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Section 1: Introduction

1. Introduction and Welcome

About your Student Handbook

This handbook gives you essential information about the Institute and the University.

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

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

Master’s Degrees

MA Sociological Research Methods & MSc Survey Methods for Social Research:
Both degrees are administered by the Department of Sociology with teaching provided by the Sociology Department and ISER. Your principal source of reference is the department’s Postgraduate Taught Handbook, which provides full details including the rules concerning assessment. Note that any Sociology courses (including those taught by ISER staff members) are assessed according to the rules of the Sociology Department, and any optional course taught by another department is assessed according to the rules of that department.

MSc Applied Economics and Data Analysis. This degree is administered by the Department of Economics with teaching provided by the Economics Department and ISER. Your principal source of reference is the Department’s Graduate Economics Handbook, which provides full details including the rules concerning assessment. Note that Economics courses (including those taught by ISER staff members) are assessed according to the rules of the Economics Department and any optional course taught by another department is assessed according to the rules of that department.

MSc Research Methods Health. This degree is administered by the School of Health and Social Care (HSC) with teaching provided by the School and ISER. Your principal source of reference is the department’s Postgraduate Student Handbook, which provides full details including the rules concerning assessment. Note that HHS courses (including those taught by ISER staff members) are assessed according to the rules of the School of Health and Human Sciences and any optional course taught by another department is assessed according to the rules of that department.

Research Degrees

MPhil/PhD in Applied Economic & Social Research; Economics; Health Research; Survey Methodology and Biosocial Research. These degrees are administered by
ISER and so your principal source of reference is this document, the ISER Postgraduate Handbook (referred to herein as The Handbook).

Note: this Handbook refers to the Handbooks of other departments, specifically Economics, HHS and Sociology.

Caveat

The rules, regulations and policies summarised in The Handbook were checked at the time of its compilation but there may be inadvertent inaccuracies, and subsequent changes to the guidelines and rules. ISER reserves the right to alter or amend course structures, departmental guidelines, staffing and any other arrangements where academic developments or unforeseen events render such action necessary. As such, The Handbook is a guide and not the definitive source of rules and regulations; in particular, if there are discrepancies between the Handbook and official University documents, then it is the latter which take precedence. With regard to University regulations governing postgraduate study, please see the University’s publication entitled Higher Degree Regulations and Procedures.

If you spot any inaccuracies in The Handbook, or have any comments which would help us to improve it (or indeed any aspect of ISER’s postgraduate programme), then please let us know.
A Message from the Director of ISER

On behalf of all members of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, welcome to the University of Essex! We are delighted that you have chosen to study here for a postgraduate degree.

ISER is unique: not only is it an internationally-renowned multidisciplinary research institute but also, as a full department of the University of Essex, we teach and supervise postgraduate students. We sincerely hope that you are able to take advantage of this special and effective combination.

The Institute specialises in the production and analysis of longitudinal data – evidence which tracks changes in the lives of the same individuals over time. There are approximately 45 full-time researchers – including economists, epidemiologists, and demographers, social policy analysts, sociologists and survey methodologists – analysing links between individuals’ life events, employment conditions, behaviour and values over the life course and through successive generations.

ISER is home to three major research programmes:

- MiSoC is the Research Centre on Micro-Social Change, directed by Prof Mike Brewer.
- Understanding Society, The UK Household Longitudinal Study, successor to the British Household Panel Survey, directed by Prof Michaela Benzeval.
- EUROMOD is the tax-benefit microsimulation model for the European Union, directed by Prof Matteo Richiardi.

We also carry out research for other agencies, including UK and other national government departments, the EU and commercial organisations.

ISER has close links with other departments in the University. We run Master’s degrees jointly with the Departments of Sociology and Economics in the Faculty of Social Sciences, and with the School of Health & Social Care. We also collaborate on grant applications and research projects. In the last Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, conducted by the UK Higher Education Funding Council, ISER staff members contributed to the Economics and Sociology units of assessment. The REF confirmed that the University of Essex is in the top four UK universities for research excellence in the social sciences, defined as economics, politics, and sociology or social policy.

I hope that you will enjoy your stay at Essex, not only working hard but also enjoying yourself. On behalf of all ISER staff, we wish you a happy and productive stay at Essex, and good luck with your studies.

Emily Grundy
1.1 Term dates, calendar and academic week numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week No</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>Sunday</th>
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<td>19-Apr</td>
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<tr>
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<td>30-Apr</td>
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<td>02-May</td>
<td>03-May</td>
<td>04-May</td>
<td>05-May</td>
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<tr>
<td>50</td>
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<td>25-Sep</td>
<td>26-Sep</td>
<td>27-Sep</td>
<td>28-Sep</td>
<td>29-Sep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* NB Graduation - Provisional, subject to change. Graduation dates apply to all three campuses.
1.2 Timetables

The University lecture timetable is managed centrally by the Timetable Office (Room 6.101). The lecture timetable is published online only and can be found here: http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/timetables.aspx

Check notice boards near the relevant departmental offices for information about courses. Notice boards should be checked regularly for changes in the timetable and re-scheduled lectures and classes. If you have any doubts please speak to the relevant department’s Graduate Administrator, located in offices 5B.208 (Economics), 2S2.4.01 (HHS), or 6.339 (Sociology).

All ISER students on taught courses (both those registered for MA/MSc and for MPhil/PhD degrees) are expected to attend every lecture of the courses they are taking. If there are several parallel classes for a course, then each student should choose one and attend it. However, if there is just one class for a course, then all students should attend that class.

1.3 Pattern of the academic year

ISER students on taught courses, please see the relevant department’s handbook for their pattern of the academic year. MPhil/PhD students will be subject to the following pattern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Number</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Welcome / Induction (5 October 2018, ISER (Social Science Research Centre))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Autumn Term Supervisory Board Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Spring Term Supervisory Board Meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 Study leave and reading week

MPhil/PhD students are allowed to take study leave under specific grounds including: Illness; Maternity or paternity leave; Domestic/family problems relating to serious ill-health, death, and/or the need to provide care; financial problems; and paid work. Students must discuss their reasons for leave with their supervisor and file a request to intermit. Intermission is counted as terms of study and not weeks or months; study leave is restricted to six terms unless circumstances are exceptional. Additional information and the link to intermission request is found here: https://www.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/intermission.aspx

All ISER students on taught courses, reading week is normally week 8 in the autumn term and week 21 in the spring term. No lectures or classes take place during reading week, unless you are notified by your lecturer or class teacher. If a member of staff has missed a lecture or class due to illness, or for any other reason, reading week may be used to catch up on that missed session. Check with the relevant department or lecture to determine whether a reading week take place.

1.5 Link to myEssex

myEssex is a student web portal which offers a structured set of links to online services and information. It will already have been customised for you, automatically providing links to
information on your scheme of study and courses; applications for Intermission and Study Away; and links to the relevant departments. You can personalise myEssex further by adding and hiding links, adding personal contacts and by changing the look of pages. For more information log on at: https://www.essex.ac.uk/myessex

1.6 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 any 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.

1.7 Course costs in addition to tuition fees

For students on taught courses please see relevant Departmental Handbook on course costs.
2. About the Institute

2.1 Details of academic staff/GTAs including contact details and office hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISER Research Staff</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Extn.</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Tarek Al Baghal</td>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
<td>4781</td>
<td>2N2.4.26</td>
<td>talbag</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Gina Anghelbeascu</td>
<td>Senior Research Officer</td>
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<td>2N2.6.12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Silvia Avram</td>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
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<td>savram</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Yanchun Bao</td>
<td>Research Fellow</td>
<td>4780</td>
<td>2N2.5A.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Nicola Barban</td>
<td>Reader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Selçuk Bedük</td>
<td>Senior Research Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Michaela Benzeval</td>
<td>Director, Understanding Society</td>
<td>3983</td>
<td>2N2.5A.12</td>
<td>mbenz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Sonia Bhalota</td>
<td>Professor of Economics</td>
<td>3573</td>
<td>2N2.6.06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Cara Booker</td>
<td>Research Fellow, Acting Graduate Director</td>
<td>3026</td>
<td>2N2.4.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Magda Borkowska</td>
<td>Senior Research Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Michael Brewer</td>
<td>Professor of Economics; Director MiSoC</td>
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<td>2N2.5A.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Malcolm Brynin</td>
<td>Reader, Graduate Director</td>
<td>2995</td>
<td>2N2.6.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Jonathan Burton</td>
<td>Associate Director, Surveys</td>
<td>2266</td>
<td>2N2.5A.02</td>
<td>jburton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Bastien Chabé-Ferret</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Amy Clair</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Paul Clarke</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Thomas Crossley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Apostolos Davillas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Paola De Agostini</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prof Emilia Del Bono</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Xavier Jara Tamayo</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Jack Kneeshaw</td>
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<td>Dr Alari Paulus</td>
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<td>Dr Birgitta Rabe</td>
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<td>Prof Matteo Richiardi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Bernhard Schmidpeter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Melissa Smart</td>
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<td>mcsmar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Alex Wenz</td>
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<td>3897</td>
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Note: At the time of publication the information provided is accurate. See the ISER web pages for updates.
Please see the ISER website for a full list of research staff, including research interests: https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/people

ISER students taking taught classes should refer to the associated departments' websites for information regarding Lecturers and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and their office hours.

Generally, ISER staff operate under an open door policy. However please bear in mind that many of the staff are very busy and if your query requires more than a quick discussion please email or call for an appointment.

2.2 Details of administrative staff

**Departmental Manager:**
 Angela Newsam  2N2.5B.04  4698   anewsam@essex.ac.uk

**Graduate Administrator:**
 Janice Webb  2N2.5B.17  2645   janice@essex.ac.uk

**Information Security Manager:**
 Ray Ware  2N2.5B.05  3067   iserisms@isermail.essex.ac.uk

**Research Funding Manager:**
 Emma Appleton  2N2.5B.12 2631   emma.appleton@essex.ac.uk
 Sarah Williamson (maternity leave)  2N2.5B.12 2631   sarah.williamson@essex.ac.uk

2.3 Resources supplied or maintained by ISER

2.3.1 Common room and mail

The Common Room is located on level 6, of the SSRC building (2N2.6.24) it is shared by the UK Data Archive and all members of ISER (staff, research students, visitors). There are tables to eat lunch, refrigerator, microwave, hot and chilled water machine and filter coffee. A small charge is made per cup for tea and coffee.

The mail room is located in the Output room (2N2.5B.18). Research Students' pigeonholes are alphabetical and should be checked regularly for incoming mail (you may use ISER as a mailing address). Research students may use the internal mail system to send mail to recipients within the University. External mail which is related to your thesis, is acceptable (the ISER stamp and sender’s name needs to be clearly visible).

2.3.2 Office space

ISER provides office space for students registered for research degrees, but not for Master’s students. Subject to the constraints in space available to ISER as a whole, we aim to provide each research student with their own desk for the duration of their minimum period of study. Students who are present in ISER less than 50% of the term may be asked to share a desk.

We do not generally provide office space to students during their completion year. However, if you are approaching your completion year and prefer to remain present at ISER during this time, please make a special request to the Director of Graduate Studies, space constraints permitting, we will do our best to provide you with a desk. Note that, whether or not you have a desk in ISER, we will continue to provide you with full remote access to computer facilities.
Students have access to their offices at most times during the day and night, including weekends. See also the IT and Security sections below.

2.3.3 Computing facilities

All new PhD students based in ISER will have a ‘virtual’ desktop client on their desks through which the department’s computing facilities can be accessed.

You may access your virtual desktop remotely when connected to the ISER Virtual Private Network (VPN) from a registered computer (see Mobile Computing and Teleworking on the ISER Intranet, at https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/cdoc/isms/h/doc11.4)

You may also log in to any computer in the University’s open access PC labs (https://www1.essex.ac.uk/it/labs/usage/) but you will not be able to access any of ISER’s networks or resources from these labs, except for your ‘M:’ drive (see below).

You will be issued with a username when you register; you will need this to log in to the ISER or campus networks. As part of your induction week, your ‘buddy’ will walk you through the intranet and other computing facilities. If you have problems or faults with hardware, etc., they should be reported via the “request help” section of the ISER Intranet https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/request/ and a member of the IT support team will be in touch. Please do not email the IT support team with requests for help.

Useful email groups:

iser-current@isermail.essex.ac.uk: current staff, students and visitors within ISER
rsrchgrp@isermail.essex.ac.uk: ISER research staff, students and visitors
isergrads@isermail.essex.ac.uk: ISER postgraduate research students

ISER email lists can be found at https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/posts/163-email-lists.

Students in their completion year will retain access to ISER’s email, computer systems and VPN facilities, even if they do not have a desk in the building, until they have submitted their thesis and had any corrections approved.

2.3.4 Software and data

Most commonly-used software is available via the ISER network. The majority of ISER members use MS Office for day-to-day business. There is a network license for Acrobat Standard, and various web-browsers are available (Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Netscape, Chrome, etc.). A range of text editors is also available, including Programmers File Editor (PFE). Data analysis software including Stata, SAS, R and SPSS is available either through ISER servers or on desktops; access to other analytical packages, i.e. MPlus, may be available upon request.

If you need any software in addition to what is already available on the system, you will not be able to install it yourself. Instead, please follow the procedures detailed in our Software Authorisation and Installation guide found on the intranet at https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/cdoc/software.docs.
ISER uses Outlook365 through which email and calendar/personal-organiser programs can be used. Details of how to access email remotely are at https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/posts/2-accessing-email-when-away-from-iser.

ISER directly manages the inboxes and remote mail folders for most staff and many students, but some students will be assigned inboxes on the University's Microsoft Exchange Server.

Your PC's hard drive will be partitioned into "c:" and "d:" drives (and possibly others as well). You will have not have write-access to the c: drive, but you will be able to write to the subdirectory "d:\home\username" (This is known as your 'local home directory').

In addition, several network drives will be set up automatically when you log in. Your “M:" drive is a network share mounted on all ISER and University Windows™ computers and is accessible if you access the university network from a university computer lab. You will also have access to another network drive, your "I:" drive, which can be used like your "M:" drive except a) you'll have more space on it, and b) it is accessible only from ISER computers.

Your networked drives will be backed up automatically (the “M:" drive by the University, and the “I:" drive by ISER). However, it is your responsibility to back up your local drives, including your local home directory. Most colleagues use the package Syncback, provided on your computers, for this purpose.

On the data side, you will have access to network shares containing ISER’s versions of the British Household Panel Survey (mounted by many researchers as drive "s:" and Understanding Society. See the list of resources in Default Access Rights https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/computing/data-access-and-aquisition for more information.

The ISER handbook and the Intranet have more details of how our computer systems work.

2.3.5 Security

Information security is a major concern for everyone at ISER, as we have a large number of projects that use and/or collect extremely sensitive data. For this reason, we are certificated against the major international security standard, ISO 27001:2013. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISO/IEC_27001:2013 and as part of our ‘information security management system’, you'll be asked to sign a Confidentiality Undertaking and agree to our Code of Ethics https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/cdoc/hr.docs

All new students and staff undertake in an information security awareness training session as part of their induction process. The training session is (approx. 1 hour) and is mandatory it must be taken within 2 months of starting study at ISER.

https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/posts/719-information-security-awareness-training

ISER Staff and Security Handbook, https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/infosec contains the core information you need to comply with our security requirements, as well as an undertaking for you to sign annually, having refreshed yourself on them.

2.3.6 Other facilities

There is a selection of stationery the Output room (2N2.5B.18). Research students may use pens, paper, etc., as long as it is related to their thesis work.
Telephones can be used for internal University calls, and local calls.

Printing from PCs: there is a printer in each breakout space on all levels of ISER. Please keep to a ‘reasonable’ usage. There are also printers in the Output room and in the Research Library which has a colour option.

ISER noticeboard is located on level 5B adjacent to the output room (2N2.5B.18).

Research students have access to photocopying facilities for thesis-related use. Photocopiers are located on level 6, the Research Library and the Output room. They can only be used with a PIN number, supplied by the Graduate Administrator. Please keep usage ‘reasonable’ or we shall have to impose constraints. You should also be mindful of the law about copyright (see signs posted by machines).

Scanning of documents can be done using the all-in-one printer in the output room or the scanner located in the Research Library.

2.3.7 Research library (ISER’s specialist library)

The Research Library is on located in room 2N2.5B.04 of the SSRC Building is a specialist library focusing on longitudinal materials. It has books, journals, statistical publications, and an extensive collection of ‘grey’ materials. For details, see https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/admin/research-library.

The Albert Sloman Library is the main university library, see http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/. The library has a good stock of journals and books, and extensive electronic resources, including electronic archives of many journals. The library staff can provide introductory orientation and general assistance, e.g. with bibliographic searches.

2.3.8 ISER coffee mornings and other common areas

Research students, staff and visitors are invited to participate in the ‘ISER coffee breaks’ held 11:00-11:30 each Tuesday and Friday. This forum is an opportunity for ISER members to meet informally. Free biscuits are provided.

A small kitchen and shower facilities are located on level 4.

2.4 Location of departmental offices, opening hours, common rooms

These are the contacts for postgraduate students regarding administrative matters:

**ISER**: Janice Webb (9:00 - 14:30)
2N2.5B.17  2645  janice@essex.ac.uk

**Economics**: Lorna Woollcott (10:00-13:00, 14:00-16:00)
5B.208  2726  lornaw@essex.ac.uk

**Sociology**: Michele Hall (10:00-13:00, 14:00-16:30)
6.339  3051  mehall@essex.ac.uk

**Health & Social Care**: Jade D’Mello
(Mon & Wed 8:30–16:00, Tue & Thur 08:30–18:00, Fri 08:30–15:30)
2S2.4.01  3375  jedmel@essex.ac.uk

Please note, occasionally, an administrator will be away from their desk for meetings or short breaks, in which case please return later.
2.5 Details of departmental support and the supervisor

2.5.1 Departmental support

ISER is required to make the following provision for contact between students and departmental teaching staff:

- To provide you with the opportunity to raise academic problems or personal issues that may be affecting your academic progress. Departmental professional services staff are also able to offer support and advice. This represents an important opportunity for the department to identify and advise you if you are experiencing difficulties;
- To assist you in finding sources of further information and help within the University, both academic and pastoral;
- For your questions relating to degree schemes, course options and other academic concerns to be dealt with by a designated member (or members) of staff who thoroughly understands the academic procedures, curricula and assessment requirements for the department’s schemes;
- To respond appropriately to any concerns about your progress that are identified to the department (whether from inside or outside the department) and to identify a point of contact for such communications (for example: Departmental Administrator, Undergraduate Administrator, Scheme Director). Examples of typical issues include any unexplained absence you may have had from prescribed study, poor performance, or an identified requirement for specific academic support;
- To accompany you (if you request it) at progress hearings and interviews with the Dean of Postgraduate Research & Education (but not at disciplinary proceedings);
- To establish a system through which letters of reference can be made available to any prospective employers, etc., recognising that such requests may continue to be received many years after a student has left.

At the heart of the department’s student support are what the University refers to as the Student Liaison Officer and the Deputy Student Liaison Officer. Currently, the Deputy Director of Graduate Studies assumes these responsibilities.

You are welcome to approach any senior member of the research staff in ISER or research support staff when you have a problem, whether academic or non-academic. Members of staff recognise that personal difficulties can affect your academic work. Don’t feel that you are intruding – members of staff are there to help and prepared to talk to you in confidence.

The person who you contact may not be able to solve your problem but he or she should, at least, point you in the direction of someone who can help. If you are in doubt about what to do first, see section 3.7 (a) on “How to get your questions answered”. It is most important that you keep us of any problem that may impact adversely on your academic progress or performance. While the reasons why you seek support may involve a mixture of both academic and non-academic causes, the sort of advice that can be provided differs between the two. Here broadly speaking, is how your inquiries are handled:

- Academic problems, relating to degree schemes, course options, class allocation, absences from lectures and classes, assessment, extensions to submission deadlines, academic progress and performance. These are the responsibility of the department.
Although the person you speak to first may not be able to deal with your problem, you will be guided to a member of staff who can.

- **Non-academic problems** (including accommodation, financial, personal, family and health problems). Members of ISER are not professional counsellors but you should expect to receive guidance about how to take advantage of the specialist support services available elsewhere in the University.

2.5.2 Supervisors

2.5.2.1 Principal supervisor

In almost all cases, the principal supervisor, who is referred to informally as the 'first' supervisor, will have been selected during the student's application to study at ISER. A principal supervisor should have expertise directly relevant to the student's area of study. The principal supervisor is responsible for the student's progress and, in conjunction with the Research Student Progress Board, has a major say in the decisions on whether the student can confirm PhD status, enter completion, and submit his/her thesis at a given time.

2.5.2.2 Second supervisors

We also expect each student to have a second supervisor. The second supervisor should be chosen no later than the end of the first (full-time) term. The second supervisor will act as principal supervisor whenever the principal supervisor is absent from the University, unless other arrangements have been agreed.

The second supervisor's level of involvement is flexible. A second supervisor may

- Attend all the student’s supervision meetings and play a role more or less equal to that of principal supervisor;
- Take primary responsibility for supervising a particular part of a student's thesis (for example, one of the three papers);
- Advise on particular issues, such as analytical techniques;
- Play a relatively minor role in the course of the student's research, but read and comment on written work as it is produced.

It is not unusual for students to have more than one second supervisor during their studies. Any choice of second supervisor should be made by the principal supervisor in consultation with the student. The Director of Graduate Studies can be consulted if a decision cannot be made. Conversely, the Director of Graduate Studies can veto any choice of second supervisor providing that he/she explains this decision.

2.5.2.3 Supervisory Panel

The principal supervisor and second supervisor will both be part of the student's Supervisory Panel. Ideally, a Supervisory Panel will also involve a third member of staff whose role is to organise and chair Supervisory Panel Meetings. However, in ISER, the norm is for two-member Supervisory Panel where the second supervisor is responsible for organising and chairing meetings. See Section (see Section 3.7.1) for further details about Supervisory Panels.
2.5.2.4 Change of supervisor

A principal supervisor is allocated on the basis of the research topic outlined in a student’s application. ISER is committed to finding the best match between the skills and interests of the supervisor and research student. However, a change of supervisor may be necessary for a variety of reasons: the principal supervisor may become too busy, take a long period of leave, or leave ISER; the student may change direction and start studying a new topic; or the working relationship between the student and principal supervisor may break down.

In such cases, the Director of Graduate Studies will consult with the student and the Research Student Progress Board to identify an alternative principal supervisor. But it will not always be possible to do this: **ISER does not, and cannot, guarantee that an alternative principal supervisor, capable of providing the necessary level of supervision, can always be found.** If alternative supervision cannot be found then it may be necessary for the student to change department within the University or move to another Higher Education Institution to find a supervisor. However, the Director of Graduate Studies will assist any students in making such a move.

If a student is unhappy with any change-of-supervisor decisions made by the Director of Graduate Studies, then he/she should first contact the Director of ISER. If the student remains unhappy after the Director of ISER’s intervention, then he/she should contact the Dean of Postgraduate Research Education and ask for the matter to be reviewed.

*Guidelines on research supervision and training*

The University publishes a broad statement of its policy in the document *Postgraduate Training and Research: Guidelines for Supervisory Arrangements and Progress Procedures*. This document is published in the Higher Degree Regulations booklet and can be found on the University web site at [http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/higher.shtm](http://www.essex.ac.uk/academic/docs/regs/higher.shtm)

ISER’s guidelines, outlined in the sections below, supplement those issued by the University (if a conflict arises between departmental guidelines and those issued by the University, the latter take precedence).

2.6 ISER policy on technology security

For information regarding personal smartphone, laptop, tablet or desktop computer security required to meet ISER’s ISO 27001:2013 standards please see the ISER Staff and Security Handbook, [https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/cdoc/isms/e/doc8.2](https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/cdoc/isms/e/doc8.2)

2.7 Details how the department will communicate with students

Important information is communicated to students primarily by email but also through University notice boards and by post. You are expected to access and check your University email account at least once a week. ISER research students have pigeonholes in the Printing/Output Room (2N2.5B.18).

Students who are taking taught classes are encouraged to check their emails, the departmental website and the myEssex student portal regularly during term-time.

Important information is also posted on notice boards outside the Examinations Office (Room 6.101), on departmental notice boards and in the LTB foyer. All students are advised to check these regularly.
Please note University Regulation 7.10 regarding communication: “Students are required to acquaint themselves with formal communications from academic Departments and administrative sections of the University. These may take the form of written correspondence, sent by internal or external mail, notices posted on official notice boards, and messages sent by electronic mail. Students are required to access their University e-mail at least once per week during term-time.”

2.7.1 Contact points between students and staff

2.7.1.1 Taught-course students (including ESRC-funded PhD students in the ‘1’ part of ‘1 + 3’ studentships)

1. Look for the answer in this handbook or the relevant departmental handbook for your taught course.

2. Contact the relevant Graduate Administrator (see above for contact details). He/She will be able to answer your question directly or direct you to someone who can.

3. Contact a course supervisor (or, in the first instance, any lecturer on your course). Course supervisors are responsible for all academic aspects of courses, such as the content of lecturers, exercises, and assignments. Please note that course supervisors cannot grant extensions to assignment deadlines or to change test dates; furthermore, course supervisors cannot sign change-of-option forms.

4. The taught-course directors in the relevant department can grant extensions to assignment deadlines and change test dates. For the Department of Economics, this is the Director of Graduate Studies (Taught Schemes); for the Department of Sociology, this is the Graduate Director; and for the School of Health and Human Sciences, this is the Graduate Director (Taught).

5. Student liaison officers (SLO) oversee student support for Master’s students and are based in the relevant department. Contact this person if you wish to raise an issue at the Staff-Student Liaison Committee. You can also contact a student member of the SSLC directly. The SLO is available to accompany students at meetings of the Progress Committee or at meetings with the Dean of Postgraduate Research and Education.

6. The Director of ISER should only be approached if you have been unable to resolve your problem in consultation with other staff members as per the steps above. If you approach the Director of ISER without having done so, then you will first be asked to consult the Handbook or approach the appropriate member of staff.

2.7.1.2 Research students

1. Look for the answer in this handbook. If your question remains unanswered read on.

2. Your supervisors may be able to answer your question if they have previously supervised research students at ISER.

3. ISER’s Graduate Administrator (see section 3.2 for contact details can answer general enquiries and enquiries about procedural matters (including ones relating to Postgraduate Research and Education).

4. At this point, any unresolved questions can be put to ISER’s Director of Graduate Studies and, in his/her absence, the Deputy Director of Graduate Studies.
5. The Director of ISER should only be approached if you have been unable to resolve your problem in consultation with other staff members as per the steps above. If you approach the Director of ISER without having done so, then you will first be asked to consult the handbook or approach the appropriate member of staff.

2.7.2 How to contact teachers and other members of staff

- During office hours: Staff in teaching departments (but not ISER) hold office hours during which they will see students. Office hours are normally posted on the staff member’s office door or can be found on his/her web page.
- By email every member of staff has an email account. ISER staff email addresses may be found at either https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/people or (when using a departmental computer or logged on remotely using the VPN) https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/users. See departmental web pages or search the online phonebook http://www.essex.ac.uk/Search/Phonebookresults.aspx for contact details of non-ISER staff. **Important note:** Assignments, term papers and dissertations must not be submitted by email.
- By telephone: all members of staff can be contacted at their internal University telephone extensions. You should not telephone a member of staff at home unless you have explicit permission from the person you are trying to contact.
- By note: you may contact a member of staff by leaving a note under the person’s door or, preferably, with a secretary, who will insure that it reaches the person to whom it is addressed.
- Teachers may occasionally be employed on a part-time basis to teach particular courses. The best way of contacting these teachers is to speak to them at the end of lectures or classes. If this is not possible, ask the relevant Department staff for advice about how to contact them.

2.8 Information on funding and grants

2.8.1 Studentship funding

Some students at ISER are privately funded, but most have financial assistance from a variety of sources, some of which are listed below. Not all these opportunities are available every year, and competition for assistance is always intense. Note that you are much more likely to succeed in finding a full scholarship if you apply before you start your studies. DTC studentships are never available to students who have already started their course of study, and our linked studentships are nearly always given to new students.

1. **ESRC Doctoral Training Centre Studentships.** The University of Essex is an accredited ESRC Doctoral Training Centre; under this scheme, a certain number of scholarships are allocated to the University of Essex, and ISER is one of the departments among which these are allocated by the University. Students applying to any of our PhD pathways, on either a +3 or a 1+3 basis are eligible to apply for these studentships (though note that they are available only to UK and EU students). These studentships cover fees plus a stipend for the period of study (three years for the PhD, 4 years for the 1+3 degrees). The stipend does not cover the completion year.

2. **ESRC/BBSRC Soc-B Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in Biosocial Science Studentships.** The University of Essex is in partnership with UCL and Manchester to
provide +4 studentships to students applying for the Biosocial research degree (though note that they are available only to UK and EU students). These studentships cover fees plus a stipend for the period of study (four years for the PhD). More information can be found on the Soc-B website.

3. **Social Sciences Doctoral Scholarship.** As part of the Faculty of Social Sciences ISER students are eligible to apply for this studentship. The studentship includes a fee waiver for UK and EU students (international students will need to pay the balance of their fees), a stipend equivalent to the RCUK national minimum, a training bursary and Proficio funding (see Section 4.1). More information can be found on their webpage.

4. **ESRC linked studentships.** These studentships are paid at the same rate as Doctoral Training Centre studentships, and the same conditions apply. However, the money comes to ISER via a different route: our linked studentships form part of large research grants, and because of this, these studentships generally specify the field of research in which applicants are expected to pursue their studies.

5. **Grants from external funding bodies.** Our students have been supported by funding bodies including the British Council, the EU, and various programmes from overseas governments and research institutes. Applications are generally initiated by the student but typically require supporting recommendations and documentation from ISER as host department. We encourage students to seek external funding and will do our best to provide advice and assistance, as long as the student has approached us in sufficient time before the relevant deadline.

6. **Occasional research assistance (ORA).** ISER sometimes employs research students as part-time research assistants on funded projects. Positions are advertised to students as they come up, by email; if more than one student expresses an interest, the staff member concerned is responsible for the selection process. You need permission from your supervisor before agreeing to work as a research assistant.

7. **Graduate student teaching (GTA).** Many of our students work as GTAs in other departments, particularly Economics and Sociology. Posts are advertised in May or June each year. Students must obtain permission from their supervisor before applying for GTA work. Please note the following about GTA work:

   - First-year students cannot undertake GTA work. We may make occasional exception but these will only be in exceptional circumstances, and never for ESRC-funded students.
   - All students are encouraged to discuss carefully with their supervisors whether to undertake GTA. We only advise students to undertake GTA work if they are clearly on track to complete within 3 years.
   - All students who wish to undertake GTA work must register with Cadenza http://www.essex.ac.uk/ldev/recognition/cadenza/default.aspx. Cadenza is an accreditation scheme for university teachers and the University policy is that its GTAs must be either accredited or working towards accreditation. Please contact the teaching department to organise your Cadenza enrolment, not ISER.

2.8.2 Funding for conferences and training

Students are expected to take advantage of training throughout the course of their studies; we also encourage research students to present their work at conferences or meetings in the UK and abroad.
The ESRC scholarships listed above include a component (the RTSG, or Research and Training Support Grant) to pay for training and conferences. A proportion of the RTSG may also be used for the purchase of equipment, specialist software, etc. For students not in receipt of these scholarships, ISER has limited funds, in the form of the FACT (Funding for Attending Conferences and Training) fund, which may be used for these purposes.

There are rules about what the RTSG and FACT funds will and will not cover; details are available on the intranet. Please ensure that you understand the guidelines properly before spending any money, as if you spend money on something which is not covered, you won't be able to claim it back. If you are in doubt, consult Sarah Prior (ISER’s Research Funding Co-ordination Assistant).

Claims to the RTSG and FACT funds must be made on special forms supplied by the Doctoral Training Centre; these are downloadable from the ISER Intranet. Forms must be signed by your supervisor and accompanied by original receipts. Please get your supervisor’s approval before spending money which you intend to claim back under either of these schemes.

All students can access money for doctoral training from the University's ‘Proficio’ scheme. Further details can be found in Section 4.1 and here https://www.essex.ac.uk/study/pgr/proficio

2.8.3 Casual work

Occasionally, the opportunity to participate in casual work, such as research assistant, arises. Opportunities are usually advertised via email. Students who are in good standing with regard to entering completion on schedule should speak with their supervisor before applying. Please note that University Regulation 4.27 ‘Paid Duties’ (page 91 in the University Calendar) states that the maximum number of hours allowed is 18 per week. This regulation applies to all students, regardless of studentship funding source.

Whether you can work during your studies depends on what type of immigration permission you have. Your visa will say if you can work in the UK and, if so, how many hours per week during term time.

International students see working in the UK during your studies:
https://www1.essex.ac.uk/immigration/living/work_int.aspx

If you are unsure what conditions you have been given or don't understand the wording on your sticker/identity card, please check with the International Services Team by completing their online enquiry form, before you start working.

Tier 4 (General) visa should have a condition allowing Degree students – 20 hours of work per week in term time.

You must only work the hours stated on your visa. You cannot exceed the hours in any individual week. A 'week' is seven days starting on a Monday and ending on a Sunday. In your vacations you can work longer hours but must check what term time means for you.

If your visa shows a different number of hours per week than stated above or states "no work" this could be an error. Please complete the immigration enquiry form and we will check it for you and if appropriate can request it is amended by the Home Office.
Section 2: Academic Matters

3. Learning and Teaching

3.1 Learning, teaching and the nature of doctoral studies

ISER’s educational philosophy is one of “learning by doing”. Our students are full and active members of ISER’s interdisciplinary research community. All students belong to one or more of our thematic research groups.

Many also take the opportunity to teach, to gain experience on placements and to have their research featured in our newsletters and reports. We also encourage students to publish their research as working papers and in academic journals, in the course of their studies.

Our students have the opportunity to learn first-hand about design and collection of a major national data source (Understanding Society) and to visit other institutions specialising in data collection. Thus, ISER offers a far more rounded environment for research training than is usually possible for students engaged in secondary analysis of large-scale survey data.

ISER shares the University’s mission to achieve a high and consistent quality of education. Our goals of maintaining high teaching standards and of enhancing students' learning experiences are fostered by, and complementary to, our commitment to pursue excellence in research and scholarship.

3.2 What ISER expects from students and what students can expect from ISER

The relationship between the research student and the supervisor is the key to a productive and successful outcome. Experience indicates that this relationship works best when the following responsibilities and obligations are recognised by both parties.

3.2.1 Responsibilities of the student

1. Producing written or other work in accordance with the schedule agreed with the supervisor, giving sufficient time for comment from and discussion with the supervisor;
2. Developing and updating, together with the principal supervisor, and on a rolling basis, a realistic timetable for timely submission of the thesis;
3. Taking ownership of the research: it is normal for students to start out by following their supervisors’ instructions about what to do next, but at some point they are expected to start setting their own working agendas, and developing and rigorously exploring their own ideas. Obviously, it takes time to develop the skill and confidence to do this, and it will come later to some students than to others, but this is what all students should be striving to achieve from day one. Note that “taking ownership” does not mean that students should stop listening to their supervisors: a supervisor’s experience and input is vital for anyone who wishes to pass his/her viva voce examination, and a supervisor’s advice should always be sought and acted on;
4. To attend Research Student Seminars (and presentations as required), ISER Seminars and one of the Research Group meetings when in residence;
5. Provide a careful report of research progress for each of the two meetings of the Research Students Progress Board per year, and other such reports as the Research Students Progress Board or the Director of Graduate Studies may ask for;
6. Attending any courses prescribed by the Director of Graduate Studies;
7. Ensuring that, for any absence from the University exceeding one month, the supervisor and the Graduate Office in the Department have an address at which they may be contacted at short notice;
8. Familiarising him or herself with the relevant higher degree regulations;
9. Deciding with your supervisor when to submit your thesis.

3.2.2 Responsibilities of the principal supervisor

1. Providing constructive guidance for the student and criticism of the student’s research plans;
2. Requesting written work, as appropriate, and returning it with comments within an agreed and reasonable period of time;
3. Continually developing and updating, together with the student, a realistic and detailed timetable for submission of the thesis;
4. Allowing your students to develop confidence and autonomy in the writing of their papers and the development of their theses;
5. Advising on the standard expected of an MPhil/PhD thesis;
6. Advising students on suitable research training, including courses to attend;
7. Encouraging the student to maintain an interest in his/her discipline beyond the confines of the their thesis topic, by such means as attendance at seminars & courses;
8. Maintaining close contact through regular supervisory meetings (except when this is not physically possible for students not in residence, in which case regular contact should be kept by other means);
9. Being accessible to the student at reasonable times and with reasonable frequency;
10. Maintaining records of meetings held with the student and of work submitted and commented upon (note: this is a legal obligation for Tier 4 students);
11. Ensuring that the student and Research Students Progress Board are made aware of inadequate or poor performance at an early stage;
12. Providing (or arranging for the Supervisory Panel to provide) a careful report to each of the two meetings of the Research Students Progress Board, and such other reports or advice that the Director of Graduate Studies may seek.

3.2.3 ISER’s responsibilities

1. Provide supportive learning environment
2. Provide physical and computing facilities and services needed for completion of thesis

3.3 Moodle, ORB and FASer
Our **online resource bank (ORB)** stores important module materials such as reading lists and past exam papers.

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

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

`faser.essex.ac.uk`

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

### 3.4 Course structures and learning outcomes

#### 3.4.1 The MA and MSc Degrees

#### 3.4.1.1 Master’s Degree Schemes

ISER co-runs the following four Master’s degree schemes with other departments:

#### 3.4.1.1.1 MA Sociological Research Methods: brief overview

Run jointly by ISER and the Department of Sociology, this course is offered on a full-time, part-time or modular basis.

In this course you will explore the following topics:

- Debates in contemporary social theory
- The theory and methods of qualitative interviewing
- Quantitative data analysis
- Sociological research design

Students are expected to complete six courses and to submit a dissertation proposal and a dissertation. Students are allowed to proceed to the dissertation only if all coursework requirements have been fulfilled satisfactorily.

The structure of the scheme is, in summary,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compulsory course:</th>
<th>SC520</th>
<th>Interviewing and Qualitative Data Analysis</th>
<th>(20 credits)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core course:</td>
<td>SC901</td>
<td>Topics in Contemporary Social Theory</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core course:</td>
<td>SC504</td>
<td>Introduction to Quantitative Analysis</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core course:</td>
<td>SC905</td>
<td>Sociological Research Design</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional course 1:</td>
<td>Option from available list (substantive or methodological from a range of choices)</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional course 2:</td>
<td>Option from available list (substantive or methodological from a range of choices)</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core course:</td>
<td>SC981</td>
<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>(60 credits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.4.1.1.2 MSc Applied Economics and Data Analysis: brief overview
Run jointly by ISER and the Department of Economics, this course offered on a full-time, part-time or modular basis.

The aims of the scheme are as follows to provide students with:

- Techniques used in the analysis of panel data
- The specification of models and the tests of their validity
- Methods for analysing persistence over time in economic variables
- Handling different types of datasets
- Survey methodology and sampling frames, and how to deal with problems of response rates and attrition

The scheme comprises a total of eight credit units with each ten-week lecture course constituting one credit unit. Three credit units cover microeconomics, mathematics and econometrics. At least two credit units in the scheme are devoted to courses on the topic of specialisation of the scheme. Two credit units involve a choice from a range of optional courses, while all students are also required to submit a dissertation on an approved topic. Students are allowed to proceed to the dissertation only if all coursework requirements have been fulfilled satisfactorily.

The structure of the scheme is, in summary,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compulsory course:</th>
<th>EC903 Microeconomics</th>
<th>(20 credits)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory course:</td>
<td>EC511 Mathematical methods</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory course:</td>
<td>EC968 Panel Data Methods</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory course:</td>
<td>EC969 Applications of Data Analysis</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional course 1:</td>
<td>EC501 Econometric Methods</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or \hspace{1cm} EC966</td>
<td>Estimation and Inference in Econometrics</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional course 2:</td>
<td>Course from Economics or other department</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional course 3:</td>
<td>Course from Economics or other department</td>
<td>(20 credits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core course:</td>
<td>EC981 Dissertation</td>
<td>(40 credits)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.4.1.3 MSc Survey Methods for Social Research: brief overview**

Run jointly by ISER and the Department of Sociology, this course is the only programme of its kind in the UK. It prepares students for professional careers in survey research. It is offered on a full-time, part-time or modular basis.

In this course you will explore the following topics:

- Sampling
- Questionnaire design
- Analysis of survey data
- Management of the survey process

The structure of the scheme is, in summary,
Compulsory course: SC968 Advanced Quantitative Analysis: Modes for Cause and Effect (20 credits)
Compulsory course: SC504 Introduction to Quantitative Analysis (20 credits)
Core course: SC971 Survey Sampling, Non-response and Inference (20 credits)
Core course: SC70 Introduction to Survey Design and Management (20 credits)
Core course: SC74 Survey Measurement and Question Design (20 credits)
Optional course: Option from available list (substantive or methodological from a range of choices) (20 credits)
Core course: SC981 Dissertation (60 credits)

3.4.1.1.4 MSc Research Methods Health: brief overview

Run jointly by ISER and the School of Health and Social Care. It prepares students for professional careers in health-related research or employment in health-related governmental and non-governmental organisations. Full-time, part-time or modular basis.

The aims of the scheme are as follows to provide:

- Knowledge of the core areas of social science, organisational studies and health, including health policy, public health, epidemiology and medical sociology
- An understanding of the qualitative and quantitative approaches to researching issues of health and healthcare
- Advanced training in researching psychosocial aspects of health and wellbeing.

The structure of the scheme is, in summary,

Compulsory course: SC970 Introduction To Survey Design And Management (20 credits)
Core course: SC504 Introduction to Quantitative Analysis (20 credits)
Core course: HS947 Theory and Method in Health Research (15 credits)
Core course: SC968 Advanced Quantitative Analysis: Models for Cause and Effect (20 credits)
Core course: HS948 Qualitative Health Research (15 credits)
Optional course 1: HS640 Leadership in Health and Social Care (15 credits)
Optional course 2: HS900 Research Design and Critical Appraisal (15 credits)
Optional course 3: SC971 Survey Sampling, Non-response and Inference (20 credits)
Core course: HS981 Dissertation (60 credits)

3.4.1.2 Where to find full details of the MA and MSc Schemes
For full details of these schemes, you are referred to the postgraduate handbooks of the relevant departments (see Section 3.7(a)). In these handbooks, you will find information about the following topics:

- Registration and course enrolment
- Courses (compulsory and optional) for each scheme
- Procedures for changing schemes and courses
- Objectives and key skills
- Deadlines for coursework and dissertation submission, and rules concerning format
- Rules of assessment for each course
- Rules regarding progression to the dissertation
- Rules regarding re-submission of assessed course work and re-sitting of examinations (if relevant)
- Differences in rules for part-time and full-time Master’s students
- Rules regarding award of the degree
- Advice concerning the writing of the dissertation

3.4.1.3 Which rules apply to which course and scheme?

The fact that some courses on each of the Master’s degree schemes are taught by staff from different departments raises the issue of what rules apply to the assessment of courses within a degree scheme and for the award of the degree overall. Here are some answers.

3.4.1.3.1 Course rules

The rules of assessment and other requirements and convention for each course within a degree scheme are set by the department that teaches it. For Department of Sociology courses, the course identifier is prefixed with SC, while courses administered by the Department of Economics are prefixed with EC and courses administered by HSC are prefixed with HS.

Students should observe that the Departments of Economics and Sociology assess (non-dissertation) courses in quite different ways, for example: the former department relies on a combination of optional term papers plus compulsory examinations, whereas the latter relies on two long essays. For full details, see the relevant departmental handbook.

3.4.1.3.2 Degree scheme rules

The rules regarding the awarding of the MA or MSc can be found in the following places:

- MA in Sociological Research Methods and MSc in Survey Methods for Social Research are as set out in the Department of Sociology Postgraduate Taught Student Handbook
- MSc in Applied Economics and Data Analysis are as set out in the Department of Economics Postgraduate Handbook
- MSc in Research Methods Health are as set out in the School of Health and Social Care Postgraduate Taught Student Handbook.

ISER shares responsibility for these degrees with these departments and any changes and modifications to degree schemes are decided jointly but, because each degree scheme is
attached to a single department for administrative purposes, the formal rules are provided by the Departments of Economics and Sociology and the School of Health and Social Care.

3.4.2 MPhil and PhD Schemes

This section describes the regulations and departmental procedures governing students registered for research degrees. In providing these degrees, we are bound by the University of Essex Higher Degree Regulations and Procedures, so wherever the material in this section differs from University regulations, the University regulations will always take precedence.

Some of the information below relates to all students, but sometimes it differs depending on whether the student is registered full time or part time, or whether the student is in his/her minimum/completion period; other information, particularly that regarding attendance, does not apply to distance-learning students. We have tried to make these distinctions clear in the text.

Two degrees are offered by ISER: MPhil and PhD. Students register for each degree on one of four pathways: ‘Economics,’ ‘Applied Social and Economic Research,’ ‘Survey Methodology’, ‘Health Research’ or ‘Biosocial Research’.

MPhil and PhD degrees are assessed based on a dissertation, or thesis, and formal viva voce examination in which the student defends his/her thesis. The thesis is written under the supervision of one or more members of ISER’s research staff. For PhD degrees, the maximum length of the dissertation is 80,000 words; for the MPhil the maximum word length is 50,000.

3.4.2.1 Structure

The “standard” PhD at ISER consists of a minimum of three substantive chapters of publishable quality. Each chapter explores with a specific research topic or question. The thesis is also includes a substantial Introduction and Conclusion. Some students also include Appendices with accompanying documentation, additional results, and so on.

The introduction should outline the context of the research and to set out the overarching, unifying question which the thesis addresses. The introductory section should include a literature review and an outline of the methodologies employed.

The student must be sole author of at least one chapter. However, we do encourage students to consider co-authoring one chapter with their supervisor. In this case, the thesis must state clearly and explicitly which part is joint work, and what contribution was made by the student (we would expect a large majority of the analysis, and over half the work overall, to have been performed by the student). Co-authorship must be declared at the time of the relevant Supervisory Panel.

This standard thesis structure is the one which has proved to be the most successful for our students. Alternative structures may be acceptable if agreed upon by the student and supervisor. If you do decide on an alternative structure, then the Director of Graduate Studies must be informed.

Structure of an MPhil
An MPhil would normally consist of two substantive chapters. One chapter may be co-authored; where this is the case, it must be stated clearly and explicitly which part is joint work, and what contribution was made by the student (we would expect a large majority of the analysis, and over half the work overall, to have been performed by the student).

A candidate for an MPhil must submit a thesis for examination in accordance with the rules set by the Senate. It must embody results of research carried out during the course of the scheme of study and research. The candidate normally has a viva voce (oral) examination. “In the thesis and the examination the candidate is required to present the results of research and demonstrate competence in the area of study.” (Higher Degree Regulations and Procedures, section 3.51. See also 3.52–3.57)

3.4.2.2 Planning your work

Writing a good PhD requires good ideas and a degree of technical and intellectual skill. But the best way to ensure success is to be well organised.

Your thesis will probably consist of three substantive chapters, so it’s fairly easy to see that you should be producing finished chapters at about the rate of one per year. In fact, your first chapter is likely to take a little longer than the others, because in your first year you will be looking to confirm your PhD status (in June), attend courses, get to grips with the data, etc.

If you are registered for full-time study, you should plan on finishing your first chapter by the end of your FOURTH term of study. You should plan on finishing your second chapter by the end of your SIXTH or SEVENTH term, and you should plan on finishing your third chapter by the end of your NINTH term (when you will be entering completion). Part-time students should plan to produce chapters by the end of their 7th, 13th and 18th terms respectively.

You should write your work up as you go along. Not only will this make your life easier when you enter your completion year, it also means that you will be able to publish your work as ISER working papers or as journal articles during the course of your studies. This is something we strongly encourage, as it will put you at an enormous advantage when the time comes to get a job. Please do NOT underestimate the time required for writing your work up: good work is meaningless if it is written up hurriedly and carelessly.

3.4.2.3 Standards

An ISER PhD is expected to be of the high standard found at other leading British universities with these standards ensured by the system of external examination. This may differ slightly from other University systems, such as those in the United States or continental Europe. The expected 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 the following five qualities:

(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 dictionary definition of a thesis is a logical and coherent argument through which a statement or theory (or a collection thereof) is maintained or proved. A PhD thesis is a dissertation through which such a thesis is set out. Hence, a thesis must have a thesis! A dissertation comprising a collection of random observations on the work of others is not satisfactory, no matter how long it is; nor is a merely descriptive presentation of information: the candidate must convey a logical and coherent argument in support of a precisely stated idea.

(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 progressively develop and substantiate the central questions/issues being examined.

(d) Disciplinary orientation

The formulation of the problem and the explanatory concepts used must be within the appropriate discipline (i.e. 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, etc.). This does not exclude the incorporation of, for example, material drawn from economics or political science, but the thesis must not be exclusively limited to these.

(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.

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

3.5 Registration, absence and intermitting, and maximum period of study

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/)

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/

If your request is approved your period of study will be adjusted pro-rata.

Please carefully read our guidance on Tier 4 and course changes here: http://www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/studies/changes

### Periods of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students first registered between 2008-09 to 2017-18</th>
<th>Students first registered from 2018-19 onwards</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research degree</td>
<td>Mode</td>
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<tr>
<td>Masters by Dissertation (MA or MSc by dissertation)</td>
<td>FT</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
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<td>Master of Philosophy (MPhil)</td>
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<td>PT</td>
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<td>Doctor of Medicine (MD)</td>
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<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
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<td>Doctor of Philosophy Integrated (PhD)</td>
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<td>PT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate</td>
<td>FT/PT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### 3.6 Supervision

ISER students are expected to make supervision arrangements with their supervisors at regular intervals. The frequency of meetings with supervisors will change as students become more autonomous and their work progresses. It will also change depending on the nature of the work being done (e.g., literature review, analysis, preparing a paper for journal submission). The minimum that students should expect is to have substantive meetings (of
an hour or so) once a month, but fortnightly meetings are more the norm, especially before
PhD status is confirmed. Please note that it is not unusual for the frequency of meetings to
vary between supervisors, and even between students supervised by the same supervisor.

If there are any problems with supervisory arrangements (including the frequency of
supervisory meetings) then these should first be raised with the principal supervisor. If a
satisfactory solution cannot be found, then the problem should be raised with the Director of
Graduate Studies (or, if the Director of Graduate Studies is the supervisor, the Director of
ISER). If, after discussion, the student is still not satisfied then he/she can request a meeting
first with the Director of ISER and, if no resolution can be found, the Dean of Postgraduate
Research Education.

Finally, please be organised be punctual and prepared for supervision meetings r, and to
provide your supervisor with written work well in advance of the time when you want
feedback. Supervisors are a talented and hardworking bunch, but they are only human, and
normally need a few days to give feedback on a short draft, and a couple of weeks or more
to give feedback on a full paper.

3.7 PGR milestones

All of the following information can be found on the student section of the ISER Intranet.

Postgraduate Research 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. The relevant 2018 milestones
for your course will be available online during the autumn term. If you’re struggling to find
them please email pgresearch@essex.ac.uk

3.7.1 Supervisory Panel Meetings (SPM)

Full-time students are expected to attend two SPMs each year, normally in November and
May; part-time students normally attend one meeting at the end of each year of study. A
Supervisory Panel typically comprises the student’s principal and second supervisors, and is
chaired by the second supervisor. A third member can also be invited to join the SPM to act
as the Board’s chair instead of the second supervisor. While the ideal SPM has three
members, it is not always practical and so two-member Panels are the norm in ISER.

Several weeks in advance of the Supervisory Panel, the Graduate Administrator will email a
report form to students required to have an SPM involved. The student will then detail their
progress before the meeting, including an outline of any substantive developments made,
and any problems or difficulties encountered, and an explanation for slow progress. This
form will then be emailed to the principal supervisor, who will give his/her view of the
student’s progress after which it is emailed to the second supervisor (and any other
members of the Panel). After the meeting, the chair of the Supervisory Panel writes his/her
report on the meeting, and forwards the completed form to the Graduate Administrator for
the Research Students’ Progress Board (see section 3.7.2 below). It is usual for the
supervisors to make this report available to the student.
3.7.2 Research Student’s Progress Board (RSPB)

The RSPB meets twice a year, usually each December and June, to consider the progress of research students and to make recommendations on matters including confirmation of PhD status, entry into completion, or (more rarely) downgrading or discontinuation of studies. The RSPB consists of the Director, Deputy Director and Administrator of Graduate Studies, plus two or more senior researchers from ISER (i.e. senior research fellows, readers and professors). RSPB meetings are chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies.

To assess student progress, the RSPB considers written reports from the students’ Supervisory Panels. Each student must document his/her progress to date and outline any future plans (e.g. regarding completion). Following the RSPB, the report is forwarded to the Dean of Postgraduate Research Education and typically the student.

In addition to making recommendations on confirmation of PhD status and entry into completion, the RSPB also monitors the progress of all other students at its twice-yearly meetings. The aim of these meetings is to identify potential problems at an early stage, and to take steps to encourage students to overcome any difficulties they may have.

Where a student's progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the normal procedure is for a letter to be sent to the student outlining the concerns of the RSPB; the Director of Graduate Studies will then meet with the student and his/her supervisor(s) to set targets for improvement. Where there is continued evidence of unsatisfactory progress, the RSPB may recommend a change of status to the Dean of Postgraduate Research Education (such as downgrading to MPhil), or that the student be discontinued and asked to leave the University.

In these cases, the student will be invited to discuss his or her circumstances with the RSPB, and has the right to appeal against the decision (see Essex Code of Practice on Research Degrees).

3.7.3 Progress Requirements for Confirmation of PhD status

All research students initially register for the MPhil degree. Those students who register for MPhil/PhD must therefore upgrade to PhD registration at a later stage. At the University of Essex, this process is called "confirmation of PhD status", and is contingent on the student's progress being judged satisfactory.

Students who first enrolled at the university in the 2013/14 academic year (or earlier), confirmation of PhD status will take place during the fourth term of full-time study (or the seventh term of part-time study). The requirement is that the student must submit a full draft of his/her first substantive chapter for consideration by the Supervisory Panel and RSPB. For confirmation to be approved, the must be “at a standard suitable for inclusion in a PhD”.

Starting from 2014/15, all new students will be expected to confirm their PhD status during the third term of full-time study (or sixth term of part-time study). For new full-time students starting October 2014, this corresponds to the second Supervisory Panel in May/June. For confirmation, the student must submit a) a draft of the work done to date on his/her first substantive chapter, b) a detailed and feasible timetable for the remaining work needed to complete chapter 1, and c) a brief outline of the research planned for the second (and possibly the third) chapter of the thesis. The draft must be of sufficiently high quality to
indicate, first to the Supervisory Panel and then to RSPB, that the student is clearly on track to produce work of the standard necessary to be awarded a PhD degree.

Confirmation of PhD status will be discussed at the relevant Supervisory Panel meeting. The Supervisory Panel will then make a recommendation to the RSPB as to whether the student’s PhD status should be confirmed.

Please be aware that high-quality work is insufficient alone for PhD status to be confirmed. If the Supervisory Panel judges that a student’s progress is so slow as to make submission within four years (or its part-time equivalent) unlikely, then this will be grounds for the RSPB to consider the following options:

- The decision to confirm PhD status will be deferred for one term;
- Or, if the student’s progress falls too far short of expectation, then the RSPB may recommend that the student is registered for an MPhil.
- In exceptional circumstances, where the student has already been warned about slow progress, then the student’s studies may be discontinued and the student asked to leave the University.

The criteria for confirmation of PhD status outlined above relate to the standard three-paper PhD, which is the structure adopted by most ISER students. Where a student is working to a different structure, these conditions may need to be interpreted flexibly; in this and other matters, the Research Students Progress Board may exercise its discretion, subject to approval by the Dean of Postgraduate Research Education.

3.7.4 Progress requirements for Entry into Completion

Completion is the name given to the writing-up period which begins at the end of the student’s minimum period (see Section 4.8.5). During completion, the student is entitled to pay reduced fees, but completion can only be entered into once certain conditions have been satisfied. The normal condition for entry into completion is that the student has completed the analysis for every substantive chapter of his/her thesis, and handed in full drafts of these chapters. Each draft chapter must be judged to be of sufficient quality to be included in a PhD thesis.

Entry into completion will normally be discussed at the last Supervisory Panel meeting of the student’s third year of full-time study (usually in May/June). Following this meeting, the Supervisory Panel will make a recommendation to the RSPB about whether the student should be allowed to enter completion. If the student is not ready at this stage, the Supervisory Panel can defer making a decision. In this event, to give the student more time, further meetings of the Supervisory Panel and RSPB can be convened nearer to the end of the student’s minimum period where necessary.

3.7.5 Completion

The minimum period from registration to submission is three years for a PhD (6 years for part-time students), and two years for an MPhil (4 years part-time). The maximum period is four years for a PhD (7 years for part-time students), and three years for an MPhil (5 years for part-time students).
At the end of the minimum period, it is usual for candidates to be permitted to proceed to a twelve-month completion period by the Dean of Postgraduate Research Education, on the recommendation of the departmental Research Students' Progress Committee. Students should note that extensions to the completion period are no longer allowed by the University; in other words, students must submit their theses within twelve months of entry into completion.

In the case of students who have not made the required progress, the RSPB may, instead of recommending entry into completion, recommend an extension of the minimum period. Extensions to the minimum period are at the discretion of the Dean of Postgraduate Research Education. In cases where an extension is granted, additional fees are payable to the University.

3.7.6 Submission

We attach the highest priority to the timely submission of all PhD and MPhil theses. We will take action to discontinue any student if, at any stage, we judge him/her unlikely to submit within four years (full time). The procedures for submitting a PhD thesis are quite tricky and it can take time to negotiate the administrative procedures and regulations; as such, all students are advised to familiarise themselves with these well in advance of their intended date of submission. The necessary information may be found here https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/

In particular, note that students must give notice of their intention to submit at least two months before their date of submission. To do this, the student must obtain the 'Title Approval' form the Postgraduate Research Education office; this must be completed and signed by the principal supervisor and then returned to the office.

Once a complete draft of the thesis has been assembled, it should be presented for comments to the principal supervisor to be read in full. Submission can follow once the final-draft thesis has been revised in light of these comments.

Two copies of the thesis must be submitted to the Postgraduate Research Education office. The thesis must be printed double spaced on A4 paper and bound in a stiff binder in accordance with the regulations.

Postgraduate Research Education publishes details of the arrangements for the examination of theses presented by research students, together with note for guidance on how to present the thesis. These are available on the Postgraduate Research Education website at: https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/

3.7.7 Staff Candidate Submission & Examination Procedures

Staff candidates who submit a thesis and/or published work shall normally submit three copies to the Registry. Candidates who submit published work must also provide three copies of a descriptive list and summary of the results of the research.

The examination of staff candidates shall be conducted exclusively by two external examiners appointed by the Executive Dean or his/her deputy; the report and recommendation of the examiners shall be received by the Executive Dean or his/her deputy.
The Executive Dean or his/her deputy shall appoint an Independent Chair to oversee the oral examination.

The Graduate Administrator in the candidate’s department arranges the oral examination in liaison with both examiners and the Independent Chair. The viva should take place no later than three months after the receipt of the thesis/published work by the examiners.

3.7.8 Electronic submission of finished Theses (after corrections)

Students must submit one bound hard copy of their thesis to the Library and an electronic copy of their thesis to the Repository in order to receive the confirmation of award letter.

The Thesis Deposit Agreement: When submitting an electronic version, students will need to complete a Thesis Deposit Agreement at the Library and an electronic version of this for the Repository. Students will be expected to have the same requirements for their Library and Repository thesis copies regarding any embargoes.

How the process will work:
1. The Registry Research Team will email a student to let them know that they can proceed to submit one bound copy of their thesis to the Library and an electronic copy to the Repository.
2. The Registry Research Team will copy the Repository Manager into this email to let them know that this student is eligible to upload their thesis.
3. The student will then submit the hard copy of their thesis to the Library, completing the Thesis Deposit Agreement and submit the electronic copy to the Repository, completing an online Thesis Deposit Agreement. Any requests for an embargo will be directed to Nigel Cochrane at this stage and both Library and Repository staff should be included in correspondence.
4. When the Library receives the hard copy, they will send an email to the Repository Manager to confirm that the hard copy has been received.
5. The Repository Manager can then make the electronic thesis live (bearing in mind any embargoes).
6. When this happens, two automatic emails will be triggered: one to confirm to the student that their electronic copy is now live and that they will receive their award confirmation shortly
7. The second email will be sent to the Registry Research Team to confirm that the student has submitted their hard copy to the Library and their electronic copy to the Repository.

3.8 Summary: how the department offers an inclusive learning experience, ensures the quality of opportunities and responds to the diverse needs of students

3.8.1 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
UK students may be eligible for a Disabled Students’ Allowance grant. See our webpages for more information, including application forms and key changes: 
www.essex.ac.uk/students/disability/funding.aspx

3.8.2 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/

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

3.8.3 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.

For more information see: www.essex.ac.uk/students/groups/mature-students.aspx

3.9 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/coursereps/ and the University’s policy here: 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.

3.10 Library services
At our Colchester Campus, the Albert Sloman Library on Square 5 has a variety of study spaces over six floors, including 24/7 facilities and group work areas. The Library offers a wide range of learning resources, online and in print, with a dedicated Helpdesk, overnight chat service and the opportunity to book appointments with your Subject Librarian to help you through your studies and beyond. libwww.essex.ac.uk

The library has a team of Subject Librarians who can help you to find appropriate resources for your assignments and show you how to search effectively. They can also provide advice on referencing and how to avoid plagiarism, using reference management software, and evaluating sources. Your Subject Librarian is Sandy Macmillen amacmi@essex.ac.uk Economics; Greg Cadge greg.cadge@essex.ac.uk Health & Social Care, Biological Sciences, 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
4. **Research Skills Development**

4.1 **Proficio**

Proficio is our innovative professional development scheme for doctoral students, and it’s unique to Essex. We believe that your academic and professional development is vital to your growth as a postgraduate research student and so we credit your Proficio account with funds that can be spent on a variety of courses. You can find out more information via [https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/research.aspx](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/research.aspx) and you can contact the Proficio team at proficio@essex.ac.uk.

4.2 **University and department specific training events**

Research training needs are assessed on first entry to ISER in conjunction with the supervisor, and then monitored and training updated as time proceeds. Training needs are accessed via discussions between the student and the student’s supervisor(s), and a ‘Training Needs’ form is completed at the start of each academic year.

Over time, a portfolio of generic and specialist training should be accumulated. A student’s training portfolio will be obtained from a mixture of the following: (1) formal courses taught in the main university programme, the Essex Summer School, or elsewhere; (2) attendance at multiple seminar programmes; (3) participation in one of ISER’s four Research Groups; (4) research networking with ISER staff or researchers elsewhere; (5) the use of specialist datasets with training in how to access and manage these data; (6) use of ISER’s research library; and (7) the University’s provision of generic skills training.

As part of the above, ESRC-funded students with Advanced Quantitative Methods (AQM) studentships must include training in AQM subjects. This should involve developing suitable training plans with their supervisors. The ESRC may ask to see evidence of all AQM-relevant training undertaken and planned at any time, and can withdraw the AQM stipend for students it deems to be insufficiently focussed on developing AQM skills through their research and training.

Additionally, there is an ISER PhD Course which covers a variety of topics necessary for completing the thesis and for future career development. The topics vary from year to year and courses are held at least once per month in each term.

**Courses**

The majority of our students will attend Master’s-level courses relevant to their research in other departments of the University during their first year. Whether the student is required to be formally assessed at the end of the course is a decision for the student's supervisor, but most students should expect to be assessed in at least one course.

Students also have access to the intensive one- and two-week courses that form part of the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection [http://essexsummerschool.com/](http://essexsummerschool.com/)

The Summer School provides a set of internationally renowned training courses on quantitative methods and data analysis for postgraduate students. ESRC-funded PhD students in the first year are required to take one course (and other research students are allowed to do so).
We also direct students to other short courses, e.g. those organised by the Centre for
Microdata Methods and Practice (http://cemmap.ifs.org.uk/), and to specialist courses on the
use of particular software packages (e.g. Stata NetCourses on introductory Stata,
introduction to programming, advanced programming, etc. See
http://www.stata.com/netcourse/.

**ISER Seminars**

**Research student seminars**

Seminars for research students are held on Thursday afternoons, usually between 15:00
and 16:30, during term time.

In alternate weeks, these seminars involve presentations by research students; each
session typically involves presentations by two or more students, the objectives being to
provide a forum to float research ideas, topics and methods; to develop ideas; to derive
feedback on your work in progress; to broaden your knowledge; and to develop your
presentational skills. All full-time students are expected to give one such presentation each
academic year and part-time students are expected to present once every two years. The
atmosphere is informal, and we recognise that those just who have just started their studies
may have little polished research to report, so will generally present a survey of the literature
or an account of preliminary investigations instead.

Attendance at these research seminars is **compulsory** for all research students in
residence, that is, all students in their minimum periods who are not (legitimately) away from
campus. One or both of the Director and Deputy Director of Graduate Studies will normally
attend these seminars, as well as the supervisors of the presenting students; other staff
members may also attend seminars in subject areas that interest them.

In the weeks when research presentations do not take place, the seminar slot will take the
form of a training session. These sessions include training on conducting literature reviews,
writing papers for publication, and so forth, and are intended to provide a programme of
professional training.

Attendance at these training sessions is compulsory for research students. Students who,
for whatever reason, are unable to attend a training session during their first years are
expected to attend this session later on during their studies.

**ISER Seminar Series**

The ISER Seminar is held Wednesday lunchtime (13:00–14:00) (sandwiches provided)
during term time in the SSRC Seminar Room (2N2.4.16), with occasional seminars
scheduled outside term times. ISER Seminar is inter-disciplinary and speakers alternate
weekly internal and external and are drawn from researchers and academic staff from ISER,
social sciences departments across the university and outside Essex. Postgraduate students
are invited to present papers at the ISER seminar.

Attendance is **compulsory** for research students in residence. Regardless of whether the
topic of the presentation falls within the confines of a student’s particular topic or discipline,
research students are expected to contribute to academic life at ISER by attending.
Information about the seminar series is available from the ISER web pages at:
https://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/events/seminars
ISER Research Groups

All ISER Research Staff are members of one or more of our Research Groups. These groups each meet around six times per year, to discuss work in progress, and to monitor existing projects and plan new ones. Research groups are currently organised into the following strands: Diversity & Intersectionality; Family & Work; Health; Methods; Policy; Income & Welfare.

Research students are expected to be active members ISER’s research community, and so must join at least one research group (many students belong to more than one group).

If any students are unclear about which group to join, then they should discuss with their supervisors and, if necessary, other ISER colleagues.

4.3 Details of any departmental support or funding for attending conferences

Research networking with ISER staff and others

Students are encouraged to make use of the wide-ranging expertise of staff at ISER by discussing their work with ISER staff other than their immediate supervisors, and also with research visitors to ISER. However, you should always discuss with your supervisor whenever you take such advice, particularly if it differs from advice offered by your supervisor(s). This is partly out of courtesy to your supervisors, and partly to ensure your supervisor is aware of your plans.

We can also facilitate research contacts with researchers in other departments and universities in the UK and world-wide. For example, we can arrange short placements of research students with other groups engaged in similar work with longitudinal and panel studies and with whom we have long-standing close research contacts (particularly those at DIW Berlin, ISR Michigan and CEPS Luxembourg). This is particularly suitable for students whose doctoral research involves cross-national comparisons using data produced collaboratively by the institutions cited together with us.

ESRC-funded students can apply for additional funding for Overseas Institutional Visits (OIVs). Enquiries and applications should be directed to Postgraduate Research and Education.

Students are expected to take advantage of training throughout the course of their studies; we also encourage research students to present their work at conferences or meetings in Britain and abroad.

The ESRC scholarships listed above include a component (the RTSG, or Research and Training Support Grant) to pay for training and conferences. A proportion of the RTSG may also be used for the purchase of equipment, specialist software, etc. For students not in receipt of these scholarships, ISER has limited funds, in the form of the FACT (Funding for Attending Conferences and Training) fund, which may be used for these purposes.

There are rules about what the RTSG and FACT funds will and will not cover; details are available on the intranet. Please ensure that you understand the guidelines properly before spending any money, as if you spend money on something which is not covered, you won’t be able to claim it back. If you are in doubt, consult Sarah Prior (ISER’s Research Funding Co-ordination Assistant).
Claims to the RTSG and FACT funds must be made on special forms supplied by the Doctoral Training Centre; these are downloadable from the ISER Intranet. Forms must be signed by your supervisor and accompanied by original receipts. Please get your supervisor’s approval before spending money which you intend to claim back under either of these schemes.

All students can access money for doctoral training from the University’s ‘Proficio’ scheme. Further details can be found in Section 4.1 and here
https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/research.aspx
5. Assessment

5.1 Principal Regulations for Research Degrees. Code of Practice for Research Degrees. Code of Practice for Professional Doctorates

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.

5.2 Extenuating circumstances, intermitting and withdrawing

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 affects 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 your 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/) or the Student Services Hub (www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/default.aspx).

Thinking of leaving or taking a break from your studies?

You may experience doubts at some point during your studies, if you’re thinking about leaving Essex, we’re here to support you and give you the advice you need to help you make an informed choice.

Intermission is a temporary withdrawal or leave of absence from the University and provides you with the opportunity to take a break from your studies. Normally, this is for reasons beyond your control (e.g. health or personal problems) although other reasons are permitted. Intermission must be approved by the University first, so if you are thinking about intermitting, we strongly advise you to contact your department and 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. 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.

5.3 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/marking_policy/default.asp

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

5.4 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: 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. Further information regarding restrictions can be found here: https://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

5.5 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.

5.6 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

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

Making a Complaint: The University is a large community engaged in many activities of both an academic and non-academic nature. From time to time, you may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of your dealings with the University and, when that happens, it is important that the issue is dealt with constructively and as quickly as possible without risk of disadvantage or recrimination.
A complaint is defined as the expression of a specific concern about matters that affect the quality of a student's learning opportunities (this is in line with the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints). The University aims to resolve complaints quickly and informally.

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

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

### 5.7 Academic offences procedure

The University expects students to act with honesty and integrity in relation to coursework, examinations and other assessed work, and to follow our conventions for academic writing (including appropriate referencing of sources) and ethical considerations. If you don’t meet these expectations, then you may be charged with having committed an academic offence, a matter the University takes very seriously.

It is your responsibility to make yourself aware of the regulations governing examinations and how to correctly prepare your coursework. An academic offence can take place even if you didn’t mean to commit one, and examples include plagiarism, falsifying data or evidence, and communicating with another candidate in an examination.

If you aren’t sure what the conventions are, particularly in relation to referencing, you should ask your department, contact the Talent Development Centre, and also refer to **6. Referencing and good academic practice** in this handbook. More information about academic offences and getting support can be found at: [www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence](http://www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence)

### 5.8 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 with the Ethical Approval application form here: [www.essex.ac.uk/reo/governance/human.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/governance/human.aspx)

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

### 5.9 Risk assessments and health and safety for students carrying out research

Health and Safety will take place two weeks after arrival by the ISER Health and Safety Officer. Additional Health and Safety assessments can be requested at any time.
6. Referencing and Good Academic Practice

6.1 Good academic practice, scholarship at ISER and the University of Essex

ISER shares the University’s mission to achieve a high and consistent quality of education. Our goals of maintaining high teaching standards and of enhancing students’ learning experiences are fostered by, and complementary to, our commitment to pursue excellence in research and scholarship.

Good academic practice is important to completing your thesis as well as ensuring a successful post-PhD/MPhil career. A scholarly attitude will result in a higher quality thesis which may lead to better quality papers in higher quality journals. The university and ISER are committed to helping you achieve your career goals and it starts with good academic practice and scholarship.

6.2 Guidance on referencing

Providing full and accurate references to your sources is a very important part of presenting your work. There are two aspects of this: (a) citations that point to references (e.g. Keynes (1936), p. 383); and (b) the bibliography (or ‘list of references’) that contains information about the references themselves. Here are some rules:

1. You must always include direct quotations from other people’s work – published or unpublished – in inverted commas (you may use either single or double quotations marks – simply be consistent). Failure to acknowledge other people’s work constitutes plagiarism and is a serious academic offence. Always follow a quotation with the relevant citation.

2. Citations should also appear when you refer to the work of others without direct quotation.

3. The bibliography is a list of references that appears at the end of your paper or project. The following information should always be included: author; date of publication; title of the work. For a book you should also include the edition, place of publication and publisher. For an article you should include the journal or book in which the article appears as well as page numbers and, if possible, the volume number.

4. For unpublished works, you will have to use your discretion but always make clear the origin of the work (i.e. from where it can be obtained). List the references in alphabetical order by author.

5. You do have discretion in terms of how you present your citations and bibliography. That is, you are not required rigidly to adhere to the style outlined above. But remember: you will lose marks for sloppiness. If in doubt, adopt the format outlined above.

6. You may come across non-standard cases which do not fit into the above categories, in which case try to be as systematic as you can. For instance, if there is no author such as for a newspaper article, give the reference by title. Example:


7. Two important rules:
   - For every citation, there must be exactly one reference in the bibliography.
• For every reference in the bibliography, there must be at least one citation. Never include references in the bibliography that are not cited in your paper. Why not? Because the reader is left puzzling about the role and significance of such references in your paper.

8. It is bad style to string together long quotations. Use quotations to support your argument not as a substitute for it. Examiners interpret long quotations as a sign of laziness. You will not be accused of plagiarism — so long as the quotations are in inverted commas and properly cited. But the paper will be penalised with a lower mark than otherwise.

6.2.1 Further advice and links

• Visit the web pages at: https://www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/tdc/writing/
• Make sure that you spell-check the final version of your paper before you print it.
• Adhere to the guidance offered above and your paper will be awarded the mark that it deserves. Ignore the advice and your paper will be penalised.
• If you need further advice, ask your supervisor before the work is submitted. It’s no good grumbling afterwards when you get a mark lower than you expect.
• PhD Thesis writing module: https://www.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/tdc/writing/thesis.aspx

6.3 Information relating to the University’s policy on plagiarism and academic offenses

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; (Students should follow the common disciplinary referencing style, i.e. APA, Harvard, Vancouver, etc.) and for help with referencing, visit the library website: http://libwww.essex.ac.uk/referencing.htm
6.4 Department style guide

ISER does not follow any one style guide due to the different disciplines represented. Students should follow the accepted style for their discipline in writing their thesis.

6.5 Proofreading policy

The University have a listing of local proof-readers who have agreed to abide by the University's Guidelines and Protocols: http://www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading/

Use of a paid proof-reader is not discouraged, however, if a proof-reader is used then they must only correct grammar and typographical errors, they should have no influence on the content or empirical nature of the thesis. Paid proof readers cannot conduct any literature reviews, hypotheses formations or empirical analysis that will be a part of your thesis.

6.6 Information about being published

ISER students are encouraged to publish their chapters as either working papers in the several ISER-held working paper series or in peer-reviewed academic journals. There are no restrictions regarding publication of single-authored papers, however if a paper is co-authored agreement must be made with the co-author regarding publishing. Students are encouraged to speak with their supervisors regarding publishing thesis chapters.

6.7 Information relating to intellectual property rights

ISER follows the University's policy regarding intellectual property rights, the policy is here.
Section 3: You Matter

7. Practicalities: Getting started and IT matters

7.1 Registration, enrolling and transcripts

All new and returning students must register at the start of each academic year. The Postgraduate Research Education Team will inform you of your formal outcome following your viva and, when all necessary steps have been completed, close your record and send you an award confirmation letter. Your award certificate 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/welcome/registration
www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/award-documents

7.2 Find Your Way and room numbering system

Find Your Way is our interactive campus map app. Download it to help you find any location on campus and get directions quickly and easily. There’s also a handy web version findyourway.essex.ac.uk/

If you’re looking for a specific room, follow these rules.

If the room number has three parts and the first is alphabetical e.g. 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 e.g. 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 (e.g. 4S is the south corner of square 4), which matches the labels on the entrances (e.g. 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 e.g. 4.722, the room is in the Maths/Social Studies/Rab Butler/Square 1 building area. The first number shows the floor and the last three digits show the room number.

Also… if the last three digits are 700-799 the room is off Square 1, and if the last three digits are 500-599 the room is in the Square 2 area (Computer Science). For example, 5.512 is room 512, floor 5.
7.3 IT support, Wi-fi, 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: https://www1.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: https://www1.essex.ac.uk/password/login.aspx

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. www1.essex.ac.uk/it/

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

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

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

7.4 Immigration information

If you are a citizen of a country that is not part of the European Economic Area or Switzerland it is likely that you will require a visa to enter or remain in the UK to study. The 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 website: www.essex.ac.uk/immigration/ www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations

7.5 On-campus facilities

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

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

7.6 Graduation

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

www.essex.ac.uk/students/graduation/default.aspx
8. Skills, Employability and Experience

8.1 Employability and Careers Centre
Get valuable, one-to-one advice from careers specialists throughout your time at Essex and beyond. Come and see us or log in to CareerHub+ whether you have one hundred questions or just don’t know where to start! We offer one-to-one advice and guidance, job-hunting workshops, CV and job application reviews, and online services for creating CVs, interview preparation and job vacancies.  
www.essex.ac.uk/careers

8.2 Learning languages
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

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

8.3 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/

8.4 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

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

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

8.7 Volunteering

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

8.8 Big Essex Award

The University’s employability award is a guaranteed way to help you stand out from the crowd, 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

8.9 Essex interns

Essex interns create paid internships exclusively for you as an Essex student. They're flexible too; part time during term time or full time in vacations. You can even take part up to three years after you graduate, as part of our Essex graduates support package. Sign up for Essex Interns to kick-start your career. www.essex.ac.uk/careers/internships

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.

9.1 Student Services Hub

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 / 01206 874000
www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/ and 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/ and /www.essexstudent.com/advice/money/

9.2 Harassment advisory network, dignity and respect

We are Essex. We encourage a culture of dignity and respect. We’re committed to upholding an environment that’s free from any form of harassment or bullying. Though rare, these incidents can occur and if they do our network of trained harassment advisors are on hand to help.

www.essex.ac.uk/equality
www.essex.ac.uk/equality/harassment
www.essex.ac.uk/students/new

9.3 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

9.4 Nightline

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

www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/nightline
9.5 Health and safety on campus

Our campuses are generally very safe environments. We want to ensure that things stay this way. In order to achieve this we work closely with local agencies including the police and borough councils. Take a look at our website for general advice and information.

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

Please read the emergency evacuation notice in your accommodation, work or study location for fire safety procedures. If you have a permanent or temporary disabilities that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

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

9.6 Residence Life

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

9.7 Health Centre

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

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

9.8 Student Union Advice Centre

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.

Colchester students - suadvice@essex.ac.uk, 01206 874034

9.9 University Privacy Statement

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

www.essex.ac.uk/website-privacy
www.essex.ac.uk/records_management/policies/students.aspx
Section 4: Essex Matters

10. The Essex Experience

10.1 The Essex Charter

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

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

10.2 Freedom of speech policy and Code of Conduct

For regulations relating to the Code of Student Conduct, see the University’s website:

www.essex.ac.uk.students/study-resources/handbooks/default.aspx
https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations

10.3 Essex Spirit, social media and other channels of communication with students

Keep up-to-date with important news, events and offers from across the University with our Essex Spirit blog. Go to our email lists to subscribe to the fortnightly e-bulletin.

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

We have more than 60 Facebook pages, including one for each department. We’re also on Twitter.

www.facebook.com/uniofessex/
https://twitter.com/Uni_of_Essex

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

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

10.4 Students’ Union

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

Say hello at essex.su
10.5 Alumni

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

alumni.essex.ac.uk/home

10.6 What comes next? Information relating to post-doctoral work

Students are encouraged to speak with your supervisors regarding life after your viva. Whether you want to go into academia, the third sector or the private sector your supervisor will be able to give you valuable information on achieving those goals.

Job advertisements are often announced via email, so checking your @essex.ac.uk email is encouraged to keep apprised of new announcements.

ISER students are encouraged to upload their CV and Job Market Paper to the ISER website.

Students are also encouraged to write grants for post-doctoral work provided that the grant writing process does not impinge on your thesis preparation and writing.

Providing references for students

Teachers and supervisors of research students are normally prepared to provide references for students but they are not obliged to do so. ISER’s policy is to encourage members of staff to provide references though it recognises that there are circumstances when staff may decline to do so.

If you wish a member of staff to write a reference for you, you should first obtain permission from the person concerned. Each member of staff is entitled to adopt his or her policy with respect to references and may decline to provide a reference at his or her discretion. If you experience difficulty in finding someone to write a reference for you, see the earlier section on “Contact points between students and staff” (Section 3.7.1) – there is normally someone from whom a reference can be obtained. ISER undertakes, at the very least, to provide a reference in the form of a statement of your academic performance while at the University.

Remember that you may need a reference after you have graduated, perhaps several years after you have left the University. It is possible that all the members of staff you know you will have left or find difficulty in remembering much about you. For this reason, you may ask a member of staff to deposit a reference with the Graduate Administrator to be used in the future, on your behalf, if a reference request is received. Members of staff are not obliged to provide such references but, if they do, the references will used when a request is received. Note that this does not prevent you from requesting a reference from a particular member of staff at any time if you prefer to do so.