



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



LSE Widening Participation

# GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS



# WELCOME

This guide has been put together by the LSE Widening Participation Team to answer some of the commonly asked questions parents and carers have about applying to and studying at LSE.

If you have any further questions, please contact [widening.participation@lse.ac.uk](mailto:widening.participation@lse.ac.uk)



# CONTENTS

- Page 3 **Introduction to LSE**
- Page 5 **The social sciences**
- Page 7 **How can I help my child choose a subject?**
- Page 9 **Making a successful application**
- Page 13 **Support for students at LSE**
- Page 15 **Our Graduates**
- Page 17 **Practical ways to support your child**
- Page 19 **Other sources of help**

To find out more about the widening participation activities we run or to see a brochure of all our activities go to our website: [lse.ac.uk/wideningparticipation](https://lse.ac.uk/wideningparticipation)

## WHAT IS LSE?

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) is the only university in the UK specialising in the study of the social sciences. It is widely regarded as the world's leading dedicated social science institution. The School offers programmes not only in economics and political science, but also in a wide range of social science subjects taught within 15 academic departments.



## HOW DOES LSE COMPARE TO OTHER UNIVERSITIES?



LSE ranks **#4** in the UK –  
University League Tables 2018



**Social Sciences** and **Management** at LSE ranks **#2** in the world, only rivalled by one university in the US. QS World University Rankings by Subject 2018



*"My parents were worried I would face a big culture clash. They had heard that LSE students were largely white and middle class and they were worried I would feel out of place as I am black and from a working class school and family. They feel reassured as I have interacted well with students from different backgrounds and I have also created a Somali society so that students like me can have a community on campus."*

**LSE undergraduate student**

# WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL SCIENCES?

The social sciences study human society and behaviour. Social science subjects studied at LSE include Economics, Social Policy, Political Sciences, Anthropology, Sociology, Geography, History, Law, Management, Philosophy, Finance, Mathematics, and Statistics.



Academics at LSE work to answer many of the questions that the public and governments ask about our lives today, such as:

- Does using mobile apps change the way children learn?
- Is there any link between air pollution and traffic accidents?
- What sort of housing should we build to meet the growing needs of London?
- How should countries work together to prevent wars and conflicts?
- What is the best way to help refugees rebuild their lives in a new country?

These are some examples of the many questions that social scientists seek to answer. If these are the sorts of questions that spark your child's interest, then they may wish to consider a social science degree.



# WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CHOOSING A SOCIAL SCIENCE SUBJECT?

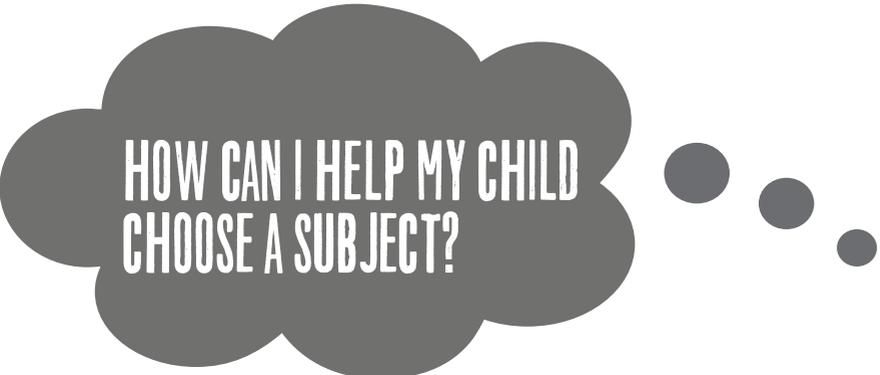
Studying the social sciences will offer your child the opportunity to develop a range of transferable skills. These include being able to: write reports and essays; read and understand large volumes of new information; and think critically – skills which the labour market is continually in search of.

The social sciences are engaging subjects to study and student feedback shows they enjoy the challenge of the questions they research and discuss as part of their studies.



## LSE 100

At LSE we recognise that no important issue should be fully understood through a single lens, so all undergraduate students take part in the exciting course LSE 100. This course brings all students together to debate and discuss different approaches to the big problems facing the world today. In 2016 and 2017 students tackled questions on nationalism, crime and punishment, the shift to the east, and poverty and inequality. In this course students find themselves in small classes debating a problem with others who may be studying a different discipline to them such as law, economics, statistics, management, anthropology or government.



## HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD CHOOSE A SUBJECT?

LSE offers subjects that fall into two main types:

**Quantitative subjects** such as economics, mathematics, finance and statistics where students gain skills using numbers and mathematical modelling to a high level to solve problems and make predictions.

**Qualitative subjects** such as sociology, law, international relations and anthropology where students develop strong skills in essay writing and critical analysis.

Choosing what to study at university can be a challenge. It can be tempting to choose a subject with an obvious

vocational pathway such as Engineering, Medicine or Law. However, there are a wide variety of non-vocational subjects which are highly regarded by employers. There are lots of positive reasons to choose to study a non-vocational subject at university. Most employers, including those offering competitive graduate training schemes, are looking for graduates who have a range of skills that they can use and develop in the work place. All our degrees require students to read and understand large quantities of new information and to use what they have learnt to solve complex problems. Flexibility of thinking and the ability to learn quickly is key to many jobs, especially those undertaken by new graduates.



## WHAT IS A JOINT HONOURS PROGRAMME?

Some LSE students take a joint honours programme, which is where they study two subjects as part of their programme. This can allow students to mix both quantitative and qualitative subjects together, such as Economics and

Government or to study two subjects to add variety such as Law and Anthropology, which incidentally is a qualifying law degree. A full list of the available joint honours programmes at LSE is available in the prospectus or online.

**Free resources on your doorstep to support your child's learning.**  
London has a wide range of free and easily accessible places to visit which can help develop an interest in certain subject areas.

## INTERESTED IN LAW?

The Royal Courts of Justice and the Supreme Court are open to the public – you may even be able to sit in on a live case.



## INTERESTED IN POLITICS?

Both the House of Commons and the House of Lords have public viewing galleries where members of the public can go and watch a debate.

## INTERESTED IN MATHS AND FINANCE?

Why not take a tour of the Bank of England Museum, and discover the history of the bank, and its buildings and the people who have shaped it for more than 300 years.



These are a few suggestions that some of our students have taken part in. They are not affiliated with LSE so please make sure you contact them directly before visiting.

# MAKING SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

LSE is a highly selective university. This means that we receive many more applications than we are able to make offers to for all of our courses.

The level of competition at the School means that LSE does not typically accept applications through Adjustment or participate in Clearing.

Our standard offers are given in our prospectus and on our website. These range from A\*AA - to AAB at A Level depending on the degree subject. Applicants will normally be predicted

by their teachers to meet or exceed these grades. We also normally expect UK applicants to have a grade B or 5 in English and Maths GCSE. For some degrees, applicants must have studied specific subjects at A Level. Prospective students should always consult the most recent prospectus for up to date entry requirements, and check with Undergraduate Admissions if they have any questions about applying. You can contact them at [ug.admissions@lse.ac.uk](mailto:ug.admissions@lse.ac.uk)

## WHAT ARE PREFERRED AND NON-PREFERRED SUBJECTS?

We consider traditional academic subjects to be the best preparation for studying at LSE. As such, we expect applicants to offer at least two full A levels (or equivalent) in these subjects. A full list of preferred and non-preferred subjects can be found in the prospectus or online: [www.bit.ly/2rQYG4w](http://www.bit.ly/2rQYG4w)

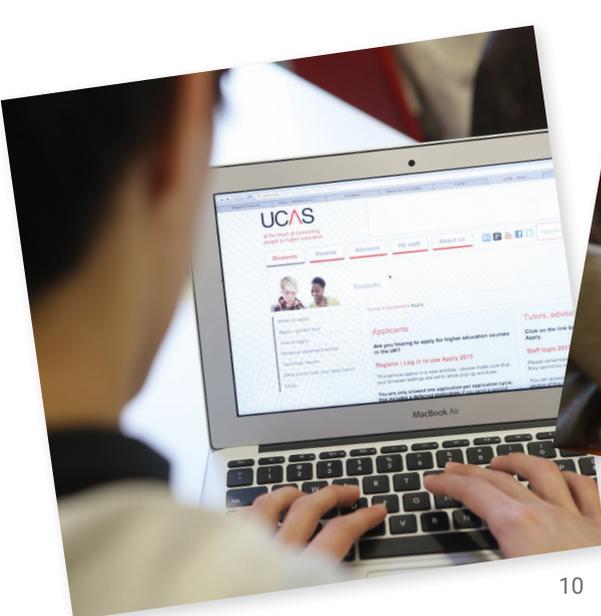


# HOW APPLICATIONS ARE ASSESSED?

Our admissions process aims to select people with the best potential, attitude and drive to succeed on the courses that we offer, irrespective of their background.

Each application is considered on its merit and in competition with other applicants that year. Applications are viewed holistically, considering all information presented on the UCAS application:

- Academic achievements and qualifications (achieved/predicted), including GCSE grades (or equivalent), AS grades or marks (where available), A level grades (or equivalent), and/or other accepted qualifications
- Personal statement
- Academic reference
- Contextual Information, such as schools attended or Widening Participation courses completed.



# HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD PREPARE A GOOD PERSONAL STATEMENT?

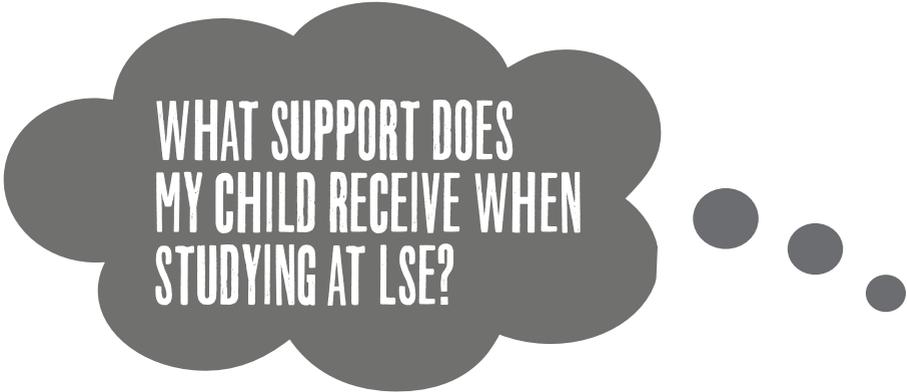
A good personal statement is vital – as we do not interview for places at LSE – it is the only opportunity for the applicant to explain their interest in their chosen subject.

The statement should indicate the nature and extent of your child's interest in the degree programmes they wish to study. It may be useful to think of the statement as a short academic essay about the parts of the course they are most looking forward to learning more about. Further guidance about writing a personal statement can be found here: [www.bit.ly/2rM1VyQ](http://www.bit.ly/2rM1VyQ)

One of the things we look for is that students have explored the subject outside of the curriculum and are able to reflect on what they have learnt. This might be through reading relevant books, listening to podcasts, doing online courses or lots of other things. Some students are reluctant to discuss academic ideas, but explaining what they are learning in class and beyond to non-experts (such as parents and carers) can be a good way for them to practice expressing their thoughts.







# WHAT SUPPORT DOES MY CHILD RECEIVE WHEN STUDYING AT LSE?

LSE offers a range of academic and pastoral support to students while they are studying.

## Teachers and Academic Advisers

For guidance about a particular course, your child can turn to their class teacher. Your child will also have an academic advisor who will be able to help with any academic, administrative or personal questions.

## LSE LIFE

LSE LIFE is LSE's new centre for academic, personal and professional development. It is the place for all students to come for support/guidance and ideas about how to succeed in their studies. LSE LIFE will help your child make the most of their time being a student at LSE. They run courses to help students develop the skills they need, for example, to write better essays, take better notes in lectures, and participate fully in seminars. They also have a team of study advisors who can meet students on a one-to-one basis and provide them with support in making the transition to university life; discuss their ideas about academic pursuits and pathways into professional life; or help them deal with any difficulties they might encounter in their first few months of university.

## Accommodation and support

### For students living in LSE's residential

**halls:** We have hall wardens and sub wardens who are there to help your child with problems that occur as well as organising social events to help students get to know each other.

### For students who live at home or in non-LSE owned accommodation:

Many of our students who come from London choose to live at home, in non-LSE halls of residence or with friends while studying. Our Off Campus Support Scheme helps all new undergraduate students who do not live in LSE accommodation connect with each other and the LSE community. Your child will be matched with a mentor who is usually from the same academic department and who helps them settle in at LSE and make the most of their time at university. They will also benefit from dedicated events and support from the Student Services Centre. Eligible students will be contacted in mid-September and the Off Campus Support Scheme coordinators can be contacted via email ([offcampussupport@lse.ac.uk](mailto:offcampussupport@lse.ac.uk)) with any questions about the scheme or eligibility.



### Peer support scheme:

The Peer Support Scheme provides student-led, informal and confidential assistance to all LSE students who would like some emotional support, help and reassurance. Volunteer Peer Supporters come from a variety of different backgrounds and the programme seeks to be reflective of the diversity of the LSE student body as a whole. There are peer supporters allied to each hall of residence but any student can contact any of the peer supporters for an informal chat, or get involved with events that they run. Search on the LSE website for Peer Support for more information.

### Disability and Wellbeing Service

The Disability and Wellbeing Service on the 3rd floor of Tower 3 offers support to students with any disability including mental health, learning difficulty or medical need. You can find out more by searching Disability on the LSE website. There is also a free confidential student counselling service provided on campus that is open to students.

*"They [my parents] were worried about the issue of 'mixing in'. There is often a reputation of LSE being very international and as having a high percentage of students coming from private schools. My parents were worried that coming from a state school would be seen as a difference. They were also worried about making friends as a 'student living at home' as many others had chosen to live in halls.*

*[Now] They understand there are other people in the same situation as me – both from state schools and who live at home compared to university accommodation and the like. They also now understand that you can still have friends who are not the same as you, as most people are really friendly and inclusive and a lot of my friends come from different backgrounds."*

**LSE Undergraduate Student**

# OUR GRADUATES

What are the likely job prospects after graduating from LSE?

## Key facts about LSE Graduates:

**90.62%** of leavers from **2015/16** were **working, studying** or **doing something else six months after graduation**

The most recent median **average starting salary** was **£29,000** for **graduates working full-time** in the UK – compared to the **national average £19,000 – £22,000**.

(Source: graduate-jobs.co.uk)

## Top four employment sectors for LSE graduates are:



The LSE Careers Service offer careers events, a vacancy board, one-to-one appointments, practice interviews, advice about further study, support if a student would like to set up your own business, and numerous online resources. They can help your child throughout their degree and also offer support for up to five years after graduation so whether your child is thinking of further study, changing career or moving up then the LSE Careers Service will still be here to help!

*"LSE places a huge emphasis on critical thinking and analysis which is so useful to my job! Working with so many students from different backgrounds and needs means that my ability to look beyond the obvious and question a lot of what students accept as 'normal' is vital. It has helped me become more empathetic towards others, more inquisitive and better equipped to anticipate and solve issues."*

**Busayo Twins**, General Secretary of LSE Students' Union 2016-17



*"We seek applicants for our graduate programme who are highly inquisitive and analytical and who want to apply their skills to real world economic and business issues. LSE students often fit this profile very well and perform strongly in our demanding assessment process, which is testament to the world-class education that LSE provides. As a result, LSE alumni are always well represented in our graduate intake and many have gone on to build highly successful careers at FTI."*

**FTI Consulting**

# PRACTICAL WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER

## Open Days

Attending open days are a great way to gain an in depth insight into different universities and courses. They are often held during the week so can be hard to fit around work, but don't feel you need to go to lots – attending one or two can help you get a feel for what factors might be important for your child in deciding where to study. At university, students will need to be independent and attending open days on their own can be good practice for this.

Our top tips for a successful open day include:

- Plan ahead and register in advance – some university open days can fill up quickly.

- Arrive early and make a day out of it – take time to view the accommodation, the city and get a proper feel for the environment.
- Attend the welcome talks – they'll tell you more about the university in general and other important information.
- Attend a number of related subject talks – a student interested in politics might also attend talks by the International Relations and Social Policy departments as they may discover another degree programme they are interested in.
- Speak to some current students – they have recently been facing the same questions as your child and can offer the insider view on life at that university.



# ACTIVITIES WE OFFER

The Widening Participation Team at LSE deliver a range of exciting activities that help students explore and learn more about university and the Social Sciences. A full list can be found on our website, we have included a description of our longer term projects that your child might like to participate in.

## Year 11 Summer School

The Year 11 Summer School offers students the opportunity to spend a week at LSE in the summer after completing their GCSEs. Students are given the chance to experience university life first-hand and have a taste of subjects available to them at university.

## LSE CHOICE

LSE CHOICE is an enrichment programme that takes place across Year 12 and Year 13. Students have the opportunity to study one of the following subjects: Economics, Government and Politics, History, Maths, or Sociology in greater depth. The programme consists of a week long, non residential summer school in August, followed by 16 Saturday two hour classes designed to enhance students' knowledge and understanding of certain topics relevant to the A-level curriculum.

## Pathways Programmes

We run two Pathways programmes in partnership with the Sutton Trust: **Pathways to Law** and **Pathways to Banking and Finance**, where students join in Year 12 and continue through to the end of Year 13. These programmes provide students with the skills needed to make a successful university application as well as the information, advice and guidance needed to succeed in a law and finance related careers. Students take part in activities such as lectures and seminars, careers and professional networking events, work placements and e-mentoring.



Details of all our activities can be found at [lse.ac.uk/wideningparticipation](https://lse.ac.uk/wideningparticipation)

# OTHER SOURCES OF HELP

LSE:

**[lse.ac.uk](http://lse.ac.uk)**

Universities and Colleges Application Service (UCAS):

**[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)**

Complete University Guide:

**[www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk](http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk)**

Prospects:

**[www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk)**