SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

MSD Postgraduate research
Welcome – Dr Terry McGenity, Graduate Director (Research),
A warm welcome to the School of Biological Sciences. We hope that you will enjoy your time here and make the most of the exciting opportunities available. You are now an important and integral part of the School community, contributing to its research activities, which fall into five groups: Ecology and Environmental Microbiology; Plant Productivity; Cancer and Stem Cell Biology; Protein Structure and Function; Genomics and Computational Biology. Each research group brings together several academic staff and their associated teams, who collaborate on projects, scholarly activity and knowledge exchange.

In the UK, academic research outputs are assessed periodically by the government in a process called Research Assessment Framework (REF). In the most recent REF, 85% of our research was rated as being of internationally recognised quality. This means that the School has an excellent research environment, which encourages novel ideas, critical reasoning and communication skills. Our strong focus on research means that you will be supervised by some of the leading academics in your chosen fields. You will work closely with your supervisor, technical staff, postdoctoral scientists and other postgraduate students. Our postgraduate programmes require commitment and hard work. However, the rewards for your endeavours are that you will carry out novel research, grow into highly skilled, independent research scientists, and along the way you will develop long-lasting friendships and collaborations.

We are committed to your career development and we will offer advice and resources to help you. It is essential that you plan ahead and take the necessary steps to develop your career and gain the necessary skills that a competitive job market demands. I look forward to seeing you in the School and wish you all the best with your postgraduate research studies.
About this handbook
This handbook gives you essential information about your School and the University.

Other helpful sources of information are available at www.essex.ac.uk/myessex and www.essex.ac.uk/students. Our friendly departmental staff are also here to help and you can find their contact details in this handbook.

At our three uniquely intimate campuses we celebrate diversity and challenge inequality. Whatever your background, race or sexual orientation, you’re part of a vibrant community that lives, learns and plays together.
## CONTENTS

### SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction and welcome  
   1.1 Term dates, calendar and academic week numbers  
   1.2 Link to *myEssex*  
   1.3 Pattern of the academic year  
   1.4 Study leave  
   1.5 Student responsibilities

### 2. About the School of Biological Sciences

2.1 Details of academics staff  
2.2 Administration and liaison in the School  
2.3 Location of common room, noticeboards, photocopying, stores  
2.4 School support  
2.5 Communication with students

### SECTION 2 – ACADEMIC MATTERS

3. Learning and Teaching  
   3.1 Learning, teaching and working as a Graduate Laboratory Assistant  
   3.2 Online resources  
   3.3 Registration, absence, intermitting and maximum period of study  
   3.4 Supervision  
   3.5 MSD Milestones  
   3.6 Inclusive learning experience  
   3.7 Disability and wellbeing  
   3.8 International students  
   3.9 Mature and Part-time students  
   3.10 Student representation  
   3.11 Library services

4. Research Skills Development  
   4.1 Proficio  
   4.2 Scientific societies and conferences  
   4.3 Travel fund  
   4.4 Best scientific article

5. Assessment  
   5.1 Principal Regulations for Research Degrees, including exit awards  
   5.2 Extenuating circumstances and withdrawing  
   5.3 Submission of the thesis  
   5.4 Examiners and the viva  
   5.5 Appeals, complaints and fitness to practice  
   5.6 Academic offences policy  
   5.7 Ethics
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.8 School safety, health and safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Referencing and good academic practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Referencing and good academic practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Thesis layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Proofreading policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Information relating to intellectual property rights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 3 – YOU MATTER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Practicalities: Getting started and IT matters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1 Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Find your way and room numbering system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 IT support, email account, computer labs, free MS Office, M: drive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4 Immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5 On campus facilities, such as printing services, lab opening times etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6 Graduation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>8. Skills, employability and experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1 Employability and careers centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Languages at Essex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Talent development centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4 Career hub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5 Frontrunners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6 Student ambassadors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7 Volunteering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.8 Big Essex award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9 Essex interns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.10 Other career resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9. You Matter: Health, welfare, support and safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1 Student services hub, including disability, wellbeing, counselling and confidential issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Harassment advisory network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3 Faith groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4 Nightline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5 Health and safety on campus, including personal evacuation plans and campus security details including the shuttle bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6 Residents support network (RSN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7 Health centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8 Student union advice centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9 University privacy statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SECTION 4 – ESSEX MATTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. The Essex Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1 The Essex Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2 Freedom of speech policy and the Code of Conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 Essex spirit, social media and other channels of communication with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4 The student’s union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5 Alumni</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME
SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Welcome to the School of Biological Sciences at the University of Essex. This handbook gives you information regarding the supervision of research students by academic staff, and on the timetable and monitoring of progress. The contents of this handbook are accurate at the time of release but revisions may occur from time to time. Notification of these will be made by email.

Graduate Director for Research Students
Dr Terry McGenity ext 2535 tjmcgen@essex.ac.uk Room 5.17

Graduate Administrator (Research)
Emma Revill ext 3321 ecrix@essex.ac.uk Room 4.01A

START DATES FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES 2017-2018
All Postgraduate Research Degree courses run for a full calendar year, e.g. October to October, January to January or April to April depending on your registration start date.

1.1 TERM DATES
Autumn term
Thursday 5th October 2017 – Friday 15th December 2017

Spring term
Monday 15th January 2018 – Friday 23rd March 2018

Summer term
Monday 23rd April 2018 – Friday 29th June 2018

Information relating to the University’s term dates for students can be found at https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/key-dates

1.2 THE myESSEX STUDENT PORTAL
MyEssex is the University’s student portal that you used during your application process. Once you’re a registered student, you can also use myEssex to update your personal details and as a quick reference guide to other student webpages: www.essex.ac.uk/dsh/myessex
1.3 PATTERN OF ACADEMIC YEAR

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<th>Week No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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1.4 ABSENCES WHILST ON YOUR COURSE
You must report any absences, annual leave or sickness to the Graduate Administrator (Research). For annual leave where you will be away from the university, a request must be made online via (https://www.essex.ac.uk/ef/) 

1.5 STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES
Professional doctorate students have a responsibility to:

- Read the documentation provided, including the regulations for your degree, this Code of Practice and details of the departmental supervisory arrangements. You should sign a form to certify that you have read the documentation and agree to abide by it.
- Attend lectures and seminars for taught modules and attend meetings with your professional practice and research supervisors and Supervisory Panels as arranged and prepare adequately for them, notifying your supervisor in the event of unavoidable absence.
- Keep in regular contact with your professional practice and research supervisor. Students and supervisors are required to communicate, whether face-to-face or by electronic means, to engage in discussion/review of the student's work and progress at least once a month (and bi-monthly for part-time students).
- Provide updates on progress as outlined in the Progress and Appeals Procedures for Research Degree Students 
- Complete the work required for your taught modules and carry out, as far as possible, the work agreed with your supervisor and submit written work as agreed so that you meet the required milestones.
- Familiarise yourself with University and subject-specific guidelines on ethical research, including data protection matters, and with health and safety and intellectual property regulations and obtain ethical approval as appropriate.
- Familiarise themselves with the expectations and conventions regarding academic referencing other people’s work.
- Attend any research training and generic skills courses as agreed with the PD Director.
- Submit reports on progress as requested to professional practice and research supervisors, Supervisory Panels, the PD Director, or the departmental Research Students’ Progress Board.
• Keep a record of your personal progress, including a copy of agreed training needs, courses that need to be attended and when they are attended. In the case of professional practice, this will usually take the form of a professional practice portfolio which forms part of the assessment for the degree. In the case of research, this may take the form of a log book or research portfolio to be signed off by your supervisor, but will not be part of the assessment for the research component.

• Inform the relevant module coordinator or supervisor and/or the PD Director promptly if there are any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect your work. Notify the Supervisory Panel/Research Students’ Progress Board in writing of any extenuating circumstances that you believe have significantly affected your performance.

• Discuss any supervisory problems with your supervisor or PD Director or the Head of Department. Alternatively, if they feel unable to talk to a member of the departmental staff, they should contact the Postgraduate Research Education Team to discuss their problems. Any discussions will remain confidential if requested. Students may request a change of supervisor but should note that it may not always be possible for suitable alternative arrangements to be made.

• You must present your thesis for examination by the end of the final term of your minimum period or completion period, depending on your programme of study. A request for an extension of up to two weeks to the submission deadline may be made. Requests must be made to the Postgraduate Research Education Team in advance of the deadline. If granted, an extension, you will not be expected to register or pay the prescribed fee for that two week period. If you fail to present your thesis for examination by the deadline, you will be deemed to have withdrawn permanently from the University and from your research degree unless you are permitted an exceptional further period of completion. Extenuating circumstances that affect your ability to submit your thesis by the agreed deadline will be considered by the Dean on a case-by-case basis.

• Familiarise yourself with the guidelines on thesis submission and with the examination process, and ensure that you are prepared for your viva.

2. ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

2.1 ACADEMIC STAFF
For a full list of staff biographies please visit http://www.essex.ac.uk/bs/staff/Staff.aspx?type=academic

• Dr Selwa Alsam
• Dr Vassiliy Bavro Research Group Convenor (Protein Structure & Function)
• Dr Louise Beard
• Dr Ulrike Bechtold
• Dr Greg Brooke
• Dr Tom Cameron
• Professor Ian Colbeck
• Dr Paul Dobbin - Director of Recruitment
• Dr Alex Dumbrell - Joint Research Group Convenor (Ecology & Environmental Microbiology)
• Professor Nelson Fernández
• Professor Richard Geider (p/t)
• Dr Lauren Headland
• Dr Leanne J. Hepburn (p/t) Employability Development Director
• Dr Mike Hough
• Dr Matt Jones
• Dr Gareth D. Jones
• Professor Elena Klenova
• Professor Tracy Lawson - Director of Impact, Research Group Convenor (Plant Productivity)
• Dr Julie Lloyd - Director of Education
• Dr Etienne Low-Decarie
• Dr Pradeepa M Madapura
• Dr Antonio Marco -
• Dr Terry McGenity Graduate Director (Research)
• Dr Boyd A. McKew
• Dr Metodi Metodiev
• Professor Philip M Mullineaux Head of School
• Dr Jordi Paps
• Professor Jules Pretty - Deputy Vice-Chancellor
• Dr Filippo Prischi
• Professor Christine A. Raines Dr Brandon Reeder
• Dr Philip Reeves
• Professor Christopher A. Reynolds
• Professor Leonard Schalkwyk – Director of Research; Research Group Convenor (Genomics & Computational Biology)
• Dr Nicola Slee (p/t)
• Professor David J. Smith Dr Michael Steinke
• Dr Richard Strange
• Dr Dima Sivistunenko
• Dr Vladimir Teif
• Professor Graham J.C. Underwood - Executive Dean, Faculty of Science and Health
• Dr Corinne Whitby - Joint Research Group Convenor (Ecology & Environmental Microbiology)
• Dr Jonathan Worrell
• Dr Nicolae Rada Zabet
• Dr Ralf Zwacka - Graduate Director (Taught); Research Group Convenor (Cancer and Stem Cell Biology Group)

Emeritus Professors

• Professor Neil R. Baker
• Professor Richard J. Cherry
• Professor Tim Gray
• Professor David B. Nedwell
• Professor John Norton - Leverhulme Emeritus Professor
• Professor Martin H. Sellens
• Professor Glyn Stanway
• Professor Mike T. Wilson

Honorary Research Professors

• Dr Tony Elston
• Dr Philip Murray
• Dr Bruce Sizer

Honorary Senior Lecturers

• Dr Rowan Casey
• Dr Sankaran Chandrasekharan
• Dr John Corr
• Dr Simon Marsh
Visiting Academics

- Dr Brian Fitzsimmons
- Dr David Heath

Visiting Fellows

- Dr Jamila Alhoderi
- Mr John Bartington
- Dr Sinan Battah
- Dr Rachel Bragg (Hine)
- Dr Nathan Davies
- Mr William Falco
- Dr Catherine Hesford
- Dr Jane Heywood
- Dr Richard D. Jurd
- Dr Nelida Leiva Eriksson
- Mr Andrew May - Executive Fellow
- Dr Gergana Metodieva
- Dr Michael Moffat
- Dr Zak Nasar
- Dr Niwedie Paluwatta Muhandiramalage
- Dr Mahasweta Saha
- Mr Lieke Schiphof Godart
- Dr Gary Silkstone
- Mr Victor Urrutia Figueroa

Visiting Professors

- Professor Graham Mitchell

2.2 ADMINISTRATION AND LIAISON IN THE SCHOOL

The Head of School is responsible for all members of the School, academic, technical and administrative staff and students, and for the work, equipment and buildings of the School. The Head of School represents the School in discussions with the University authorities on all academic, financial and personnel matters. Appointments can be made to see the Head of School through the School Office Administrator (room 4.30).

The Graduate Director (Research) is responsible the admission and progress of research students. If you have any problems about your research you should first discuss this with your Supervisor and then your Supervisory Board but the Graduate Director (Research) is also available for consultation and discussion. Appointments can be made to see the Head of School through the Graduate Administrator (Research room 4.01).

The Graduate Administrator (Research) 4.01 is responsible for the co-ordination of the work of the Graduate Office including full administration (recruitment, registration and progress) for postgraduate research students. She supports the Graduate Director and postgraduate research students and provides guidance for completing and submitting School scholarships, travel grants and other funding opportunities. She co-ordinates and manages the scholarship training opportunities and process/manages Graduate Laboratory Assistants contracts and payments. She is the interface between students, the School and univeristy as well as external contacts and partnerships. In addition, she is responsible for maintenance and updating of the postgraduate webpages (internet and intranet).
SCHOOL MEETINGS
These are normally held once a term. All groups of staff and students are represented at the meeting. There are Postgraduate representatives and you may ask for information, or put forward items for discussion, through these representatives.

RAISING PROBLEMS
If any difficulties arise during the course of your work or supervisory arrangements it is preferable that they are raised initially with your Supervisor. If this is not possible, speak with the Graduate Administrator (Research) who will arrange an appointment for you with the Graduate Director (Research). Problems of a more general nature, applying to several postgraduate students, may be raised at the Postgraduate Research Student Staff Liaison Committee.

2.3 COMMON ROOM
The Darwin Room (Room 4.11) is the School Common Room. There are microwaves and fridges provided but please do clean after use. We hope you will co-operate to keep the room tidy and presentable for visitors.
Please remember that visitors to the School are not allowed to enter the labs without authorisation, but are welcome to use the Common Room as an informal meeting place.

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH ROOM
All Postgraduate Research Students can use the hot desk facilities in the Postgraduate Research Room (Room 4.01). A copy of the PGR Room Rules will be emailed to you and accessible online via Moodle.

POSTGRADUATE NOTICEBOARD
The Postgraduate Research noticeboard is located in the main corridor opposite room 4.30. Information relating to conferences, support and scholarships are advertised here.

PHOTOCOPYING
Photocopying facilities are available in the School, in the Library, and the Copy Shop in Square 4. The Copy Shop has a range of sophisticated equipment and provides an inexpensive binding service for Literature Reviews, Annual Reports and, eventually, your thesis copies for examination. For further information: http://www2.essex.ac.uk/printing/. You will be given photocopying cards of 100 units for use with the School photocopier.

INTERNET
The BS School pages on the Internet http://www.essex.ac.uk/bs/ are used to present key information about what we do, for advertising and promotional purposes. This includes:

a) general information about degree courses (includes scheme aims and structures and brief module choices).
b) the postgraduate training - studentships, topics, courses
c) the research interests and activities of the staff
d) staff lists and contact details and up to date publication lists
e) other links and activities (e.g. meetings, seminars).

INTRANET
Teaching administrative material and other information that is for the exclusive use of Biological Sciences staff and students is mounted on the Intranet. The Intranet can be reached from the link on the Biological Sciences home page, (see ‘on-line resources’) or by entering the direct link: http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/. From this page you can link to safety information, finance claims and ordering details.

ORDERING AND STORES
You can obtain items (e.g. stationery, photocopying cards) from the Stores on the second floor (Room 2.07). The purchase of other materials and equipment using School order forms
should be made in consultation with your supervisor or the technician in charge of your laboratory.

For up-to-date opening hours and information: http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/lab/admin/stores/default.htm

USE OF EQUIPMENT
Many items of equipment are heavily used and their use must be reserved in advance on an appropriate booking sheet. Only people whose names have been approved in writing may use the autoclaves. Please inform your supervisor of any faulty equipment by email.

REPAIRS
If you find any equipment that is broken or not functioning properly you should complete a repair form on the Intranet (http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/lab/faults/default.htm). Failing this you should notify the technician in charge of your laboratory. You should never try to repair equipment yourself.

LATE WORKING
a) The normal working hours of the School are 8.00 am until 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.
b) Those working in the School outside working hours must have a late working pass.
c) The late working register by the entrance door must be signed, with the exception of those working between 7.00am and 8.00am on weekdays. This book is checked regularly by Security Officers for persons present in the building and is particularly important in the event of a fire alarm evacuation.
d) Researchers working after 10.00 pm and before 7.00 am must obtain written permission from their supervisors and notify the Technical Services Manager in advance.
e) Such permission may only be given for periods of 7 days.
f) Those working after 10.00 pm should inform patrol officers at the Information Desk before 10.00 pm or starting work if this is later.
g) After completing a session of late work, the worker should inform the Information Desk that he/she is leaving the building.

You will only be issued a late working pass when you have been fully trained in the laboratory. To obtain this a passport size photograph should be attached to the Late Working Pass Application form (http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/documents/forms/default.shtm). There is a photo machine outside Students Union Bar. You will also be given a copy of Late Working Pass Procedures which must be followed. Passes will be issued by David Knight, the Technical Services Manager in room 4.02, and must be carried at all times and produced when asked by a Security Officer http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/security/default.shtm.

2.4 SCHOOL SUPPORT
If you experience any issues whilst studying with us, it is advisable to discuss with your supervisor first. If however, you experience supervisory problems please contact the Graduate Administrator (Research) first. She will be able to advise and if necessary, arrange a meeting with the Graduate Director. In addition, more general concerns can raised via the student-staff liaison committee meeting or through the self-assessment forms. The university offers a variety of support mechanisms to help with accommodation, visa advice, well-being and development. Full details are explained further in this handbook and found via the university website.
2.5 EMAIL USE
Important and urgent information will be distributed by e-mail and therefore you must check your e-mail daily, or you may miss essential information. This is also a way for you to communicate with your supervisor(s) or other School staff. **We cannot email to private email addresses only Essex email accounts**

PIGEONHOLES
The pigeonholes for research postgraduate students are found in room 3.05 on the 3rd floor; they are organised alphabetically. Please remember to check your pigeonholes regularly. These pigeonholes are also used by research staff and technicians. The academic and administrative staff pigeon holes are also located in room 3.05.

ADDRESS
You will have been allocated or found satisfactory accommodation in the Colchester area. Please make sure that you keep your myEssex Student Portal updated with your current contact details (term time address, mobile phone number, external email address), so that you can always be contacted in an emergency. Also inform the Graduate Administrator (Research) of any changes.
3. LEARNING AND TEACHING

3.1 POSTGRADUATE TRAINING

In addition to laboratory/field work and laboratory training directly related to your research topic, research students are also required to attend a more formal, structured training programme as follows.

THE UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME

New graduate students are required to attend the following compulsory courses in their first year:

- DOCTORAL WELCOME CONFERENCE
  This is designed to introduce participants to researching at Essex and to mark the start of their doctoral journey with us.

- GRADUATE LABORATORY ASSISTANTS
  All new research postgraduates must complete the training course if they wish to become Graduate Laboratory Assistants in undergraduate practicals. If you are in further completion or about to enter further completion you are not allowed to undertake the role of Graduate Laboratory Assistants. You will be notified of dates for training via email. Students should discuss with their supervisor if they wish to be considered for these duties.

THE SCHOOL POSTGRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAMME

This programme starts in Week 1 and continues throughout the year. Most of these training seminars and meetings are compulsory and progress is conditional on adequate attendance. They cover topics of common importance to all Biological Sciences research students, and have been designated by the Research Councils as topic areas in which graduate students must receive training. There is a training programme for each year of study and include sessions on writing a Literature Review, Annual Report writing, preparation of a thesis (includes School guidelines on the preparation of a thesis), and preparing for the viva. Information on training sessions throughout the year will be emailed directly to you.

UNDERGRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT COURSE MODULES

Students are encouraged to attend undergraduate and/or postgraduate lectures (usually not more than 2 course units, 40 contact hours per year) to provide additional academic background necessary for their research project. You should discuss possible course choices with your supervisor.

SCHOOL SEMINARS

Research students are expected to attend the regular School Seminars held during term time. These usually take place on Thursdays from 1.00 – 2.00pm. It is important to continue to extend your general scientific education. The seminars are selected to be of wide biological interest. Full a list of seminar details please visit http://www.essex.ac.uk/bs/news_and_seminars/seminars.aspx.
3.2 ONLINE RESOURCES
Our online resource bank (ORB) stores important module materials such as reading lists and past exam papers.

We use Moodle as our online learning environment, to enhance face-to-face teaching. It lets you get to course materials, and has built-in features to enhance learning such as discussion forums, chat facilities, quizzes and wikis.

FAser is our online coursework submission and feedback system. Use it to check coursework deadlines, upload coursework and receive electronic feedback all in one place.

faser.essex.ac.uk
www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/learning-technology/

General information about the degree schemes the School offers, the postgraduate training and the research interests and activities of the staff are available at http://www.essex.ac.uk/bs/. This includes simplified overall degree descriptions and structures.

The School has administration, teaching (undergraduate and postgraduate), research and recruitment material held on:

a) Moodle https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/
b) The Internet http://www.essex.ac.uk/bs/ (externally visible)
c) The Intranet http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/ (only visible to BS Dept staff and students).

3.3 REGISTRATION, ENROLLING AND TRANSCRIPTS
All new students and returning students must register at the start of each academic year. The full process for new students includes activating your student record for the academic year - which is held by our Postgraduate Research Education Team – getting your email account, access to IT and library services, enrolment on modules and confirming your contact details.

You should discuss any proposed change of degree title with your supervisor. One you have decided you want to change your degree title, you will need to make a formal request using the online Change of Course/Degree title form (available here: www.essex.ac.uk/esf/)

Until your final term, you may request a transfer from one mode of study to another, for example from full time to part time, including distance learning, or vice-versa. You should discuss any proposed change with your supervisor.

If you are a sponsored student, you should discuss any proposed change with your funding body and/or check its terms and conditions. If you are a Research Council funded student you should contact the Student Services Hub to discuss your request to change your mode of study.

Once you have decided you want to change your mode of study, you will need to make a formal request, using the online Change of Mode of Study form, which will need to be approved by your department and the Dean. You can find the form at: www.essex.ac.uk/esf/

If your request is approved your minimum and maximum period will be adjusted pro-rata.

Please read carefully our guidance on Tier 4 and course changes here:
http://www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/studies/changes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research degree</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters by Dissertation (MA or MSc by dissertation)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>Two years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Philosophy (MPhil)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>Five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Medicine (MD)</td>
<td>PT only</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>Four years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>Seven years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy Integrated (PhD)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>Five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Eight years</td>
<td>Nine years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate</td>
<td>FT/PT</td>
<td>See individual programmes</td>
<td>See individual programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table taken from the Principal Regulations for Research Degrees – Appendix 1)

3.4 SUPERVISION AND PROGRESS

This section of the Postgraduate Handbook describes the School procedures and arrangements for supervision and monitoring progress.

LABORATORY NOTEBOOK
All PhD students receive one complimentary laboratory notebook per academic year. The laboratory notebook facilitates the keeping of a valid record of your research work. Accurate records will allow you to prove when a particular idea was generated. It will also allow you to register details of each experiment and when they were done. This Notebook belongs to the student/researcher and the supervisor or head of laboratory. The School requires that you adhere to a set of guidelines in completion of the Notebook and these will be circulated via email.

All MSD students have a supervisor or supervisors. Your most important academic contact in the School is your supervisor. Your supervisors will guide you in your studies including your training in the laboratory. Students meet with their supervisors on a regular basis. The frequency of meeting will vary with different projects and also at different stages of your studies but is likely to be weekly or fortnightly. Meetings and discussions with supervisors should be recorded in your laboratory notebook. Consultation with your supervisors is particularly important when you are writing up your thesis. The supervisors should see all chapters with time to make comments and suggest revisions before your deadline for submission.

A full description of the responsibilities of supervisor and student are described in the accompanying document “Responsibilities of Supervisor and Student” and in the Code of Conduct [https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/codes-higher](https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/codes-higher). As research students you are entitled to six weeks annual leave which must be agreed with your supervisor and the Graduate Office. As detailed in the code of practice regulation 4.28 any research time conducted outside the UK must be approved by the Head of School. A form must be completed which can be obtained from the Graduate Office.
ASSESSMENT GENERAL POINTS
PRINCIPAL REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES AND THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH DEGREES
www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/regulations-higher;
https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/codes-higher

The Principal Regulations and the Code of Practice are extremely important documents that set out both your responsibilities, and the responsibilities of the University to you. Take time to familiarise yourself with them. They outline the roles and responsibilities of you, your supervisor, your Supervisory Panel and the Research Student Progress Board.

SUPERVISORY BOARD
All research students have a Supervisory Board; the role of the Supervisory Board is to review the student’s progress. The Board consists of the supervisor(s) plus at least one other member of academic staff who should Chair the Board. The supervisor nominates the other member(s) of the Supervisory Board who should be generally familiar with the field of research so they can meaningfully review the student’s progress but they are not directly involved with supervising the research project. The composition of an individual’s Supervisory Board will be notified to the student before or at the time the first report is submitted i.e. towards the end of the Autumn term.

The Supervisory Board formally meets with the student at least twice a year, in December and in June (subject to your start date, please refer to the flow chart). The system of Supervisory Boards is intended to give the students a different perspective on their work and also experience of discussing and defending their work. They may also give feedback on written work such as the Annual Reports. The Supervisory Board also reviews training undertaken and further training needed.

After each meeting the Supervisory Board will agree on a report which is sent to the Graduate Administrator (Research) and the student. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the student is informed of any recommendations made by the Board. The board report form is submitted to the Research Students Progress Committee where all recommendations are approved and confirmed. A copy of all board report forms are then submitted to the Postgraduate Research and Education team.

GENERAL POINTS
You will have at least two meetings with your Supervisory Board and you are required to produce the documents described below, depending on the stage of your programme, that will form the basis of the meeting. See the flow charts to find the deadlines for handing in these documents. Hard copies of your documents should be given to each member of the Supervisory Board and an electronic copy to the Graduate Administrator (Research).

FIRST YEAR
Interim Board:
Each student is required to produce a short written report (1000 words maximum) two months after the commencement of their programme. This will:

- briefly describe the background of the research project, including a few key references.
- set out the scope and goals of the research project.
- include an outline plan of the experimental programme.
- identify relevant training courses.

Your report will be discussed with you at your Supervisory Board. Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will then write a report summarising progress, highlighting any weaknesses, and recommending whether you are allowed to proceed to the next stage.
These reports are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

**Annual Board:**
Two documents are required, a Literature Review and a First Year Annual Report. To help you to plan and spread out your work, the deadlines for these are different, so please see the flow charts.

**Literature Review**
An extensive Literature Review should be produced, discussing the background of your project and placing it in the context of previous work in the field. It is written during your first and second terms. Writing the review will introduce you to the appropriate background scientific literature for your project and, with regular updating, will form the basis of the first chapter of your thesis. There will be a seminar on the approaches to writing the Literature Review in the Autumn Term (see your Training Programme timetable). The Literature Review should:

- be thorough and logically structured.
- be **5000 words** maximum in length.
- be fully and correctly referenced (consult the Guidelines for Referencing below).
- have an abstract of approximately 300 words that outlines why the research area is important and summarises what major conclusions can be drawn from the review.

**First Year Annual Report**
This should succinctly summarise progress to date. The format of this report is based on that of the MSD thesis so that you can practice in writing clearly and logically and presenting data in the correct manner. Also, it is important that you use abbreviations, species names, etc. correctly and present references in the correct format in the text and in the reference list.

The 1st year Annual Report should be no more than **3000 words** (figures, diagrams and the reference list are in addition to this). Make sure the pages are numbered. The report must have a:

- **Title page** (title, your name, supervisor’s name year of study and date).
- **Summary/Abstract** (approximately 300 words) explaining why the work is important, the purpose of the research, the methods used, summary of key results and main conclusions.
- **Introduction** which sets out the problem you are investigating, but should not be an extensive review of the literature because you have already written a Literature Review.
- **Materials/Methods section**, which should be complete with a description of all the methods used.
- **Results section**, which should be presented in exactly the same way as for the final thesis or for publication. Figures and tables should be numbered and figures should have legends and tables should have headings. The legends should be clear and self-explanatory and contain the key to symbols or lines used in the figure. Appropriate software packages should be used for preparing figures and tables. Microscope images, maps etc should have scale bars. Statistical analysis, if appropriate, should be included. The results section should also have a **written description or commentary** on the data you have presented.
- **Discussion section.** In the Discussion you are addressing the general question: What do your results mean? You need to set your findings in the context of the existing body of knowledge. You should discuss any possible limitations in your
methods and the reliability of your results. The report should be correctly referenced in the text and in the reference section at the end.

- **Reference list.** Correctly and consistently formatted.

With your report you must also include:

- a **plan and timetable** for the remaining part of your practical work and writing up.
- a thesis plan.
- **resubmit your literature review** as this is a working document.
- research completed (experimental)
- produce **one draft chapter**

The Annual Report will be discussed with you at your Supervisory Board. Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will then write a report summarising progress, highlighting any weaknesses, and recommending whether you are allowed to proceed to the next stage. These reports are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

**COMPLETION YEAR**

You can submit your thesis and be examined at the end of your Minimum Period. If you submit before the start of the next term then you can avoid Completion Year Fees. If you need to use the Completion Year to prepare and submit your thesis, you will have two Supervisory Board meetings.

**Interim Board:**
The documents required for this Annual Board are:

- completed **final draft** or **sufficient chapters for submission**
- **timetable** to thesis submission.

The documents are discussed at your Interim Supervisory Board meeting. You will receive feedback on the chapters submitted. Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will write a report summarising progress and recommending whether you are allowed to proceed in the Completion Year. The reports from the Supervisory Board are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team for the Dean’s approval (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

**Please ensure you complete the Approval of Title form two months before you intend to submit**

**Completion Annual Board**
The documents required for this Annual Board are:

- completed **final draft** or **sufficient chapters for submission**
- **timetable** to thesis submission.

The documents are discussed at your Annual Supervisory Board meeting. You will receive feedback on the chapters submitted. Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will write a report summarising progress and suggesting how you can be helped to complete the thesis within the time limit. The reports from the Supervisory Board are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team for the Dean’s approval (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).
VISA ARRANGEMENTS TIER 4
Overseas research students are sponsored until the maximum date (i.e. four years from when you start). If you submit within the normal time frame and your viva is held within 3 months of submission your visa will cover this period of time. The university does not automatically sponsor students under examination or in corrections. This is assessed on a case by case basis via the Postgraduate Research and Education team. Further information can be viewed via http://www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/

If you fail to attend a meeting each month with your supervisor (or alternatively substantive communication, such as submitting a piece of written work, date etc. for students working remotely) your supervisor is required to notify the Graduate Administrator who will inform the Graduate Director and the Tier 4 team

RESEARCH STUDENTS’ PROGRESS BOARD (RSPB)
This committee formally monitors the progress of all research students on an annual basis. The RSPB is chaired by the Graduate Director (Research) and includes the Director of Research, and at least two other academics plus the Graduate Administrator (Research). Students do not attend this meeting. On the basis of the Supervisory Board reports the RSPB will make one of the following recommendations to the Dean of the Postgraduate Research and Education team:

a) that the student be allowed to proceed to the next year:
b) that the student’s progress to the PhD programme is confirmed;
c) that the student’s studies be discontinued;
d) that the student’s status be altered (e.g. upgraded or downgraded)

The Dean will receive a report from the RSPB outlining the recommendations for each individual student. If a recommendation is made for a student’s status to be downgraded or their studies discontinued the student will be formally notified and given an opportunity to discuss the recommendation with the Board. If a student requests a review of the recommendation this is considered formally as an appeal (see below). At the end of their minimum period (three years for PhD) the RSPB may recommend that the student enters the completion period. For this the student must have completed all laboratory work/field work and written several chapters of the thesis.
### 3.5 MSD MILESTONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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</table>
| M1: Agreement on research topic and assessment of training needs and knowledge required to undertake research project and complete the thesis. | - A brief description of the general research topic.  
- Training Needs Analysis to be completed. | - By the end of Term 1  
- By the end of Term 1 |
| M2: Clarify research topic and demonstrate an understanding of topic and relevance to wider research | Research Project Proposal, including (dependent on subject area):  
- Write central research problem/questions to be answered.  
- Identify the techniques and protocols to be used including feasibility and access to core facilities.  
- Methodological considerations.  
- Feasibility Report – identifying sources, access, Health and Safety aspects and ethical considerations  
- Create project plan, outlining objectives for each stage. | By Term 3 |
| M3: Demonstrate the ability to produce work of the quality and quantity in order to complete a Masters by Dissertation. | Evidence that academic writing is of standard and ability expected at Masters by dissertation level, including adequate referencing and language skills.  
- Write critical literature review  
- Formulate a critique of the Literature Review | By end of Term 3 |
| M4: Demonstrate work of the quality and quantity expected to be in a position to complete within one year | - Create a detailed, realistic plan of work leading to submission  
- Produce 1 draft chapter  
- Report on research undertaken to date  
- Research completed (experimental, empirical and theoretical work, where relevant)  
- Produce supervisory board report written in an appropriate subject specific style | By Supervisory Board (Term 3) |
| M5: Demonstration of effective project management through the setting of research goals and prioritisation of activities. | Create a detailed, realistic completion plan (if required) | By Supervisory Board (Term 3) |
| M6: Subject-specific milestones | Present poster at Graduate Forum | |
Completion Year (if needed)
M7: Clear evidence of progress towards submission
  - Completed final draft of thesis or sufficient chapters for supervisor(s) comments
  - Completion year plan (if necessary)
  - Evidence of progression to be considered at Supervisory Board
  - Oral presentation at Graduate Forum

By Supervisory Board prior to submission

The deadlines above are for full-time students. For part-time students term 1 equates to term 2, term 2 to term 4 and term 3 to term 6.

### 3.6 INCLUSIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR ALL
The School of Biological Sciences is committed to promoting a positive and inclusive working environment for our scientists. In addition, the university offers support mechanisms for our disabled students, international students and part-time students (see under section 2).

### SUPPORT FOR FEMALE STUDENTS
The School of Biological Sciences has a large and vibrant community of female scientists working at all levels in research, teaching, management and outreach. The University was awarded the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award in November 2013 in recognition of its continuing work to support women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects (https://www1.essex.ac.uk/equality/athenaswan/default.aspx). The School of Biological Sciences first achieved its Athena SWAN Bronze Departmental Award in November 2014 and this was renewed in 2017. The School has a Women in Biological Sciences (WIBS) webpage with a range of information and resources for staff and students http://www.essex.ac.uk/bs/about/women_in_science/default.aspx.
The Essex Women’s Network provides a forum for women to share ideas and provide mutual support and is open to all staff and postgraduate students, https://www1.essex.ac.uk/equality/forums/essex-womens-network.aspx

### POSTGRADUATE MENTORING SCHEME
The University has a postgraduate mentoring scheme where you can contact two current Biological Sciences students with questions related to study and University life. You can contact the mentors via https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/mentoring/default.aspx

### SCHOOL MENTORING SCHEME
The School of Biological Sciences is committed to supporting staff and research students at all stages of their careers. A School Mentoring Scheme has been established as a result of an action from the School’s Athena SWAN Bronze Departmental Award. This voluntary scheme is open to all academic and research staff and PhD students.

**Aims of Scheme**
The Mentoring Scheme aims to support individuals’ at various stages of their professional or personal development. Mentors will provide support, give advice and guidance on career/ personal development and provide opportunities to reflect on progress. The scheme supports both traditional mentoring with senior staff as well as peer mentoring and can be either long-term or short-term to suit individual needs. Through the establishment of the Mentoring Scheme we aim to:

- Support staff and students at key career transition points
- Provide guidance on career and personal development

Further information can be found on the School Mentoring Scheme Moodle page. To request a mentor or to sign up as a mentor for this scheme, please contact the Mentoring Coordinator (Dr Beverley Wilkinson, bwilk@essex.ac.uk).
RESEARCH GROUPS
Students will be members of one of the research groupings: Cancer and Stem Cell Biology, Protein Structure and Function, Genomics and Computational Biology, Ecology and Environmental Microbiology and Plant Productivity. These groups have regular research meetings which students should attend. Laboratory groups, research workers and students supervised by individual members of staff, also have regular lab meetings.

THE GRADUATE FORUM
This is a compulsory one-day event held in September each year and must be attended by all research postgraduate students. First year students are required to present a poster, second years to give a 10-minute oral presentation and third years to co-ordinate the event. Students are responsible for the planning and the organisation of the Graduate Forum, including the programme for oral and poster presentations, preparation of abstract booklet, organising publicity and refreshments. There are prizes for best oral and poster presentations. There will be seminars on poster preparation and also oral presentation for second and third years respectively, in the Summer Term (see your Training Programme timetable).

3.7 DISABILITY AND WELLBEING
We would encourage all new students with a disability, long term medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty to disclose and register with the Student Services Hub so that we can plan how best to support you in your studies.

You can find out about the support we offer here: www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/help.aspx

UK students may be eligible for a Disabled Students’ Allowance grant. See our webpages for more information, including application forms and key changes: www.essex.ac.uk/students/disability/funding.aspx

3.8 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
We are proud to be a global community and we recognise that living and studying in the UK may be very different from your own country.

Essex has a wide range of support covering academic and health and wellbeing issues. Our friendly and professional staff will be able to guide, give advice and assist you during your time at Essex.

You can find helpful information here - www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/international/default.aspx

If you are studying on a Tier 4 visa, don’t forget to read section 7.4 Tier 4 Information of this handbook which has further information and links.

3.9 MATURE AND PART-TIME STUDENTS
As a mature student you’ll be in very good company – around 37% of our students are mature students.

We appreciate that studying as a mature student can present challenges. This is particularly true if this is your first experience of higher education and you have other commitments and responsibilities to meet such as work and family. We want you to be aware of the support available so that you can make the most of your time at Essex.

You can find more information here: www.essex.ac.uk/students/groups/mature-students.aspx
3.10 STUDENT REPRESENTATION

Student feedback is a vital part of the University's approach to quality assurance and enhancement. It is important that you are given the opportunity and that you take time to feedback to the University.

You can do this in a number of ways:

1. You can contact (or be elected as) a **student representative** who represent the voice of fellow students in departmental Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and other University level committees.
3. You can find out information about Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) here: [www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student_representation/sslc.asp](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student_representation/sslc.asp).

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENT STAFF Liaison Committee

Everyone at Essex, from your lecturers to support staff and the Students’ Union is here to make sure you love your time at Essex, but things only get better and better through the work of student representatives in every department. They act as the student voice in every part of student life, from collecting feedback from students on their course for formal departmental meetings to contributing to the review of the degrees we offer and shaping how the University might be run in the future.

You have the opportunity to become a student representative and the voice of your fellow students. At the beginning of the year, the department and Students’ Union will put out an open call for student representatives. Once trained, you’ll have an opportunity to be a Course Representative, who collects the views of their course mates, or a Year Representative, who collects the views of course representatives and presents them formally to the University at departmental Student-Staff Liaison Committee (see above) meetings. There may also be other departmental meetings that you can take part in such as Periodic Review, where all the courses in a department are reviewed.

Being a student representative does not need to be a big commitment and is a great opportunity to develop negotiation and communication skills. The Students’ Union will also provide opportunities to have your time volunteered recognised, to put on your CV. And if you’re up to the challenge, there are limited opportunities to represent students at a faculty level and contribute to the big decisions made by the University.

Student Representatives are supported both by departments and the Students’ Union and all opportunities are advertised through the Students’ Union. If you would like to feedback the views of students on your course and help make the Essex experience even better, then check the Students’ Union website for opportunities from the beginning of term.

The School has a postgraduate research student staff liaison committee (PGR SSLC); students are represented by one of their number in each year of research (i.e. a constituency). Meetings are held two/three times per year and items may be placed on the agenda via one of your research postgraduate representatives. Being a student representative is a valuable opportunity to develop the environment for research students in the School. It also provides good experience of decision making and communication. It is an asset to your CV and can enhance employability. To find out more about the PGR SSLC please see separate document which is located on Moodle and will also be emailed to you.
3.11 LIBRARY SERVICES
At our Colchester Campus, the Albert Sloman Library on Square 5 has a variety of study spaces over six floors, including 24/7 facilities and group work areas. The Library offers a wide range of learning resources, online and in print, with a dedicated Helpdesk, overnight chat service and the opportunity to book appointments with your Subject Librarian to help you through your studies and beyond.

libwww.essex.ac.uk

The library has a team of Subject Librarians who can help you to find appropriate resources for your assignments and show you how to search effectively. They can also provide advice on referencing and how to avoid plagiarism, using reference management software, and evaluating sources. Your Subject Librarian is Greg Cadge – contact him greg.cadge@essex.ac.uk or use the Book a librarian form on the Library website to get in touch.

For guidance in relation to third-party proofreading of student work:
www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading

4 RESEARCH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
4.1 PROFICIO
Proficio is our innovative professional development scheme for doctoral students, and it’s unique to Essex. We believe that your academic and professional development is vital to your growth as a postgraduate research student and so we credit your Proficio account with funds that can be spent on a variety of courses. You can find out more information via www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/research and you can contact the Proficio team at proficio@essex.ac.uk.

4.2 SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES AND CONFERENCES
It is really useful to join a scientific society and become part of the wider scientific community. In addition, societies hold conferences where you can meet key researchers and hear about new work, often before it is published. You may also have the opportunity to present your own work in a talk or poster. Some societies provide funds to students to attend these conferences. Your supervisor will be able to advise on which society or societies is appropriate for you to join and further information is available on the Early Career Researcher Resources Moodle. These conferences and other meetings in the UK or abroad are considered very important parts of your scientific training. If your studies are funded by a studentship or scholarship, your sponsors will probably have allocated funds for you to participate in at least one major conference. Your supervisor will keep you informed about these conferences or meetings and may be able to provide some financial support. The School may be able to help as well and a call for requests for funds to attend a meeting or conference is made each term by Email.

PRESENTING YOUR WORK
Throughout your period of study you will be expected to present your work orally to audiences, typically in the informal setting of your laboratory group meetings or in your Research Group meetings. The annual Graduate Forum (above) provides a more formal meeting structure for poster and oral presentations. Some PhD students in their third year may, in addition, be invited to present a seminar to a wider School audience, for example during the weekly School Seminar Programme. Presentation of your results in a poster or talk and the opportunity for discussion is an important part of participating in a conference or meeting.

COHORT BUILDING EVENT
In 2017 the School held the first postgraduate cohort building event. The event brought together postgraduate students and postdoctoral scientists from all the diverse disciplines within the School to promote interdisciplinary knowledge and exchange of techniques. The
event comprised of talks from each of the seven research groups, an interactive session on networking, an alumni presentation, a motivational lecture by an eminent guest speaker and the opportunity to attend a careers workshop to provide targeted careers advice. A similar event will be held in 2018 and registration information will be circulated via E mail.

4.3 SCHOOL TRAVEL FUND
The School is willing to consider an application to help fund your attendance to a key conference or workshop. There will be termly calls for applications. The maximum amount to be awarded is £300.00, however, in exceptional circumstances this may be increased. Forms should be completed and submitted to the Graduate Administrator (Research) and include a written statement in support from your supervisor. The applications will be considered by the Head of School and Graduate Director and a decision on any level of support we can offer will be made within a week of the closing date.

4.4 BEST SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE PRIZE
The purpose of this prize is to encourage PGR students to produce manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals. The prize for the best article will be a certificate signed by the Head of the School and the Dean of the Faculty and a financial gift. Full details on the award will be circulated via email.

5 ASSESSMENT

5.1 Principal Regulations for Research Degrees and the Code of Practice for Research Degrees www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/regulations-higher; www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/codes-higher

The Principal Regulations and the Code of Practice are extremely important documents that set out both your responsibilities and the responsibilities of the University to you; take time to familiarise yourself with them. They outline the roles and responsibilities of you, your supervisor, your Supervisory Panel and the Research Student Progress Board.

5.2 Extenuating Circumstances, withdrawing and intermitting
www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances beyond your control which cause you to perform less well in your coursework or examinations than you might have expected. In general, extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect you for any significant period of time and/or during the examination period. You need to submit your form by the deadline given here – www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/general/assess-rules.aspx

You will not get extra marks if you hand in an extenuating circumstances form. Boards of Examiners use other methods to take into account extenuating circumstances, such as permitting further reassessment opportunities for uncapped marks.

You should read the guidance on extenuating circumstances very carefully before submitting your form and evidence. Seek advice from the Students’ Union Advice Centre (www.essexstudent.com/services/advice_centre/) or the Student Services Hub (www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/default.aspx).

Thinking of leaving or taking a break from your studies?
You may experience doubts at some point during your studies, if you’re thinking about leaving Essex, we’re here to support you and give you the advice you need to help you make an informed choice.
**Intermission** is a temporary withdrawal or leave of absence from the University and provides you with the opportunity to take a break from your studies. Normally, this is for reasons beyond your control (e.g. health or personal problems) although other reasons are permitted. Intermission must be approved by the University first, so if you are thinking about intermitting, we strongly advise you to contact your department and your Student Services Hub to talk to one of our advisers.

You should also read our guidance on intermitting very carefully at [www.essex.ac.uk/see/intermit](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/intermit). If your intermission is agreed to, we will also give you the advice and support you need to help you carry on with your studies.

**Withdrawing** is the formal process for permanently leaving your programme of study and the University. If you are thinking of withdrawing, you should seek advice from your Department or the Student Services Hub at the earliest opportunity. It is very important that you discuss your circumstances with the University and follow the formal procedure for withdrawing. If the university is not formally notified, then you may risk continuing to incur further tuition or accommodation fees. More advice and information is available at [www.essex.ac.uk/see/withdraw](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/withdraw).

### 5.3 SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS

#### APPROVAL OF TITLE FORM

Two months prior to submission this form should be completed. You should have the title of your thesis approved by your supervisor and then submit the form to the Graduate Administrator (Research) who will have it signed by Head of School and submitted to the Postgraduate Research and Education team.

The Graduate Administrator (Research) will email the Approval of Title Form throughout the academic year and it is also available on the Web. [http://www2.essex.ac.uk/academic/students/pgr/index.htm](http://www2.essex.ac.uk/academic/students/pgr/index.htm)

The Postgraduate Research and Education team will then send you instructions for preparation of the thesis and the Thesis Submission Form - please keep these filed safely.

#### THESIS SUBMISSION FORM (RD1)

This form should be signed by you and must accompany submission of two hard copies (either spiral bound or glue bound). Binding can be carried out by the Copy Shop on Square 4. You will receive a receipt from the Postgraduate Research and Education team for the submission. Details of the requirements with regard to presentation of the thesis, appointment of examiners and examination results are set out in Higher Degree Regulations and Procedures are listed below. You will also be emailed this information.

### 5.4 EXAMINERS AND THE VIVA

Your supervisor is responsible for suggesting nominations for an internal and external examiner; this is done after you have submitted your Approval of Title Form. The Postgraduate Research and Education team Research Office formally appoints the examiners. The expected time span from submission of thesis to the viva varies and may be dependent on availability of the External Examiner, however, this is usually within three months of submission. Except for unusual extenuating circumstances, students should ensure that they are available for the viva date agreed on by the Internal and External Examiners. Your supervisor will not normally be present during your viva and will not normally have any contact with your examiners other than to arrange their appointment.

The Examiners' reports will be sent to the Postgraduate Research and Education team who will communicate with the student with regard to corrections, if these are necessary. When the corrections have been made and approved, an approval form, signed by the Internal Examiner, is submitted to the Postgraduate Research and Education team. Following approval by the Dean, a final copy can be uploaded via the Thesis Repository. This must be
uploaded within 8 weeks from receiving formal notification. The award letter is issued by the Postgraduate Research and Education team once the thesis copy has been uploaded.

**DEGREES CONFERRED**
Postgraduate research students are conferred immediately after they have submitted one electronic copy to the Repository.

**5.5 APPEALS, COMPLAINTS AND FITNESS TO PRACTISE**
If the recommendation of your Research Students Progress Committee is that your degree should be downgraded or your studies discontinued, and you want to appeal, you must do so **within two weeks** of receiving the notification. You must do so in writing on the Form of Appeal which is available online at [www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr).

You should read carefully the Appeals Procedure against a progress decision – postgraduate research students at:
[www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-progress-appeals](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-progress-appeals)

You may also appeal against an examination decision. ‘Failed’ or ‘referred’ candidates may submit their appeal no later than **eight weeks** after the notification of the decision.

You should read carefully the Appeals Procedure against an examination decision – postgraduate research students (thesis) at: [https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/policies](https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/policies)

Professional doctorate students may appeal against the recommendation of a Research Students’ Progress Committee that they be discontinued or downgraded **within two weeks** of receiving notification of the recommendation. You should read carefully the Appeals Procedure for professional doctorate students at [Policies | University of Essex](https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/policies).

**Making a Complaint:** The University is a large community engaged in many activities of both an academic and non-academic nature. From time to time, you may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of your dealings with the University and, when that happens, it is important that the issue is dealt with constructively and as quickly as possible without risk of disadvantage or recrimination.

A complaint is defined as **the expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities** (this is in line with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints). The University aims to resolve complaints quickly and informally.

You can find the complaints procedure and the forms here: [www.essex.ac.uk/see/complaints](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/complaints)

**Fitness to practise** is only applicable to students on certain professional courses (such as nursing or social work). If this applies to you, you will have been told by your department. You can find the full Fitness to Practise procedure online at: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg)

**5.6 ACADEMIC OFFENCES POLICY**
The University expects students to act with honesty and integrity in relation to coursework, examinations and other assessed work, and to follow our conventions for academic writing (including appropriate referencing of sources) and ethical considerations. If you don’t meet these expectations, then you may be charged with having committed an academic offence, a matter the University takes very seriously.
It is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the regulations governing examinations and how to correctly prepare your coursework. An academic offence can take place even if you didn’t mean to commit one, and examples include plagiarism, falsifying data or evidence, and communicating with another candidate in an examination.

If you aren’t sure what the conventions are, particularly in relation to referencing, you should ask your department, contact the Talent Development Centre, and also refer to 6. **Referencing and good academic practice** in this handbook.

More information about academic offences and getting support can be found at: www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence

### 5.7 ETHICS

All research involving human participants, whether undertaken by the University’s staff or students, **must** undergo an ethics review by an appropriate body and ethical approval **must** be obtained before it commences. You can find our Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants here - www.essex.ac.uk/reo/governance/human.aspx - along with the Ethical Approval application form.

‘Human participants’ are defined as including living human beings, human beings who have recently died (cadavers, human remains and body parts), embryos and foetuses, human tissue and bodily fluids, and personal data and records (such as, but not restricted to medical, genetic, financial, personnel, criminal or administrative records and test results including scholastic achievements). Research involving the NHS may require and research involving human tissue or adults lacking capacity to consent will require Health Research Authority approval.’

### 5.8 SCHOOL SAFETY

The University’s Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, sets out the health and safety responsibilities of all University employees according to their job role. The responsibilities of employees and managers are also summarised in the **Employee Guide to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy**. Both documents can be found either on the safety notice board adjacent to the main entrance, from David Knight in Room 3.20 or by following the link at www.essex.ac.uk/OHSAS.

**Capability**

Risk assessments for the work activities need to take account of capability issues that may increase risk (for example pregnancy, immaturity of young people, health conditions etc). General advice is available from HSAS, or advice on individuals with specific health concerns is available from the Occupational Health Adviser. Advice on pregnancy can be found on by on the University’s website, by following the **Pregnancy** link on the HSAS A to Z at www.essex.ac.uk/OHSAS.

**Health and Safety Standards**

Health and safety standards (that is how we do things safely) are detailed in health and safety policies, codes of practice, standards, procedures and risk assessments covering a range of activities. They are the way the University and School ensure that legal obligations for health and safety are met and are therefore mandatory.

University-wide policies and generic risk assessments are available on the University’s website at www.essex.ac.uk/OHSAS. The University also adopts health and safety codes of practice published by University and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA).
The School has produced specific guidance and, where appropriate, safety standards and codes of practice for a range of activities. Further information can be found on the Biological Sciences safety intranet site, which can be found at http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/default.shtm.

SAFETY GLASSES
There is a School rule (supported by legislation) requiring you to wear safety glasses in all laboratories. Some areas have a risk assessment which says that glasses need not be worn, for example, when using a microscope; these areas will be made known to you when you are in the lab.

SO PLEASE NOTE – the general rule is that you must wear safety glasses in the laboratory

6 REFERENCING AND GOOD ACADEMIC PRACTICE
6.1 Information relating to the University’s procedure on academic offences
Respecting authorship through good academic practice is one of the key values of higher education in the UK.

The University takes academic offences very seriously. You should read the sections of this handbook which refer to referencing, coursework and examinations very carefully.

Referencing is a key academic/scientific skill. It is how you will acknowledge all sources used within a piece of work. You must reference all works used directly (quotes) and indirectly (paraphrasing and summarising). Referencing allows you to give credit to authors/researchers’ concepts and ideas/ideas and results, demonstrate your breadth of reading and knowledge on a subject, direct readers to your sources, and avoid plagiarism.

You should always use the best available sources of evidence, such as peer reviewed journals and recognised books.

To find out about your departmental referencing style (Harvard) and for help with referencing, visit the library website: http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/referencing.htm

How to reference

Referencing in text: References in the text are cited as: “Smith and Jones (1989) reported that...” or “X was discovered by Smith and Jones (1989)”, but not “Smith and Jones discovered X was bigger (1989)”. Note that initials and titles are not used when citing in the text; if there are two or more papers by the same authors in the same year then they become 1989a, and b etc. Never write phrases such as “see the book The Molecular Biology of the Cell”.

If a paper has three or more authors, use the form (Smith et al., 1989) in the text, where et al. is an abbreviation (hence the full stop) for the Latin et alia, meaning ‘and others’.

Secondary sources: If the information you are using was quoted by a source such as a textbook or a review as originating from somewhere else, this is then a secondary source. You should make every effort to read the original source, but if this is not possible, then you should cite the original authors followed by the secondary source. Therefore, if you have read about the work of Bloggs (1985) in a book by Smith (1992), and have not read the original you should cite this in the text as: “Bloggs (1985, cited in Smith 1992) showed that ...” or “It has been shown that ... (Bloggs 1985, cited in Smith 1992)”. In the reference list you only give the details of Smith (1992).

Reference lists: Must be at the end of your Literature Review, report or thesis, and must be given in alphabetical order.

a) References to papers must include the name(s) of the author(s) and their initials, the year of publication, the title of the paper, the title of the journal (italicised) with its volume number (in bold font), the initial and final page numbers in that order.
b) References to books must include the name(s) of the authors or editors and their initials, the year of publication, the title of the book (italicised), edition number, city of publication, name of publishers, in that order. References to particular parts of books must give inclusive page numbers and if appropriate, the chapter title. If the chapter has different authors to those of the book as a whole, then the citation should be to the chapter authors, stating that it (the chapter title) is “In.........”.

c) References to Manuals and Schedules should include author/company, year of publication, type of document (e.g. manual, protocol), name of document, name of company or University and School/Department.

Some examples of the types of references are as follows:

To reference a book with all chapters written by same authors:

To reference an edited book containing a series of articles/chapters by different authors:

To reference a journal article (or journal abstract/conference proceeding):

Be consistent with the format. For instance you must not use abbreviated journal names in some references in your list and full names in others.

To reference from the internet:
At a minimum, a reference of an Internet source should provide a document title or description, an address (in Internet terms, a uniform resource locator, or URL) and the date of retrieval. Whenever possible, identify the authors (or company/organisation) of a document as well.

To reference a doctoral dissertation:

ENDNOTE/MENDELEY
It is recommended that you use EndNote or Mendeley, or another referencing package, from the beginning of your research. This gives you the opportunity to collect and format references during your studies and make report and thesis writing easier. There will be an Endnote and Mendeley training session (details to follow) this will include installation guidance. Slides from the training session are also available via Moodle.

6.2 THESIS LAYOUT
The Graduate Administrator (Research) will circulate guidelines on the presentation and style for the thesis layout. This is also available to view via Moodle.
6.3 PROOFREADING
The systems and protocols described in the University policy and guidance on proofreading are the result of an ongoing project to review commercial and third-party proofreading on campus, ensuring best practice in proofreading at the University in relation to student texts. Please see http://www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading/ for an approved list of proofreaders.

6.4 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS
Copyright and intellectual property right issues fall into two broad areas: compliance (respecting the rights of others when we make use of their materials and intellectual output) and exploitation/enforcement (protecting and exploiting our own intellectual output). Full details can be viewed via https://www1.essex.ac.uk/it/about/default.aspx?tab=3
7 PRACTICALITIES: GETTING STARTED AND IT MATTERS

7.1 REGISTRATION, ENROLLING AND TRANSCRIPTS
All new and returning students must register at the start of each academic year. The Postgraduate Research Education Team will inform you of your formal outcome following your viva and when all necessary steps have been completed - close your record and send you an award confirmation letter. Your award certificate and academic transcript cannot be produced until the Postgraduate Research Education Team has completed the above step so if you have not received your award confirmation letter, the Graduation Office cannot produce your documents. For more about registration and the Postgraduate Research Education Team, visit our student webpages.
www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/registration
www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/award-documents

7.2 FIND YOUR WAY AND ROOM NUMBERING SYSTEM
Find Your Way is our interactive campus map app. Download it to help you find any location on campus and get directions quickly and easily. There's also a handy web version - findyourway.essex.ac.uk/
If you're looking for a specific room, follow these rules.

If the room number has three parts and the first is alphabetical eg TC.1.20 then the room is in one of the outer buildings. The format is building.floor.room. The first part indicates the building - "TC" is the Teaching Centre and "LH" is the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall. The second part tells you the floor and the third the room number. For example, LH.1.12 is Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall, floor 1, room 12.

If the number has three parts and the first contains numbers and letters eg 5N.7.16, then the room is in square 4 or 5. The format is entrance.floor.room. The first part tells you the square and corner (eg 4S is the south corner of square 4), which matches the labels on the entrances (eg door 4NW is next to The Store). The second part is the floor and the third part the room. For example, 5NW.6.12 is in the north-west (NW) corner of Square 5 (entrance "5NW"), floor 6, room 12.

If the number has two elements and the second element has three digits eg 4.722, the room is in the Maths/Social Studies/Rab Butler/Square 1 building area. The first number shows the floor and the last three digits show the room number.

Also... if the last three digits are 700-799 the room is off Square 1, and if the last three digits are 500-599 the room is in the Square 2 area (Computer Science). For example, 5.512 is room 512, floor 5.

7.3 IT SUPPORT, WIFI, EMAIL ACCOUNT, FREE MIS OFFICE, COMPUTER LABS, M:DRIVE
Visit our website to set up your IT account and password, register an external email address and passphrase and request a reminder for a forgotten passphrase:
www.essex.ac.uk/it/getaccount.

You must change your password within four weeks of your account being created, and then once every four months after that. The easiest way to change your password is online at:
www.essex.ac.uk/password.
Once you’re set up, you can access email, log on to lab computers, connect to eduroam wi-fi and much more.

As part of your Office 365 email account you get 1TB cloud storage space for all your documents with OneDrive. OneDrive lets you create, edit, and share documents online. You also get at least 300 MB of local storage, known as your M: drive. You can access this by going to ‘My Documents’ on any lab computer.

Visit the IT Services website for helpful information, including how-to guides, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to video screencasts. www.essex.ac.uk/it

If you can’t find what you’re looking for, or if you need to talk to someone, then you can get help from the IT Helpdesk in the Silberrad Student Centre. Open Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 6.00pm, and Friday 8.30am to 5.45pm.

Information on computers and software is available here: www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/computers-and-software/default.aspx?tab=3

If you need to use a computer on campus our computer labs are the perfect place to study or work. Many labs stay open until late and some are open 24/7. For computer lab locations, opening hours and real-time availability visit: www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/computers-and-software/default.aspx

7.4 IMMIGRATION INFORMATION
If you are a citizen of a country that is not part of the European Economic Area or Switzerland it is likely that you will require a visa to enter or remain in the UK to study. The type of visa you need to apply for will depend on your circumstances including what passport or travel document you hold, the length of your proposed study and where you are applying from. Find out more on the University’s website at: www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/

7.5 ON-CAMPUS FACILITIES
There is a broad range of facilities to support your living and learning experience at our Colchester Campus – including study-based services like the IT helpdesk and group study pods, but also various food and drink venues, three banks, a general store run by the Students’ Union, a printing and copy centre, market stalls each Thursday, a Post Office, launderettes, and much, much more. Full details on all on-campus facilities feature on our student webpages and in the campus guide you received with your welcome information when you joined us as a student member.

www.essex.ac.uk/students
www.essex.ac.uk/welcome

7.6 GRADUATION
The culmination of all your hard work, Graduation ceremonies take place at our Colchester Campus each July in the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall. All eligible students studying at our Colchester, Loughton and Southend Campuses will be invited to attend. For more information visit our graduation pages: www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/default.aspx

8 SKILLS, EMPLOYABILITY AND EXPERIENCE
8.1 EMPLOYABILITY AND CAREERS CENTRE
Get valuable, one-to-one advice from careers specialists throughout your time at Essex and beyond. Come and see us or log in to CareerHub+ whether you have one hundred questions or just don’t know where to start! We offer one-to-one advice and guidance, job-hunting workshops, CV and job application reviews, and online services for creating CVs, interview preparation and job vacancies.

www.essex.ac.uk/careers
8.2 LANGUAGES AT ESSEX
Learn a language at Essex to increase your global and cultural awareness. Language learning can give you the confidence to work and travel internationally, expand your options for studying abroad, and get a competitive edge when you’re looking for a job. There are a number of ways to do it, so look online to discover the best option for you. www.essex.ac.uk/study/why/languages

8.3 TALENT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
Our specialist academic skills advisors are on hand to give you guidance on all aspects of study skills such as assignment planning; essay writing; English language and academic style; maths, numeracy and stats support. Visit us to find out how to book in for one-to-one sessions and small-group workshops. www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/tdc/

8.4 CAREERHUB+
Find hundreds of part-time jobs, internships and graduate vacancies, book on to careers events and workshops, take career assessments, practice your interview skills, build your CV, and connect with employers on CareerHub+, the online Essex careers and jobs portal. Login with your Essex IT ID and password. careerhub.essex.ac.uk/students/login

8.5 FRONTRUNNERS
Challenge yourself. Frontrunners is Essex's unique on-campus work placement scheme for students. You'll get the chance to work on real projects in real workplaces and develop real skills for you to brag about on your CV. You'll get fully trained in your role and you'll get paid for it. www.essex.ac.uk/frontrunners

8.6 STUDENT AMBASSADORS
Be a Student Ambassador and make a difference to others and make a difference on your CV! Student Ambassadors help to promote the University and higher education. You'll be a valued part of the Student Recruitment and Outreach teams. Keep an eye out for Student Ambassador vacancies on CareerHub+ at the start of the Autumn Term. www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job_hunting/on_campus

8.7 VOLUNTEERING
Join the vTeam and be the difference. There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer during your time at Essex. The vTeam, run by the Students Union, is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, make friends, give something to the local community, and gain valuable skills. www.essex.su/vteam

8.8 BIG ESSEX AWARD
The University's employability award is a guaranteed way to help you stand out from the crowd. Sign up and start your journey! www.essex.ac.uk/careers/bige

8.9 ESSEX INTERNS
Essex interns create paid internships exclusively for you as an Essex student. They're flexible too; part time during term time or full time in vacations. You can even take part up to three years after you graduate, as part of our Essex graduates support package. Sign up for Essex Interns to kick-start your career. www.essex.ac.uk/careers/internships
8.10 OTHER CAREER RESOURCES
The Early Career Researcher Resources Moodle page contains information on different career pathways, postdoctoral fellowships, jobs, example CVs and other careers resources for PGR students and researchers.

9 YOU MATTER: HEALTH, WELFARE, SUPPORT AND SAFETY

9.1 STUDENT SERVICES HUB, INCLUDING CONTACTS FOR DISABILITY, WELLBEING, COUNSELLING AND CONFIDENTIAL ISSUES
If you need practical advice, a confidential conversation, or general information and guidance on University life, no matter what the issue is, the Student Services Hub is the place to go. Want to know how and when to apply for accommodation? Having problems with your funding? Struggling with exam stress? Your questions matter and you’ll get answers from our team of experts.

Colchester email: askthehub@essex.ac.uk
Southend email: askthehub-sc@essex.ac.uk
Loughton email: askthehub-lc@essex.ac.uk
www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing

If you get into financial difficulty get help and talk to someone as soon as possible. The sooner your problem is identified, the sooner it can be solved. Advisers in our Student Services Hub and our independent SU Advice Centre can listen and talk you through the issues.

9.2 HARASSMENT ADVISORY NETWORK, DIGNITY AND RESPECT
We are Essex. We encourage a culture of dignity and respect. We’re committed to upholding an environment that’s free from any form of harassment or bullying. Though rare, these incidents can occur and if they do our network of trained harassment advisors are on hand to help.
www.essex.ac.uk/equality
www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment
www.essex.ac.uk/students/new

9.3 FAITH GROUPS
We’re proud of our vibrant and diverse multicultural community and we recognise and support the many different religions and beliefs on campus. The calm, friendly and supportive atmosphere in our Multi-Faith Chaplaincy is a welcoming place for staff, students and the wider community to meet, interact and engage with each other.
www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/mfc

9.4 NIGHTLINE
Established at Essex in 1970, Nightline is a friendly help and support service run by students, for students. We work under strict confidentiality ensuring complete anonymity, and we’re always willing to listen. From tea and toast to campbeds, whether you’re waiting for a taxi, need a revision break, or just want to chat, pop in or call us.
www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/nightline

9.5 HEALTH AND SAFETY ON CAMPUS
Our campuses are generally very safe environments. We want to ensure that things stay this way. In order to achieve this we work closely with local agencies including the police and borough councils. Take a look at our website for general advice and information.
http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/safety
Please read the emergency evacuation notice in your accommodation, work or study location for fire safety procedures. If you have a permanent or temporary disabilities that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

www.essexstudent.com/safetybus
www.essex.ac.uk/students/campus/emergency
www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/fire/peep

9.6 RESIDENCE LIFE
Our Residence Life team is here to help you settle in and support you during your time living on campus. Each residents’ assistant (RA) is assigned an area and will aim to get to know you and organise a range of social activities. Plus they can help if you’ve got any concerns or complaints. Residence Life operates outside of office hours when other University support services are closed.

www.essex.ac.uk/accommodation/support/reslife

9.7 HEALTH CENTRE
If you’re studying on a course for more than six months, you’re required to register with a local doctor. Our Colchester Campus has its own health centre or you can use the NHS Choices postcode finder to find your nearest doctor.

www.rowhedgesurgery.co.uk
www.nhs.uk

9.8 STUDENTS’ UNION ADVICE CENTRE
Our SU advice centre offers free, confidential, independent and impartial advice on any issue that might be affecting you. Our friendly, trained staff are on hand to support you throughout your time at Essex.

www.essex.su/advice
suadvice@essex.ac.uk
01206 874034

9.9 UNIVERSITY PRIVACY STATEMENT
Under the Data Protection Act 1998, any individuals about whom the University may be holding personal data have the right to access the data that is being held about them. Full details about how this works, and how to request such information are available on the Records Management web pages, see: ‘How to access your personal data’.

www.essex.ac.uk/website-privacy
10 THE ESSEX EXPERIENCE

10.1 THE ESSEX STUDENT CHARTER
Our Student Charter is developed by the University of Essex and our Students’ Union as a part of our ongoing commitment to create an outstanding environment that offers the highest standards of teaching, research and support in an international and multi-cultural community.

www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/charter

10.2 FREEDOM OF SPEECH POLICY AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT
For regulations relating to the Code of Student Conduct, see the University’s website:
www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/handbooks/default.aspx
https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations

10.3 ESSEX SPIRIT, SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS
Keep up-to-date with important news, events and offers from across the University with our Essex Spirit blog. Go to our email lists to subscribe to the fortnightly e-bulletin.

http://blogs.essex.ac.uk/essexspirit/
www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/

We have more than 60 Facebook pages, including one for each department. We’re also on Twitter.
www.facebook.com/uniofessex/
https://twitter.com/Uni_of_Essex

Our ‘What’s on?’ calendar brings together all the events happening across our three campuses, so you can make the most of your time at Essex.

http://www.essex.ac.uk/events

10.4 STUDENTS’ UNION
We’re famous for our Students’ Union at Essex, and for good reason. Here you’re not just a member of a normal Students’ Union, you’re part of a family. We’re here to cheer you on as you walk into exams and to help you absolutely destroy the competition in interviews and land your dream job. We’ve given students the tools to set up over 100 societies for anything they want. And if you’re into sport – we run more than 40 sports teams and unlike other Universities ours are free to join. You choose what drinks we serve in our bar and what products we stock in our shops, just write it on the wall and we’ll do our absolute best to get it in stock for you ASAP.

Say hello at essex.su

10.5 ALUMNI
Your time will fly by. But Essex is forever, not just for a few years, and you’ll be part of this place for life. When you graduate, you’ll get an alumni card, which gets you access to all alumni events, like our popular Sports Weekend, and allows you to keep using the gym and the library, so stay in touch.

alumni.essex.ac.uk/home