

**Your studies**

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# DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

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Postgraduate research

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
2018-19



University of Essex

# Introduction and Welcome



## Welcome

**Welcome to the Department of Sociology and thank you for choosing to study with us.**

Welcome to those of you who are new to the Department and welcome back to everyone else.

We hope that this handbook will answer any questions you have but there are many other people who can help. In addition the Graduate Director, your supervisor and the Student administrator can advise you. Members of the administrative staff are always happy to assist with any enquiries and can guide you to the right people - inside or outside the Department.

The Department of Sociology at Essex is a large academic department, and we are proud of our distinguished record in both teaching and research. We hope that you will feel a part of our endeavours and we welcome your contributions to the Department and the development of the discipline.

The world of Sociology is extremely varied and stimulating and whether you are new to the subject or not, we are confident that the intellectual environment at Essex will help you to explore it in depth and to develop your own potential to a high level. Sociology is a stimulating subject, so enjoy your studies!

We hope your stay here will be pleasurable and rewarding, so welcome again to the Department of Sociology at Essex.

**Professor Andrew Canessa**  
**Department of Sociology**

## About your Student Handbook

This handbook gives you essential information about your Department and the University.

Other helpful sources of information are available at [www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/](http://www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/) and [www.essex.ac.uk/students](http://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.



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## Term dates

### 2018-2019

Autumn term	4 October 2018 – 14 December 2018
Spring term	14 January 2019 – 22 March 2019
Summer term	23 April 2019 – 28 June 2019

### 2019-2020

Autumn term	3 October 2019– 13 December 2019
Spring term	13 January 2020 – 20 March 2020
Summer term	20 April 2020 – 26 June 2020



You can download a copy of the university calendar with corresponding week numbers from the Timetable Office webpage: [www1.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/documents/weeks-2018-19.pdf](http://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/documents/weeks-2018-19.pdf)

Information about teaching timetables and your individual timetable can be found at [www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/education.aspx](http://www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/education.aspx) Please check your timetable regularly for updates. Make sure you leave plenty of time before your teaching event to find the room

## STUDY LEAVE 2018-19

<b>Ayse Guveli</b>	Autumn and Spring term
<b>Mike Roper</b>	Autumn and Spring term
<b>Neli Demireva</b>	Autumn Term
<b>Sean Nixon</b>	Autumn Term
<b>Pete Fussey</b>	Autumn Term
<b>Shaul Bar Haim</b>	Autumn Term
<b>Katy Wheeler</b>	Spring Term
<b>Anna di Ronco</b>	Spring Term
<b>Isabel Crowhurst</b>	Spring Term
<b>Anna Sergi</b>	Spring Term
<b>Nigel South</b>	Spring Term

## Reading week (week 21)

Although there may be voluntary events taking place during reading week, for example film screenings, there will be no scheduled teaching in week 21 (week beginning 18 February 2019 in the Spring term).

## 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:

[www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/](http://www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/)

## Student Responsibilities

As a Postgraduate Research student, you 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.
- Attend meetings with your 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 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](#)
- 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 the departmental milestones for your degree and the requirements for your chosen thesis format. The milestones are designed to help you submit your thesis by the deadline and are used to assess your progress during your period of study. The milestones will be considered at your RSPB which takes place twice a year (or equivalent for part-time students). It's important you review your milestones regularly to ensure you'll be ready to submit your thesis by the required date.
- 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 yourself with the expectations and conventions regarding academic referencing other people's work.
- Attend any research training and generic skills courses as agreed with your supervisor
- As requested, submit reports on progress to professional practice and research supervisors, Supervisory Panels, , 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. This may take the form of a log book or research portfolio to be signed off by your supervisor.
- Inform the relevant supervisor 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 the Head of Department. Alternatively, if you feel unable to talk to a member of the departmental staff, please contact the Postgraduate Research Education Team to discuss the concerns. 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.

In addition to the above requirements, Professional Doctorate students should:

- Attend lectures and seminars for taught modules and attend meetings with their professional practice supervisor.
- Complete the work required for your taught modules
- Maintain a professional practice portfolio which forms part of the assessment for the degree.

# About our Department

## Sociology Department Staff

Sociology Department Academic Staff information can be found online:

[www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/people/academic](http://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/people/academic)

### Administrative Staff

Department Manager (Maternity Leave until January 2019)	Camilla Thomsen	3055	[cthomsj]
Deputy Department Manager	Millie Marshall	2871	[manewm]
Operations Administrator	Sheila Marrinan	3049	[smarrin]
Student Administrator (PG)	Michele Hall	3051	[mehall]
Student Administrator (UG)	Jane Harper	3052	[jharper]
Student Administrative Assistant	Rosa Chandler	4892	[rbchan]
Research Grant Administrator	Sue Aylott (p/t)	3548	[sue]

### Resource Centre

Student Support Officer	Rowena Macaulay (p/t)	3743	[rowena]
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### Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

GTA	Email
Alice Rizzuti (Autumn Only)	ar16353
Amy Stevens	astevec
Astrid Martinez Cedillo	a.p.martinezcedillo
Ayse Sargin	as16887
Benjamin Turpin	bturpi
Camilla Giambonini	clgiam
Carlos Simoes Ferreira E Penha	cjsimo
Daniela Peruzzo	dp16420
Ekaterina Tarnovskaya	et16065
Gemma Mackman	groyce
Gulcimen Karakeci	gkaraka
Helen Rand	hrand
Irina Straton	istrat
Jennifer Kelley	jennifer.kelley
Joanne Taylor	jt17062
Kirils Makarovs	km17265
Mel Pearson	mjpear
Paulina Jimenez Fregoso	pjimen
Punjapha Pitigraisorn	pp16373



Sanjaya Aryal	sa17852
Selin Sivis	ss16365
Tariq Derdeb	td17593

**Staff details can be found here**

[www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/people](http://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/people)

### **Our Location**

Colchester Campus  
Department of Sociology  
University of Essex  
Wivenhoe Park  
Colchester CO4 3SQ  
Direct Tel: 01206 873051  
General Enquiries: [soc-office@essex.ac.uk](mailto:soc-office@essex.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/)



### **General Office Opening Hours**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10.00 hours to 13.00 hours & 14.00 hours to 16.00 hours

Wednesday, 10.00 hours to 13.00 hours. **Closed Wednesday afternoons.**

### **Common Room**

Students are encouraged to use the Department's Common Room (6.341) on the 6th floor close to the General Office. Daily newspapers are provided during term-time and a good quality vending machine dispenses hot drinks, along with a drinking water cooler.

### **Photocopying**

There are photocopying facilities available in the Library and at the Square 4 Copy Centre.

### **Who to go to if you need help**

If you have any queries relating to your Department or course of study, please contact Michele Hall, Student administrator. You can also speak to your supervisor or the Graduate Director, Joan Busfield.

Student Administrator	Michele Hall	3051	mehall
Graduate Director	Joan Busfield	3399	busfj

### **Need to talk to your supervisor?**

Teaching Staff publish Academic Support hours (previously known as Office Hours) on their doors during term-time. Alternatively, please email staff directly for Academic Support hours or check their Moodle page. Staff will normally be in their office during their term-time Academic Support hours.

### **Student Support Within the Department**

The Department values student support very highly and there are many people to whom you may turn. Your supervisor or the Graduate Director or the Student administrator in the General Office can help resolve many immediate issues but we also have an integrated support network.

### **Student Support Services and Disability Liaison Officer - Rowena Macaulay**

Room 5A.315, Email: [rowena@essex.ac.uk](mailto:rowena@essex.ac.uk), Tel: 01206 873743

Rowena works in a dedicated support capacity available to all students on any matter (academic and pastoral), either on a drop-in basis or by appointment.

In the Student Resource Centre (SRC; located in Room 5A.307) you can find out everything you need to know about all aspects of support in the Department. Additional information can be found under: [moodle.essex.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=382072](http://moodle.essex.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=382072)

The Student Resource Centre also:

- holds a large archive of former PhD theses dating back to the first ever completed in the Department in 1968, all of the theses are available to current research students to borrow
- holds additional computer terminals which have Endnote, Reference Manager and NVivo 10 (for qualitative and mixed methods research)
- is a physical space available to research students to use for their own purposes by arrangement, including for example by Graduate Teaching Assistants looking for a quiet space to see their class students in 'office hours'

A word about confidentiality - we are very mindful of your privacy in seeking support. Individual matters raised with one member of staff will not in the normal course of events be discussed with another staff member outside the support team without your advance agreement.

**The Student Resource Centre (SRC) is located in Room 5A.307**

### **Staff Research Interests**

Details of the research undertaken in the Department, including the interests of individual members of staff, are available at: [www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/staff/Staff.aspx?type=academic](http://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/staff/Staff.aspx?type=academic)

### **Correspondence and Communication**

Letters may be sent as an e-mail attachment or mailed to term-time home addresses so it is important to make sure the University has your current contact details. Your address and contact details can be updated via the "My Essex" portal. You are also advised to check the Student Pigeonholes, located in the Sociology Common Room during term-time.

The University and Departments make increasing use of e-mail to advise students of deadlines and to communicate information on various aspects of student life. You should access and check your University e-mail account **at least three times per week in term time, and preferably daily.**

Any letters, messages or correspondence for members of staff may be left in the General Office.

### **Using Mobile Phones, Smartphones, Laptops, and Tablet PCs**

A student may not make a personal recording of a teaching event, supervisory meeting, oral examination or other formal meeting or committee which considers the student's academic progress or performance without the permission of all other individuals present. If this permission is granted, the recording may be made for the personal use of the student only, in support of their studies and learning. The recording must not be made publicly available or shared for other purposes without the consent of those present.

Disabled students who have difficulty with note-taking are encouraged to contact Student Support for further information on when recording is permissible and other access strategies.

The Department has agreed that mobile phones and other technology may be used for teaching-related purposes in lectures and classes, but must not be used for personal phone calls and texting.

### **SMS Text Messages**

There may be occasions when the University or the Department wishes to contact a student or group of students urgently. In such cases, an SMS text message may be sent to a student's mobile phone, or to the mobile phones of a group of students, to alert them that an urgent e-mail has been sent to their inbox. This method of communication may be used if, for example, a lecture or teaching event has to be cancelled at very short notice. It is therefore important that you ensure that your contact details are

regularly updated via 'myEssex', and we encourage students to include their mobile telephone for the reasons given above.

### **Graduate Teaching Assistantships**

Research students have the opportunity to work as graduate teaching assistants (GTA) in the Department. The Department does not normally consider candidates for teaching who are in the first year of a PhD at Essex, unless the student concerned is going on to a PhD after completing a postgraduate taught degree at Essex (for example, ESRC 1+3 students), and already has some familiarity with the Department and its procedures. Application forms are emailed to all current PhD students in the Department of Sociology and ISER at the end of the Spring term. Students are required to submit a covering letter together with an up to date CV. Applications are considered by the Head of Department and the GTA Co-ordinator, and PhD students who are new to teaching in the Department are invited for interview. Successful candidates are notified of their teaching allocation during the summer term. All GTAs are required to complete the training requirement outlined in the Code of Practice on Teaching and Demonstrating by Graduate Students. For further information, see:

[www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university\\_policies/default.asp#GTAs](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university_policies/default.asp#GTAs)

### **Department Annual Prizes**

A student will be eligible for the award of one prize only in an academic year.

#### **The Don Pike Award**

This prize is awarded annually for the best, first time, Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) employed by the Department of Sociology, as nominated by their students. Only GTAs teaching for the first time in the Sociology Department will be considered. The prize-winner will receive £200. Prize money must be spent towards the cost of preparing a thesis.

#### **The Fuller Postgraduate Research Prize**

This prize is awarded annually to a Postgraduate Research student from the Department of Sociology for the best research publication. The prize-winner will receive £200.



# Academic Matters

## Learning and Teaching

The Department offers four research degrees: PhD by research, Integrated PhD, MPhil, and MA by Dissertation. A PhD is a structured three-year programme of advanced study and research. PhD students are expected to complete their study within four years of entering, with a thesis no longer than 80,000 words. The MPhil is a structured two-year programme and is expected to be completed in three years with a thesis no longer than 50,000 words. The Masters by Dissertation is a programme of minimum one year duration and completion is required in the second year with a thesis no longer than 30,000 words.

## Integrated PhD

The Integrated PhD provides preparatory training for research work. In this scheme, students follow a full range of taught modules (of the MA in Sociological Research) in their first year, while undertaking preparatory work for their research. Students have to pass the modules to be allowed to continue to the second year and must also submit a revised research proposal towards the end of their first year. During the second year students complete the bulk of their data collection and/or theoretical groundwork, and in their third year, students complete the doctoral research, writing a thesis of no more than 80,000 words.



Part-time students follow a similar pattern, but are expected to spread the taught modules over two years and to produce their proposal early in the second year.

## MPhil

The minimum period of registration for the MPhil degree is six terms (two years). Comprising both a programme of coursework and research, the degree is awarded on the basis of a thesis with a maximum length of 50,000 words. Each

successful MPhil thesis makes an original contribution to Sociology, though of a less substantial nature than required for the award of a PhD.

## Masters by Dissertation

This degree is for those students who wish to carry out a relatively small piece of research under the supervision of an academic member of the staff. The minimum period for this postgraduate degree is one year full-time (or two years part-time) and the maximum is two years full-time (three years part-time). A candidate submitting a dissertation for a Masters degree is required to present the results of research carried out during the approved period and should demonstrate advanced understanding of the area of study. The dissertation should set out the relationship between the candidate's work and the wider field of knowledge, and should be expressed clearly and concisely. Arrangements can be made for students to attend appropriate sociological modules to ensure relevant theoretical and research methods training. This should be discussed at an early stage with the dissertation supervisor. The length of the completed research dissertation should be no more than 30,000 words.

On application, a student undertaking the Masters by Dissertation may be permitted to transfer to the degree of MPhil, MPhil/PhD or PhD by the Department's Research Students' Progress Committee.

## Information about Moodle and FASer

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](http://faser.essex.ac.uk)

[www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/learning-technology/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/it/services/learning-technology/)

## Registration, intermitting, changes to studies

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. Once 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/](http://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 Postgraduate Research Education team 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/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/esf/)

If your request is approved your period of study 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>

Periods of study

		<i>Students first registered between 2008-09 to 2017-18</i>		Students first registered from 2018-19 onwards	
Research degree	Mode	Minimum	Maximum	Research degree	Mode
Masters by Dissertation (MA or MSc by	FT	One year	Two years	Masters by	FT
	PT	Two years	Three years	Two years	PT
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	FT	Two years	Three years	Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	FT
	PT	Four years	Five years	Four years	PT
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	PT only	Two years	Three years	Doctor of Medicine (MD)	PT only
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	FT	Three years	Four years	Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	FT
	PT	Six years	Seven years	Six years	PT
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	FT	Four years	Five years	Doctor of Philosophy	FT
	PT	Eight years	Nine years	Eight years	PT
Professional Doctorate	FT/PT	See individual programmes	See individual programmes	Professional Doctorate	FT/PT

### Supervision, Requirements and PhD Milestones

Supervisory meetings, ongoing interaction with one's supervisor, and submission of work to Supervisory Boards and/or Research Students' Progress Committees are the primary means by which research student progress is monitored in the Department.

### Frequency of Supervision

Research students should expect a detailed discussion/review of their work and progress three times a term (including their supervisory boards) in their first year of study.

In their second and subsequent years, they should expect detailed discussion/review of their work and progress **at least once a month across the whole year**.

Research students should expect a detailed discussion/review of their work and progress **three times a term** (including their supervisory boards) in their first year of study. At the first meeting, the supervisor should discuss student's training needs and fill in the Research and Skills Training Needs form to be kept by the supervisor, student and the Student administrator <https://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/current-students/pg.aspx>

Please note that these are the **minimum** expectations relating to contact between supervisors and students. Many staff will offer supervision on a more frequent basis. Contact will often consist of face-to-face meetings, but may also involve virtual meetings such as Skype, or detailed email correspondence, particularly during field-work.

Supervisors should keep a record of all contact with research students.

## PhD Supervisory Boards

Supervisors ensure that meetings of supervisory boards with the student are arranged at least twice a year for full-time students and once a year for part-time students until they have submitted. If the student is studying away when the board is due, acceptable alternative arrangements are put in place to monitor the student's progress, such as a supervisory board meeting held via Skype/video. Distance learning students have one face-to-face supervisory board per year. The supervisory board reports are then reviewed by the Research Students' Progress Committee.<sup>1</sup>

Supervisors and students decide among themselves what work they wish the board to consider. The material submitted might be a draft chapter, a detailed report on fieldwork and data collection, or a substantive progress report that identifies issues for discussion. The material submitted should allow for a focused discussion, and it should be such as to convey a sense of the student's recent progress.

The role of the Board Chair is to monitor and provide an external check on the supervision process, but also to give a second view on students' work. Supervisors and Chairs are thus **required to read and comment on any work submitted** for a Supervisory Board. Students must ensure that the Supervisor and Chair have sufficient time to read and comment on the work.

All Supervisory Panels of PhD students are to meet **by weeks 9 and 37**, and students should electronically submit Supervisory Panel Report form ([moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7129](https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7129)) to the Chair and supervisor before the scheduled board meeting. The Chair is expected to fill in the Board's comments and recommendations at the board meeting and return the form by email to the Student administrator ([socpgadm@essex.ac.uk](mailto:socpgadm@essex.ac.uk)). Students should keep a copy of the form.

## Requirements for First Year Students

At the end of their First Year, students are required to submit a **Research Proposal** of no more than 12,000 words. This should cover the following areas:

**1. Research problem** (around 2,000 words). This should:

- identify the overall research problem
- state clearly the key questions that the thesis will address
- locate the research problem within the broader line of inquiry
- describe the conceptual and theoretical framework that undergirds the study

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<sup>1</sup> Research Students' Progress Committee (RSPC) is held at least twice a year to review the progress of all students and report this to the Registry. The first meeting is held between December and mid-January, the second in the summer term, before the end of June.



**2. Literature survey** (around 5,000 words). This should demonstrate the relationship of the proposed research to existing studies. It should:

- identify and discuss key areas of literature, engage with ongoing debates in the literature, show how the proposed study will draw on and further develop these debates or contribute to a new line of inquiry
- locate the study in relation to influential texts in the relevant disciplinary or interdisciplinary areas, and demonstrate any gaps, weaknesses or criticisms
- indicate how the proposed research will contribute to the advancement of knowledge, data or methods

**3. Research design** (around 5,000 words). This should explain how the research will actually be conducted. It should:

- identify the primary or secondary data sources that will be collected or accessed
- explain how the fieldwork or collection of data will be organised, and demonstrate accessibility of sources
- justify the data collection and analytical methods/techniques to be used in relation to the overall topic and research questions
- provide a schedule for the fieldwork/data collection phase of the thesis, as well as for the overall completion of the thesis. This might also be the place to raise any potential difficulties or limitations as well as any ethical issues connected with the research.

NB: It is expected that different sections of the proposal will be incorporated into various chapters of the thesis, and students may choose to present their proposal in a different format from the one above; however they must ensure that all three areas are covered.

### **Confirmation of PhD Status**

In the first instance, students wishing to take a PhD register for an MPhil degree, with registration being upgraded to full PhD registration at the end of their first three terms of full-time study (or six terms in the case of part-time students). This process is referred to as confirmation of PhD status, and is conditional on the student's progress.

Confirmation of PhD status is normally discussed at the student's first supervisory board meeting in their third term of study (usually the supervisory board of the Summer term of Year 1 for full-time students and the Summer term of Year 2 for part-time students). The Board reviews the student's work to confirm whether progress and work is at PhD level. Following this meeting, supervisors make a recommendation to the Research Student Progress Committee (RSPC) about whether the student's PhD status should be confirmed.

In order to decide whether to confirm PhD status, the Supervisory Board applies the following criteria:

1. The student has adequately formulated the topic and produced a clear outline of the thesis, together with a plan of work for the remainder of the minimum period.
2. The student has completed a review of the secondary literature in the field, established a critical position in relation to it, and identified the major primary and secondary sources to be used.

3. The student has begun examining primary sources and has demonstrated accessibility to data sources.
4. The quality and quantity of work so far produced indicates the student has an original thesis that can be completed on time.

Students who meet these criteria have their PhD status confirmed. In the case of students progressing at a slower rate than expected, a number of options are available. The RSPC may choose to defer the decision on confirmation for one term. Alternatively, if a student's progress has fallen well short of the required levels, the RSPC may recommend that the student remain registered for an MPhil; or (exceptionally, and in cases where the student has already received warnings from their supervisors about progress) that the student's studies be discontinued.

Once their PhD status is confirmed, students continue to have two supervisory boards each year (one for part-timers), at which their progress toward completion is assessed. While we expect all our students complete their PhDs on time, subsequent recommendation of downgrading or discontinuation could be made if good progress did not continue.

If the confirmation decision is deferred for one term, the Supervisory Board provides the student with clear written guidelines as to what would have to be achieved by the second Confirmation Board in order for the PhD status to be granted. The final decision focuses on the extent to which the guidelines have been followed, but also involves an assessment on the quality of the work produced. In cases of decisions of confirmation as MPhil or discontinuation, the student has the opportunity to make her/his case to the RSPC. The student is informed of this opportunity by the Supervisory Board, which also contacts the Student administrator to make the necessary arrangements. If the RSPC upholds the initial recommendation of the Supervisory Board, the student then has a right to appeal to the Graduate School.

### **Requirements for Second Year Students**

For empirically based research, data collection should normally be completed by the end of the second year. With the exception of registered PhD distance students, those who wish to carry out any fieldwork or study away from the university must ensure that the request for **permission to study away from the University** has been approved. This is done online via: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/esf/>

The Supervisory Board will need to discuss any risks that might be associated with the Fieldwork and an **ethical approval form** should be completed and submitted to the Department at least 6 weeks before fieldwork commences: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/governance/human.aspx>

### **Requirements for Third Year Students**

Students are expected to complete writing of drafts of all the chapters in the thesis.

### **Completion Period: Extensions Beyond the Minimum Period of Study**

The University regulations are as follows:

The stage between the end of the minimum period and the end of the maximum period is known as the Completion Period.

At the end of the prescribed Standard Period of three full-time years, a student may be permitted to proceed to an eleven-month Completion Period by the RSPC. The RSPC shall decide that a student can proceed to the completion period where it is satisfied that the student has completed written work of sufficient quality and quantity to provide clear evidence that the student is in a position to write up the remainder of the thesis and submit well within the eleven-month completion period. The aim should typically be for students to submit their thesis by the beginning of the Spring term. **Completion year tuition fees are at a lower rate.**

The Supervisory Board will base its judgement on whether the student can proceed to the completion period on the quality and quantity of the written work submitted to it at the end of the minimum period. The RSPC's decision will be reported to the appropriate Dean, accompanied by appropriate supporting documents.



Where the student is not ready to proceed to the Completion Period because there is no realistic expectation that the student will be in a position to present the thesis for examination within the completion period, even though the quality of the work is of the required standard, then the Dean may extend the minimum period, on the recommendation of the Department's RSPC. **This would involve the payment of full fees.** In such cases, both supervisor and student should give a clear indication as to why this is and provide a timetable for submission as soon as possible after the original maximum period.

A student who is not permitted to proceed to the Completion Period will need approval to extend his/hers minimum period and students shall pay the appropriate fee for the additional terms .

### **Taught Modules**

For those who are registered for PhD or MPhil degrees by thesis only, a Supervisor may require a student to attend a module to aid him or her with the thesis, normally in their first year. Students may also attend modules on an informal basis, for which they are not registered, but only if space permits and with both prior and continuing consent of the lecturer/class teacher. Once they have approval they will need to register as an auditing student. Please speak to Michele Hall for further information.

### **Milestones for PhD Students**

**PGR Milestones are used to ensure you are making sufficient progress during your studies and to keep you on track to submit within the standard period. At each Research Student Progress Board, your progress will be considered against the relevant milestones for your course. Your supervisor will talk you through the relevant milestones, however please ensure you refer to them on a regular basis.**

### **Higher Degree Regulations for Research Degrees**

Information about higher degree regulations can be found on the following moodle page:

[www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/default.aspx](http://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/default.aspx)

## Disability and emotional 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 Student Support 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](http://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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/disability/funding.aspx)

## 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/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/international/) 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.

## Mature and part-time students

As a mature student you'll be in very good company – around 25% 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/groups/mature-students.aspx)

## 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.
2. You can find more information on the Students' Union website [www.essexstudent.com/representation/course-reps/](http://www.essexstudent.com/representation/course-reps/) and the University's policy here: [www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student-representation/student-rep.asp](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student-representation/student-rep.asp).
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).



## 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](http://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 Sandy Macmillan) – contact them [amacmi@essex.ac.uk](mailto:amacmi@essex.ac.uk) or use the Book a librarian form on the Library website to get in touch. More information can be found at <http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/subject.htm> For guidance in relation to third-party proofreading of student work: [www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading](http://www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading)

## Research and Skills Training

### 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 <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/research.aspx> and you can contact the Proficio team at [proficio@essex.ac.uk](mailto:proficio@essex.ac.uk).

### PhD Colloquium

Information can be found on our Moodle pages:

[moodle.essex.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/675695/mod\\_resource/content/1/phd-colloquium.pdf](http://moodle.essex.ac.uk/pluginfile.php/675695/mod_resource/content/1/phd-colloquium.pdf)

Mandatory for PhD students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years

First year (running weekly for both terms):

### **DESIGNING AND LOCATING YOUR RESEARCH IN THE FIELD**

Topics covered: general info on PhD process; writing successful research proposals and effectively preparing literature surveys; networking strategies (conference participation, summer schools, membership in research networks, etc—things that will help students to strengthen their CVs over time); preparing for fieldwork and data collection, and locating secondary data. In addition, students are introduced to a range of theoretical paradigms and their empirical applications as represented in the Department (through presentations by academic staff). Students are expected to present their research proposals for comments by the colloquium tutor and also by others in class.

Written assignment: PhD research proposal

Second year (running bi-weekly for both terms)

## **CONDUCTING AND COMMUNICATING YOUR RESEARCH**

Students commit themselves from the beginning of the year to present at a conference of their choice (beyond departmental venues) and work on the conference paper throughout the colloquium, including practice presentations and discussant roles for each other's papers before the actual event. The colloquium also includes sessions on "research data management" and discussions of issues arising from students' ongoing fieldwork and data collection, and locating.

Written assignment: Conference paper Third year (running bi-weekly for both terms)

## **DISSEMINATING AND PUBLISHING YOUR RESEARCH**

Students commit themselves from the beginning of the year to write a paper to be submitted to a journal and work on writing the journal paper throughout the colloquium, including discussion of drafts in class, and students acting as manuscript reviewers for each other's papers. The colloquium also includes sessions on forms and process of publishing (preparing book manuscripts and revising and resubmitting journal articles); post-doctoral funding sources and obtaining research grants, using ESRC /BA (or other relevant) templates as example; searching and preparing for academic jobs, job market talks, and interviews.

Written assignment: Paper for journal submission and peer review report

### **Departmental Seminars**

The Department runs an exciting seminar series consisting of presentations by leading scholars in the social sciences. The seminar series includes a number of special annual seminars such as the Fuller lecture given by a renowned speaker and an Undergraduate Lecture given by a renowned public figure who is asked to address issues affecting youth today.

Our Research Centres such as the Centre for Research in Economic Sociology and Innovation (CRESI) and the Centre for Intimate and Sexual Citizenship (CISC) also run seminar series. You can find out more about our Research Centres at [www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/research](http://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/research)

These seminars are open to all staff and students and are normally followed by a reception in the Sociology Common Room. Postgraduate Research (PGR) students are expected to attend alongside Masters students and academic staff.

PGR Students are informed of the schedule for all of our seminar events throughout the year, so please keep a regular check on your emails. You can find the details of any of our scheduled events at [www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/events](http://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/events).

## Conferences

### Graduate Introductory Day

This is for all graduate students, both taught and doctoral students, to be introduced to the Department and its activities. This is held during Welcome Week in October and it is compulsory for all new Postgraduate students to attend.

### Residential Graduate Conference

The Graduate Conference is regarded as the academic and social highlight of the Department's annual calendar. The Conference is held over two days during the Summer term and offers sessions on a wide variety of topics, with presentations by staff and students. All graduate students (PGT and PGR students) are strongly encouraged to attend and students are also invited to help organise the conference.

More information can be found on our website:

[www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/annual-graduate-conference](http://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/sociology/annual-graduate-conference)

## Graduate Small Grants

Research students in the Department of Sociology have the opportunity to make a formal application for a small grant (for a maximum of £1,000 during their registration period) to assist them in their PhD/MPhil research, or to present papers at conferences. Applications can be made three times during the academic year. Details can be found on our website: [moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7129](http://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=7129)

## Progressions and Assessment

### **Principal Regulations for Research Degrees and the Code of Practice for Research Degrees/Code of Practice for Professional Doctorates**

[www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations)

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies>

The Principal Regulations and the Codes 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 Students' Progress Board.

**Extenuating Circumstances, withdrawing and intermitting** [www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ)

**Extenuating circumstances** are circumstances beyond your control which cause your progress to be negatively impacted upon, including performing 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. Extenuating circumstances deadlines will be issued by the department ahead of the Supervisory Panel.

Professional Doctorate and Integrated PhD students need to ensure that this form is submitted by the postgraduate taught deadline given here in order for it to be considered by the Board of Examiners – <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.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/](http://www.essexstudent.com/services/advice_centre/)) or the Student Services Hub ([www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/default.aspx](http://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 the 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 approved, we will also give you the advice and support you need to help you carry on with your studies when you return.

**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).

### **Marking Policy and re-marking of coursework (Professional Doctorates and Integrated PhD students)**

You have the right to request a re-mark of your coursework under certain circumstances which your department will advise you on. The University Marking Policy can be found here: [www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university\\_policies/examination\\_and\\_assessment/marketing\\_policy/default.asp](http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/university_policies/examination_and_assessment/marketing_policy/default.asp)

You will need to complete a form and be aware that marks can go down as well as up.

## Submission of the thesis

### Thesis Submission Pre-Examination

All candidates for Masters by Dissertation (MA or MSc), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Professional Doctorate must submit two copies of their thesis for examination. Candidates being examined as staff must also submit two copies of their thesis for examination.

The two copies of your thesis should be submitted for examination in an unbound format.

They **must** be adequately secured (for example in spring-back binders or comb binding and **not** in ring binders or lever arch box files). They **must not** be overfilled and to avoid all risks of coming open and jeopardising examination, two binders **must** be used, if required.

All registration fees and debts must be paid before the thesis can be accepted for submission.

You should submit to the Silberrad Student Centre:

- a) **Two** copies (one original and one good copy) of the thesis or dissertation.
- b) A submission form (RD1) completed and signed by yourself.

*You are strongly advised to retain one good copy of the thesis or dissertation yourself.*

Please note that you **must** provide an electronic copy of your submitted thesis to the Postgraduate Research Education Team if your examiner requests an electronic version.

All submitted copies of the thesis belong to the University and shall be returned to the candidate following the viva.

### Thesis Submission For Award

Following the completion of the examination process, the candidate will be notified via email that in order to gain their award they must submit one electronic version of their thesis to the online Research Repository. Following the receipt of this deposit, the candidate will be awarded their postgraduate research degree.

### Thesis Deposit

Detailed thesis deposit instructions to the Repository can be found here:

[www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/research-thesis.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/research-thesis.aspx)

Students wishing to place a restriction on their thesis must do so in writing prior to submission of their thesis to [repository@essex.ac.uk](mailto:repository@essex.ac.uk). Further information regarding restrictions can be found here:

[www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/research-thesis.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/research-thesis.aspx)

When depositing your thesis in the online Repository you will be required to read and accept the conditions stipulated in the Thesis Deposit Agreement.

### Retention

Your thesis will be made open access when deposited in the online Research Repository.

The Thesis Deposit Agreement outlines the availability of the thesis and how it will be stored in the Repository. Full details of the requirements for thesis submission can be found at

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/thesis-submission-deposit.pdf>



## Examiners and the viva

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. **Appeals, complaints and fitness to practise**

If the recommendation of your Research Students' Progress Board is that your degree should be downgraded or your studies discontinued, and you want to appeal, you must do so **within 10 working days** of receiving the formal 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 may also **appeal** against an examination decision. 'Failed' or 'referred' candidates may submit their appeal no later than **40 working days** after the formal notification of the decision.

**You should read carefully the Progress and Appeals Procedures for research degree students at:** [www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-progress-appeals](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/research-progress-appeals)

**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)

## 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..

**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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence)

## 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](http://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 fetuses, 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.

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### British Sociological Association

Guidance can be found online [www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa\\_statement\\_of\\_ethical\\_practice.pdf](http://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24310/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice.pdf)

A useful annex on digital research can be found online:

[www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24309/bsa\\_statement\\_of\\_ethical\\_practice\\_annexe.pdf](http://www.britsoc.co.uk/media/24309/bsa_statement_of_ethical_practice_annexe.pdf)

## Referencing and Good Academic Practice

Good academic practice (e.g. precision in writing, skills in reasoning and argumentation, accurate referencing) is central to scholarship; no less so than the subject matter of your learning itself. To a large extent we do sociology in writing, and any areas of weakness here, whether in your written expression directly, or in your understanding of the conventions surrounding academic writing, will undermine the quality of your work.

Citation and referencing practices are particularly important for two reasons: firstly, because they are at the heart of academic dialogue (between yourself, as writer, and other scholars researching and writing in the field, whose work sets a context for your own); and secondly, because where they are incorrectly employed or missing your work risks the charge of plagiarism - a serious academic offence relating to the use of other people's ideas as if they were your own (whether deliberately done or inadvertently).

The Department provides plenty of support in the above respects. We have our own Department Style Guide (available to download from the Student Resource Centre web pages), which offers guidance on good referencing practices, and there is also extensive guidance on the University website (see: A-Z/Plagiarism). If you remain unclear or would like further support with any aspect of your writing, you may also contact Rowena Macaulay, Department Student Support Services Officer, at any time for individual advice (email: [rowena@essex.ac.uk](mailto:rowena@essex.ac.uk)).

Plagiarism is the term used to describe the misuse of authorship. It is a serious academic offence and is treated as such by the University of Essex.

## 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; (please insert department variation here) and for help with referencing, visit the library website: <http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/referencing.htm>

## Organisation of Thesis Work

Most of this advice is prepared with PhD students in mind, but the same principles apply to MPhil students and to students doing an MA by Dissertation.

### Objectives of the Thesis

A PhD is expected to be of a high academic standard comparable to that of other British universities. The issue of comparability is maintained by the system of external examining. The standards set by Supervisors within this Department are therefore no different from those set in any other British University. They do, however, differ slightly from other University systems such as that of the United

States or in the countries of continental Europe. The standard is summarised in the University regulations as follows:

'In the thesis and examination the candidate is required to conduct and present original investigations, to test ideas whether his/her own or those of others, to understand the relationship of the theme of his/her investigations to a wider field of knowledge and to express himself/herself clearly and concisely.' (Higher Degree Regulation 4.16)

The thesis must embody at least five qualities. These are:

**(a) Originality**

The thesis must incorporate new data or other empirical material or, where appropriate, explore theoretical issues in a critical manner. The work must be the student's own and must not plagiarise that of others. Where either the data and/or the ideas are not the student's, the source must be properly acknowledged in the preface and in notes and references. Plagiarism is a grave academic offence, equivalent to 'cheating' in an examination.

**(b) Coherent argument**

The thesis must have a thesis! It must convey a sound and well-substantiated argument. A collection of random observations on the work of others is not satisfactory; nor is a merely descriptive presentation of information.

**(c) Substantiation**

A crucial part of establishing a thesis argument is the presentation of the relevant empirical/theoretical material to support it. The thesis must be clearly structured in a series of chapters that develop and substantiate the central questions/issues being examined in the thesis.

**(d) Disciplinary orientation**

The formulation of the problem and the explanatory concepts used must either be within the appropriate discipline. That is, they must be sociological if the thesis is intended to be a contribution to sociological knowledge, derived from social history if social historical, from the analysis of social policy if the thesis falls within this sub-discipline, use anthropological concepts and methods if the thesis is being framed within the discipline of social anthropology. Students may also choose to use an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary framework drawing on a plurality of modes of analysis, but this must be clearly explained in the thesis. None of this excludes the incorporation of, for example, material drawn from literature, history, film, philosophy, art history, economics or political science, but the thesis must not be exclusively limited to these. Such theses should be presented in other departments.

**(e) Academic style and format**

The conventional academic style of presentation should be observed (see style sheet - Part III) for ways of presenting references and footnotes. The thesis should be written in a formal way, in the style of publications in academic journals. It should go without saying that it should be written in good, clear English and should be thoroughly copy-edited. Clarity of expression should be an absolute priority in all drafts of the thesis.

Note that common reasons for rejecting theses are that they are 'badly written', 'fail to contribute anything new to the subject'; 'no clear argument'; 'data do not support the argument'; 'purely descriptive' and 'bad, sloppy presentation'.

**(a) Planning the work**

Right from the start of the degree you should plan your time carefully, devise schedules and try to stick to them. Some students at the beginning of a PhD think that three years is a long time to sit and cogitate, and imagine that the thesis will somehow come together at the end as a result of some spontaneous combustion. The analysis and writing up should take one half to a third of your total time not just a couple of months at the end. Remember that you have to allow time for getting feedback on your work; Supervisors cannot read work the day you give it to them, it may even be difficult for them to read a paper within a week during a busy time of the term. Supervisors require advance notice for all work that a student may want them to see. You should plan to complete your final draft a good month or two before your final deadline, not the week or the day before.

**(b) Formulating the problem**

This is the most crucial aspect of your work. You will be reformulating and refining it continually thereafter, but you must have a project to work on. Ideally, a problem should be formulated at a specific rather than a general level. You can look at the general implications afterwards. Do not, for example, formulate your problem as 'a critique of contemporary social class theory' but rather as a proposition about a specific problem in class theory, or a specific author or group of authors' works. Start from the particular and work out rather than the other way round. If you jump in at the deep end you may drown. If you wade in gradually you may reach the depths of human knowledge eventually, and will have a better idea of how you got there. Set your problem out schematically and divide it up into propositions or hypotheses to be tested. This will help in devising the methodology and in organising the analysis.

**(c) Surveying the literature**

Don't 'read everything first' – you'll never finish. Think first, then read selectively, then do some more thinking. Refine your problem as you do so. Many theses have a conventional 'literature review' chapter. The purpose of surveying the literature is to situate your problem and argument, not to tell us everything there is to know about the subject. We need to know how what you will investigate fits into the existing forms of knowledge, and whether your findings are going to relate to the various bodies of research and thought about the subject. We need to know this as part of evaluating the overall contribution of your thesis; but you can indicate this within the space of 25 pages not 100. We don't want to know about other people's theses; readers will want to know about yours. Note that the literature review should be completed within the first year of a PhD. You should not have to embark on a literature review at the beginning of your writing up stage.

**(d) For those doing empirically-based research, deciding on the methodology**Methodology

This must be chosen in relation to the problem you have formulated. The first stage in establishing this relationship is operationalisation of concepts. You must have a clear idea of how abstract concepts can be translated into operational indicators, otherwise it may be possible to read off different conclusions from your data. The research method chosen must be precise in its aims and you should keep a record of what these aims are. If you have a vague problem, you will have a vaguer methodology and you will wonder what you are going to do with all your data.

The methodology should reflect the kind of analysis you intend to do. Think about what you are going to do with the data once you have got it. Are you going for a technique such as ethnographic fieldwork which is qualitative? If so, how will you collect and interpret it? Are you going for quantitative techniques? If so, will you analyse the data with cross-tabs or more sophisticated statistical techniques? Have you got



the necessary technical skills for this? If not, discuss how to obtain them with your Supervisor. What data requirements are imposed by these techniques?

### Data collection

While you are in the field or in the library/archive, you will continually be observing things which have implications for the analysis. Keep a notebook to record your observations and insights. Keep thinking about the original problem, what light is being shed by the fieldwork? You may already be thinking of ways in which the problem should be redefined or modified - keep records of all these thoughts, they'll prove useful later. Evaluate your research techniques as you go along, it will be useful for your methodological appendix. Data collection should be completed by the end of your second year.

### Data analysis

By now you are probably engulfed by the myriad complexities of 'real life' and have forgotten what the original problem was. Your problem now is how to relate the materials you have collected to the theoretical and literature review work you did in the first year. Solutions might include:

- go back to the problem and look at the way you had originally divided it up into propositions or sections;
- analyse the data only in relation to each of the sections, one at a time;
- write up each bit of the analysis as you go, but only as a working document. Observe what you might have expected (and why) and what resulted.

### **(e) For those carrying out theoretically-based research, avoid drowning in literature**

The dangers of drowning in a sea of potentially relevant literature, always present in PhD work, are greatly multiplied when the topic is a theoretical one. There is no single life-preserving strategy either: different individuals find (or fail to find!) their own defences. The following tips, however, may be of some help:

- (i) Students often embark on a field of theoretical research because the issues interest them, rather than because they have a distinctive and independent view, perspective, or 'thesis' on the general topic. In many ways this is an admirable intellectual quality but can, if not held in check, lead to an interminable process of 'reading round the topic', in the hope that an argument will emerge. It probably won't. Engage in a theoretical project if you think, however naively, that you have something to say. You may find that someone else has already said it, but it is unlikely to be exactly what you want to say. If you start with a proposition, and a set of arguments for it, this in itself will set outer limits to the range of appropriate reading and provide criteria for distinguishing the important from the unimportant in what you do read.
- (ii) Do not allow yourself to be intimidated by your growing recognition of the sheer quantity of literature in your chosen field. Instead, use your preliminary reading to get a sense of the main figures in the debate and the main lines of cleavage. Try initially to situate yourself in the general framework, and then concentrate on developing your own position, returning at a later state to the finer-grained study of the literature which then seems to be pertinent.
- (iii) Do not allow yourself to be intimidated by impenetrable forms of writing and excessive use of jargon. Most things that can be said at all can be said simply and clearly. Be suspicious of texts which exhibit neither virtue and resist any temptation to imitate them.

### **(f) Writing up**

Once you have completed the above stages, you can start working towards a full draft of your thesis.

Do not think about commencing a first draft of the thesis until you are surrounded by a series of working documents on the different sections of your data, you have sketched out some ideas about how they fit together, and you have made a complete set of notes on the methodological aspects of the thesis.

The first step is to construct the argument in detail. This argument will form the spine of the thesis. It takes two forms: (i) the overall argument and (ii) subsections; (i) then gives you the introduction and (ii) the successive chapters. The overall argument should be written up in note form only to guide you in preparing the rest. It is highly advisable that you write up the detailed parts of your argument as separate chapters and submit them to your Supervisor for comment.

The Introduction and Conclusion of your thesis are often written last. It helps if you write them at about the same time, and they should not merely repeat each other. The Introduction should firmly indicate what your project is about, the Conclusion can summarise this briefly, show how the various parts of the argument fitted together, and can raise some more general issues of wider relevance. It is also the appropriate place to mention what you have not done, or were not able to do. It is very important to do this or the examiners may conclude that you do not recognise that there are limitations on what you have been able to achieve, and grill you on this at the viva. You can also indicate what further research or other activities (for example, policy changes) you think now needs to be done etc.

### **(g) Issues of style**

Remember that your readers don't know what is to come, and there is a limit to what anyone can absorb in the space of 80,000 words. You are supposed to be taking them on a voyage of discovery, but they will need maps and signposts. Visually it helps a lot if you divide the text into sections (though not too many) with sub-titles indicating what each one covers. Indicate at the beginning of each chapter what the purpose of the chapter is, what it is going to cover and what the main points are going to be. Summarise what you have covered at the end and indicate how it is going to link into your overall argument, and to other chapters. Don't be afraid of some repetition. You may have to remind your reader as he/she goes deep into the text, of some important point 100 pages back. These 'signposts' should be dotted about all through the text so that the reader can see where he/she is going and where he/she came from. It helps a reader enormously to understand your points of detail if he/she has a clear idea of the overall argument.

Arrange your chapters so that the 'lead in' is short in relation to your main text. Introductory chapters, the theoretical framework and your evaluation of the existing literature should all be reasonably short. If you want to expand your theoretical critique of the existing literature, and you feel it is really important, do it in the conclusion and let readers know at the beginning that they will find it there. The conclusion should be the gem at the bottom of the mine, not a drip in an empty cave!

Avoid long sentences and verbosity. No sentence should be more than two or three lines. Use simple words wherever possible, avoid jargon unless absolutely necessary. Use short paragraphs (but not too short) and lots of them. Given your word limit, each word has a price: every redundant word limits the scope of your analysis and reduces the clarity of your ideas.

### **Tips and Problems**

#### **(a) Drafts**

Recognise that the analysis and writing up stages involve multiple drafts. Everyone's first draft is rough, don't worry about it. Concentrate on getting the ideas down on paper, you can do the refining later. Don't polish each chapter until it sparkles before going on to the next, you may find you have to cut some of it out later and it will really hurt to throw away that beautiful prose.

### **(b) Writing blocks**

Writing blocks and 'PhD blues' are frequent at this writing up stage. Some students doubt their ability and think they will never get to the end. You may get a block if:

- you are over-ambitious for your thesis and despair about reaching your goals.
- you become confused about the original objective of the thesis, usually because you have got swamped by data or divergent theoretical ideas.
- you have locked yourself away and aren't having enough contact with other people who can give you support.

The solution might include:

- lower your ambitions for the thesis (very few are actually path-breaking milestones). It may help to look at some of the other theses that have been submitted in the Department;
- divide it up into manageable parts; if you get stuck on one part, try another;
- recognise that what you write initially will be re-written subsequently, so it doesn't matter if it is not quite right at first;
- don't be afraid to show your drafts to friends and other students. It may not be perfect, but neither is anyone else's. Get feedback;
- talk to people about your ideas - friends, members of staff, other graduates. Talking helps to clarify your ideas and gives you confidence.

### **(c) Over-confidence**

Some students suffer from the reverse of the above. They are so convinced of the merit of their work that they feel there is no need to show drafts to their Supervisor prior to the final write-up. They suddenly appear after a long period of absence with a complete manuscript expecting it to be approved by the Supervisor for immediate submission. They are surprised and puzzled when the Supervisor indicates that some re-writing is necessary and are resentful of the time and expense that this entails.

These problems can be avoided by maintaining frequent contact with the Supervisor during the writing up period, and providing drafts of different chapters for discussion with the Supervisor, prior to the final write-up.

### **(d) Changing the Topic/Title/Argument**

At some stage in the programme you may feel that you wish to change the form of your thesis to accommodate a change in your theoretical interests, recent innovations in your field, or new problems raised by the materials you have collected. A change in the title of the thesis is a minor matter although it must be approved by your Supervisor and registered with the Registry. Once the Approval of Title form has been submitted no changes can be made. The form is usually submitted 2 months prior to submission of thesis. A shift in the structure of the argument is not too serious a matter either, provided it does not take you into a different theoretical literature or imply a radical change in methodology, both of which can be costly in terms of time. A change in topic is a very serious matter and is to be discouraged since it has serious time-cost implications. It may also affect the ability of the Supervisors to fulfil their roles or even for the Department to provide alternative Supervisors. A change in topic would have to be approved by the Supervisor and the Director of Postgraduate studies. Approval will be conditional upon good grounds being presented. A shift in the student's interests is rarely sufficient.

### **(e) Sensitivity to criticism**

The more students invest in their research the more they identify themselves with it and the more sensitive they become to criticism. This can be a real problem at the writing-up stage for you may either become totally crushed by criticism and may take it as a terrible indictment of your whole being. Or, you

may not 'hear' it, because you are too wedded to the arguments and too over-protective about your ideas. All of this is common and natural. However, it is extremely important that you be receptive to criticism and that you learn to convert negative or critical comment into positive constructive action. In order to facilitate this try the following:

- if you feel overwhelmed after a meeting with your Supervisor or Supervisory Board, write down what you think were the problems raised and go over them with your Supervisor when you have had time to detach yourself from the event;
- ask your Supervisor to write down his/her comments so that you can re-read them later when you can absorb them better;
- if you can't understand any points being made about your work, say so. Ask for more clarification. Remember that part of your confusion will come from the emotional problem of over-identification with the thesis, not from problems with your intellectual ability;
- make suggestions to yourself on paper about how you can correct the faults that have been detected and go over them with your Supervisor.

#### **(f) General readings**

There are a great many guides to research and to the writing process involved in a PhD. You might look at a few. These are all in our Albert Sloman Library either in hard copy or online or both:

Umberto Eco, (2015), How to Write a Thesis, MIT Press. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/how-write-thesis>

Rowena Murray, (2011), How to Write a Thesis, Open University Press.

Howard S. Becker (1986), Writing for Social Scientists, University of Chicago Press.

Kate L. Turabian, (1982), A Manual for Writers of Theses, University of Chicago Press.

On writing itself:

George Orwell's 1946 classic essay 'Politics and the English Language' is an excellent reflection on the use and abuse of language. Its suggestions for clear and evocative use of the language are still relevant today. There are many editions of the essay in many books or online at [http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e\\_polit/](http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit/)

Michael Billig, (2013) Learn to Write Badly: how to succeed in the social sciences, Cambridge University Press is a book that instructs you how not to write and how to avoid contributing to what is widely regarded as the bad writing of the social sciences.

#### Submission of thesis

Information and guidance can be found on the following webpage:

[www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/default.aspx](http://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/default.aspx)

#### Page Layout

Candidates may print on both sides of the paper (double-sided printing) with double spacing for everything except quotations, footnotes, captions to plates etc.

- Where double-sided printing is used, both the left hand and right hand margins must be at least 3.2cm (this is the binding margin).
- Where single-sided printing is used, only the left hand margin must be at least 3.2cm (this is the binding margin). It is desirable to leave about 1.3cm at the outer edge of the page.

- When photographs are mounted the binding margin must be increased to 3.8cm.
- It is desirable to leave 2.5cm margins at top and bottom of the page.
- The best position for the page number is at the top right 1.3cm below the top edge.

#### a) Style

Although every author will have his/her own style of writing, it is important that your usage of capitalisation, hyphens, spelling, etc. should be consistent throughout the manuscript.

- abbreviations - should be easily identifiable and must be consistent throughout;
- capitalisation - use capitals in the text as sparingly as possible;
- figures and numerals - units of measurement should be given in figures (e.g. 39 per cent). Numbers under a hundred should be in words (e.g. sixty-eight people). Over a hundred, they can appear as figures (e.g. 500 people). Dates are to be typed day-month-year with a comma between the month and the year (e.g. February, 1969);
- punctuation - use single quotation marks throughout, except for quotations within quotations which will then appear within double quote marks;
- spelling - if a word has an alternative spelling, make sure you use only one form throughout.

#### b) Sub-headings

Please check all your sub-headings for consistency and indicate clearly their degree of importance - either by marking in the margin A, B, or C or by being consistent in their typing so that, e.g. A is typed capitals, B is lower case and underlined, and C is lower case and not underlined. It is not advisable to use more than three degrees of sub-heading as this can confuse the reader. Do not overuse sub-headings as this can lead to fragmentation of the material and argument. You are writing a thesis not a report.

#### c) Quotations

Quotations occupying more than three lines of typescript should begin on a fresh line and be distinguished by indentation and single space typing. Do not change the spelling or punctuation in a quotation, unless there is an obvious error. Quotations from North American books should retain US or Canadian spelling.

#### d) Notes

Footnotes may appear at the foot of the page or the end of the chapter, although publishers prefer them at the end of a chapter. They must be restricted to statements that develop an idea or expand a quotation, where to do so in the text would seriously disturb the balance of the matter. Bibliographical

references do not normally appear as notes, but they can depending on which style guide you choose to employ (see below).

#### e) References

In general, you are recommended to use the Harvard system of referencing. This is as follows:

Text references - give the author's name, date of publication, and page reference (if one is needed) in parenthesis: 'It is difficult to quarrel with the conclusion (Jukes 1862: 318) that ...'. You must give a page number if you are reproducing a quotation from another author or referencing a specific point made by the author. If the author published two or more works in one year, these are labelled 2007a, b, etc. and must be clearly identified as such in the list of references that comes at the end of the book. The person's initials should be included where there are books/papers by two authors with the same



surname published in the same year. This is fairly rare but it does sometimes happen. Never use Latin forms such as *ibid.* or *op.cit.* with this system of referencing. Always give references in the text as explained above.

(Social historical work may require a different system of referencing - check with your Supervisor.)

The final list of full references should list all the references actually used in the text. This list then appears at the end of the manuscript. References should be consistent in their presentation and should contain the following information:

- books - name of author, initial(s), date, title (underlined or in italics), place of publication, publisher, e.g. Burns, T. (1992) Erving Goffman, London: Routledge;
- articles - name of author, initial(s), date, title of article, name of journal (underlined or in italics), volume number, issue number, page numbers, e.g. McCrone, D. and Kichy, R. (2000) 'Nationalism and Citizenship', Sociology 34(1), 19-34;
- papers in books - name of author, initial(s), date, title of paper, name of editor of book, book's title (underlined), place of publication, publisher (there is no need to give the page numbers) e.g. Witz, A. (1994) 'The Challenge of Nursing' in J. Gabe, D. Kelleher and G. Williams (eds) Challenging Medicine, London: Routledge.

The references themselves should be listed in alphabetical order and, when an author has written more than one work, those works should appear in chronological order. Please follow the style of punctuation given in the examples above.

#### f) Tables, Figures, Photographs and Illustrations

Tables and figures should be labelled and numbered clearly at the top and the source stated at the foot of the table or figure. Please check that columns and rows are labelled and sum to the correct totals. Where percentages are used, remember to put in the 100% totals for the relevant columns or rows at the bottom or side and the total 'N'. Photographs, art works, and other illustrations may also be important additions to a thesis, giving readers a visual understanding of what is being discussed in the text. These should also be labelled and numbered.

### **Proofreading**

Many students seek 'proofreading' services at some point during their studies but there are many different editing practices used in this name. In a context where work is to be assessed, the University is keen to ensure as far as possible that we have a shared understanding of what proofreading work should entail and the acceptable boundaries to any intervention on a student text.

There is no obligation for any student to engage the assistance of a paid proofreader at any stage of study or on any piece of coursework. However, it is acknowledged that certain types of student texts are quite often submitted for proofreading to a third party and that such assistance is at times actively recommended by supervisors. This is particularly the case for doctoral dissertations which typically aim for publication standard in their presentation. In addition, students whose first language is not English may want to have Masters level projects and dissertations proofread. There are no University regulations forbidding the use of proofreaders for other types of work but please see the note below on consulting supervisors.

For more information on proofreading and where to find a proofreader, please visit the following webpage: [www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading/)

### **Getting published**

Information about getting published will be covered in the PhD Colloquium but you can also ask your supervisor for advice. You may also find the information on the Research and Enterprise Office website useful: [www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/open-access.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/open-access.aspx)

### **Intellectual property**

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). The following webpage provides links to guidance covering both of these aspects:

[www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/guidelines-ownership-ipr-students.pdf](http://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/guidelines-ownership-ipr-students.pdf)

# You Matter

## Practicalities: Getting started and IT matters

### 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 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 certificate. For more information about registration and award documents, visit our student webpages:

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/registration](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/new/registration)

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/award-documents](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/award-documents)

**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/](http://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.

## IT support, wifi, email account, free MS 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](http://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](http://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](http://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 in Colchester. Open Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 6.00pm, and Friday 8.30am to 5.45pm.

TF.2.03, Info Point, Learning Hub in Southend. Open Monday to Friday 8.30am – 6.00pm

Library, Main House, Hatfields, Loughton. Open Monday to Friday 10.30am – 5.30pm.

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

## 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 University must ensure all students hold the right to study in the UK throughout their studies and there are regulations regarding your Immigration status. For Tier 4 students, the Home Office attach conditions to your Tier 4 leave that restrict study, work and access to state benefits, some nationals have to register with the Police. The University has many duties as a Tier 4 sponsor and must ensure we remain compliant in order to retain our Tier 4 licence. Find out more on the University's website: [www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/) and [www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations).

### **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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students)

[www.essex.ac.uk/welcome](http://www.essex.ac.uk/welcome)

### **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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/default.aspx)



## Skills, Employability, and Experience

### 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers)

### Learning a Language

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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/study/why/languages)

### English classes for the dependants of international students and staff (ECDIS)

The Department of Language and Linguistics offers dependants of international students and staff at the Colchester Campus, the chance to improve their English language, through our ECDIS programme, at no extra cost. Classes are taught at three basic levels: Elementary (A1/A2), Intermediate (B1/B2) and Advanced (C1/C2) and will focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing.

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/language-and-linguistics>  
[ecdis@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ecdis@essex.ac.uk)

### Talent Development Centre

Operating on Colchester and Southend campus, the TDC offers a range of ways to help you realise your potential and improve your academic performance. Our tutors provide expert guidance on study skills; mathematics and statistics; assignment writing and English for academic purposes. Look online to find out more about our classes, workshops, drop-in clinics and on-line resources.

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/tdc](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/tdc) **CareerHub+**

Find hundreds of part-time jobs, internships and graduate vacancies, book on to careers events and workshops, take career assessments, practise 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](http://careerhub.essex.ac.uk/students/login)

### 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/frontrunners)

### **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+ in January.

[www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job\\_hunting/on\\_campus](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/job_hunting/on_campus)

### **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](http://www.essex.su/vteam)

### **Big Essex Award**

The University's **employability award** is a guaranteed way to help you stand out from the crowd, get recognition for all your extra-curricular activities and help you to identify and evidence your skills and experience to employers. Over 100 activities are included, so sign up and get started!

[www.essex.ac.uk/careers/bige](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/bige)

### **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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/internships)

## **You Matter: Health, Welfare, Support, and Safety**

**We know university life can throw up all kinds of concerns and questions - if you need some information, advice or support to succeed, stay healthy and happy, we've got it covered**

### **Student Services Hub, including contacts for disability, wellbeing, counselling and confidential issues**

If you need practical advice, a confidential conversation or general information, no matter what the issue is, our [Student Services Hub](#) is the place to go. Ask us about health and well-being, accommodation, money matters and much more. Your questions matter and you'll get answers from our team of experts

Colchester email: [askthehub@essex.ac.uk](mailto:askthehub@essex.ac.uk) / 01206 874000

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/) and [www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing)

### **Money management**

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.

[www.essex.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/money/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/money/) / [www.essexstudent.com/advice/money/](http://www.essexstudent.com/advice/money/)

### **Harassment report and support service, 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/equality)

[www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment](http://www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment)

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/new](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/new)

### **Religion, faith and beliefs**

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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/mfc)

## 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/nightline)

## 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.

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/safety](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](http://www.essexstudent.com/safetybus)

[www.essex.ac.uk/students/campus/emergency](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/campus/emergency)

[www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/fire/peep](http://www.essex.ac.uk/health-safety/fire/peep)

## 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/accommodation/support/reslife)

## 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](http://www.rowhedgesurgery.co.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **Students' Union Advice**

Our SU Advice service offers free, confidential, independent and impartial advice on many issues that might be affecting you. Our friendly, trained staff are on hand to support you throughout your time at Essex. You can speak to us about Academic processes and procedures, representation at University meetings, Tier 4 UK visa extensions, housing, complaints, welfare and consumer issues.

[www.essex.su/advice](http://www.essex.su/advice)

Colchester students - [suadvice@essex.ac.uk](mailto:suadvice@essex.ac.uk), 01206 874034

### **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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/website-privacy)

[www.essex.ac.uk/records\\_management/policies/students.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/records_management/policies/students.aspx)

# Essex Matters

## The Essex Experience

### 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/charter)

### 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](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/handbooks/default.aspx)

[www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations](http://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations)

### 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/](http://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/](http://www.facebook.com/uniofessex/)

[https://twitter.com/Uni\\_of\\_Essex](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.

[www.essex.ac.uk/events](http://www.essex.ac.uk/events)

### 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](https://www.essex.ac.uk)

## 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](https://alumni.essex.ac.uk/home)

[alumni.essex.ac.uk/home](https://alumni.essex.ac.uk/home)

## Further Useful Information and Links

**Departmental website address** <https://www1.essex.ac.uk/sociology/>

**Departmental Facebook page** <https://www.facebook.com/UoESociology>

**Departmental Twitter feed** <https://twitter.com/essexsociology>

**Linked-In groups** <http://goo.gl/ZKBz3O>

### Useful websites and further links

#### **IDEATE: Student Journal**

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/ug/ideate.aspx>

#### **Department of Sociology Research:**

<http://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/research/default.aspx>

#### **Essay referencing and style guides available from:**

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/documents/style-guide-15-16.pdf>

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