



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE

Welcome to the Department of International History

LSE-CU Double Master's Degree Handbook 2026/27



lse.ac.uk/International-History



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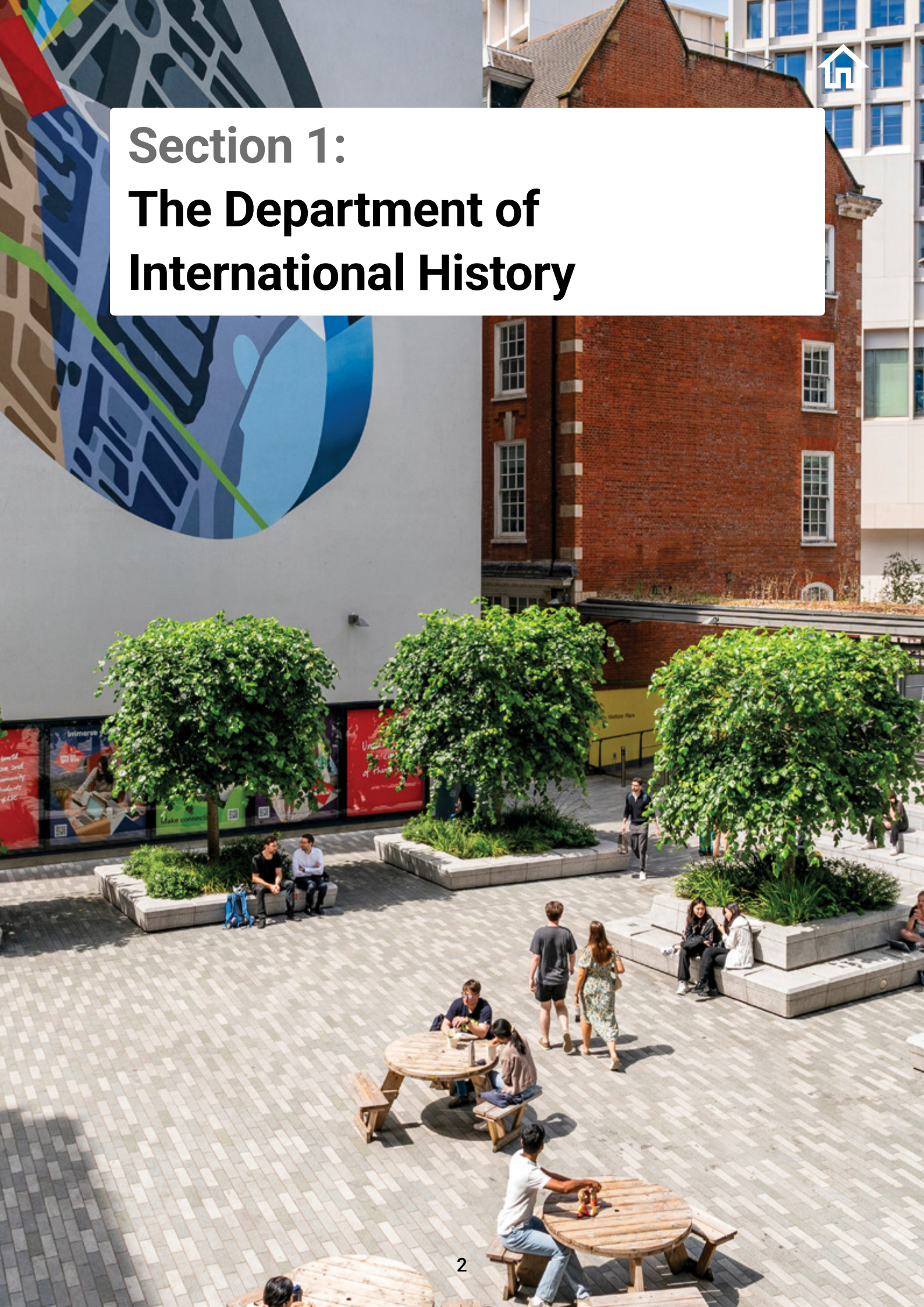
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Section 1: The Department of International History





Welcome to the Department of International History

This year, the Department will have about 150 graduate students, about 250 undergraduates, twenty-five academic staff, six tutorial fellows. The Department is located on the ground, mezzanine, first, second and third floors of Sardinia House.

The Academic Director of the LSE-CU Double Degree, Professor Piers Ludlow and Masters Programmes Tutor, Professor Antony Best, represent LSE and take responsibility for all formal and informal liaison with the CU History Department's representatives (Dr Ruth Barraclough and Dr Line Lillevik). They are responsible for allocating students to dissertation supervisors at LSE and for granting or refusing permissions to take outside options that are not on the published list of courses. You will also have separate academic mentor. Students should consult their advisers during their regular published office hours or by email.

As Head of Department, I am responsible for the overall management of the Department and I am available to all students by appointment via Ms. Demetra Frini (d.frini@lse.ac.uk), the Department Manager.

Your first point of contact in the Department on all administrative matters relating to your degree is Mrs. Nayna Bhatti (n.bhatti@lse.ac.uk), in Room SAR 1.03c.

Your programme-specific induction meeting for the LSE-Columbia Double MA Degree in International and World History will be held Tuesday 22 September 2026, 10:00am–11:00am, Room CKK 2.13, Cheng Kin Ku Building, 54 Lincoln's Inn Fields. The reception for all postgraduate students is on Thursday 24 September at 4.30pm – 6pm MAR 8.01.

We will be holding Welcome events for all students during the week commencing 21 September 2026. Full details are available on the [department's Welcome microsite](#).

I look forward to meeting seeing you in September.



Professor Vladislav Zubok
Head of Department



Key Staff

Head of Department

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Chair of Masters Examinations Sub-Board

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Department Manager

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Wed 4.30-5.30pm;
Thurs 2-4pm & by appointment



Staff List

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The Academic Director

The Academic Director oversees the Double Degree programme. Although students should see their Academic mentor as the first point of contact for matters relating to courses and dissertations, the Academic Director is also happy to meet with students and discuss these matters by appointment or during office hours. The Academic Director should also be notified in the case of problems relating to supervision arrangements or serious problems resulting in deferral, interruption of studies and dissertation extensions. Once final results have been announced, the Academic Director will also supply feedback on dissertations upon request.

The Academic Mentor

The **Academic Mentor** will remain your tutor and dissertation supervisor throughout your time of study at the LSE. It is important that you establish contact in the early days of term and maintain a close working relationship with your academic mentor throughout the programme. She/he can advise on academic and non-academic matters. In other words, your academic mentor is your first point of contact if you have any concerns about your studies at the LSE (eg, choice of courses, MSc regulations, progress in studies, references) or other personal concerns that you may wish to discuss in confidence.

Your academic mentor will normally contact you at the beginning of each term and will let you know when s/he is going to be available to see tutees. S/he will also post the times of her/his regular, **weekly office hours** on her/his door or on the Student Hub app when they see students without prior appointment. It is your responsibility to make sure that you respond to your mentor's request to see you and/or seek him/her out during office hours. You should, as a **minimum**, see your academic mentor at **least twice** in both Michaelmas and Lent terms and at **least once** in the Summer term to discuss your overall progress.

NB. Academic staff do not hold office hours out of term. You can find all staff office hours on the department's website and on their office doors.

*** The School (other departments) sometimes also refer to academic mentors as "supervisors". In the Department of International History, we only speak of "dissertation supervisors" (in the context of HY498 and HY499).**

If you are unable to resolve any matter satisfactorily with your academic mentor, you can discuss it with the Masters Programmes Tutor.



Departmental Senior Student Adviser (DSSA)

The **Department Senior Student Adviser** Ms Anna Izdebska is available to support you throughout your time at LSE, helping you to navigate the advice and support services available to you (alongside your Academic Mentor and other departmental staff), and to assist with your personal, welfare or wellbeing needs. They will also be the best person to ask for support if at any point your engagement or assessments have been impacted - they can discuss the options available to you and ensure you receive appropriate support.

You can book a 30min appointment with Ms Anna Izdebska (in-person or online) or attend an online drop-in session for quick queries - please refer to the [**Departmental Senior Student Advice Team webpage**](#) for the booking form and drop-in information.

Online Pre-Enrolment and Campus Enrolment

The majority of new students will be required to undertake a two-stage process: Online Pre-Enrolment and Campus Enrolment. You will receive email notification when it is time to complete the pre-enrolment process for your programme. Campus enrolment takes place in-person and is where we will check your official documents and you will be issued with your LSE Card. It is very important that you attend Campus Enrolment. Usually, you can re-register for subsequent years of study online, but sometimes we may need to see you in person again.

For more information, visit [**lse.ac.uk/enrolment**](https://lse.ac.uk/enrolment)

Your LSE Card

Your LSE card provides access to buildings and acts as your Library card. It is important that you keep it safe and never share it with anybody else. If your LSE card is lost, stolen or damaged visit [**lse.ac.uk/studentidcards**](https://lse.ac.uk/studentidcards) to find out how to get a replacement.

“ Your LSE card is an important piece of identification so please make sure you keep it safe, and never share it with anybody else. ”



Course Selection and Timetables

When to select your courses

Postgraduate students will be able to browse (but not select) courses from **10am on Monday 21 September 2026**. Course selection for postgraduates will be open from **10am on Thursday, 24 September 2026**. Course selection will reopen from **10am on Monday 19 January until 5pm on Friday 30 January 2027** to allow changes to be made to Winter Term half unit courses.

If you're looking for information on selecting courses, the [LSE website](#) offers step-by-step guidance outlining how to explore your options and make choices. You can also refer to the LSE Calendar and your department's guidance for more detailed information.

You will need to select your courses on LSE For You once the system opens. Guidance on how to do this can be found on here. Providing your selected courses are ready in Moodle, you should be automatically enrolled on their Moodle pages a few hours after selecting your courses on LSE For You.

You should ensure you attend any departmental course selection meetings and seek advice before finalising your courses. Should you have questions about a particular course the most efficient strategy is to put them to the Course Convener.

Other Useful Information

Laptop/iPad Loan

The Department can offer on loan for short periods of time a small laptop or iPad for the following uses/occasions:

- Archival visits
- Minute taking at the Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings
- School forums
- History society
- When computer failure could hamper progress on essays or dissertations.

Please enquire with your programme administrator/manager or the Department Manager for further details and availability. Please also note that the number of available laptops or iPads is limited.



Staff-Student Liaison Committee

At the start of the year you will be asked by your department if you would like to represent your programme on the Staff Student Liaison Committee. These are important Committees as they provide a forum for feedback from students both on their programme and for discussion of issues, which affect the student community as a whole. The role of an SSLC representative is therefore central to ensuring that courses and programmes in the School work efficiently. Students will be asked to nominate representatives early in the Michaelmas Term. Those elected as a representative will be given training.

Membership of SSLC includes student representatives from each programme of study and relevant academic staff.

The Department's Committee meets on a termly basis and all International History students are welcome to attend. Minutes of meetings are placed on the Department's website for information and future reference.

The SSLC also elects one representative to attend the relevant School level Students' Consultative Forum. More information on the Consultative Fora can be found by following the link lsesu.com/voice/academic-reps/consultative-forum/





Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Department of International History

LSE's diverse mix of people and ideas, with students and staff from over 140 countries, underpins its global reputation for excellence. It is the School's dynamic community that makes studying and working here a unique experience. Within this setting, the Department of International History is committed to promoting inclusivity and equity, and to creating an environment of mutual respect and dignity. We pride ourselves on providing a welcoming academic atmosphere for students and staff alike, one where lively intellectual discussions result from encounters with difficult, challenging and sometimes controversial subjects.

History is an ongoing conversation, and new generations of historians ask new questions, bringing their own experiences and perspectives about the past and the present to bear on their work. Our curriculum and sources are chosen on intellectual grounds and are closely linked with staff's research and expertise. In studying history, students are given the chance to discuss and critically engage with varied material. And in doing so we believe that students will have the best opportunity to thrive and reach their full academic potential. As a departmental community we cherish the chance to work with each individual student to achieve a meaningful learning experience.

Our environment of open academic dialogue is fundamentally important to the Department. Learning how to place history in context and critically analyse historical sources is an essential part of studying history. Historians very often have to deal with subjects that they might find disturbing, both written and visual, and that primary material from the past often deals with contentious subjects and may contain discriminatory or prejudiced views. However, there is a sharp distinction between encountering offensive views in the context of historical study and endorsing them in the present. The latter is unacceptable; the former is part of being an historian and a social scientist. Recognising the legacies of racism in the present, for example, is vital to understanding how structures of inequality built in the past continue to shape the contemporary world.

If you have any concerns or questions, you can contact the Department's EDI Representative, Dr A. Halladay, A.Halladay@lse.ac.uk



Department of International History Policy for Student Conduct on Social Media

Things to be aware of:

Social networking platforms are in the public domain and it is not possible to be sure what is being viewed, shared or archived, even if material is posted on a closed profile or group. There can be no reasonable expectation that posts will remain private and will not be passed on to other people, intentionally or otherwise.

Social media is sometimes used for bullying and harassment. Such behaviour from our students will not be tolerated. Bullying and harassment contravenes the School's expected standards of conduct and could result in disciplinary action.

You should be very mindful that posting offensive comments on a public site can damage your reputation. These may be seen by potential contacts and employers and could bring into question your judgement and character. In some cases, social media may also cause damage to the School's reputation and, where this is the case, the School may consider disciplinary action.

It is now standard practice for prospective employers to Google candidates, so you should assume that any references or images relating to drug taking, excessive alcohol consumption or other inappropriate behaviour could be around and attached to your name for many years.

Actions

- Remember that there is no such thing as an entirely private social media account – you will always leave a trace of your actions online
- Clean up your profile and ensure nothing is available that you wouldn't want your parents, relations or potential employers to see
- Do not use language or phrases that could be considered, sexist, racist, homophobic, or any other type of offensive language
- Think about others' feelings before posting comments and consider whether you may cause offence or embarrassment
- Ask permission before sharing videos or photos of others
- Be careful about the information you post online such as your address or whether you're going away.



LSE Regulations

The School's regulations provide definitions of unacceptable behaviour:

Bullying

Bullying may be physical or psychological in nature and conducted in an open environment or a secretive manner. It is behaviour that is often repetitive and intended to dominate another person or group by making them feel degraded, humiliated, intimidated or offended. It can cause a person to lose respect and confidence.

The types of behaviour may include:

- unmerited criticism, exclusion, isolation and/or gossip;
- gossiping campaigns or spreading rumours about a person;
- stalking or persistently displaying unwanted conduct to a person face-to-face, online or by another means of communication;
- taunting, teasing, ostracising or ridiculing a person either directly or to a third party;
- shouting at or berating a person in a public environment, such as in an office, during a committee session or in a classroom;
- taking or hiding another person's property;
- undermining a person's ability to carry-out or take credit for their work by unfairly overloading them with menial tasks, taking their work away from them, or stealing or copying their work;
- physically or verbally threatening or intimidating a person;
- making unwelcome sexual advances.



Harassment

Like bullying, harassment can occur in many different forms: orally, in writing, in person or on social media. The School considers any unwelcome behaviour that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment to be a breach of its Anti- Harassment Policy. Unwelcome behaviour may relate but is not restricted to a person's age, disability, gender identity, ethnicity, race, religion or belief, sex and/or sexual orientation. The kinds of actions or behaviour that is considered to be harassment include:

- jokes, offensive remarks or intimate questions conveyed orally or in writing directly to a person or about a person to a third party;
- producing, sending or displaying inappropriate and/or offensive images or other material to, or about, a person or group;
- abuse, threats or intimidation towards a person or group;
- damaging, defacing or removing a person's or group's property;
- breaching a person's confidentiality by disclosing their sensitive personal information;
- less favourable treatment by excluding a person from a benefit or opportunity that is open to others;
- unwanted physical conduct such touching, staring at or hitting a person;
- sexually assaulting or making sexual advances towards another person.

For the full policy, please see:

lse.ac.uk/staff/services/policies-and-procedures/assets/documents/harpol.pdf

Events of Interest to Masters Students

Annual Lecture

The department hosts an annual lecture as part of the LSE Events programme. The speaker is a renowned historian invited by the department; speakers in recent years include Professor Ada Ferrer, Professor Avi Shlaim, Professor Beatrice Heuser, Professor David Blackbourn, Professor Fredrik Logevall, Professor Dominic Lieven, and Professor Joya Chatterji.

Details for this year's annual lecture are [here](#).

The Department organises an exciting range of student events throughout the year, for further information visit:

- Student (Social) Events: lse.ac.uk/International-History/Events/student-events
- Department Careers Events: lse.ac.uk/International-History/CurrentStudents/Careers



Senate House Library Tours

Each year, the Department arranges for new students to take a tour of Senate House Library which is highly recommended. The Senate House Library is an invaluable back-up to the LSE Library, and its history section is particularly strong. It is important to make as much use of it as possible, as its funding is currently under threat. It is very worthwhile taking this opportunity to get to know what it can offer.

Further details of library tour dates will be announced once the library reopens.

Senate House Library, University of London (SHL) is one of the largest humanities and social sciences libraries in the UK. Its holdings amount to c.2 million volumes and it receives c. 5,500 current periodical titles. A wide range of electronic resources is also available through SHL's subscriptions. The History Collection is (in terms of books borrowed and renewed) the major subject collection in SHL. The aims of the visit to SHL are to provide students with introductory guides to SHL, to some of its collections [Should go out as this only refers to SHL, not other libraries] and also to give a sense of the physical layout of SHL, concentrating on History and other relevant collections, including Politics and International Relations.

Membership of SHL is available free of charge on production of current LSE ID. Students can join SHL in advance of the visit, or on the day itself. The entrance to SHL is in the North Block of Senate House, on the west side of Russell Square – a 15 minute walk or a short bus ride from LSE (routes 59, 68, 91, 168 or 188).

LSE-Columbia University Double MA Degree in International and World History

Guidelines for interpreting programme regulations

Classification scheme for the award of a taught master's degree (four units)

Exam sub-board local rules

Twenty-two month programme. Students take the first year at Columbia University, and the second year at the LSE as follows:

Optional courses to the value of three full units, a dissertation and a language course as shown below.

Please note that places are limited on some optional courses. Admission onto any particular course is not guaranteed and may be subject to timetabling constraints and/or students meeting specific prerequisite requirements.

Programme Code: TMINWOHY

Department: International History



For students starting this programme of study in 2026/27

Paper 1 **HY458** LSE-Columbia University Double Degree Dissertation (1.0) #

Papers

2, 3 and 4 **Courses to the value of 3.0 unit(s) from the following:**

International History:

- HY400** Crisis Decision-Making in War and Peace 1914-2003 (1.0) #
- HY411** European Integration in the Twentieth Century (1.0) #
- HY422** Presidents, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy, from Roosevelt to Reagan, 1933-89 (1.0) (not available 2025/26)
- HY424** The Napoleonic Empire: The Making of Modern Europe (1.0)
- HY429** Anglo-American Relations from World War to Cold War, 1939-91 (1.0)
- HY432** From Cold Warriors to Peacemakers: the End of the Cold War Era, 1979-1999 (1.0)
- HY435** Political Islam: From Ibn Taymiyya to ISIS (1.0) (not available 2026/27)
- HY436** Race, Violence and Colonial Rule in Africa (1.0)
- HY440** The Iranian Revolution (1.0)
- HY444** Latin America in the Cold War (1.0)
- HY459** The Ottoman Empire and its Legacy, 1299-1950 (1.0) (not available 2006/27)
- HY461** East Asia in the Age of Imperialism, 1839-1945 (1.0)
- HY463** The Roots, Origins and Dynamics of the Cold War, 1917-1962 (1.0)
- HY465** The International History of the Balkans since 1939: State Projects, Wars, and Social Conflict (1.0)
- HY469** Maps, History and Power: The Spaces and Cultures of the Past (1.0)
- HY471** European Empires and Global Conflict, 1935-1948 (1)
- HY472** China and the External World
- HY478** The Origins of the Modern World: Europe, China and India, 1600-1800
- HY483** Land and Conflict in Latin America since 1750 (1.0)
- HY486** The Anti-Slave-Trade Atlantic world, c. 1807-1870 (1.0)



- HY4B1** The Vietnam Wars, 1930-75: regional and International Perspectives
- HY4B7** Asian Borderlands
- HY4C1** Fighting and Enduring the Great War (1.0)
- HY4C2** Defining the Nation: South Asian History within a Global Perspective (1.0)
- HY4C3** Spaces of Democracy in 20th Century Germany (1.0)
- HY4C4** Crises and Reforms in Modern History
- HY4C5** Britain's Secret State: Intelligence and Power since 1900
- HY4C6** Women of the World Unite: Transnational Feminisms and Decolonisation in the long Twentieth Century.

Economic History:

- EH404** India and the World Economy (0.5)
- EH413** African Economic Development in Historical Perspective (0.5)
- EH429** History of Economics: Ideas, Policy and Performativity (0.5)
- EH452** Latin American Development and Economic History (0.5)

Regarding Economic History (EH) courses only: it may be possible to take further options among EH courses with the agreement of the course teacher responsible and the Academic Coordinator of the Double Degree.

One of the above may be replaced by a further course from other LSE departments (subject to agreement with tutor and teacher responsible for the course).

Paper 5 Compulsory Language Requirement

Students can fulfil the language requirement of the dual Master's degree in three different ways:

- 1) By taking two years of language training while at Columbia and the London School of Economics.
- 2) By taking, and passing, two translation exams. (Both translation exams must be taken at Columbia. See sample translation exams on the CU History Department website).
- 3) By taking, and passing, one translation exam and studying a language for one year, either at Columbia or at the LSE Language Centre.

means there may be prerequisites for this course. Please view the course guide for more information.



HY458 LSE-Columbia University Double Degree

Dissertation Workshop Syllabus

HY458, run by Professor Piers Ludlow (n.p.ludlow@lse.ac.uk) together with Professor Susan Pedersen (s.pedersen5@lse.ac.uk) is an occasional seminar designed to support your research and writing. Sessions will be devoted to research materials available in the London area, which may be of relevance to your dissertation; to the question of what makes for good academic writing; and to the issue of how best to present research findings orally.

The final session of Winter Term will then be used for a day-long workshop in the course of which all of the Double Degree students will be able to present their work to their peers, to some of their supervisors and to interested members of staff. This provides a final opportunity to receive feedback and advice on their dissertation.





HY458 LSE-CU Double Degree Dissertation Regulations

1. The HY458 dissertation in International History is mandatory for the LSE–Columbia University Double Degree in International World History. It is the single most important component of the Double Degree. The dissertation requires students to pursue sustained research in an area of particular interest to them, and it is the sole paper in which a narrow fail mark **cannot** be compensated by good marks elsewhere. Coming to terms with the dissertation process is therefore imperative.

The dissertation for the LSE-CU double Master's degree is an exercise in using primary sources to write on a topic related to World History (including international history, economic history, cultural history and social history). Dissertations that represent contributions to disciplines outside History, such as International Relations or Politics, will not be approved or accepted. Dissertations must therefore be based substantially on a critical analysis of primary sources, and candidates should aim to include an element of originality in the conceptualising of the thesis and/or the treatment of the evidence. When there is any question about the suitability of a particular topic, the CU Faculty Director will be consulted but the Academic Director of the LSE-CU double Master's degree at LSE will be the final judge of whether a particular topic falls within the above definition.

2. The HY458 dissertation must not exceed 15,000 words, including text and footnotes (but excluding the table of contents, bibliography and appendices). Dissertations exceeding the word limit will be subject to the following sliding scale of penalties: **for up to every 100 words over the limit one mark out of 100 will be deducted, penalty kicks in at one word over the limit – ie, at 15,001 and any dissertation more than 1,000 words over the limit will be given a FAIL mark of 0 automatically. In that event, you would have to re-sit HY458. This would mean re-submitting a new dissertation within the deadline for resubmission. Students are formally required to state the total number of words on the front cover of their dissertations.**
3. You must submit your dissertation to Turnitin available on Moodle page by **27 April 2027**. Please note that the date and time that you submit your dissertation on Moodle is taken as the official submission time for the purposes of lateness penalties. If you experience any technical issues submitting your dissertation on Moodle, please email your dissertation to ih.pgadmin@lse.ac.uk and make sure it reaches the department by the deadline
4. Students must not put their name or student number on the dissertation but use their 5-digit candidate number instead (not the student ID). Candidate numbers can be found using LSE For You. Students must sign a declaration to the effect that they have read and understood the School's Regulations on assessment offences (see the online LSE-CU handbook) and that apart from properly referenced quotations the work submitted is their own. In particular, they must confirm that they understand the School's Regulations regarding plagiarism (see point 11 below).



5. Dissertations not submitted by the set deadline (or extended deadline as appropriate) will be subject to the following penalties: **five marks out of 100 will be deducted for coursework submitted within the 24-hours of the deadline and a further five marks will be deducted for each subsequent 24-hour period until the coursework is submitted.**
6. If a student expects to be unable to meet the submission deadline due to serious reasons such as illness or bereavement, he or she should immediately discuss the matter with their Academic Mentor and/or the Academic Director of the programme. If deemed appropriate, students shall then apply in advance for a formal extension from the Chair of the MA/MSc Examinations Board in International History (Dr Imoabong Umoren I.umoren@lse.ac.uk). Normally such applications should be made approximately one week prior to the submission deadline. **Retrospective extensions after the passing of the deadline can and will not be granted.** All applications must be backed by supporting evidence such as a medical certificate or similar written evidence. In accordance with Departmental policy, computer hardware, software or printer malfunctions will not be accepted as valid reasons for late submission. Students are expected to retain and update back-up copies of all their work.
7. Dissertations must include a bibliography of all consulted sources at the end, listing first primary sources (by collection and folders, not referring to individual documents), then secondary sources. Dissertations that do not provide a bibliography are subject to penalties. Failure to include a bibliography will result in the **deduction of 5 marks out of 100**. For further guidance on bibliographic formats see the guidance documents on the HY458 Moodle site.
8. Students may include an appendix of no more than 12 pages, containing key documents, and transcripts of oral history interviews, maps, illustrations or other visual sources. The appendix must not contain additional dissertation text: if it is found to do so, it will be counted towards the word limit and penalties are likely to be incurred as a result.
9. Your dissertation must be typed in double spacing on one side only of A4 paper (or American Letterhead) and tape or spiral bound. Sub-headings are usually helpful guideposts for the reader. All notes should be footnotes rather than endnotes and should be numbered consecutively throughout the dissertation. For further guidance on referencing formats see the guidance documents on the HY458 Moodle site.
10. Before submitting your dissertation, your dissertation supervisor is allowed to read and comment on **up to 5,000 words** of your dissertation in draft form but no more. It is up to you and your supervisor to discuss which 5,000 words would be most appropriate for them to read and when you should submit this. A mark will not be included in feedback you receive.



- 11.** The work you submit for assessment must be your own. If you try to pass off the work of others as your own, you will be committing plagiarism.

Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons, including other candidates, must be clearly identified as such, being placed inside quotation marks and a full reference to their sources must be provided in proper form.

A series of short quotations from several different sources, if not clearly identified as such, constitutes plagiarism just as much as does a single unacknowledged long quotation from a single source.

It is also an offence to commit self-plagiarism, in other words to submit, without appropriate mention in the references, extracts from work that you have written for other purposes and have had assessed elsewhere or at an earlier stage of your work at the School.

The examiners are vigilant for cases of plagiarism and the School uses plagiarism detection software to identify plagiarised text. Work containing plagiarism may be referred to an Assessment Misconduct Panel which may result in severe penalties.

If you are unsure about the academic referencing conventions used by the School you should seek guidance from your tutor or the Library.

The Regulations on Plagiarism can be found at the following web link:

lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/academicRegulations/RegulationsOnAssessmentOffences-Plagiarism.htm

- 12.** Students, who change their subject without discussing it with their supervisor bear full responsibility for ensuring that their subject is within the regulations of the HY458 dissertation (Please see point 1 above); if it is not, the dissertation will be failed.
- 13.** The School procedure for handling deferred assessments and resits is as follows. If you defer an assessment or you do not pass the assessment/s for a course and need to resit, you will take those deferred or resit assessments in the postgraduate RDAP. All postgraduate deferred and resit assessments from the 2026-27 academic year take place in January 2028. If you need to defer or resit your dissertation, you will also (re)submit your dissertation during the RDAP.
- 14.** Dissertation HY458 - Resit dissertations are "revise and resubmit". Students are entitled to one supervisory meeting to discuss the revisions that need to be made.



Learning History, Study Skills

Why study history?

"Important abilities and qualities of mind are acquired through the study of History. They are particularly valuable for the graduate as citizen and are readily transferable to many occupations and careers"

"The particular characteristics of History as a discipline: Its subject matter, distinguishing it from other humanities and social sciences, consists of the attempts of human beings in the past to organise life materially and conceptually, individually and collectively, while the object of studying these things is to widen students' experience and develop qualities of perception and judgement. History provides a distinctive education by providing a sense of the past, an awareness of the development of differing values, systems and societies and the inculcation of critical yet tolerant personal attitudes."

"History's ability to promote understanding between cultures and between national traditions remains as important as ever."

[Extracts from: History Benchmarking Draft Report, 1999]

Apart from being extremely enjoyable and enabling students to learn about the past; to understand the past and through it, come to a far better understanding of the present; history also offers students the opportunity to acquire and improve on many of the key skills which have been identified as a priority for Higher Education after consultation with employers.

Each of the courses we offer has a separate description of its content and the way it is taught and examined. Each is distinctive and seeks to cover different yet complementary areas of history and chronological periods. Some also place particular stress on certain skills.

This document highlights the generic skills that are integral to all our courses.

Key skills

The ideal graduate has recently been defined as someone who is adaptive, responsible and reflective, as well as having high level analytical and problem-solving skills. A number of key skills have been identified which have both intrinsic value and are regarded by employers as vital for the workplace.

- Communication (verbal and written)
- The use of information technology
- Learning to learn/improving own learning and performance, working with others
- Numeracy/application of number.



Studying History

History places particular stress on the development of independent thought and analytical skills, and requires excellent communication skills, namely high levels of literacy and oral presentation. Consequently, students following history courses will be expected to do a great deal of independent work and independent thinking, as well as a good deal of reading and writing. You must present the results of research both in independent work and in the context of group discussions. The need to come to terms with unfamiliar periods and areas facilitates reflective and adaptable skills, empathy and imaginative insight within critical and methodological constraints. Learning to understand the sixteenth-century Inquisitor or the Chinese peasant in the Cultural Revolution is not only fascinating in itself, but a complex exercise and nurtures multiple skills, not least enabling you to learn to understand unfamiliar cultures and belief systems. These topics are therefore as relevant in terms of skills as the most recent history of your own country. In making your choices you should bear these factors in mind. For those who come convinced that only Twentieth-Century History is relevant, think again!

The MSc in International and World History offers various types of courses in a wide range of subject areas. You are offered the opportunity to master a variety of subjects, in different formats, learning to deal with a wide intellectual and cultural range. Courses vary from general overviews at one extreme, to in-depth primary-source studies at the other. The former encourages understanding of historical process, with its mix of continuity and change; the latter sharpens the analysis of documentary and other material, developing research methods.

We encourage students to cover national as well as international history; political as well as social; early modern as well as contemporary; history of ideas as much as history of events. Each level, each topic, provides specific tasks and stretches the student in a different direction. Collectively, they reinforce each other as nurture the acquisition of complementary skills. History degrees aim to widen the student's experience and develop qualities of perception and judgement, while fostering intellectual independence, sharpness and maturity.

Seminars

History in general encourages and develops both conceptual and thematic thinking and requires the results to be expressed coherently and persuasively. Classes and seminars at this level are not passive learning exercises. They are intended to allow you to discuss the reading you have done and to learn from others. They will help you to develop vital communication and critical skills. Here you are expected to listen, engage in debate, offer reasoned arguments and learn to sustain or amend your own views in the light of the response of others. Although it does not account for your final mark, you will be graded throughout your career on class performance and employers invariably request comments on this area of a student's performance.



Essays

History requires high levels of literacy. Employers too emphasise the need for high levels of proficiency in written work. The ability to persuade through reasoned and clear argument is invaluable in many areas of life. History requires the production of essays and other forms of written work and it both rewards good skills and penalises poor quality work.

Writing essays forces you to practice these technical skills, prompting you to develop greater clarity in structure and expression while also giving you the opportunity to refine your skills at putting forward clear arguments. Demonstrating an understanding of material, conceptual grasp, marshalling an argument, deploying ideas and information, these are the crucial skills to develop.

You will get feedback from essays and classes regarding your general standard of English. You should not ignore these comments. On the contrary, you should act on the recommendations to improve. There are books which give helpful hints on essay writing. For more serious problems, the Language Centre can provide help. It is essential to appreciate that poor spelling, poor syntax and poor presentation will affect your marks adversely in the exams and will make you less attractive to future employers.

Essays require independent research as well as coherent explanations. You are encouraged to do as much work independently as you can, to read widely and extensively. Having gathered information from various sources you must learn how to organise and assess it, although it will often be contradictory or conflicting. Therefore you are encouraged to explore the library's holdings independently and only rarely given specific page references to books or articles. Learning how to identify the main topics for your essay and how to find the relevant information are essential parts of your training.

A Guide to Writing

Organisation

History essays and examination answers normally consist of three parts:

- 1 An **analytical** introduction of at least half a page that familiarises the reader with the issue you will address; makes clear your attitude toward it; and mentions in passing the sub-topics through which you will address it. Try to **break the issue down into its component parts**, and make each part a sub-topic.
- 2 The body of the paper: a carefully structured series of **logically linked paragraphs** that develops each of your sub-topics using **specific** evidence and examples.
- 3 An **analytical** conclusion that flows logically from your argument and **sums it up**, with reference to the evidence deployed in the body of your paper.



Paragraphs

A paragraph **must** contain the following three elements:

- 1 A “topic sentence” that makes clear the paragraph’s subject, and provides a **logical transition** from the preceding paragraph.
- 2 Several sentences of **development** of the **thought** of the topic sentence.
- 3 A concluding sentence that ends the train of **thought** appropriately, and helps provide a **logical transition** to the following paragraph.

Avoiding non-sentences

Sentences **must** have at least a **subject** and a **verb**:

No: “A secret organisation called Mau Mau with no clear leader nor single definition”.

No: “It is easy to see that due to Germany’s aims at any cost to become a world power unleashed the forces causing World War I.”

Perfect spelling

Please always use a **spelling checker** or a dictionary! And always **proof-read** carefully.

Crack the use of the apostrophe to show plural or something belonging to something

The Queen The four Queens
The Queen’s Crown The Queens’ Palaces
“It’s” is a short version of “It is”, and better not used.

Avoid the passive voice, non-specifics and generalisations

PASSIVE VOICE: “There was a view that the Congo might break-up in 1960 and the Prime-Minister was assassinated.”

ACTIVE VOICE: “Western powers feared the Congo might break-up in 1960, and used proxies to assassinate Lumumba.”

The phrase “there was” –is best avoided.

Ditch present participles

Present participles are verb forms ending in **-ing** that designate continuing action.

Use them as sparingly as possible.

Eg: “Seeing the French Navy approaching, Nelson’s tactics shifted.”

Better: “As the French Navy approached...”

Write impersonally

“I”, “Me”, “We”. Use sparingly.

Make the **historical actors or forces** the **subjects** of your sentences – even introductory ones.



Verb tenses

Deal with **past** events using the **past** tenses.

NB:

- 1 The past tense of "**to lead**" is "**led**".
- 2 **would**, when used to designate a past time closer to the present than the past time you are discussing (ie, "...would occur...") is awkward, **Always use a past tense instead**.
- 3 **might** is the past tense of "**may**".

Singular or plural?

Never mix **singular** subjects with **plural** verbs or pronouns (or vice versa): "Even in making the treaty, **Germany** felt it should be made on **their** terms."

(**Germany** is singular, **their** is plural).

Gender and numbers

Pronouns that refer to countries should always be neuter ("its") not feminine ("her"). The **United States** – since 1865, is a **unit**; please consider it **singular** for purposes of pronoun agreement. In general, collective **nouns** ("government"; "Nazi Party"; country names such as "Germany" or "France") are **singular** and therefore take **singular verbs and pronouns**.

Don't use pronouns without a clear antecedent

Beware of using sentences or paragraphs that begin with "this".

For instance: "This was the basic idea of French policy..." (beginning a paragraph)

The reader may be left confused.

Commas

Commas are **pauses**: they halt the flow of the sentence. Do not use a comma unless you really want a pause. Read your sentences out loud to detect excessive use of commas. Shorter sentences are good for clarity. Don't glue separate sentences together with a comma.

Abbreviations, colloquialisms, jargon

Contractions (can't, won't, it's, and so on) are **unacceptable in formal writing**.

Colloquialisms (slang) and jargon are not a good idea either. Do not use eg.

Avoid phrases such as:

"**at that time**" [be specific - use the **date** instead]

"**time period**" [redundant - what is a period if not a period of time?]

"**So,**" (beginning a sentence)



Verbosity, redundancy, repetition

Make every word count. **Never say the same thing twice in successive sentences.**

Do not even repeat the **same word** in successive sentences unless you wish to emphasise it, cannot find a substitute, or the word is the subject of the sentence. But when in doubt, choose repetition over lack of clarity.

Frequently misused or mis-spelled words

Affect (as a noun) : do not confuse it with “cause and **effect**”. The verb “to **affect**” means “to influence”; “to **effect**” is an archaic way of saying “to do”. **Do not confuse the two.**

Advancement as a noun, except when meaning career advancement: the noun is “**advance**” (as in “advances in science”)

Aggression: double g

As, in a causal sense, is stuck up and unclear. Use “because” or “since”.

Ascendancy when you mean “**ascent**” or “**accession**” (to the throne)

Disinterest, disinterested means not having a stake in; if you mean **lack of interest, uninterested, Expansionary** is not a word; the word is **expansionist**

Like with a verb, as in the slogan “like a cigarette should”. Use **like** only to compare nouns; with verbs, substitute “as” for “like.”

Quote is a **verb** and nothing else; the **noun** is “**quotation**”.

Tenet, a fundamental principle of a religion or ideology, from the Latin *tenere*, to hold (often misspelled as “tenent” or “tenant” or simply garbled).

To, too: the difference is great: be especially careful in proofreading

Whilst, while not incorrect, if you can bear to use **while**, please do so.

Quotations

Quotations from **secondary** sources - with rare exceptions - clutter the text to no purpose except as padding. Therefore, **do not quote**, except when citing **primary** sources such as the words of historical figures, or when taking issue with a secondary source on a point of interpretation.

If you use a long quotation that runs over two lines, then you must indent it as a mini paragraph and you do not use quotation marks.

All other quotes should conform to either the UK style (single quotes inside the sentence)

The tsar insisted “Napoleon’s use of the word “constitution” is wrong”.

OR the American style (double quotes outside the sentence)

The tsar insisted “Napoleon’s use of the word “constitution” is wrong.”

Be consistent. For further elaboration on footnoting see the Dissertation Guidelines.



Capitalisation

Use capitalisation sparingly - a little goes along way. As a general rule, only capitalise proper nouns, including full names of institutions. Do not capitalise titles ("president," "king," "queen") unless they immediately precede the name of an individual.

One exception: always capitalise **German nouns** (Dolchstoss, Blitzkrieg, Geist, etc.)

Reference works

The following may be particularly useful in refining style and organisation:

- Christopher Lasch, *Plain Style: A Guide to Written English* (2002) **PE1408 L34**
- William Strunk, Jr and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* **PE1408 S92**
- W. H. Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (1965) **PE1625 F78**
- Wilson Follett, *Modern American Usage: A Guide* (1966) **PE1460 F66**
- Should you seek a historian as a model for your writing, do peruse Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (1939 – but still in paperback; also **DG254 S98**). It covers matters not taught in this Department, but is the closest thing to Tacitus in English: a brilliant and lasting historical work.

Common errors to search for

- **it's** (USE "It is..." "The Amristar Massascre was imperial policy at its worst.")
ELIMINATE "it's"!
- **lead** (make absolutely sure that you do not mean **led**)
- **like** with a verb (substitute "as" for "like": see **Section 15**, above)
- **may** (change to might? - see **Section 7.3**, above)
- **now, then**, at that **point**, at that **time** (BE SPECIFIC)
- **them, their** (check pronoun agreement)
- **This, this** (check for clear antecedent)
- **time** period, period of **time** (REDUNDANT; BE SPECIFIC)
- **quote** (**must** be a verb; the noun is "quotation")
- **utilise** (or **utilize**) (ick!)
- **would** (when referring to a later past time - see **Section 7.2**, above)
- **Yet**, and **But** (NO COMMA - ever - after an initial "Yet" or "But").



Department of International History Policy on the use of Generative AI

The Department permits the limited use of generative AI in accordance with its AI policy. Students should consult the Department's AI policy available on the course Moodle pages for the full guidance and requirements, as this is the authoritative and most up-to-date version.

Relevant Courses/Advice

Digital Skills Lab – [Maximising the Benefits and Mitigating the Risks of Copilot.](#)

Digital Skills Lab – [Copilot Advice.](#)

LSE Moodle – [Developing your AI Literacy.](#)

This policy was adapted from LSE100's "Policy on the Use of Generative AI in LSE100" (2023). For the original see [here](#).

Spelling errors

Your spelling checker should pick up the following errors, but please be aware of them; these are some common errors:

- **Britian** (Britain)
- **Bismark** (Bismarck)
- **Napolean** (Napoleon)
- **guerilla** (guerrilla = little war', from guerra [war, Spanish])
- **emporer** (emperor)

It is a really good idea to leave enough time at the end of your final draft to:

- 1 run all papers attentively through the **spelling checker**.
- 2 **proof-read carefully** after spell-checking to ensure that your sentences make sense, and to eliminate the innumerable errors that spelling checkers cannot catch (ie, "form" for "from," "too" for "to").

And finally, a couple of the most abused grammatical devices: the semi-colon, colon and dash.

Semi-colons

A semi-colon creates more separation between thoughts than a comma but less than a full stop. Two main uses:

- 1 To help separate items in a list, when some of those items already contain commas.

I bought shiny, ripe apples, small, sweet, juicy grapes, and firm pears.

Better:

I bought shiny, ripe apples; small, sweet, juicy grapes; and firm pears.



2 To join two sentences.

An independent clause is a group of words that can stand on its own (independently)—it is a complete sentence. Semi-colons can be used between two independent clauses. The semi-colon keeps the clauses somewhat separate, as a full-stop (period) would do, so we can easily tell which ideas belong to which clause. But it also suggests that there may be a close relationship between the two clauses—closer than you would expect if there were a full-stop between them.

Examples:

I went to Waitrose today; I bought a ton of fruit. Apples, grapes, and pears were all on sale.

OR

I went to Waitrose today. I bought a ton of fruit; apples, grapes, and pears were all on sale.

BUT NOT:

I went to Waitrose today; I bought a ton of fruit; apples, grapes, and pears were all on sale.

Colons

Colons follow independent clauses (clauses that could stand alone as sentences) and can be used to present an explanation, draw attention to something, or join ideas together.

- 1 To announce, introduce, or direct attention to a list, a noun or noun phrase, a quotation, or an example/explanation. You can use a colon to draw attention to many things in your writing. The categories listed below often overlap, so don't worry too much about whether your intended use of the colon fits one category perfectly.

Lists/series:

We covered many of the fundamentals in our writing class: grammar, punctuation, style, and voice.

Nouns:

My roommate gave me the things I needed most: companionship and quiet.

Quotations:

Shakespeare said it best: "To thine own self be true."

- 2 To join sentences. You can use a colon to connect two sentences when the second sentence summarises, sharpens, or explains the first. Both sentences should be complete, and their content should be very closely related. But if you use colons this way too often, it can break up the flow of your writing: do not get carried away!

Example:

Life is like a puzzle: half the fun is in trying to work it out.

- 3 To express time, in titles, and as part of other writing conventions. Colons appear in several standard or conventional places in writing.

With numbers. Colons are used to separate units of time (4:45:00 expresses four hours, forty-five minutes, and zero seconds); ratios (2:1), and Bible verses and



chapters (Matthew 2:24). In bibliography entries. Many citation styles use a colon to separate information in bibliography entries.

Example:

Kurlansky, M. (2002). *Salt: A World History* (New York, NY: Walker and Co).

To dash or not to dash...

The dash is not one of the basic building blocks of grammar but now and again it can be perfect. Overusing dashes can break up the flow of your writing, making it choppy or even difficult to follow, so don't overdo it.

Dashes are not hyphens, which are shorter lines (-) and are most often used to show connections between words that are working as a unit (for example, "well-intentioned")

Dashes do the following and are used by writers

- 1** To set off material for emphasis. Think of dashes as the opposite of brackets (parentheses). Where parentheses indicate that the reader should put less emphasis on the enclosed material, dashes indicate that the reader should pay more attention to the material between the dashes. Dashes add drama—parentheses whisper.

- 2** Dashes can be used for emphasis in several ways:

A single dash can emphasise material at the beginning or end of a sentence.

Example:

After eighty years of dreaming, the elderly man realised it was time finally to revisit the land of his youth—Ireland.

Example:

"The Office"—a harmless television programme or a dangerously subversive guide to delinquency in the workplace?

Two dashes can emphasise material in the middle of a sentence.

Example:

Everything I saw in my new neighbourhood—from the graceful elm trees to the stately brick buildings—reminded me of my alma mater.

Two dashes can emphasise a modifier. Words or phrases that describe a noun can be set off with dashes if you wish to emphasise them.

Example:

The fairgrounds—cold and wet in the October rain—were deserted.

- 3** To indicate sentence introductions or conclusions. You can sometimes use a dash to help readers see that certain words are meant as an introduction or conclusion to your sentence.



Example:

Books, paper, pencils— in nineteenth-century America many students lacked even the simplest tools for learning.

- 4 To mark “bonus phrases”. Phrases that add information or clarify but are not necessary to the meaning of a sentence are ordinarily set off with commas. But when the phrase itself already contains one or more commas, dashes can help readers understand the sentence.

Slightly confusing example with commas but with a dash

Example:

Even the simplest tasks—washing, dressing, and going to work—were nearly impossible after I broke my leg.

- 5 To break up dialogue. In written dialogue, if a speaker suddenly or abruptly stops speaking, hesitates in speech, or is cut off by another speaker, a dash can indicate the pause or interruption.

Example:

“I—I don’t know what you’re talking about”, denied the politician.

For your ultimate guide to good writing style consult either

The Oxford University Style Guidelines

ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/University%20of%20Oxford%20Style%20Guide%20%28updated%20Hilary%20term%202016%29.pdf

OR

Turabian’s Chicago Manual of Style for writers of theses, dissertations and academic papers

chicagomanualofstyle.org/turabian/citation-guide.html

This document is based on one prepared earlier by Emeritus Prof M. Knox. Please let us know of any useful additions we can make.

Professor Joanna Lewis

Advice on Writing Notes

In order to complete any course in Arts and Social Sciences it is vital to produce a set of notes, taken from lectures, tutorials and especially books and articles. These notes must eventually provide you with the necessary arguments, ideas and facts with which to answer essay questions, during the year and in examinations. The purpose of this handout is to give some general hints on how to go about writing notes. As with essay-writing, it is impossible to make any hard-and-fast rules about note making. Everyone will write different notes on the same book or on the same lecture. Nevertheless, it is possible to lay down certain guidelines and to emphasise what you should not be doing.



The first step is, of course, to decide which topics you wish to write notes upon. To an extent this should suit your own interests, but it will also be dictated by the essays you are asked to write during the year and by the questions which appear on examination papers. Past examination questions may help provide you with a focus for the various ideas which appear in books as well as giving hints as to future questions.

Ultimately a set of notes, on each of the topics you have chosen to cover, should be:

1. short enough so that you can revise from them quickly, but comprehensive enough to answer a range of questions fully.
2. Easy to understand - usually by being divided into several major headings, each of which may have a number of sub-headings, and with a wide range of short, clear analytical points, if necessary, backed up by some selected factual illustrations (dates and events, or statistics, etc.). In any notes you should include a form of shorthand as far as possible, eg, B for Britain; Gov for government; WWI for First World War; 19thc for nineteenth century; cld for could. The more abbreviations you can make without making the notes difficult to decipher, the better;
3. A clear introduction to the main elements under every topic, or in an article or chapter of a book. Again, a balanced sub-division of notes into major headings will enable you to use one set of notes, with some quick restructuring, to answer several questions.
4. A mixture of arguments and facts, but with the emphasis on argument and analysis. This will ensure that the essays you write are also based on analysis first and foremost. Notes must avoid mere chronology and the simple repetition of facts. Dates and events should ILLUSTRATE an argument, NOT become a substitute for it.

By the time of the examinations, you should aim to write a single set of notes on each topic you have selected but these will be taken from four main sources:

Classes and Seminars

These can be used to explore additional issues and arguments, but in order to be valuable they require preparation by students. Those who do not prepare adequately for a class will not understand or be able to contribute to the debate. The main purpose of classes and seminars is to talk and think, they are an opportunity to express your own ideas and to consider other ideas put forward in the discussion. They are **not** meant to serve as a source of information, and so the amount of notes you can take from classes may only be half a side or so. It will depend on the quality of discussion and its coherence. It can be difficult to be coherent as a book. As classes are not lectures, they should not become a monologue by the tutor, however short the students are on ideas. You may find it easier to write notes up **after** the class finishes.

But again, write down any arguments and illustrations which do seem pertinent. Also write down any questions and the answers suggested to them. And try to sum up the main opposing arguments in any debate which takes place.



Books and Articles

These are clearly vital in order to explore the views of historians and political scientists but can be complex and long. The problem here is scale: there are numerous books and articles on any bibliography, and each can lead to long, detailed notes. You need to be selective, but about the number of books and articles you read, and what you note about them. Part of your university education means developing an ability to make judgements about what you should and should not read based on what is important or relevant to your particular task. Regarding the number of books to read: be guided by any advice that tutors and lecturers might give. You should try and concentrate on detailed studies, rather than general texts and read until you feel that you have a sound understanding of the major problems on any subject and are able to write a fair answer to any essay question you have been asked.

On individual books, don't simply read everything from cover-to-cover: some books are worth reading but generally you should use books selectively, looking only at sections that are relevant to your needs. You need to distil from books their main arguments, to note down some factual illustrations that back arguments up (dates, events, actions of key characters, statistics, etc.) and sometimes to write out key, telling quotes (but keep these to a minimum, since they are difficult to remember in examinations.)

It can be difficult to understand the main arguments of a large book at first and the problem is always **what** exactly to note down. To some extent this requires practice, but it is possible to distil the main arguments from a book by reading **either** the introduction, **or** the conclusion, **or** the introductions and conclusions to individual chapters. At these points almost every book contains a summary of its main ideas. Once you are aware of the main arguments, then any subsidiary arguments and any illustrations or good quotes should also begin to stand out.

Some students believe in "skip-reading": they simply read the first sentence of each paragraph. In some books this may not be a bad idea but in general it is a rather crude way of going about things! However, it can be useful to skip-read a book at first in order to get the gist of what it is saying - then go back and read it in greater detail.

Again, practice should enable you to keep notes on books to a minimum (perhaps four to six sides on **major** works; but others should be shorter to you'll simply end up with too much). But initially you may find yourself writing down more than the essential arguments and illustrations. You must work at preventing this because otherwise you will not be making the best use of your time. It may be wise to practice writing notes with an article rather than a book, because articles can be just as valuable as books but are shorter, give a clear idea of why they were written and usually make their main arguments clear in the conclusion.

Primary source materials such as diaries and memoirs by those involved in events can be used to reinforce and illustrate arguments but may be biased and have a limited perspective. Keep notes on these down to essentials. Collections of documents are more important and should be looked at by graduate students on a selective basis.



After reading several books and articles you may be able to distinguish several approaches to a question. It is then important to note down these differences: it can be useful in essays to show that you understand different schools of thought on an issue, the various arguments used to back them up and any differing interpretations of evidence.

Once you have taken notes from all the above sources, you are well advised to boil them down into a **single**, coherent, comprehensive set of notes, suitable for quick revision. Some students prefer not to do this, but others can become confused in examinations as they try to fuse together ideas drawn from several sets of notes. A single set of notes will iron out any discrepancies, knock out repetitions and expose any remaining gaps in your knowledge. It will also force you to make final decisions on what you think about a historical problem: what elements are most important, where do you stand in any debate, and why do you take this viewpoint? Again, a single, well-structured set of notes will allow you to adapt quickly in examinations to whatever question appears.

There will be an early chance to test your notes, when you are asked to write an essay during the year. This will expose any gaps in the notes. Whoever marks this essay should point out possible ways to strengthen arguments or to bring in further ideas and information. You should then go back to your notes and make any necessary changes.





Essay writing

History does not lend itself to “right” and “wrong” answers to questions, and there is no single “correct” approach to any important historical problem. It is possible to write essays on the same question using different material and reaching different conclusions which both gain the same good mark. But the following provides advice to those answering historical questions in course work and examinations, points out some pitfalls and suggests possible approaches to major problems.

Notes

After choosing the questions which you wish to answer, you will need to amass a body of information – from lectures, from tutorials and from your own reading – and organise it into a coherent set of notes. As you read, note down not just information but points to emphasise, investigate or question. **DO NOT SIMPLY COPY OUT RELEVANT PASSAGES** (unless they merit direct quotation). Try to summarise or analyse the facts in your own words rather than simply acquiring information.

Thinking ahead to examinations (on which more below) it is best always to structure your notes in such a way that they can be used to answer a wide range of questions on any given topic. This can be achieved by subdividing notes thematically. For example, on the Origins of the Cold War, you might have subdivisions covering origins 1944-47, ideological differences, economic aspects, particular points of dispute, then on the 1947-53 period the impact of events in Europe (Czech, Berlin) and events in Asia (Korea, establishment of communist China). This kind of structure will enable you to answer a broad range of questions on the Cold War.

It is a good idea to begin your reading with general material and move to more specialised reading once you have acquired a broader background. **ALL ESSAYS REQUIRE READING FROM SEVERAL SOURCES**. You cannot use only one book or article. It is vital to read widely and to evaluate the different views of writers.

Answering the questions

THE GREATEST PROBLEM IN WRITING A HISTORY ESSAY IS DECIDING EXACTLY WHAT IS REQUIRED FROM A GIVEN QUESTION. Frequently students lose most marks by failing to answer the question, so this weakness deserves close attention. Having gathered a comprehensive set of notes you must select the right material and structure an argument to answer **the question**.

In its simplest form, failing to answer the question may simply mean getting the subject wrong: asked to write an essay on the Truman Doctrine you write one on the Monroe Doctrine. The only way to avoid this is to read thoroughly and think carefully. But such basic errors are very rare.



Another problem is when only half of a question is answered. “Why, and with what consequences, did China enter the Korean War?” requires you to answer both parts. Too often this kind of question is simply answered from the viewpoint of “why?” you also need to say something about the RESULTS of Chinese entry.

Far more common is a failure to direct your answer **specifically** at the question. It is very easy to slip into writing “all I know about” a particular issue. For example, when faced with the question: “How far was Russia responsible for the outbreak of the First World War?” you either write a general history of Russian foreign Policy before 1914 OR you write a general account of the July-August 1914 crisis. Obviously, some points about Russian foreign policy before the 1914 are needed. But you must DIRECT YOURSELF AT THE QUESTION, looking at Russia’s role in the 1914 war crisis in the same detail, and then assessing (by looking at the role of other powers and general factors) the significance of this in leading to conflict.

Always THINK WHAT IS REQUIRED and plan your argument accordingly. This crucial operation should not be left until the end of your reading but should go on continuously throughout. As your reading progresses decide on which books or articles are most relevant. Then plan the stages of your argument in more detail. What specific points need to be made? In what order and with what relative emphasis? Can they be clarified by well-chosen examples or quotations? PLAN YOUR ESSAY.

Answers can be UNBALANCED if too much time is spent on background and not enough on the essence of the problem; too much can be written on one theme when numerous issues need to be discussed.

A particular problem with history questions is slipping into a CHRONOLOGICAL NARRATIVE. It is very easy to produce a list of facts and dates without argument or analysis. But factual material should be used as a “skeleton” around which an analysis is based. The opposite problem is a diatribe: all opinion and no evidence. This is not acceptable either. Arguments must be supported. AN ANSWER NEEDS ANALYSIS.

Structure

An essay needs to have a paragraph structure through which the argument is developed. Ideally, this should include an **INTRODUCTION** to “set the scene” or to give a brief outline of the essay; a number of **PARAGRAPHS**, each dedicated to a particular element in an answer; and a **CONCLUSION**, which draws elements together, looks back to the original question and reaches sensible and coherent conclusions about it.

With questions where you are asked to produce a “list” of factors for example “Why did the Nationalists win the Spanish Civil War?” the structure is easy: each paragraph can look at a particular factor. But questions which ask you to “discuss” an issue will need more thought. In such circumstance your answer should show that you **understand the question**, that you are aware of different **schools of thought** on a particular problem (the various ideas put by historians), but that you have **a case of your own**, which you favour, and which you develop in the essay.



Style

In general be crisp, precise and lucid: use clear, understandable English to make your points. **DO NOT** waffle. **DO NOT** be repetitive. **DO NOT** "OVERWRITE": this is where, in order to illustrate your unsurpassed appreciation of the intricacies of the beautiful English tongue, you determine on a course of unremitting punishment for the unfortunate witness to your dubious talent (the reader) by writing somewhat in the present manner.

There are various other things to avoid: bad spelling; colloquialisms; long or convoluted sentences. The use of the first person ("I think . . ." and "In my view . . .") should also be avoided.

Once you have finished an essay a good idea is to leave it overnight or even longer before **reading it over**. It is easier to pick up on errors in this way.

References

Since an essay is an evaluation of evidence, there must be some indication of the sources of the writer's material. An elaborate set of footnotes is not required but you must:

- 1 List books and articles consulted at the end of the essay using the following form:

AUTHOR, TITLE OF BOOK, YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

AUTHOR, TITLE OF ARTICLE (in inverted commas), TITLE OF JOURNAL OR BOOK IN WHICH THE ARTICLE APPEARS, VOLUME NO. FOR JOURNALS OR EDITOR FOR BOOKS, YEAR OF PUBLICATION.

ESSAYS WITHOUT BIBLIOGRAPHIES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE.

- 2 Provide a footnote or an endnote showing the source (including page no.) of any direct quotation you make or in order to acknowledge the source of a particular argument.

Copying word for word from sources (primary or secondary) without due acknowledgement is not acceptable. Essays which contain such acknowledged and "undigested" borrowing may be rejected as this is a form of plagiarism.

AN ESSAY MUST ALWAYS REFLECT YOUR OWN ANALYSIS.



Examinations

Some additional advice for examinations:

- 1 Read **all** the questions. Make sure that there are no supplementary pages, or questions printed overleaf. You must give yourself the maximum choice.
- 2 **Follow the rubric**, at the top of the page, on how many questions to answer: there is no point answering four questions if only three are required. Also avoid answering three questions from Section A when you should have answered one each from Sections A, B and C. In order to maximise your mark it is vital to **answer the required number of questions**. If you are only left with 20 minutes and are running out of ideas you can at least hope to pick up some marks – whereas writing nothing will get no marks at all. You will be penalised for “short weight”, so make sure you time yourself properly and answer all questions.
- 3 Choose the questions you answer carefully, making sure that you have the **necessary material** (facts and argument) to provide an adequate answer.
- 4 Once again, **ALWAYS ANSWER THE QUESTION**. It is particularly easy to stray from the point in exams.
- 5 In exam conditions you cannot hope to write the same length of essay as you do during the year, but the same structure applies: an introduction, tackling the problem in separate paragraphs, and reaching a conclusion, with a good mix of fact and analysis.
- 6 Even though you will be rushed, write as neatly and legibly as possible. Otherwise you can lose marks. Scripts which are deemed unreadable will have to be typed at your expense.

Information on Assessment

Essays

There is informal (formative) assessment of students throughout their year-long courses in the International History Department, mainly in terms of marking and feedback of essays and class performance.

Some courses also include an assessed essay (or several assessed essays) or other piece of work as part of the final grade – normally these range from 10 per cent to 50 per cent (summative assessment).

Detailed information about assessment on each course can be found in course guides via this link lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/courseGuides/graduate.htm



The reason for assessment diversity is that we hold to the principle that teachers should be allowed a measure of freedom in the way they teach courses, adopting the methods they judge most effective as a means of imparting and assessing knowledge and skills. Students should be aware that assessed essays can bring down as well as enhance results from unseen exams.

All teachers fill out detailed feedback forms for all formative and summative essays. Feedback on formative assessments is given to students within three weeks of the submission deadline. Feedback on summative assessments is given to students within four weeks of the submission deadline. Students meet individually with the teachers in office hours to discuss the assessment of their work.

On any other **exam-related data**, you can apply to gain access to your file via the DPA process after LSE has released the **final results**:

info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Secretarys-Division/Legal/Student-Matters

Essay Submission

Formative Coursework Submission Guidelines

The Department of International History requires all pieces of formative coursework to be submitted in electronic form to Turnitin via Moodle and by email. You should follow these guidelines carefully to ensure that your coursework is submitted in the correct manner. Grades and feedback may be withheld if you fail to submit your coursework properly.

Preparing your Submission

- Check your work thoroughly – a spellchecker may not identify errors in names and dates
- Stick to the set word limits (includes any footnote text, but excludes the bibliography)
- Cite primary and secondary sources carefully to avoid plagiarism (see below).

Submitting your Coursework Electronically

- Save the coursework as a .doc or .docx file – no other file types will be accepted
- The file name MUST include the course code and your name – eg, HY***-name.doc
- The coursework file MUST NOT include your candidate number.

1 Submit a copy of your coursework to Turnitin

- Use the specific link for the piece of coursework listed on the course Moodle page to submit it
- This submission will generate a Turnitin originality report, which you should read carefully using the guidance documents listed below
- If you wish to edit and resubmit the piece of coursework, it must be done BEFORE the set (or extended) deadline



- To edit the submitted coursework, click Edit, then delete the previous version, upload the new version and click Save Changes (this will also generate a new report)
- If you experience any issues submitting your coursework on Moodle, contact the Programme Manager at ih.pg.admin@lse.ac.uk or the Web Resources Editor at ih.projectadmin@lse.ac.uk

2 Submit a copy of your coursework by email

- Email a copy of your coursework to your class teacher by the set (or extended) deadline
- This email copy **MUST** match the version uploaded to Turnitin on Moodle

PLEASE NOTE IT IS THE EMAIL COPY THAT COUNTS FOR DEADLINE PURPOSES IN LINE WITH DEPARTMENTAL REGULATIONS.

Turnitin Guidance

- Instructions on how to view and interpret your Turnitin originality report (provided by LSE LTI) PDF file:
lti.lse.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Turnitin-online-resources-STUDENT-HANDOUT-FeedbackStudio.pdf;
- Watch a video on how to interpret your Turnitin originality report:
youtu.be/6bjnVRVldJA
- Originality reports can take anytime between 10 minutes and several hours (depending on how busy the Turnitin servers are) to be fully generated.

Plagiarism

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism in your work. You should use the Turnitin report to see if there are any issues with your coursework before the final deadline. If you are unsure or have any concerns, you can ask your class teacher, the Teacher Responsible for the Course, or your Academic Mentor for further advice. Coursework will be screened, and any cases of suspected plagiarism will be taken very seriously.

The School's regulations on plagiarism can be viewed at:

info.lse.ac.uk/Staff/Divisions/Academic-Registrars-Division/Teaching-Quality-Assurance-and-Review-Office/Assets/Documents/Calendar/RegulationsAssessmentOffences-Plagiarism.pdf



Assessed Essays (summative coursework) submission guidelines

Department of International History

Summative Coursework Submission Guidelines 2026/27

The Department of International History requires all pieces of summative coursework to be submitted in electronic form to Turnitin via Moodle. You should follow these guidelines carefully to ensure that your coursework is submitted in the correct manner. Grades and feedback may be withheld if you fail to submit your coursework properly.

a) Preparing your Submission

- check your work thoroughly – a spellchecker may not identify errors in names and dates
- stick to the set word limits (includes any footnote text, but excludes the bibliography) - cite all primary and secondary sources carefully to avoid plagiarism (see below).

b) Saving your File

- save the coursework as a .doc or .docx file – no other file types will be accepted
- the file name **MUST** include the course code and your candidate number – eg, HYxxxCandidateNumberxxxxxx.doc
- the coursework file **MUST NOT** include your name.

Submitting your Coursework on Moodle

Submit a copy of your coursework to Turnitin

- use the specific link for the coursework, listed on the course Moodle page, to submit this file - this submission will generate a Turnitin originality report, which you should read carefully using the guidance documents listed below (see below)
- if you wish to edit and resubmit the piece of coursework, it must be done **BEFORE** the final submission deadline (or revised deadline, where an extension has been confirmed)
- to edit the submitted coursework, click Edit, then delete the previous version, upload the new version, and then **Save Changes** (this will also generate a new originality report)
- if you experience any issues submitting your coursework on Moodle, contact your Programme Administrator at ih.pgadmin@lse.ac.uk.

PLEASE NOTE IT IS THE MOODLE SUBMISSION DATE AND TIME THAT COUNTS FOR DEADLINE PURPOSES IN LINE WITH DEPARTMENTAL REGULATIONS.



Extensions

The Department expects students to meet Assessed Essay deadlines, and it is your responsibility to organise your time appropriately. Extensions to deadlines can only be considered if you experience circumstances which are sudden, unforeseen, out of your control and proximate to the assessment(s) in question. You will also need to supply evidence of those circumstances which meets LSE's **Standards of Evidence** policy; in the majority of cases, requests without evidence cannot be considered.

To allow for processing time, any extension requests must be made at least three days in advance of the submission deadline. Students should complete the form provided on the course Moodle page, gather supporting documents or other evidence, and email the form and the evidence to ih.pgadmin@lse.ac.uk. You will be notified by e-mail as to whether your extension is granted by the Chair of the Exam Sub-Board. Please do not assume that your extension has been granted until you have received such an e-mail.

Unfortunately, the Department cannot consider extension requests made less than three days before the submission deadline. If you experience adverse circumstances after this time but before the submission deadline, you should consult the **Exceptional Circumstances** procedures.

Turnitin Guidance - Instructions on how to view and interpret your Turnitin report (provided by LSE LTI) [Atlas: lse.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/MG/pages/398753797/How+to+interpret+Turnitin+originality+reports];

- Watch a video on how to interpret your Turnitin originality report [embedded: youtu.be/6bjnVRVIdJA]
- Originality reports can take anytime from 10 minutes to several hours/days (depending on how busy the Turnitin servers are) to be fully generated.

Participation component

A student who fails the assessed participation component will have an oral examination in the form of a 20–30 minute viva (or written equivalent at the TRC's discretion) during the RDAP period.

Plagiarism

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism in your work. You should use the Turnitin originality report to see if there are any issues with your coursework before the final submission deadline. If you are unsure or have any concerns, you can ask your class teacher, the Teacher Responsible for the Course, or your Academic Mentor for further advice. Coursework will be screened, and any cases of suspected plagiarism will be taken very seriously.

NB. In 2020/21, there were at least five cases of alleged plagiarism which either resulted in a penalty, or referral to a School Assessment Misconduct Panel.



Extension Policy – Department of International History

The Department expects students to meet Assessed Coursework deadlines, and it is your responsibility to organise your time appropriately. **Extensions to deadlines can only be considered if you experience circumstances which are sudden, unforeseen, out of your control and proximate to the assessment(s) in question.** You will also need to supply evidence of those circumstances which meets LSE's [Standards of Evidence](#) policy; in the majority of cases, requests without evidence cannot be considered.

Please note that the maximum extension that the department can grant is 10 calendar days.

If you have 'My Adjustments' and extensions to deadlines is explicitly stated in your plan, you still need to request an extension if you require one. However, in these circumstances you should not have to provide medical evidence, the My Adjustments plan should be classed as the evidence. Please state this clearly in the 'Reason for Application' field on the form.

To allow for processing time, any extension requests must be made **at least three days** in advance of the submission deadline. Students should complete the form provided on the course Moodle page, gather supporting documents or other evidence, and email the form and the evidence to ih.pgadmin@lse.ac.uk (PG courses). You will be notified by email as to whether your extension is granted by the Chair of the Exam Sub-Board. Please do not assume that your extension has been granted until you have received such an email.

Unfortunately, the Department cannot consider extension requests made less than three days before the submission deadline. If you experience adverse circumstances after this time but before the submission deadline, you should consult the [Exceptional Circumstances](#) procedures.

If you are taking any outside courses, you should request an extension from the department(s) responsible for those courses. The Department of International History only considers requests for its own courses (courses with HY prefix).

Penalties for the Late Submission of Assessed Work and Exceeding Word Limits

Assessed essays must be submitted exclusively during School working hours. **5 points out of 100 will be deducted for un-authorised late submissions received during the first 24 hours after the deadline, and a further 5 points will be deducted for each subsequent 24-hour lateness period, or fraction thereof. After five days, coursework will only be accepted with the permission of the Chair of the Sub-Board of Examiners.**

Penalty policy on exceeding the word limit on assessed essays: "for up to every 100 words over the limit one mark out of 100 will be deducted". This means that the penalty kicks in at one word over the limit – ie, at 3,001 for an assessed essay.



In accordance with Departmental policy, computer hardware, software, or printer failures or malfunctions will **not** be accepted as valid reasons for late submission. Please therefore be sure to keep back-up copies of all your work.

As the essay is part of your examination, plagiarism is regarded as cheating and, if evidence for it is strong enough, the essay will be marked ZERO. In addition, you are likely to find yourself in front of the LSE Misconduct Panel, where harsher punishments are available. For further details, see:

info.lse.ac.uk/Staff/Divisions/Academic-Registrars-Division/Teaching-Quality-Assurance-and-Review-Office/Assets/Documents/Calendar/RegulationsAssessmentOffences-Plagiarism.pdf

All students must be asked to add a declaration on all work submitted as part of the formal assessment for their degree other than work produced under examination conditions, to the effect that they have read and understood the School's rules on assessment offences and that the work submitted is their own apart from properly referenced quotations.

Postgraduate Marking Criteria

Distinction (70-100)

Scripts will contain answers that engage closely with the implications of the question as well as its surface meaning. There will be a clear and coherent unfolding of the author's argument which deploys an impressively wide range of knowledge. A successful balance will be achieved between generalisation and detail. There will be historiographical awareness, where relevant, along with an ability to demonstrate independent conceptual command, as opposed to merely paraphrasing the views of others. There may be originality in the form of persuasive and well-evidenced new ideas or unexpected connections. Answers will be stylish, well-written and properly presented. Answers at the top of the range will display all these qualities in equal combination.

Merit (60-69)

Essays will display a sustained level of competence in coverage of the subject matter and understanding of the question. Answers will be regularly, but not always consistently analytical. Most of the implications of the question will be explored, but not all. There will be a high, but not impeccable standard of factual accuracy and interpretative coverage. Argument will be clear and direct, and with a sound conceptual grip.

Pass (50-59)

Some of the virtues and more of the defects of the merit grade will be present here. There will be some familiarity with all the terms and concepts bound up with the question, but several important aspects of the question or evidence necessary to answer it may be omitted or misinterpreted. Although still competently structured, argument will often be fuzzy and soft-focused, lacking analytical bite and sharpness. There may be a



tendency to state ideas rather than explore them and to leave a part of the argument to rest on unsupported claims. There may be an imbalance in the handling of ideas and data, as, for example, in a purely historiographical approach with insufficient reference to available evidence, or in the regurgitation of a mass of factual data unsubordinated to an overall argument. The knowledge deployed may seem somewhat familiar or imprecise. There may be stylistic weaknesses and errors in written English.

Fail (40-49)

Essays will contain some relevant points but remain inadequately focused on the specific question set. Above all the structure of the answers will be determined by the (limited) knowledge available to the writer rather than by the requirements of the question. Indeed the emphasis of the question may be misconstrued or misunderstood, and replaced by a bland and largely irrelevant narrative. Argument is unfocused and/or fragmentary, usually confined to the opening and closing paragraphs. There will be a sense of the ideas of others parroted uncritically or even with distortion. Points may be listed, giving rise to unexamined contradictions, or alternatively major issues may be omitted from consideration altogether. Answers tend to remain at a level of banal generalisation supported by trite evidence or none at all. There will be many factual errors, and the quality of the written English and general presentation may also fray badly at the edges.

Statement on Assessment and Feedback

The Department of International History believes that teaching and research are interlinked in humanities. The philosophy behind our programmes is to introduce students to the diversity of historical and cultural human experience, to make them aware of the development of differing values, systems and societies, and to inculcate critical yet tolerant personal attitudes. History programmes place particular stress on the development of independent thought and analytical skills, and require excellent communication skills, namely high levels of literacy and of oral presentation. Candidates are required to master a variety of intellectual approaches, in different formats, and have to learn to deal with a wide range of intellectual and cultural challenges. Courses vary from general overviews at one extreme, to in-depth primary-source studies at the other. The former encourages understanding of the historical process, with its mix of continuity and change; the latter sharpens the analysis of documentary and other material, developing research methods. This philosophy informs the Department's constant search for better modes of assessment and feedback.

We offer Masters students a variety of different assessment methods to choose from, and from the beginning students are clearly told how the course is going to be assessed. The assessment methods are outlined in the course descriptions. Several Masters' courses have assessed essays or other pieces of work as part of the final grade. Students are made aware that assessed essays can bring down as well as enhance results from unseen exams. Teachers can also award marks for class



participation, regular postings on Moodle, and in some courses, there is no exam at all, and the grade is based on one or two longer assessed essays. Class attendance is compulsory for all courses. Some courses include a grade for participation, on the grounds that active and outstanding engagement in class work helps motivate students to prepare for class discussions and to engage more actively in these discussions.

Many courses in the Department are assessed by three-hour examinations in the summer term. This method tests above all the ability of students to accumulate an expert knowledge about specific historical areas and issues during the entire year. It allows students to articulate in a structured way a historical discussion, to organize their thoughts, focusing on the construction of an argument that relies on the flexible deployment of factual knowledge and historiographical interpretations. The Department considers that at Undergraduate level the upper second grade (60-69%) should be given for "competent work showing a good grasp of the subject matter... familiarity with the most important reading and historiographical debates." The first-class grade (70% and higher) requires "exceptional answers, well-presented and argued with sophistication, which demonstrate a wide familiarity with the subject matter and the historiographical debate." For graduates/masters students the Distinction grade (70% and higher) requires "historiographical awareness, where relevant, along with an ability to demonstrate independent conceptual command, as opposed to merely paraphrasing the views of others. There may be originality in the form of persuasive and well-evidenced new ideas or unexpected connections."

Students can check on the Department's marking criteria in the Handbooks for Undergraduate and Graduate Students, available also electronically.

The summative examinations at the end of the year provides sufficient time for students who come to the School from very different academic backgrounds and even different educational systems (particularly for Masters Degrees), to "align" with common educational norms and standards and develop their thoughts in particular areas of expertise that they chose. The candidates practice for the summative exam over the Michaelmas and Lent terms through oral presentations, formative essays, and often a "mock exam" while receiving continuous feedback from their teachers.

The summative exam is also a fair mode of assessment: it allows the Department to assess all candidates in the same way, with the same set of questions and time limit (candidates with disabilities may get more time as appropriate). This facilitates the task of grading and avoids any risk of plagiarism. Because the exam is intended as a test of the course as a whole, three questions are the required minimum. Three hours has long been considered as a reasonable time to undertake such tests.

At the same time, the Department employs complementary alternative modes to assess learning outcome. This reflects the diversity of pedagogical methods preferred by individual teachers. It is also a reflection of the very different types of history which are taught in the Department which lend themselves to different forms of assessment. The Department allows teachers a measure of freedom in the way they teach courses,



adopting the methods they judge most effective as a means of imparting and assessing knowledge and skills. This freedom also contributes to the atmosphere of “living assessment”: every year teachers reflect on their courses and some decide to experiment with different forms of assessment. We also have five-year course reviews in place.

The Department’s experimentation with assessment reflects an increasing priority placed on presentation skills and the articulation of reasoned arguments in verbal contributions to class discussion. Longer, more intensively researched and revised pieces of writing are deemed particularly appropriate at postgraduate level than shorter writing assignments. This priority reflects the advanced learning aims and objectives of our postgraduate courses as well as the educational aim of developing the transferable skills needed after graduation.

Formative essays are considered to be very important to achieve learning outcomes: they allow students to test their skills against the criteria of their teachers, understand better most important threads of historiographical discussions, receive feedback and advice on additional readings, and prepare themselves thoroughly for a summative examination or essay. It is a department policy that teachers set aside a time to return formative essays individually to candidates within two weeks after their submission with a detailed written feedback and further discussion on improvement on structure, concept, language, originality, and the use of sources, among other points. The Department has standard feedback sheets available for formative essays. Many courses also offer a mock exam with the TRC providing feedback on the mock exam answer.

There are a variety of ways of communicating feedback to students via Moodle and LSE for You for each individual course. All teachers meet with students to provide feedback on their performance in class, class presentations, and essays. All candidates also have academic mentors and can receive their feedback from them on their assessed work. The contact between students and their teachers, as well as academic mentors goes well beyond the class and office hours – and includes exchange of e-mails, consultations on lists of literature and sources, and readings of preliminary drafts.

A few words should be said about the process of setting and marking of exams and assessed coursework. Where assessed essays have been introduced, questions are submitted at the start of the year to the relevant Chair of Exams and to External Examiners – a distinguished historian from outside the LSE who is the additional and final check for fairness and clarity - for approval and feedback. Only once approved are these circulated to students. When it comes to exams, the Teacher Responsible for the Course (TRC) will normally set the exam and develop exam questions. This is then scrutinized collectively within the Department and passed on to an external examiner. Marking of all materials that contribute to the final grade is done “blind” – ie, students are not identifiable by the examiners since they are given a number which has no key until the exams have been graded.



Each exam paper or essay is read and marked by one examiner (the so-called “moderated marking scheme”, which is regularly reviewed by the department). A proportion of all essays and exam scripts, including all fails, borderline marks (39/49/59/69) and firsts are also scrutinized by a moderator who approves the distribution of marks. A sample of essays or exam scripts is reviewed by an external examiner. Agreed marks are then collectively discussed and reviewed by Sub-Boards established for each degree or joint degrees. These are attended by internal and external examiners. There is no identification of candidates by name until marks are agreed and/or a degree is awarded. The assurance of anonymity reduces to the absolute minimum the risk of bias in assessment on the grounds of race, gender or other personal characteristics.



Section 2: LSE beyond your department





- > Own your learning
- > Centre your self
- > Build your community
- > Broaden your horizons
- > Make your impact
- > Expand your skills
- > Shape your future





LSE beyond your department

Your department is at the heart of your LSE experience – your academic home. But it's only one part of a large, dynamic university full of opportunities to learn, connect, and grow. It can take time to explore what's available, and you're not expected to do everything. Your experience is yours to shape.

This section of your handbook introduces that wider offer and is structured around a set of themes covering different aspects of your LSE experience – from developing as a scholar and looking after your wellbeing to building connections, broadening your horizons, and shaping your future. You can explore each of these themes further with [LSE LIFE](#) – your one-stop shop for opportunities beyond your programme. There's no need to have it all figured out – just start where you are, follow your curiosity, and take opportunities that feel right for you.

You will also see mention of [LSE Students' Union](#) (LSESU) – the student-led organisation that represents all LSE students. It is independent to LSE, and organises student-run societies, activities, and campaigns.

LSE LIFE – your personal guide to LSE

So many opportunities, so many choices, so much to explore. Think of LSE LIFE as your personal guide to LSE – helping you find the skills, experiences, and opportunities that feel right for you during your time with us. LSE LIFE is here for you throughout the year – both online and on the Ground Floor of the Library:

- The **LSE LIFE events and opportunities listings** are regularly updated, central listings of all the extracurricular happenings across LSE. You can filter by provider and theme, or just browse and see what strikes your interest!
- **LIFE Conversations** are one-to-one appointments providing personalised guidance about student life, settling into London, or making the most of what's on offer. LSE LIFE advisers can help clarify your goals, make a plan for your next steps, and help you find the teams and programmes that best fit your interests.
- The **LSE LIFE space** is a bright, open space located right on the ground floor of the Library. Perfect to study by yourself or with friends, attend a workshop or event, or drop by at the reception with any questions you might have.



Own your learning

Shape your intellectual journey – whether for success in the classroom or world-changing research

Studying at LSE is probably unlike anything you've done before – and that's part of what makes it exciting. You'll encounter ideas that challenge your assumptions, arguments that demand a response, and questions that don't have easy answers. You'll be expected to read critically, write persuasively, question evidence, speak up in classes and seminars, and develop a point of view that is genuinely your own. It can feel like a shift from being told what to think to working out how to think: reading independently, testing ideas, and deciding how to use your time. Lectures and seminars matter, but much of your progress happens in the hours around them.

That's a lot to ask. It's also one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do. You're not expected to arrive knowing how to do all of this, and you won't get there simply by putting in more hours. A common misconception is to confuse effort with progress: reading endlessly or spending long days in the library can feel productive without making your thinking much clearer. Progress tends to come from smaller, more deliberate habits – reading selectively, turning notes into arguments, and testing your understanding in discussion with your peers.

Your department, teachers, and academic mentor are your first point of contact – but there's extensive support beyond that. Across LSE, specialist teams can help you at every stage of your academic journey.

- **Learning Lab** is there for you at every stage of your learning journey – from finding your footing to thinking more critically, writing more convincingly, and getting more from your reading. **Workshops** run throughout the year on a variety of topics such as academic writing, critical reading, research planning, exam preparation, dissertation writing, and using AI tools critically and effectively. You can also book **one-to-one sessions** with Learning Lab Study Advisers to discuss specific aspects of your work.
- **LSE Library** is a central part of your learning environment, providing access to course readings and extensive research collections, alongside a wide range of study spaces. From Winter Term, it's open 24 hours a day. You can also discover alternative study spaces across campus with the **Facilities Guide**. Each department also has a **dedicated librarian** who can help with any Library questions, such as finding, evaluating, and referencing resources.



- The **Centre for Language Studies** offers free **English for Academic Purposes (EAP)** courses in Autumn and Winter Terms. EAP focuses on the skills required to perform in an English-speaking academic environment across the core subject areas you will encounter during your time at LSE.
- The **Department of Methodology** runs research design and methods courses, required on some master's programmes and optional on others. It also offers **one-to-one support** and **short courses** to complement your learning and support you through your dissertation and other research projects.
- **Digital Skills Lab** can support you in developing key digital and data skills that underpin many courses and assessments.

Using these resources early can help you find your footing more quickly. It's also worth coming back to them at key points in the year – for example, before your first summative assessments or when you start working on longer pieces of research. Over time, you'll develop a sense of what works best for you – whether that's how you organise your study, approach your reading, or make use of different kinds of support.

Three ways to start

- Join a Getting Started with the Library session during Welcome to learn more about what it has to offer!
- Attend a **Learning Lab session** in your first fortnight.
- Find a study space that works for you – the Library, a café, or your hall's common room.

Discover more – **LSE LIFE: Own your learning**





Centre your self

Prioritise your wellbeing, adapt to change, and build strength from the inside out.

Looking after yourself isn't a distraction from your studies. It's the foundation on which you build everything else, and it means different things at different times. Sometimes it's about building habits that help you stay on track: managing your workload, knowing your limits, finding routines that work for you. Sometimes it means genuinely switching off – a yoga session, a workout, or a mindful break. Sometimes it means recognising that you need support and knowing how to find it.

Unwind and recharge: make time to relax and enjoy yourself

Whether you're deep in revision or simply spending time on campus between lectures and seminars, it's important to make space to relax, recharge, and enjoy yourself – even during the busiest periods of the academic year. From sports and wellbeing sessions to creative arts and crafts events: explore upcoming activities and events with the [Unwind and recharge](#) filter on the LSE LIFE events listing.

You don't have to measure whether an issue is "serious enough" to raise with someone. A better question is whether it's making it harder for you to work, think clearly, or stay steady. If it is, that's enough reason to seek support – and early help usually gives you more options than late help. The following teams are here for you at every stage:

- The [Student Wellbeing Service](#) offers [wellbeing appointments](#), counselling, workshops, and guidance when you're struggling or simply unsure what kind of support would help. They can help you talk through stress, anxiety, low mood, loneliness, homesickness, or a situation you're finding hard to manage. For students with disabilities, long-term health or mental health conditions, or specific learning difficulties, there's also a dedicated [Disability and Mental Health Service](#).
- [Peer Supporters](#) are trained student volunteers who help by offering a non-judgemental, confidential listening space to any LSE student. They will listen, and if you wish, can help you explore options for how to move forward. Any student can speak to any peer supporter and reaching out is a chance to build connections and speak to students you might not otherwise meet.



- The [**Faith Centre**](#) offers spaces for worship, quiet reflection, chaplaincy, and interfaith activity for all students, whether faith is central to your life or not. For some it's a place of worship, and for others it's a calm, reflective space. They offer weekly [**Ashtanga Yoga and Tai Chi sessions**](#) throughout the year. The [**Faith Centre Director and Chaplain to LSE**](#), Revd Canon Prof James Walters, offers confidential support regardless of your background or beliefs. You can also directly contact our Muslim, Catholic, Jewish, and Orthodox [**Associate Chaplains**](#).
- The [**Halls Wellbeing Team**](#) can provide wellbeing support and guidance if you live in LSE halls of residence. Check the [**Halls Life platform**](#) for more halls wellbeing information and resources.
- [**LSESU Sports**](#) has plenty of options to get involved, from the gym and drop-in sessions to sports clubs, the inclusive sport programme, and departmental sport. Staying active is a great way to support your wellbeing, lift your mood, and ease your stress – whether you're trying something new or getting back into a routine.

Three ways to start

- Make time to attend one [**Unwind and recharge**](#)-event that strikes your interest.
- Pick up a wall calendar from the [**LSE LIFE reception desk**](#) to help you stay organised.
- Take a walk through Lincoln's Inn Fields between lectures or seminars.

Discover more – [**LSE LIFE: Centre your self**](#)



Build your community

Get involved, connect with others, and make the most of what LSE and London have to offer.

LSE is a genuinely global institution. Your peers come from every corner of the world, bringing with them different perspectives, experiences, and ways of understanding the challenges that define our time. You'll meet people whose beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of seeing the world differ profoundly from your own. That's one of the most valuable things LSE offers – and it asks something of you in return: the willingness to listen and to engage thoughtfully, even if that means experiencing the discomfort of genuine difference. An LSE education doesn't just consist of lectures and assignments: it's also built from conversations, collaborations, and debates that don't appear on any transcript. Sometimes those conversations will challenge you. Sometimes they'll change you. The relationships you build and the communities you find here are fundamental parts of your experience and your education.

Building that community takes a little intention – showing up, trying things, and being open to connections you didn't necessarily expect. Societies, student groups, volunteering, and School-wide events are often the easiest routes in, but different things work for different people. Find what feels right for you, and don't try to do everything at once: one society, one regular event, or one study group will do more for your sense of belonging than signing up to many things and struggling to commit to any of them.





Find your people at LSE

Whatever your background, interests, or experiences, you are at home in the LSE community.

One of the best ways to meet new people is to connect over something you already share. The [Find your people](#)-filter on the LSE LIFE opportunities listings is designed to help you do just that. It gathers activities built around a common background, identity, or interest – covering cultural and national societies, sports clubs, music groups, and faith communities. You'll also find peer mentoring for undergraduate and neurodivergent students, [Professionals at LSE](#) events for students with five or more years of work experience, alumni mentoring for ethnic minority students, tailored programmes for female, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ start-up founders, and an [LGBTQIA+ role models directory](#), among many other events and programmes. The School also hosts celebrations for Black History Month, LGBT+ History Month, and Women's History Month, amongst others. You will be able to find many of these online on the EDI calendar and on campus in the Hall-Carpenter Room – a dedicated space to cultivate an environment of inclusivity, available for student use.

Creating an inclusive experience for every student is a core priority for the School. The [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\)](#) team actively works with the community to deliver action plans that advance equity and inclusion for students with protected characteristics and those who are underrepresented at the School through targeted work and initiatives. There is also work to foster good relations and positive dialogue across our diverse School community which you can find out more about on the [Campus Relations webpages](#).

Last but not least, don't forget London itself is part of the offer, too! Our campus is located right in the centre of the city – moments from the River Thames, Covent Garden, the Royal Courts of Justice. Make time to explore! You can find detailed accessibility guides on [AccessAble](#), that cover all buildings on campus and include route maps.



- **LSESU Societies** are one of the main ways to meet fellow students through shared interests, identities, and activities. With over 200 individual societies covering academic interests, cultural identities, sports, politics, media, the arts, and more, they are great for getting together with others on a regular basis.
- The **Faith Centre** is home to the LSE's diverse religious activities, transformational interfaith **leadership programme**, and a quiet, reflective space for both students and staff.
- **LIFE in London** is a series of free events and trips designed to connect you to London, fellow students, as well as some of the great experiences the city has to offer. From concerts and workshops to heritage-themed trips, there is something for everyone.
- **Halls Life** is the platform for student life in LSE accommodation, offering events, student-written guides and experiences, and key information to help you make the most of your time in halls.

Three ways to start

- Check out the Discover LSE Fair and the LSESU Welcome Fair in Autumn Term, and the Welcome Back Fair in Winter Term – the offer is vast!
- Explore a London neighbourhood you've never been to.
- Talk to someone on your programme you haven't talked with before.

Discover more – **LSE LIFE: Build your community**





Broaden your horizons

Develop a global perspective and engage with ideas, cultures, and questions that challenge and inspire you.

LSE is a place where people come together to debate, question, and explore the major issues shaping the world. Your degree is part of that conversation, but the intellectual life of the School extends far beyond your programme. Public events, lectures, discussions, and research talks give you the chance to encounter ideas, arguments, and perspectives that sit alongside – or sometimes challenge – what you study in class.

You don't need to attend everything. In fact, it's usually more valuable to engage selectively and thoughtfully: follow a question that genuinely interests you, explore a topic just outside your subject, or listen to people whose views differ from your own. Sometimes a single event or conversation is enough to change how you think about an issue, or to introduce you to a field, debate, or perspective you want to pursue further.

- **LSE Events** hosts one of the most active public lecture programmes of any university in the world. From heads of state and Nobel laureates to leading researchers, journalists, and policymakers: this is your chance to hear from some of the most influential figures in the social sciences first-hand. You can join the debate by posing your questions to the panel and even possibly meet the speakers at a book signing or reception after the event.
- **LSE Research Showcase** is a series of regular coffee-break research talks on campus, with free hot drinks and pastries, showcasing some of the fascinating research from our academic community.
- **World Cafés** are your chance to discover and debate important questions and ideas alongside students, teachers, researchers, alumni, and others from the LSE community. Short presentations from leading LSE researchers are followed by informal round-table conversations with scholars and other students.

Discover more – [LSE LIFE: Explore the big questions](#)

Broadening your horizons also means more than studying global topics though: it means learning from the people around you and becoming more curious about lives and perspectives beyond your own. The opportunity is to leave LSE not only with expertise in your subject, but with a wider frame of reference: more aware of complexity, more comfortable with uncertainty, and more connected to the world beyond your own experience.



- **CIVICA** is the [European University Alliance of the Social Sciences](#), of which LSE is a member alongside nine other European universities. Through CIVICA, you can take part in a range of activities and programmes, including immersive learning experiences abroad and online collaborative courses.

The world at your doorstep

You don't need to travel to encounter different cultures and perspectives at LSE: you can also engage with our international community right here on campus! [The LSE Language Community](#) – run by the Centre for Language Studies – offers bitesize speaking sessions with native speakers, weekly conversation circles, and tandem learning partnerships. The LSESU's [national and cultural societies](#) host events, food and film nights, and celebrations throughout the year. The [Faith Centre](#) offers interfaith events and activities open to students of any background, where you can learn about and connect across different cultures and traditions. Their [Beecken Faith and Leadership programme](#) is designed to help you develop key skills in reasoning and leadership in the context of engaging with religious difference, covering diverse topics, including the climate crisis and geopolitical conflict.

Discover more – [LSE LIFE: Connect across cultures](#)

Three ways to start

- Attend a [public lecture](#) on a topic completely outside your degree and note one idea or name to follow up afterwards.
- Join a [LSE Language Community](#) session or find a tandem learning partner.
- Visit the [Faith Centre spaces](#) – if you have a moment, why not take a break in The Cave, their silent room for meditation, prayer, and reflection?

Discover more – [LSE LIFE: Broaden your horizons](#)



Make your impact

Discover what matters to you and contribute to creating change, big or small, at LSE and beyond.

LSE's approach to social sciences is understanding the causes of things *for the betterment of society*. After more than 130 years, that tradition still flourishes in the research produced here, in the public debates hosted here, and in the careers of the people who've studied here. It's also alive in what students do while they are here.

We invite you to ask yourself: what are the causes that matter to you? Meaningful action isn't necessarily about doing more. Often, it's about committing to something you care about deeply and staying with it long enough to understand it properly. The value of that kind of involvement lies not only in what you achieve, but in what it teaches you – about responsibility, about other people, and about your own limits.

- The **Volunteer Centre** is there to inspire and empower you to volunteer for causes that you are passionate about during your time at LSE. They provide a range of long term, short term, and one-off opportunities to suit your interests and schedule. You can also drop in to their space in Lincoln Chambers or book an appointment to talk through what might suit you.
- **Sustainable LSE** is the School's sustainability team, where you can learn about contributing to sustainability on campus and in residences while building new skills – whether you want to come to a one-off event or volunteer with the team more regularly. Their activities range from beekeeping and wildlife workshops to carbon literacy training and sustainability auditing.

Discover more – **[LSE LIFE: Change the wider world](#)**



Impact at LSE doesn't only happen outside the School. It can also come from helping to shape the institution itself, from contributing to discussions about how LSE operates to simply showing up for another student who needs support. Alongside sharing your feedback at [departmental level](#), you can also take part in a wide range of School-wide groups and programmes.

- [LSESU Student Voice](#) gives you countless opportunities to make yourself heard in what is one of the most politically active Students' Unions in the country – whether that's getting involved with ongoing [campaigns](#) or starting your own, submitting a [policy proposal](#), or standing in the [LSESU leadership elections](#).
- [Student Education Panels](#) are a chance to share your perspective and discuss your LSE experience with peers from diverse backgrounds, programmes, and levels of study, helping to inform processes and improvements across the School.





Discover more – [LSE LIFE: Shape your school](#)

Support your peers

Your greatest impact on other students' experience at LSE can sometimes take place on a personal level, through supporting fellow students and helping to build a strong, welcoming community. There are several formal programmes through which you can support your peers:

- The [Student Academic Mentoring Programme](#) is an undergraduate-only initiative that helps first years to settle into their department and meet other students by matching them with second- and third-year undergraduate mentors. Neurodivergent undergraduate and postgraduate students can also apply to the [Neurodivergent Student Academic Mentoring scheme](#) – you don't need a formal diagnosis to take part.
- [Peer Supporters](#) are trained student volunteers who offer a confidential, non-judgemental listening space to any LSE student. All students who have already been studying at LSE for at least a year can become a peer supporter, including continuing undergraduates and those in the second year of a two-year master's programme.
- [Widening Participation](#) offer a range of paid roles, including Student Ambassador, Tutor, and Mentor positions, enabling current LSE students to share their experiences of applying to and studying at LSE with prospective students and young people considering higher education.

Three ways to start

- Drop by the [Volunteer Centre](#) on campus to learn more about your options.
- Join a [Student Town Hall](#) to learn about and debate policies that shape the way the LSESU runs.
- Attend a Meet LSE leadership event to get to know leaders from across LSE in an informal setting – keep an eye out for upcoming events in Student News.

Discover more – [LSE LIFE: Make your impact](#)



Expand your skills

Unlock the talents, tools, and mindsets that set you apart.

You've arrived at LSE with a distinctive set of abilities, built on everything you accomplished, studied, and experienced before you got here. You'll apply, test, and extend those skills every day: speaking up in a seminar, shaping a group project, and adapting to new ways of thinking and working. Some strengths deepen in new contexts, and other gaps only become visible when you're stretched. Part of university is learning to recognise both, and to think about what else you want to be able to do.

It's natural to think about skills in terms of outcomes – what mark will this help me get, or how can I highlight this on my CV. Some skills are worth being deliberate about, and focusing on one practical skill with long-term value is often more effective than an ambitious self-improvement plan. If you want to study or work abroad, invest in the language skills that will get you there. If your dissertation or internship is likely to need technical skills, build them gradually before they become urgent.

- The **Digital Skills Lab** offers practical, face-to-face workshops, bootcamps, and self-paced resources covering data analysis and visualisation, coding, AI literacy, and assistive technology – including tools like Excel, Power BI, Python, R, Stata, SPSS, and generative AI (Claude and Copilot). It's open to all students and designed to be accessible whether you're a complete beginner or building on existing knowledge.
- The **Centre for Language Studies** runs non-degree language courses at all levels, from beginner to advanced, designed to fit around your programme commitments.
- **Student Media** is your chance to practise writing, editing, production, presenting, and media management with a genuine audience – across video, radio, *The Beaver* student newspaper, and the student-run journals within Houghton Street Press.



Some skills develop without you even thinking about it though – you pick them up just by being here, doing the work, and being around other people doing the same. In fact, you could pick any programme, event or initiative listed in this guide – whether it is related to making your impact, broadening your horizons, or building your community – and it would help you grow. Volunteering, leading an LSESU society, building a start-up, working on your academic skills, or pulling together a study group – each is a chance to get better at communicating clearly, leading and collaborating, or approaching problems creatively and critically.

Reflect on your skills

Reflecting on how you're developing is hard to do alone – it's easier to explore, understand, and articulate your experience with someone who can help you take a step back.

- **LSE Careers** offers one-to-one appointments with Careers Consultants to help you identify and assess the skills you're building, and think about how to develop and articulate them for the path you want to take.
- **LSE LIFE** offers one-to-one conversations to help you make sense of everything LSE offers beyond your academic programme, and figure out which opportunities might be right for you.

Three ways to start

- Identify one technical skill that you might need during or after your degree – when would be a good time to learn it?
- Try one thing outside your comfort zone – leading a meeting, presenting a new idea to your classmates, organising a group trip, or speaking first in a seminar.
- Use the LSE Careers Skills Framework to recognise your skills, reflect on your experiences, and identify areas for further development as you prepare to enter the world of work.

Discover more – [LSE LIFE: Expand your skills](#)



Shape your future

Prepare for life after LSE by exploring your options and following your ambitions.

Thinking about life after university is a fundamental part of being at university. The futures LSE graduates go on to build are as diverse as the people who study here – in every corner of the world and every kind of organisation, and across every sector. What they share is a capacity to explore carefully, act purposefully, think critically, and keep learning. Some students arrive at LSE with a clear sense of the path they want to pursue. Others discover it gradually, through conversations, experiences, and opportunities they couldn't have foreseen.

Ask an Alum

Many cohorts of LSE students have gone on to build and shape their own unique career paths before you – and there's a great deal you can learn from their experiences. During your time at LSE, and even after graduation, you can access our global network of more than 240,000 curious and accomplished minds through [Ask an Alum](#), our online platform that connects students and alumni for advice, support, and networking. Whether it's exploring different career options, developing your professional skills, or building your first business, just submit your questions and we'll connect you with someone who can help.





As you begin to think about your own future and explore the possibilities available to you, teams across LSE can help you navigate and pursue your options. Early conversations can be valuable for testing ideas, understanding different sectors, and learning what employers really mean when they describe particular roles. If you already have a specific career path in mind, it's equally important to understand the expectations and timelines associated with it, especially in fast-moving sectors, where work experience opportunities like short placements, vacation schemes, and internships often begin recruiting early.

The important thing to remember is that thoughtful and curious people rarely settle their futures once and for all. Instead, they keep shaping them. Explore what intrigues you, build familiarity with different kinds of work and sectors, and begin to understand how your interests and strengths might translate into possible next steps.

- **[LSE Careers](#)** can help you explore your career options, reflect and build upon your skills, and offer insight into the world of work. They offer appointments, varied events and workshops, application, interview and assessment centre support, sector insights, and access to opportunities and vacancies through [MyCareer](#).
- **[LSE Generate](#)**, our entrepreneurship hub, is here to help you innovate for the betterment of society. Drop by their co-working space on campus, or join their events, programmes, and mentoring schemes to develop entrepreneurial skills, test business ideas, and meet others interested in innovation.
- **[LSESU Careers Societies](#)** are run by students, for students. From finance and consulting to technology and the creative industries, they offer opportunities to explore different sectors through networking events, conferences, workshops, and talks.

Three ways to start

- Register with LSE Careers and browse [MyCareer](#).
- Attend one [Shape your future](#)-event in your first term – even just to see what's out there.
- Ask an alum or anyone working at LSE how they've shaped their professional path so far.

Discover more – [LSE LIFE: Shape your future](#)



Section 3:

Navigate your LSE





- > Navigate your LSE
- > Term dates and LSE closures
- > Systems and online resources
- > Your programme and courses
- > Exams and assessments
- > Codes, charters, and action plans
- > LSE campus





Navigate your LSE

Find the resources, guidance, and support you need to thrive throughout your time at LSE.

There are moments at university when you need further advice – about administrative and procedural matters related to your degree or more generally about navigating student life and London. Where you start often depends on the nature of your question.

Here are three key teams at LSE who can act as a good starting point for any general queries, even if you're not sure exactly what you're looking for. If they can't help you directly, they can connect you with someone who can.

- The **[Student Services Centre \(SSC\)](#)** is your first point of contact for advice on a wide range of administrative and programme-related enquiries including enrolment, visa advice and compliance, course selection, exams, and graduation. Contact them via their **[Live Chat](#)** or use the **[SSC enquiry form](#)**.
- **[LSE LIFE](#)** is your one-stop shop for extracurricular opportunities and support at LSE. Browse the **[LSE LIFE events and opportunities page](#)** and if you'd like some personalised guidance, **[book a one-to-one LIFE Conversation](#)** to talk through any aspect of your experience and find the programmes, events, and groups that are right for you.
- The **[LSESU Advice Service](#)** offers free, impartial advice on a wide range of issues – from academic matters and assessments to finances, funding, and housing. As part of the LSE Students' Union, they are independent from LSE, and thus free from a conflict of interest. To contact them, fill out the **[Advice Service Form](#)**.

This section covers some of the mechanics behind your programme and the wider School: how things work, who's responsible for what, and where to go when something needs sorting. You can use it as a reference throughout the year – when a term isn't clear, when you're not sure what your options are, or when you need more information on a procedure or regulation. Click through to the webpages linked for the most up-to-date information and don't hesitate to reach out to someone if you need further advice.



Specialist guidance and support

For those times when you do have a specific question or concern, you may want to seek specialist advice and support directly. Here are some of the teams you might turn to.

- **Fees, finances, and money matters**

[LSE Fees Office](#) manages queries relating to the payment of tuition fees, tuition fee refunds, sponsor invoicing, and US or Canadian student loans. The [Financial Support Office](#) administers a range of bursaries, scholarships and studentships. Use the [Student Finance Hub](#) to check your fees, invoices, payments and instalment arrangements.

If you are facing unexpected financial difficulty during your programme, the LSE Financial Support Office or the independent LSESU Advice Service may be able to help you.

- **Wellbeing and counselling**

The [Student Wellbeing Service](#) offers confidential one-to-one wellbeing and counselling appointments, and workshops. If you need to speak to someone on the phone immediately or outside of working hours, you can call the 24/7 mental health support line provided by our partners [Spectrum.Life](#).

- **Disability and mental health**

LSE's [Disability and Mental Health Service \(DMHS\)](#) offers advice and support to all disabled students, including those with physical or sensory impairments, long-term health conditions, mental health conditions, neurodivergence, specific learning difficulties, and autistic spectrum conditions. DMHS will work closely with you to explore any academic adjustments ([My Adjustments](#)) that may be available and provide tailored support to help make your time at LSE as accessible and inclusive as possible. It is recommended that students contact DMHS before arriving at LSE, or as soon as possible afterwards, so they can collaborate with you to put in place appropriate support from the start of the academic year.

- **Discrimination, bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct**

If you experience or witness discrimination, bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct you can report it – anonymously or with your contact details – on [LSE's Report and Support](#) system. You do not have to navigate these situations alone; you can contact any of [LSE's Safe Contacts](#) for confidential guidance. The School also partners with [external specialists, Rape Crisis South London](#) and [SurvivorsUK](#) who offer an Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) service.

In an emergency, call 999 for the emergency services (police, ambulance, or fire brigade). On campus, [LSE security](#) can also help; call them on 020 7955 6555.



Term dates and LSE closures

The academic year has its own rhythm – terms, breaks, reading weeks, exam periods. It's helpful to see the whole picture before you get into specific procedures and regulations. This table shows the key dates for 2026/27. The notes below give a sense of what you can expect from each period and ideas about ways to approach them. Always check the [Term Dates](#) page for the latest information.

Academic year 2026/27

Welcome week	Friday 18 September – Friday 25 September 2026
Autumn Term (AT)	Monday 28 September – Friday 11 December 2026
Reading week	Monday 2 November – Friday 6 November 2026
Winter break	Monday 14 December 2026 – Friday 8 January 2027 <i>School closure:</i> Wednesday 23 December 2026 – Friday 1 January 2027
January exam period	Monday 4 January – Sunday 10 January 2027
Winter Term (WT)	Monday 11 January – Thursday 25 March 2027
Reading week	Monday 15 February – Friday 19 February 2027
Spring break	Friday 26 March – Friday 23 April 2027 <i>School closure:</i> Friday 26 March – Thursday 1 April 2027
Spring Term (ST)	Monday 26 April – Friday 11 June 2027
Spring exam period	Tuesday 4 May – Friday 11 June 2027

Welcome week is the week before teaching begins. Systems come online, departments run their introductions, and the practical infrastructure of being an LSE student gets set up. It's also a chance to find your feet, meet people, and begin to feel at home. There will be other Welcome activities running before and after Welcome week, so you don't have to try and do everything in seven days!

Autumn Term is the first 11 weeks of teaching of the academic year. For many, it's a period of adjustment where you settle in and learn ways to manage independent study. You might see term weeks referred to as "AT4" or "AT week 4", for example – the fourth week of Autumn Term.



Reading weeks fall midway through Autumn and Winter Terms, though not every programme has them. It is not a holiday, but a pause to catch up and consolidate the work you've already done in the term so far.

The **January exam period** is the final week of the **Winter break**, bringing exams and coursework deadlines into sharp focus.

Welcome Back is a series of events and social gatherings at the beginning of Winter Term where you can make a new start, meet new people, and explore more of what LSE has to offer, once you've had one term to learn your way around. **Winter Term** is also 11 weeks. Longer projects, the start of dissertation work, and other deadlines tend to land here.

Spring break runs from late March to late April, with the School closed for a week around Easter. For most students with exams in May and June, this is when you'll do most of your revision. **Spring Term** is seven weeks long, and most of it is taken up by the **Spring exam period**. There is generally very little teaching: this is a term defined by assessment.

Outside term time, during closure periods and bank holidays, services and opening hours may change. During [School closure](#), most School services are not available, though some buildings, such as the Library, may still be open.





Systems and online resources

LSE uses a set of core digital systems, but they do different jobs. It can be helpful to get an overview of which platform is for which task.

System	What it does	Find out more
Claude for Education	Generative AI chat from Anthropic, free to all LSE students. Each course sets its own AI use policy on Moodle, so check what is permitted before using Claude in assessed work.	Claude for Education ; Academic integrity
Digiexam	The software platform used for e-Exams, in-person exams where you use a laptop computer. It locks down your personal laptop to create a secure exam environment. Not all courses use e-Exams – check your specific course regulations.	e-Exams ; Exams
eduroam	The Wi-Fi network available across LSE and at universities worldwide. Connect using your LSE email address and password.	eduroam at LSE
Library Search	The online catalogue for finding books, journal articles, and other materials held by the LSE Library.	Library Search ; Library
LSE Calendar	The official publication containing programme regulations, classification schemes, assessment offence regulations, appeals regulations, and codes of practice.	LSE Calendar
LSE for You	LSE's system for completing your course selection.	LSE for You
LSE LIFE events	Your starting point for browsing and booking onto events outside your department. Because teams promote events in various places, using different booking systems, this is the easiest way to find most opportunities in one place.	LSE LIFE events



System	What it does	Find out more
Moodle	LSE's virtual learning environment. Each course has its own Moodle page where you'll typically find lecture slides, recordings, reading lists, quizzes, discussion forums, and where you submit assignments and receive marks and feedback. Important: joining a Moodle page is not the same as enrolling on a course – course selection can only be done through LSE for You.	<u>Moodle</u>
MyCareer	LSE Careers' online portal. Use it to register for careers events, browse the jobs and internships board, book one-to-one appointments with Careers Consultants, and set preferences for sector-specific information.	<u>MyCareer;</u> <u>LSE Careers</u>
Parchment	The electronic platform through which final transcripts are issued and can be shared with employers or other institutions.	<u>Accessing</u> <u>Parchment;</u> <u>Transcripts</u>
Student Finance Hub	An online portal where you can review your tuition and accommodation fees, invoices, payments, and instalment arrangements once you're enrolled.	<u>Student Finance</u> <u>Hub; Paying fees;</u> <u>Tuition fees</u>
Student Hub	LSE's app (iOS, Android, and web) for everyday student life. Use it to view your timetable, check deadlines, browse the campus map, read about news and events, and book appointments with academic staff, LSE LIFE advisers, and departmental support teams.	<u>Student Hub;</u> <u>About Student</u> <u>Hub</u>
Student LfY	LSE's main administrative system. You'll use it for updating your address, finding your candidate number, accessing your assessment results and booking appointments with some School services.	<u>Student LfY;</u> <u>What's in LfY</u>



System	What it does	Find out more
Turnitin	LSE's text-matching software. It produces a similarity report that can be used to monitor for potential plagiarism. Some departments allow or require you to submit drafts through Turnitin before your final submission, so you can review the report and use it to improve your writing and referencing.	Academic misconduct guidance ; Moodle

If you run into IT issues, you can visit the [Data and Technology Services \(DTS\)](#) team at the [Tech Centre](#) on the first floor of the Library, or raise a request via the [DTS Service Portal](#). They offer a range of support services, including the [iRoam Laptop Loan Service](#), and guidance on [cyber security, assistive technology, educational discounts](#) on tech and software, and free software available to LSE students. This includes free access to [Microsoft Office 365](#), which provides essential tools like Word, Excel, and Outlook. Outlook is LSE's main email platform and primary method of communication, so it's important to check it regularly.

DTS also provides support for [printing on campus](#). There are lots of printers available across the LSE campus, which you can connect to and use both from LSE computers and your personal devices. If you need to get something printed professionally, there is also a dedicated [Reprographics](#) team on site. They can help with anything from printing posters and leaflets to dissertation binding.



Your programme and courses

Glossary

The language of course choice, units, and regulations can seem unfamiliar at first. The [LSE Calendar](#) is the School's official resource for programme regulations, course information, and other important details related to studying at LSE. This list is here to help you get your bearings. It's a friendly introduction to terms you'll hear mentioned often, but it's not a substitute for the Calendar or advice from your department. For the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and relevant information, always consult both the [Calendar](#) and your department's guidance.





Term	What it means	Where next
Programme	The full degree comprising of all units studied, for example a BSc or MSc.	LSE Calendar
Programme regulations	The formal rules governing your degree. They specify which core courses you must take, which optional courses are available to you, how many units you need, and any dissertation or project requirement. Published in the LSE Calendar.	LSE Calendar
Unit	The measure of a course size at LSE. A half-unit course is typically taught over one term; a full-unit course is typically taught over two terms. A master's degree usually requires four units; an undergraduate degree usually requires 12 units (usually four each year).	LSE Calendar ; Course selection
Core course	A compulsory course required by your Programme regulations.	LSE Calendar
Optional course	A non-compulsory course you choose alongside the core requirements, from a list in your Programme regulations (or, with approval, from elsewhere at LSE).	Course selection ; LSE Calendar
Auditing a course	An informal arrangement where you follow a course's lectures for interest, but do not attend classes/seminars or sit assessments, and the course does not appear on your transcript or timetable. You need the course convener's permission to audit their course.	Course selection ; your course guide
Controlled access/ capped course	A course where the number of places is limited. "Controlled access" courses require departmental approval (you may need to write a supporting statement). "Capped" courses fill on a first-come, first-served basis through LSE for You. Some courses are both.	Course selection
Course selection period	The main window in Autumn Term, when you formally choose your courses for the full year through LSE for You. A second, shorter window reopens in January for changes to Winter Term half-units only. Deadlines and processes vary by department.	Course selection



Term	What it means	Where next
Timetable clashes	When two of your courses are scheduled at the same time. LSE for You has a “Student Timetable Clashes” screen to help identify simple clashes. Complex clashes may require contacting your department or the Timetables Team.	Timetables
Course guide	The guide for an individual course, giving details such as the convener, syllabus, course content, modes of assessment, and indicative reading lists.	Course selection ; Moodle ; your department pages
Seminars/Classes	Small-group teaching sessions where you discuss readings or work through problems with a class teacher and peers. Attendance is compulsory and active participation is expected, so come prepared. Master’s programmes tend to call these seminars; undergraduate programmes tend to call them classes.	Moodle
Office hours	Regular weekly slots when academic staff are available for one-to-one conversations. You can speak to any teacher during their hours, even if you’re not on their course. Some are drop-in; others require booking via the Student Hub.	Student Hub ; Academic support





Making changes to your programme

If you would like to make changes to your programme or mode of study, you have options. An **interruption** is a year-long approved break in your studies, with a return the following academic year. **Withdrawal** is permanent. A **programme transfer** moves you to a different degree at the same level, with approval from both old and new departments. A **change of mode** switches you between full-time and part-time study, usually on postgraduate programmes. All of these should be discussed with your department and may have implications for your visa, fees, and funding.

Who's who – the people behind your degree

There are plenty of people within your department who can support you, and knowing who handles what will get you to the right answer faster. The entries below indicate typical roles and job titles of people in your department.

Role	Who they are
Academic Mentor (AM)	A member of staff in your department assigned to you personally. They are there to support your progress – both in your studies and more broadly – and are an excellent point of contact whenever you have a question or concern. Your AM may also provide references for employment. On some taught Master's programmes, your AM may also be your Dissertation Supervisor, but check your department's arrangements.
Class Teacher	The person who leads your weekly class or seminar group. They may be a member of academic staff or a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA; possibly a PhD candidate). They mark work, give feedback, and hold office hours, where you can discuss topics from class further.
Course Convener	The academic responsible for running a particular course – setting its content, syllabus, assessments, and policies.
Departmental Senior Student Adviser (DSSA)	A confidential point of contact when something non-academic is affecting your studies. DSSAs can help you think through options around extensions, deferrals, changes to your studies (interruption, transfer, withdrawal), and how to access wellbeing and support services. Not all departments have DSSAs; some provide this support through other roles.



Role	Who they are
Programme Director	The academic responsible for the overall delivery and development of your degree programme. They handle programme-level issues and can approve requests to take courses outside your Programme Regulations.
Programmes Support Team/ Professional Services Team	The administrative team in your department and a valuable source of knowledge when you have practical queries about course selection, timetabling, Moodle, assessment processes, and student representation. They are led by the Department Manager.
Student Academic Representative	A student selected to represent the views of their peers at departmental committees such as the Student-Staff Liaison Committee. Selection takes place shortly after the start date of your programme, mostly from the first week of Autumn Term onwards.

One-to-one appointments with academic staff can usually be booked via [Student Hub](#). If you need to get in touch about anything via email, you can find contact details for your programme director, course conveners, and teachers on [Moodle](#). For any other contacts, check out your department's People page.

Student Voice: feedback on your programme

Your feedback is extremely important. There are several ways you can use your voice and shape the teaching and learning on your courses and programme.

Within your department, [Student Academic Representatives](#) (or programme reps) are students recruited to represent the views of their peers. They sit on [Student-Staff Liaison Committees \(SSLCs\)](#) (or Programme Forums), the main forum where elected reps discuss your feedback on your teaching and learning experiences with departmental staff on a termly basis.



There are also broader [Undergraduate/Postgraduate Taught Consultative Fora](#), made up of SSLC reps from across the School, as well as the LSESU Education Officer and Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education, allowing for School-wide feedback. Some of your reps will also attend your [Departmental Teaching Committee](#) each term, which oversee teaching and learning within departments, and help ensure effective student participation in educational decision-making.

You will have a chance to give feedback through [regular surveys](#) at both course and programme level, alongside broader surveys of the whole student experience including the [National Student Survey](#) for final-year undergraduates. These are generally coordinated by the [Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office \(TQARO\)](#).

Beyond your department, you can shape LSE at a School-wide level, for example, through [LSESU Student Voice](#), [Student Education Panels](#), and [LSESU leadership elections](#). See [Make your impact](#) earlier in this handbook for more opportunities.





Exams and assessments

Assessment at LSE comes in two forms. **Formative assessment** is practice – essays, problem sets, presentations, or mock exams that don't count towards your final grade. Formative assessments are where you can test ideas, experiment, and get helpful feedback. **Summative assessment** does count towards your final mark for a course, and might take the form of exams, coursework essays, group projects, presentations, or a dissertation.

Each department publishes **marking criteria** describing what markers are looking for – typically covering knowledge and understanding, use of literature, argument and analysis, and clarity of expression. Most written work also has a **word limit**, with rules on what exactly counts towards it and penalties for exceeding it set at department level.

If your programme includes exams, they'll usually take place in either the January or Spring exam period. Before you take any exam, read the School's official [Exam Procedures for Candidates](#) for full details of all exam regulations including personal items you're allowed to take into the exam room, writing in exam booklets or using computers for e-exams, and your **candidate number** – a unique five-digit number that ensures anonymous marking.

Another important element of exams that you'll find explained fully in the exam procedures is the School's [Fit to Sit](#) policy. This means that by entering an exam room or submitting an assessment, you declare yourself well enough to do so. If you are unwell or affected by serious circumstances, request an extension or deferral *before* the assessment – your [options](#) are much more limited afterwards.

Re-taking an exam or re-attempting an assessment is called a **resit**. Resits are normally held in one of two formal periods: the **In-Year Resit and Deferred Assessment Period (IRDAP)**, which typically runs in late August, or the **Resit and Deferred Assessment Periods (RDAP)**, which take place during the main Winter and Spring assessment periods the following year. Full details of taking resits and deferred assessments can be found on the [School's Re-entry pages](#). Eligibility, timing and rules vary by programme, so check the [Calendar](#) and your department's guidance.

If you think a result or decision needs to be challenged, there is a formal appeals process. Full details about the appeals process can be found [here](#).



Who can I talk to?

You can talk with your academic mentor, course convenor, or class teacher about feedback you receive.

You can talk with a [Learning Lab Study Adviser](#) about interpreting the marking criteria for an assignment or ways to use feedback to make progress.

For questions about the exam procedures, resits, or other administrative matters around exams and assessments, contact the [SSC Student Advice and Engagement Team](#).

The [SSC Student Regulations Team](#) handles appeals, allegations of misconduct and plagiarism, and complaints about academic matters. They also administer the process around exceptional circumstances and deferrals.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is the principle that the work you submit is your own and that you've taken responsibility for referencing others accurately and following your department's guidelines on working with other people and with AI tools. Here are some specific terms you should understand.

Plagiarism is presenting other people's words or ideas as your own, whether deliberately or accidentally, including failing to reference sources properly.

Collusion is collaborating with others on individually assessed work beyond what is permitted. **Contract cheating** is having someone complete an assessment on your behalf, and can also include the unauthorised use of GenAI tools. **Self-plagiarism** is reusing material from your own previously submitted work without proper attribution. More information about academic misconduct is in the [Regulations on Assessment Offences](#).

LSE provides all students with access to [Anthropic Claude for Education](#) and [Microsoft Copilot](#), however each course has its own **AI use policy**, set out on the course's Moodle page. Some courses permit some forms of AI use; others prohibit them entirely. **Turnitin** scans submissions for matches against other sources. Some departments let you submit drafts to Turnitin first to check your referencing. The **Turnitin similarity report** shows what percentage of your submission matches other sources. There is no safe maximum score: a low percentage can still be investigated and a high one does not automatically indicate misconduct.

When you submit summative work, you confirm an [academic integrity statement](#) affirming that the work is your own, that you have not colluded, and that you have followed AI and referencing rules. Suspected cases of misconduct are considered by an **Assessment Misconduct Panel**, and penalties can be severe.



Who can I talk to?

If you have questions about Turnitin, referencing, paraphrasing, using generative AI tools, or any other aspect of academic integrity, you can book an [Academic integrity one-to-one appointment](#). Sessions take place online and everyone will be seen individually in order to provide personalised advice – no question is too silly! The [Learning Lab](#) and [Library](#) also provide general guidance on academic integrity, referencing, and paraphrasing, through workshops, one-to-one appointments, and online resources.

Do note that some rules and regulations may vary from department to department, so it is worth checking your course guides and speaking to your teachers or academic mentor when in doubt, too.

The [SSC Student Regulations Team](#) handles allegations of misconduct and plagiarism, and complaints about academic matters.

When something affects your work

LSE has formal routes for situations where circumstances affect your assessed work. Ideally, these circumstances should be addressed before the work is due or attempted.

An **extension** is extra time on a coursework deadline, requested in advance and normally accompanied by supporting evidence. It is the most common route for short-term issues with submitted work. Full details can be found in the [Student Guidance on Extension Requests](#) document.

A **deferral** postpones an assessment to a later sitting, usually the next exam period. It is used when an extension is not enough or when the assessment has a fixed date, such as an exam. Like an extension, it is requested in advance, normally at least 24 hours before the deadline or exam start.

LSE publishes guidance on [religious observance and assessments](#) for students whose faith commitments may affect assessment participation.

[My Adjustments](#) refers to personalised plans of reasonable adjustments to adapt teaching, learning, and assessments to the needs of students with sensory or physical impairments, mental health conditions, or specific learning difficulties. They include **Teaching and Learning Adjustments** (TLAs) and [Central Exam Adjustments](#) (CEAs) and might feature extra time in exams, assistive technology, or changes to your study environment.



There is also a procedure to follow where circumstances cannot be addressed in advance. Submitting **Exceptional Circumstances (ECs)** is the only way to inform examiners about circumstances beyond your control that affected an assessment you have already attempted or were absent for. Find out more on the [Student Services Centre pages about ECs](#).

Who can I talk to?

The [Disability and Mental Health Service \(DMHS\)](#) is the service who puts My Adjustments in place, including Central Exam Adjustments. There is no requirement to tell the School about a disability. However, letting the DMHS team know about any long-term condition that has a substantial impact on your studies or your day-to-day life enables them to arrange adjustments and support.

The [SSC Student Advice and Engagement Team](#) answers questions and provides advice about academic matters including ECs, progression, deferral, interruption, withdrawal, and the School Regulations and Codes of Practice more generally.





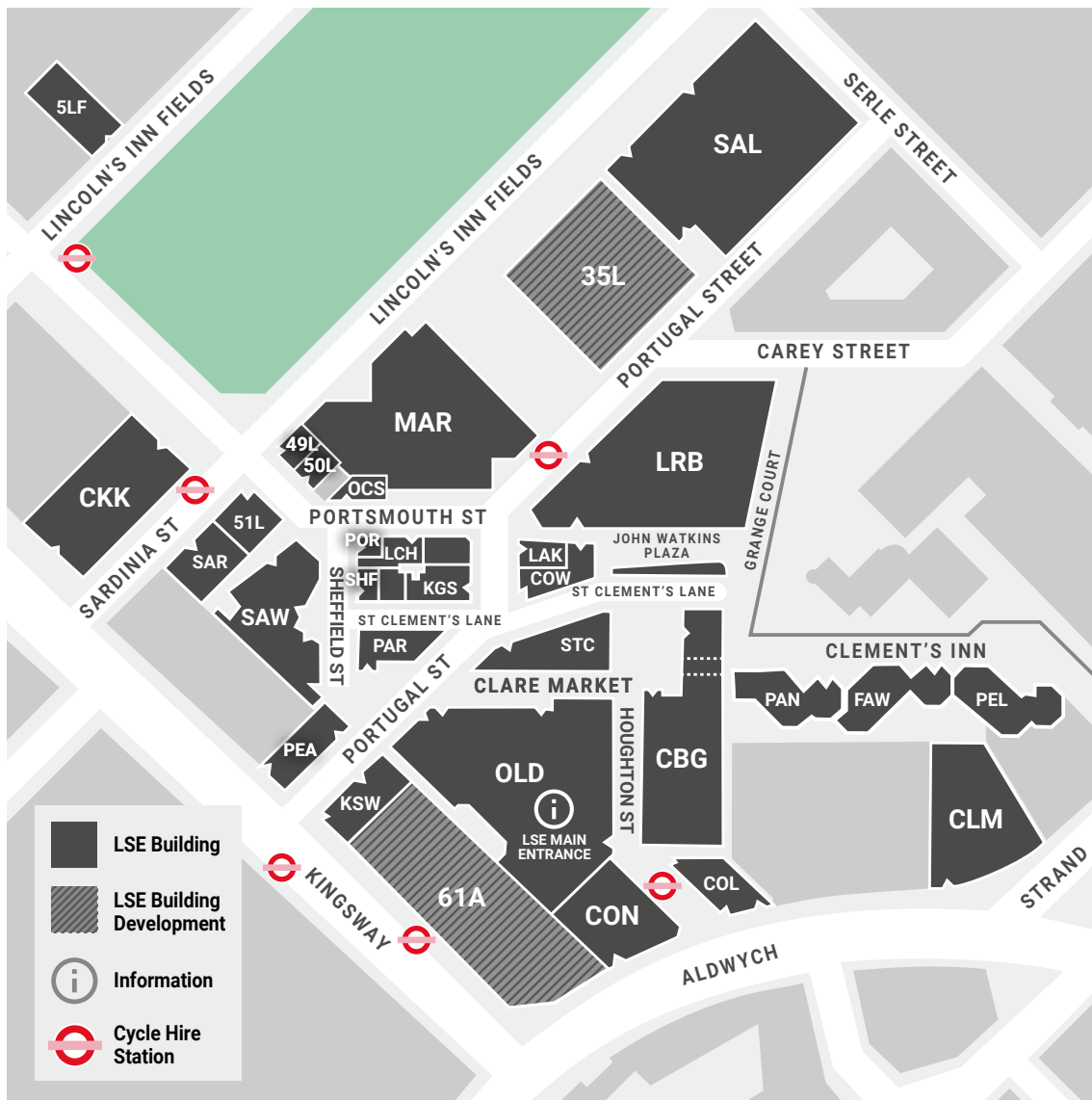
Codes, charters, and action plans

LSE has several codes and charters in place that outline the standards of education, conduct, and partnership between LSE, its staff, and students. Below is a selection of important codes, charters, and plans. A comprehensive list of School [Policies and Procedures](#) is available online.

- **[LSE Academic Code](#)**: Sets out what you can expect from your education in four areas: teaching standards, academic support, assessment and feedback, and student voice.
- **[LSE-LSESU Student Charter](#)**: Describes the community you're joining and how its members are expected to relate to each other.
- **[Codes of Good Practice](#)**: Explain the responsibilities of staff and students in relation to teaching, learning, and assessment.
- **[Ethics Code](#)**: Sets out the values the LSE community is expected to live by – covering responsibility, integrity, intellectual freedom, equality, collegiality, and sustainability.
- **[LGBTQ+ Inclusive Action Plan](#)**: Outlines six priorities to advance LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion.
- **[Race Equity Action Plan](#)**: Outlines six priorities to advance racial equity and inclusion, as part of the [Race Equity Framework](#).



LSE campus



Find out more on the [LSE campus map webpage](#).

[AccessAble](#) provides detailed accessibility guides for campus buildings, residences and study spaces, including route maps between locations to help students navigate campus confidently and independently. Explore more campus facilities with the [Facilities Guide for Current Students](#).

lse.ac.uk/International-History



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