, inform decisions and drive impact on a global scale.



LSE is, by some measures, the most entrepreneurial university in Europe. Our alumni founders have raised over \$30 billion in investment capital in recent years, and 27 start-ups launched by LSE students and graduates have become “unicorns” valued at more than \$1 billion – 17 of them in the past four years alone. This record of innovation calls for a strategy that strengthens our entrepreneurial ecosystem and empowers our researchers and students to turn bold ideas into real-world impact.

The Research for the World strategy is designed to reflect the distinctive strengths and character of LSE – a university dedicated to the social sciences and to shaping the world through ideas and evidence. It is a core element of our institutional vision, driving research leadership in line with our intellectual mission to tackle the defining challenges of our time and to build meaningful global partnerships. Our focus on research is inseparable from our wider priorities: embedding research at every level of education, and engaging our whole community – faculty, staff, students, alumni and partners – in the creation and application of knowledge. Through this strategy, we aim to reinforce LSE's position as a source of original, influential and impactful ideas that help shape a more just and sustainable world.



Mission

To be the world's leading social science institution with the greatest global impact

We will strengthen our research and innovation ecosystem to enable world-class scholarship across the social sciences and ensure that our work informs solutions to the world's most urgent challenges. We will use our voice and influence to demonstrate the power and value of the social sciences in shaping a better future for people and planet.

LSE Festival exhibition: Mapping People and Change, June 2023

Guiding principles and values

LSE is a world-class research institution built on independence, excellence and integrity. We uphold academic freedom and support curiosity-driven enquiry alongside strategic collaboration to address the most pressing global issues.

We value the diversity of thought, disciplinary knowledge and perspective that fuels innovation and will foster a supportive, inclusive culture in which creativity and excellence can thrive at every career stage.



Sustain excellence through an inclusive and diverse community

We will draw together talent from all places and backgrounds, diversifying our faculty to ensure LSE is a vibrant and stimulating place to work, where different perspectives thrive through robust but respectful debate. Our research will continue to inform and shape our teaching, in an inspiring, supportive and intellectually challenging community of people and ideas.



Extend our impact and reach

We will collaborate with local, national and international partners to forge new connections and challenge old ways of thinking, involving our alumni, friends and partners in the process. We will use our convening power to bring global leaders, innovators and changemakers together to tackle difficult issues and deliver meaningful benefits to individuals and communities in all parts of the world.



Ensure a sustainable future

We will lead the way in building a sustainable future for the social sciences, by upholding rigorous standards of enquiry, securing funding for research and scholarships, diversifying our income and making the best possible use of our resources. We will shape the global sustainability debate through our research, education and public engagement, and reduce the environmental impact of our operations.

Research for the World priorities

World-class research with global impact lies at the core of LSE’s mission and reputation.

Through this strategy, we will strengthen our research excellence, amplify our impact and influence, and foster a vibrant, collaborative environment in which outstanding social science can thrive. Together, these priorities will ensure that LSE research continues to inform policy, shape debate and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world.



Professor Larry Kramer delivers his inaugural lecture as President of LSE – October 2024

Supporting research excellence

Aim

To maintain and strengthen our position as the leading global specialist social science university by supporting and promoting research excellence across all disciplines and career stages.

Objectives

Grow research income

Develop a sustainable and effective funding model for LSE research, expanding external grant income, philanthropic support, partnerships, research commercialisation and consultancy activity, underpinned by targeted internal seed funding.

Train and support future talent

Develop and empower the next generation of social scientists, including PhD students and early career researchers, through enhanced training, mentorship and financial support, building the pipeline of world-class talent in the social sciences.

Improve monitoring, evaluation, and strategic planning

Strengthen strategic planning and intelligence to help LSE anticipate and respond effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges. Establish clear institutional priorities for investment in research and innovation, supported by regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure resources are directed toward initiatives that deliver the greatest impact in line with strategic objectives.

Delivery

We will create the conditions for exceptional research to flourish across LSE — nurturing talent, fostering collaboration and supporting bold ideas that shape the world. We will develop a sustainable model to grow and diversify research income, enabling both curiosity-driven and applied research with lasting global impact. We will invest in the next generation of social scientists by expanding training, mentorship and financial support for PhD students and early career researchers, ensuring they have the resources and opportunities to thrive within and beyond academia. And we will strengthen our strategic planning and intelligence to ensure that every decision and investment advances our shared ambition for research excellence and influence.



Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021

LSE was shown as the top university (of multiple submissions) in the UK based on the proportion of “world-leading” (4*) research produced and the joint second ranking university in the UK overall, when considering research outputs, research impact and research environment.

Above: Anthropology fieldwork in Madagascar, with a researcher talking to her Vezo “mother”. Photo by Sean Epstein. Below-left: “Timeless” pop-up exhibition, exploring fertility and egg-freezing. Photo by Jael Marschner.



Enhancing research impact and influence

Aim

To contribute to the betterment of society by increasing the impact and influence of our research.

Objectives

Recognise, reward and support impact and innovation

Strengthen how we value, reward and enable the full range of impact activity, providing professional support that helps researchers mobilise their work for public good. Harness the potential of research-based innovation as a powerful pathway to societal benefit through the continued development of a thriving innovation ecosystem.

Build new strategic partnerships

Cultivate new and lasting relationships with policymakers, businesses, industry, the third sector, civil society and alumni networks to expand the reach and relevance of our research.

Enhance civic engagement

Increase the impact and visibility of LSE's research and expertise in London, deepening our role as an engaged civic institution.

Invest in open social science

Strengthen LSE's global voice in advancing open and accessible social science, enhancing the visibility, credibility and influence of our research worldwide.

Delivery

We will expand and professionalise the support available to help researchers translate their work into real-world impact and innovation, while enhancing how we recognise and reward those achievements across the School. We will deepen our partnerships across sectors and geographies — from policymakers and industry to civil society and global networks — ensuring that LSE research informs practice and decision-making at every level. We will extend our civic engagement in London, growing our outreach, partnerships and public affairs activities to strengthen our role as a trusted anchor institution. Finally, we will strengthen LSE's role as a global convenor of ideas and debate by improving the visibility and accessibility of our research to diverse audiences. We will champion open and collaborative research practices, promoting transparency, accessibility and the wider use of LSE knowledge for societal benefit.



Award-winning impact

Distinguished Policy Fellow, Dr Timo Leiter, was awarded the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Celebrating Impact Prize 2024 for his work on climate adaptation at COP28. This followed the success of LSE's Electoral Psychology Observatory, who won the prize in 2022 for their work on improving the electoral experience of citizens.

Dr Leiter was also recognised at LSE's inaugural Impact Prizes in 2025, which recognised excellent engagement, impact, and impact culture across LSE. Winners in the "Outstanding team impact" category, led by Dr Andy Summers, had been instrumental in abolishing the UK's "non-dom" tax regime, whilst "Rising star" Dr Robtel Neajai Pailey changed citizenship legislation in Liberia.

In 2025, Professor Tony Travers received the Freedom of the City of London, a ceremonial award recognising a lifetime of impact in London. LSE Cities and The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment (GRI) have both been awarded the prestigious Queen's Anniversary Prize (now known as Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Higher and Further Education).

The TPI Global Climate Transition Centre

LSE's TPI Centre, as the academic partner of the global, investor-led Transition Pathway Initiative (TPI), produces independent assessments of company, bank and sovereign progress toward a low-carbon economy. The Centre provides insights that support investor engagement with their investee entities to encourage change. Through a unique partnership with a leading commercial data provider, its outputs also shape climate-aware equity indices.

Over 150 investors globally have pledged support, jointly representing over \$87 trillion combined assets. At this scale, investments informed by TPI data can materially affect transition finance, as well as influence entity behaviour through investor actions.



Creating a strong research environment

Aim

To foster an inspiring, intellectually vibrant and supportive research environment, underpinned by efficient systems, robust infrastructure and a collaborative culture that empowers excellence at every stage of the research journey.

Objectives

Enhance research culture and collaboration

Cultivate a vibrant, engaging, inclusive and collegial research culture that recognises diversity and interdisciplinarity as essential to excellence. Facilitate opportunities for collaboration across disciplines and with external partners, using LSE's networks and partnerships to generate research with meaningful impact and influence.

Improve research management and infrastructure, including AI

Deliver an integrated and agile research infrastructure supported by world-class systems, services and processes across the research and innovation lifecycle — including the intelligent use of digital tools and technologies — to enable global research excellence and impact.

Delivery

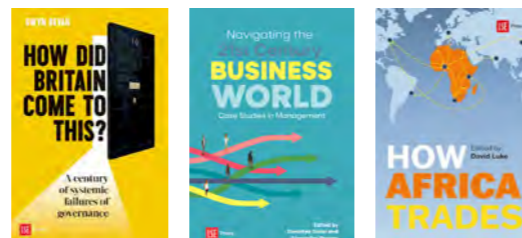
We will nurture a thriving research culture that values creativity, collegiality and collaboration, enabling our academics and researchers to produce world-class work that advances knowledge and informs change. We will continue to strengthen our professional services and infrastructure to ensure that every researcher is fully supported — from idea to impact. We will invest in cutting-edge facilities, data resources and digital systems that enhance the efficiency, visibility and openness of our research. We will modernise research management processes, adopting the best technology and AI-enabled solutions to streamline workflows and improve user experience. We will further develop our library and data services to support open science and digital scholarship, ensuring that LSE research is widely discoverable, accessible and impactful. Together, these efforts will sustain a dynamic and collaborative environment in which world-leading social science can thrive.



LSE's annual Festival engages a wide public audience of all ages with social science research

LSE Press

LSE Press supports the promotion of high-quality social science research and enables wide public access through the use of open, digital publication of books and journals. The Press has published 20 books since 2018, and their publications have had almost 2 million reads to date (October 2025).

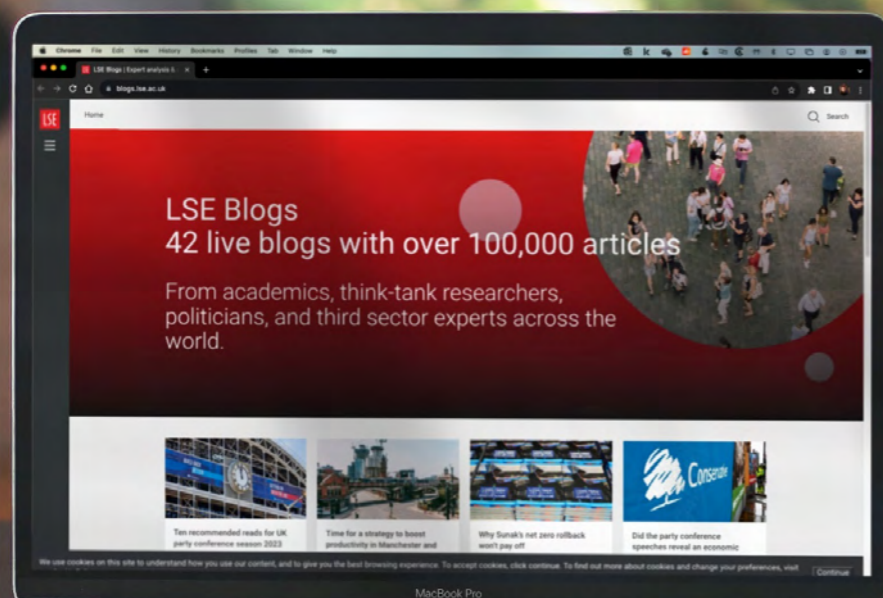


LSE Blogs

LSE Blogs has grown into one of the world's primary digital knowledge exchange platforms for academics, students, policymakers and journalists, providing evidence-based commentary and research accessibly from across the social sciences.

Around 400,000 people read LSE blogs every month, covering urgent political, economic and social challenges, with more than 7 million page views in 2024 from over 190 countries.

With over 1,700 academic and policy citations last year, LSE Blogs is a key tool for public engagement, fostering cross-department and external collaborations, and supporting the School's research ecosystem of podcasts, events and videos.



Award-winning research communications

LSE's monthly podcast, LSEiQ, has won multiple awards, including best branded podcast at the Independent Podcast Awards in 2024. Each series LSE academics, and other experts, answer one pressing question per episode about economics, politics or society. The podcast has rapidly gained a large following since it was launched in April 2017 and now has a global audience, with listeners tuning in from the United States, India and Hong Kong.

Other award-winning research content includes our monthly online research magazine and our short films.





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Produced 2025

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