Department of Government
Postgraduate research

STUDENT HANDBOOK
2020-21
Welcome from the Head of Department

A very warm welcome to new students and an equally warm welcome back to returning students. My colleagues and I hope that the academic year 2020-21 will be a productive, safe, and happy one for you.

I would like to say a big thanks to all of you for making the Department of Government your academic home. We are deeply committed to making your time at Essex an exciting and rewarding experience. We promise to provide you with the best possible learning environment for accomplishing your personal development and career goals. Much has changed in the world as a result of COVID-19 but our commitment to providing you a transformational educational experience remains the same.

The Department of Government has consistently been ranked as the top politics department in the UK. In the last Research Excellence Framework, the department was yet again ranked first for its excellence in research, so it is no exaggeration to say that you are taught by the very best scholars in the field. The department is also recognized as one of the leading departments globally, with a stellar reputation for academic excellence.

Equally important, the department places great value on fostering a strong sense of community among all of its members – students and staff. You will see plenty of evidence of this throughout the academic year in the form of invitations to our student-staff conferences, monthly opportunities to meet my leadership team, departmental seminars and various social events. If safe to do so, we will do this in person; otherwise I look forward to seeing you in a more virtual setting.

In addition, we have a very active Politics Society that features an exciting program throughout the academic year. The department boasts a welcoming common room, 5B.303, which is open to all students and staff. We strongly encourage you to make use of these great opportunities and facilities to engage with your fellow department members.

We sustain our academic excellence through a rigorous curriculum with high standards. This requires hard work from you. We demand a lot of you throughout your studies in order to prepare you for successful careers after university. The Department and University have a wealth of resources to support your studies, and I encourage you to make use of them.

This handbook is an essential guide to regulations, procedures and organisational issues, and should be your first stop for answers to questions about the department or the university. In addition, you may wish to consult the departmental website (http://www.essex.ac.uk/government) and the university module directory (http://www.essex.ac.uk/modules/). If you cannot find answers to your questions in the handbook or online, you can contact our Professional Services Team via govquery@essex.ac.uk. All of us want you to have a happy, safe and transformative educational experience.
You should of course also always feel free to talk to me as Head of Department if you have any questions or concerns. The best way to reach me is by e-mail (shane.martin@essex.ac.uk). As I mentioned above I'll also be holding a weekly coffee hour with various cohorts during the autumn and spring terms; these will be advertised to you via email. So, please do pop along and say hello.

Welcome again, and all the very best for the new academic year!

Professor Shane Martin
Head of Department & Anthony King Chair in Comparative Government
Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 6
Practicalities and Getting Started .......................................................................................................... 7
  Right to Study ..................................................................................................................................... 7
  Student visas ....................................................................................................................................... 7
  Explore your Campus ............................................................................................................................ 7
  Get connected ...................................................................................................................................... 8
  Working while studying ...................................................................................................................... 9
  Your personal belongings .................................................................................................................... 9
The Essex Experience ................................................................................................................................. 10
  Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ......................................................................................................... 10
  Student communities ............................................................................................................................ 10
  Essex Sport ........................................................................................................................................ 11
  Students’ Union .................................................................................................................................. 11
  Essex Spirit, social media and What’s on? ........................................................................................... 11
About Department .................................................................................................................................... 12
  Meet the team ....................................................................................................................................... 12
  Your supervisor ..................................................................................................................................... 14
  Research Students’ Progress Board (RSPB) ......................................................................................... 14
  Staff research interests ......................................................................................................................... 15
  Departmental resources and facilities ................................................................................................... 15
  Department Common Room .................................................................................................................. 15
  Postgraduate Study Room ................................................................................................................... 15
    Pigeonholes ......................................................................................................................................... 16
    Social Media ....................................................................................................................................... 16
Learning and Teaching ............................................................................................................................... 17
  Student Staff Partnership ...................................................................................................................... 17
    Supervisory Arrangements .................................................................................................................. 18
    Arrangements for Monitoring Progress .............................................................................................. 18
    Facilities Available to Research Students ........................................................................................... 19
    How a Research Culture is created for PGR Students ....................................................................... 19
Student Surveys
You Matter
Student Services Hub
Support for disabilities and conditions
Seeing a Doctor
Counselling services
UK Immigration Advice and Guidance
Money management
Students’ Union Advice
Residence Life
Religion, faith and beliefs
Harassment support
COVID-19 (Coronavirus)
Health and safety on campus
Making a Complaint
Student Development
Careers Services
CareerHub
Big Essex Award
Volunteering
Essex Interns
You Are Essex
Your Award Certificate
Graduation
GradIntelligence
References
Alumni
What comes next?
Introduction

All Schools and Departments at Essex create a Student Handbook each year. These are designed to be useful tools for you to find out what you need to know about your department, the University and its academic policies and procedures, and all of the resources available to you.

We know things might be a little different this year, but we remain absolutely determined to provide you with the best Essex education and student experience we can while safeguarding your health and wellbeing. Make sure that you keep up to date with what we all need to do to keep safe as a community.

At Essex we celebrate diversity and challenge inequality. You are welcomed to a truly diverse community where differences are celebrated, and individuality is valued. Your contribution is welcomed and encouraged based on your own thoughts and experiences. As part of our community you will have the freedom to explore, experiment, challenge your discipline and have your ideas shaped by peer and professional knowledge from all over the world. Essex is about more than just getting a degree: we have so much to offer our students!

Things might have to change and adapt over the year, so make sure that you’re checking online and keeping in touch with your department for the latest updates. The Student Directory contains a wealth of other helpful sources of information which you may also find useful.
Practicalities and Getting Started

You’ve made it to Essex! We’ve outlined below the most important things you need to make sure you do as soon as possible to get your time at Essex started.

Registration

Whether a new or returning student, you will need to officially register at the start of each academic year. Registration is not only a formal procedure of enrolling you into the University, but also connects you to a number of vital systems which allow you to access your online Welcome and Induction information and start your studies. As part of this process, you will need to activate your Essex IT account, register online and, once you arrive on campus, undertake a Right to Study check and collect your student registration card.

Right to Study

The University must ensure all students have the right to study at the University of Essex for the whole duration of their course. If you require immigration permission to study in the UK, this will be checked when you first register on your course and as necessary thereafter. Students have a duty to maintain valid UK immigration permission that allows study for the duration of their course, failure to do so may lead to withdrawal from the University under the University’s General Regulations.

Student visas

The University has many duties as a Tier 4 sponsor and must ensure we remain compliant in order to retain our Tier 4 sponsor status. Students with a Tier 4 or Short-term student visa have responsibilities to the University and the Home Office. There will be conditions attached to your visa that restrict what you can do in the UK, breaking any of the conditions may mean you can’t remain in the UK and complete your course. Please be aware that changes to your course, whether due to academic failure or choice, must be considered against the Immigration rules and guidance in place at the time, this can mean that some academic options may not be available to you.

If you are coming to the UK on or after 1 January 2021 to study, you may be applying for a visa under the new immigration rules that the UK government intend to introduce. These rules will also apply to European and Swiss nationals who do not already have EU settled status or UK immigration permission. The government aim to release the new rules in the autumn of 2020, we’ll publish more information on our immigration web pages after they have been published and considered.

Explore your Campus

There is a broad range of facilities across each of our campuses to support your experience at Essex, whether in person or virtually. For the latest information, see the updates on services on campus and make sure that you’re aware of the guidance for those coming onto campus.
Get connected

Your IT account
You will need to activate your Essex IT account. Once you’re set up, you can access your Essex email, log in to Moodle, access lab computers and library services, print for free on campus, connect to campus wi-fi, and much more. When you activate your account, you should register an external email address and passphrase so that if you forget your password, you can also reset it using these details. If you have forgotten those also, you should either visit the IT Helpdesk or call 01206 872345. Make sure you keep your password safe and do not share it with others!

Campus Wi-fi
If you are studying on any of our campuses, connect to our Wi-Fi by simply finding the ‘eduroam’ network on your device and use the same log in details as your IT account to connect up!

Essex Apps
The University has a variety of online systems and platforms designed to enhance your learning and help make processes, such as submitting coursework, easier. We have rounded up the top platforms, portals and apps that you need to know about!

MyEssex
MyEssex is your online account. This is different to your applicant portal – you can use MyEssex to view your timetable, update your personal details, request replacement student cards or supporting documents, monitor your course progress, let us know if you’ll miss a lecture or class, contact the Student Services Hub, and much more.

PocketEssex
Pocket Essex is the University’s official app for students; its interface of icons act as a portal through to a variety of areas and resources. PocketEssex links to many areas that MyEssex does, but also takes you through to other key resources, such as the Students’ Union, FindYourWay and the Library.

Find Your Way
When on campus, we know that finding your way can be challenging to start with. Our Colchester campus in particular can be difficult to navigate with a historically complex room numbering system! FindYourWay is our interactive campus map designed to get you from A to B on either the Colchester or Southend campuses with quick and easy directions.

Zoom
Zoom is the principal delivery mechanism used by the University for online meetings, presenting, teaching and training. This quick start guide gives you an introduction to the essentials of joining and participating in a Zoom webinar or meeting.
Working while studying

Many students choose to work part-time to supplement their income. Working during your course can also give you excellent skills and experience to boost your CV. Our Student Services Hub can help you find part-time work. There are also many opportunities to work in paid jobs on campus.

You can access recommendations on working hours, as well as guidance on rates of pay and National Insurance contributions on the Careers Services webpages.

If you have a student visa, please read our information on working in the UK for international students before you start looking for a job. The country you’re from and your visa type will determine whether or not you can work in the UK. If you can work, the type of work you are allowed to undertake and the number of hours you can work will be restricted.

Your personal belongings

The University does not cover costs for personal damage or loss of possessions; only in instances where the University has been negligent would a claim be viable for compensation for personal belongings. Therefore, you are strongly advised to take out personal insurance cover for your possessions. This is especially important for valuable items, such as laptops, phones and tablets.
The Essex Experience

The University of Essex is proud of its inclusivity and its international community. Our campuses and our University are places that are welcoming, where every single person can feel they have a place where they belong and where you can find the world in one place. As part of our ongoing commitment we have created a Student Charter as a pledge that every student becomes a part of when they join us. With the Student Charter you agree to support our community and we promise to provide you with a transformational educational experience.

Embrace the Essex Values

We are different at Essex. We are brave, we are bold, and we embrace challenges and drive change. Our values are underpinned by this very culture. While we full heartedly encourage students to challenge the status quo and explore the unknown, we expect that students do so respectfully, intelligently and act as true ambassadors for the University. The University has a Code of Student Conduct that outlines the rules and regulations that help us maintain our high standards of behaviour.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University recognises the value of diversity and is committed to equality of opportunity within the University. It therefore aims to create the conditions whereby students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of race, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations, or any other irrelevant distinction.

The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is fully effective.

Student communities

We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive student community. The University recognises the value of diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity within the University. We aim to create an environment whereby students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential regardless of their background whether that is race, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or any other distinction.

We offer a wide range of support to individuals and groups of student members, such as our postgraduate students – our student communities - who may have specific requirements, interests or responsibilities- to help fulfil your potential. Whether you are an international student, a mature student, a BAME student or have any other requirements or needs, we here at Essex want to welcome you with open arms. The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is fully effective.
**Essex Sport**

Learning doesn't just happen in the classroom. Keeping active during your studies is a great way to meet new people, help relieve stress, maintain good physical and mental wellbeing, increase productivity, and improve your employability.

Visit the Essex Sport website or download the app to discover all the ways you can keep active during your time at Essex. In order to ensure the welfare of our community there may be changes to opening hours or what's available, so do check on the website for the latest information.

**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 work hard to support our PGR community, and are here from day one of your research, to the moment you graduate to support you in any way we can.

The Students’ Union is run by students for students, and you have the ability to shape what we do. From deciding who leads the SU by electing our entire Student Leadership team including the PGR officer, to shaping your own experiences at Essex, we are here to represent your views and work with you to make amazing things happen.

**Get involved!**

There are opportunities to join 45 Sports Clubs, to get involved with our BUCS teams which offer the opportunity to play competitively in a wide range of sports across the year. If you just want to try a sport, don’t want to commit to a regular team, or would rather not play competitively, check out our Just Play programme. We have 120 Societies where you can meet people with similar interests, challenge yourself with something new or, if you can’t find what you’re looking for, start your own!

We also have our very own letting agency SU Homes designed to offer help and support for students to find off campus accommodation.

**Essex Spirit, social media and What’s on?**

Keep up to date with important news, events and offers from across the University with our Essex Spirit newsletter, delivered directly to your Essex email address.

Follow us on social media:

- Facebook: @uniofessex
- Twitter: @universityofessex
- Instagram: @uni.of.essex
- YouTube: uniofessex

Our Events calendar brings together all the events happening across our three campuses, so you can make the most of your time at Essex.
About Department

Meet the team

The departmental Professional Services office is based in room 5.401. We will be delivering a dual service during the 20/21 academic year. This means that you will be able to arrange to see us in person on campus or drop by our Virtual Department Office.

5.401 Office Opening hours - please contact govpgquery@essex.ac.uk to arrange an appointment to see a member of the team on campus.

On Campus

Even Term Weeks: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10-16, 18, 20, 22, 24 - Tuesdays 10am-4pm
Odd Term Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, 11-17, 19, 21, 23, 25 - Thursdays 10am-4pm

Virtual Office hours - all weeks of term

Monday 10am-4pm
Tuesday 10am-4pm
Wednesday 10am-1pm
Thursday 10am-4pm
Friday 10am-4pm

The virtual office will be available for all Government students and those studying Government modules as outside options. Members of the team will be available to answer your questions or to provide you any guidance that you may need. You can choose how to speak to us; you don’t need to have your video enabled!

Professional Services Team

The professional services team in the department is your first port of call for any non-academic issues. If they are unable to help directly they will be able to point you in the right direction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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</table>
| Kimberley Stockley        | Department Manager (DM) and provides leadership for the Professional Services Team. Kimberley is accountable to the Head of Department and works closely with the Faculty Manager, the Faculty Support team and central Professional Services. | Office 5.004 or Virtual Department Office
E: govdm@essex.ac.uk
Phone: 01206 872759 |
| Emma McClelland           | Deputy Department Manager (DDM) and supports the Department Manager (DM) with all aspects of departmental, course and student administration and deputises for the DM. | Office 5.004 or Virtual Department Office
E: govdm@essex.ac.uk
Phone: 01206 872982 |
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Details</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</table>
| Nicola Rowley      | Student Administrator                             | Nicola is responsible for first year undergraduate students and is the first port of call for any non-academic enquiries. | Office: 5.004 or Virtual Department Office  
E: govquery@essex.ac.uk  
Phone: 01206 872737 |
| Lewis Olley        | Student Administrator                             | Lewis is responsible for second year undergraduate students and is the first port of call for any non-academic enquiries. | Office: 5.004 or Virtual Department Office  
E: govquery@essex.ac.uk  
Phone: 01206 872757 |
| Sallyann West      | Student Administrator                             | Sallyann is responsible for third and final year undergraduate students and is the first port of call for any non-academic enquiries. | Office: 5.004 or Virtual Department Office  
E: govquery@essex.ac.uk  
Phone: 01206 873011 |
| Jamie Seakens      | Student Administrator                             | Jamie is responsible for postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students and is the first port of call for any non-academic enquiries. He deals with all postgraduate admissions, enquiries and administration. | Office: 5.004 or Virtual Department Office  
E: govpgquery@essex.ac.uk  
Phone: 01206 872741 |
| Kayleigh Page      | Summer School Co-ordinator                        | Kayleigh is responsible for co-ordinating the Summer School that our MRES students attend during the summer of their first year. | Office: 5.004 or Virtual Department Office  
E: essexsummerschoolssda@essex.ac.uk  
Phone: 01206 872502 |
| Elliot Brearey     | Finance Assistant                                 | Elliot deals with academic queries relating to expenses, research grants and departmental budgets.  
Please note: he does not deal with Student Loans or Student Finance.  
For this, please contact the Silberrad Centre. | Virtual Department Office  
E: govfinance@essex.ac.uk  
Phone: 01206 872982 |

A full list of all academic and professional services staff for the Department of Government can be found on our website at: https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/government/people/academic. For information on individual academic support hours, please refer to the staff member’s webpage.

A full list of all staff can be found on https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/government/people/academic. Below is a summary of the roles of staff that can help you with a variety of areas during your time at Essex.
**Your supervisor**

A supervisor will have been appointed for you during the admissions process. You are expected to have regular contact with your supervisor during your studies and they should be the first port of call for any concerns/problems.

**Supervision of research students during periods of leave**

Academic staff serving as supervisors of postgraduate research students will, on occasion, take periods of research leave for research purposes. During some periods of research leave, supervisors may not be in residence at the University. It is incumbent upon the supervisor, with the approval of the Graduate Director of Research, to develop a plan for the continuing supervision of students during periods of research leave. In making such arrangements, it is the policy of the department that:

a) Members of staff are expected to continue to carry out their role as supervisor during periods of research leave.
b) Members of staff on research leave are not expected to attend Supervisory Panel but are expected to provide a written assessment of progress.
c) Members of staff on research leave should make arrangements for continuing contact with their supervisees, whether through face-to-face meetings, or through some form of remote communication,
d) In cases where a member of staff plans to be out-of-residence for an extended period during their research leave, an alternate member of staff should be named (by the Graduate Director of Research, in consultation with the supervisor) as a local contact for the supervisee student. The local contact is not meant to act as a substitute supervisor (see point (A) above) but to serve as a designated point of contact in the Department during the period when the supervisor is out-of-residence.

**Research Students’ Progress Board (RSPB)**

The RSPB is made up of senior members of academic staff and is chaired by the Graduate Director, PGR. It “reviews the progress of every student through to the award of a degree, withdrawal or failure, on the basis of the reports from the Supervisory Panel, including the written report from the student. Where no Supervisory Panel has taken place, for instance because a student is carrying out research abroad, the supervisor and the student must each submit a progress report. A decision/recommendation for discontinuation, downgrading or upgrading or to confirm PhD status or change to MPhil, to permit entry into completion, or to extend the minimum period can only be made by the RSPB.”

Principal Regulations for Research Degrees: [https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/principal-regulations-research-degrees.pdf](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/principal-regulations-research-degrees.pdf)

Professional Doctorate rules of assessment: [https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/assess-rules.aspx](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/assess-rules.aspx)
Staff research interests
You can find out more about the department’s academic staff research interests by clicking on the below link:-  https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/governmen/research

Departmental resources and facilities
A wide range of facilities and resources are available for all students to access and use as part of their study at Essex. Each department and school also have a selection for the exclusive use of their students. Below is a summary of the facilities and resources that are likely to be most useful to you.

Department Common Room
The Department Common Room 5B.303 is located here: http://bit.ly/2H3syVH and is for the use of all students/undergraduate students/postgraduate students. We have comfortable couches, tables for working at, a TV and free refreshments. Printing, photocopying and scanning

Postgraduate Study Room
The Postgraduate Study room is available for all research students in 5B.305.

Printing, photocopying and scanning
All students can print, copy and scan for free at Essex! You can even print from your mobile by sending your attachment to mobileprinting@essex.ac.uk.

Once you’ve located a device, simply log in using your Essex login and password, or tap with your student card to print. Whilst printing is free for all students, please think of your carbon footprint and only print if necessary.

Please note that there are strict laws about infringement of copyright; more information can be found on the library website which explains what and how much you are permitted to copy. Usage is monitored and subject to a fair use policy.

Premium printing
Premium services for printing and finishing, including binding your documents for presentational purposes, are available at The Copy Centre (Square 4, Colchester Campus). These services are chargeable.

Noticeboards
Every department and school has their own noticeboard providing information on staff, courses and classes, updates, careers, events and opportunities. These are located in the common areas and corridors. Keep an eye out for events; important notices and things to note that are pinned up here and also shared by email from ‘GOVNEWS’. If you would like to post any notices on our notice boards or on social media, please contact a member of the professional services team at govnews@essex.ac.uk
**Pigeonholes**
You will be given access to a pigeonhole in the Common Room where any mail you get sent to the University will be held for you to collect. Please do not have large parcels delivered to the department. We will not be able to accommodate these should they arrive. Please check the pigeonholes regularly.

**HEROES: Helping Each other with Research On Empirical Subjects**
HEROES is a group of empirical minded PhD students. HEROES stands for Helping Each other with Research On Empirical Subjects. A new lead is being appointed shortly and details will be sent round once the appointment has been made.

**POPE: Public Opinion, Parties and Elections**
POPE (Public Opinion, Parties and Elections) is a PhD organised weekly section meeting. It is a casual format to present doctoral research in progress and discuss it with peers. Anyone is welcome to join, please get in touch Sarah Wagner (smwagn@essex.ac.uk) for more information or if you would like to present your work in the field of comparative politics.

**Social Media**
Our Facebook and Twitter pages are regularly updated with news, upcoming events and student opportunities--add us using the info below:

- Facebook: UoE.Government
- Twitter: @uniessegovt


Learning and Teaching

The University is committed to providing equal opportunities for all our students regardless of where or how you study. Our diverse student population is taken into account when developing the resources, services and facilities on and off campus, when we create our courses, write publications and course materials, and set our policies and regulations.

Student Staff Partnership

As a Postgraduate Research student, you have a responsibility to:

- Read the documentation provided, including the regulations for your degree, the 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 supervisio
- ers, 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. Alternatively, if you feel unable to talk to a member of the departmental staff, please contact the Postgraduate Research Education Team to discuss the concerns. Any discussions will remain confidential if requested. Students may request a change of supervisor but should note that it may not always be possible for suitable alternative arrangements to be made.
- You must present your thesis for examination by the end of the final term of your standard period, or by the end of the prescribed completion period.
  - A request for an extension of up to two weeks to the submission deadline may be made. Requests must be made to the Postgraduate Research Education Team in advance of the deadline. If granted an extension, you will not be expected to register or pay the prescribed fee for that two-week period.
- If you fail to present your thesis for examination by the deadline, you will be deemed to have withdrawn permanently from the University and from your research degree, unless you are
permitted an exceptional further period of completion.

- Extenuating circumstances that affect your ability to submit your thesis by the agreed deadline will be considered by the Dean on a case-by-case basis.
- Familiarise yourself with the guidelines on thesis submission and with the examination process, and ensure that you are prepared for your viva.

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

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

**Supervisory Arrangements**

Each accepted PGR applicant is allocated a supervisor or co-supervisor when they are accepted in the Department. Having been allocated a supervisor or supervisory team, new PGR students discuss their training needs with their supervisors at the beginning of the academic year. Students are then required to set out their training needs. Those research students that are deemed to require more formal training are encouraged or required to attend one or more of our Masters modules. Students that are enrolled on more formalised programmes (such as IDA) are required to attend seminars and workshops for their first year at least. All PGR students are able to take any agreed University Proficio training modules from which they select as they progress through the year with the guidance of supervisors, and many attend external courses intended for PhD students. Training needs are reviewed at each of the regular Supervisory Panels that are convened for the PGR students.

**Arrangements for Monitoring Progress**

Every PGR student has a main supervisor and a supervisory panel comprised of the supervisor and usually two additional members of staff. Individual supervision varies depending on the particular needs of the students, but supervisory meetings are usually for an hour at a mutually agreeable time. At the same time, all students have at least two Panel meetings per year (and some have three) during the whole of their minimum period of study. Each formal panel meeting is usually one hour long and students are expected to circulate their work at least one week before the meeting to provide time for the Panel to provide appropriate feedback. Additional meetings between the PGR student and other members of the Panel also occur in order to provide specialist help.

The PGR student writes a report of each Panel Meeting, which is then circulated to the Supervisor and the panel, before submission to the PGR Administrator via FASER. The Postgraduate Director of Research reads the reports and raises any concerns with students and their supervisors. The Department does not require students to compile logbooks, but they are encouraged to do so by some supervisors. The panel reports and progress reports, taking into consideration the agreed set milestones for each year of study, serve the same function. By May or June of the first year all PGR students have traditionally presented a fully developed research proposal, including an introduction and research question; literature review and theory; fully developed research question and defence of its relevance and importance; hypotheses and main arguments; data, methods and research design; likely findings; and evaluation of its feasibility and tentative timetable.

The Research Students Progress Board (RSPB), which comprises the PGR Director and two senior members of academic staff, monitors progress in the Department and makes recommendations about progress, upgrading, continuation, completion, intermittence, and so forth. The Department is committed that MPhil students are fully prepared and ready to move into their second and third years and thus be upgraded to PhD status. It has used various models in ensuring this transition. Extended Research Proposals are presented at the students second panel meeting. The Supervisor and Supervisory Panel is thus entrusted with the task of recommending whether or not the student can upgrade their status from MPhil to PhD. In cases where the proposal is unclear or undeveloped, or raises significant questions or is incomplete, students are invited to make revisions before the RSPB meets to discuss their progress. The RSPB meets to decide whether to recommend progress to the second year in the June Progress Meeting. In some cases, students must submit a revised version of
the proposal in September before the start of the second year. The timetable is slightly different for January starters, whose progress takes place in correspondingly different times of the year.

By the end of their second year of study, students must confirm if they are pursuing a thesis-based PhD or a modern paper-based PhD. In the event that students are not making satisfactory progress, a special progress committee is convened comprising the Graduate Directors (PGR and PGT), an additional senior member of staff, and the PGR Administrator. Decisions from the committee are then communicated to the student and the Deans if necessary. All applications for a change in status, intermittence, discontinuation, submission, and so forth must be approved by the Department and the Dean. The full guidelines, expectations, and rules of the Department are made available online, and are discussed at the induction presentation given to all new PGR students in Week 1 of the new academic year.

**Facilities Available to Research Students**

All staff and students have access to a general reading and common room for meetings and discussion groups, connection for laptop use and projector facilities to enable PowerPoint presentations at the PhD Colloquium. All staff and students are allocated mailboxes. There is a limited number of dedicated desks for research students; these are allocated according to the Department Space Policy.

In 2013, the Department was instrumental in establishing the EssexLab, which was created to enable staff members and research students to conduct a range of interactive experiments to supplement their ongoing research. Researchers now come from all over the UK to use this state-of-the-art lab, thus accessing its large participant database and configurable environment. EssexLab continues to organise a series of workshops and seminars designed to introduce experimental methods and reporting research in the quest to learn more about people's attitudes, behaviours and decisions. Our PGR students are encouraged to make use of this facility and resources are made available for those who wish to perform experiments and develop experimental research designs.

**How a Research Culture is created for PGR Students**

The Department endeavours to develop a supportive, constructive and critical research culture and environment for its PGR students. Until last year, all PGR students received an induction from the Graduate Director at the beginning of the first year of study, including a full presentation of aims and objectives of PGR provision, expectation of the Department in terms of timelines, completion and submission of all PGR work, duties of the Department to the students, availability of training, study space, activities and funding opportunities. This activity has now been integrated into a university-wide induction programme, though we continue to feed into this process, while running complementary activities. For example, we hold our own introductory sessions for all the PhD students and social activities designed to welcome and integrate students into their intellectual community.

As we have already noted, the Department hosts and runs a number of Research Centres: the Jean Monnet European Centre of Excellence, the Mike Nicholson Centre, the Centre for Ideology and Discourse Analysis (CIDA) and the Centre on the Politics of Representation in Crisis (CPRC). PGR students are an integral part of such Centres, and they often provide a focus for their research in particular areas. The Department also hosts and helps to organise a variety of specialised workshops and events. The Ideology and Discourse Analysis group has developed a research network in Ideology and Discourse Analysis. In conjunction with the Centre for Ideology and Discourse Analysis, graduate students successfully ran conferences, workshops and seminars.

The Department’s ongoing Professional Development Seminar effectively engages and socialises students into the department’s Doctoral community. PhD students are encouraged to submit articles to leading peer reviewed journals, which many do, following support and mentoring by staff. The Department enjoys a good record of joint staff-student publications in leading journals, especially in the fields of comparative politics, conflict resolution and international relations. They also continue to get invitations and attend national and international conferences. The Department also provides bespoke Doctoral seminars for some of the core research areas of the department and it is developing plans to extend and formalise such provision. The Department also encourages co-
authorship of research articles and books between members of staff and their PhD students. Students pursuing both the monographic and the paper-based PhDs often benefit from such co-authorship, while others build a strong publishing record before receiving their degrees, which makes them competitive on the academic job market.

**Research Methods and Skills Training**

As noted earlier, organizing its activities around the ideas of “theory-driven empirical research” and “normative and critical political theory”, the Department aims to generate research that is authoritative across a wide range of fields. In line with this style of research, coupled with increasing levels of specialization and professionalisation, this ethos has implications for our PGR students. We thus emphasize the development of viable research questions and rigorous research design, while identifying the research training needs of the students to be able to undertake their research and submit publishable work. Emphasis is also placed on data gathering and analysis, as well as the rigorous testing of hypotheses. Such objectives are reflected in the research methods and professional skills that we seek to impart and foster amongst our PGR students.

Our induction and social activities are thus supplemented with the more formal provision of courses and spaces. The Professional Development Seminar (GV994) mentioned above is designed and run by the Department for all PGR students, and is committed to expose PhD students to all aspects of the profession. Increasingly, this focus on professional development has resulted in a significant number of our PhD students publishing their work in international peer-reviewed journals.

At the same time, PGR students in the Department continue to run their own seminar series. This includes a bespoke PhD Colloquium that is designed to meet the interests of the different research clusters and to which all students are required to make a presentation. Doctoral students also organise HEROES - “Helping Each other with Research on Empirical Subjects” - which is a workshop/colloquium session for postgraduate research students. The latter is a platform for PhD students to get a broader view of empirical research methods, and to present and discuss their own research ideas to other research students from the Department of Government. PGR students are also encouraged to attend and participate in the weekly Departmental Seminar. Students can also audit other modules provided by the Department.

Where necessary, PGR students in the Department are invited to augment their research skills by participating in the annual Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis. Essex students are offered free access to some modules and then discounted rates to participate in the largest social science summer school in the world. In general, the Summer School offers more than 50 different courses, ranging from introductory to highly advanced methods modules, and is usually attended by more than 500 participants from over 95 different countries.

**Transferable Skills**

The inculcation of transferable skills is in part developed by our Professional Development Seminar (GV994), which is a module on the professional aspects of an academic career in political science, but is also invaluable for those students who do not wish to pursue an academic career. All first year PGR students in the Department are required to take the module. It provides an overview of writing and presenting research papers and articles in political science, organising a PhD dissertation and managing time commitments, writing a literature review and connecting it to the research design, designing and giving PowerPoint presentations, and developing related skills that enhance employability. The module emphasises early publication and engagement with the profession as the academic market has become increasingly competitive with many scholars leaving their PhD programmes with a thesis and several publications.

Previous topics have included:

- Expectations, managing time, and PhD life
- What a PhD proposal should look like
- Locating academic networks
• Seeking and applying for funding
• Conference submission and strategy
• Preparing articles for journal submission
• Writing a good academic CV
• The development and presentation of PhD and research proposals
• Preparing a job talk
• Promoting and publicising research
• Designing and presenting posters

Financial Support for Research Students

An important source of funding for PhD applicants in the UK and Europe are bids to SeNSS and Chase scholarships. In addition, University of Essex Doctoral Scholarships are usually available to support talented PhD students from across the world looking to study within the Department. The Department endeavours to ensure that its applicants are best placed to acquire such awards and scholarships, though it is also recognised that our success rates could be improved in this area, and greater emphasis is given in developing high-quality proposals and links between applicants and supervisors.

Students can use their allocated Proficio funds for attending research training events, both on campus (e.g. the Essex Summer School) or off campus. In recent times, members of staff have been encouraged to include and employ PGR students in their external grant applications from research councils and other bodies, as well as internal research funding.

The academic year

The academic year uses a week numbering system that covers the 52 weeks of a calendar year but corresponds to typical term dates. So, the start of the academic year is week 1, which is Welcome week, with teaching commencing in week 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Week numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>2-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>16-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can view the University’s week numbers with the equivalent dates in the week by week calendar. The University’s key dates include an overview of the start and end of each term and exam periods.

However, you will find that all campus activities and events make reference to the standard academic year terms and schedule noted above.

You are expected to be available during term time to attend teaching events, unless otherwise advised by your Department.

My Course

Each course at the University has its own syllabus, full details of which, including the aims and learning outcomes of your course, can be found in the University’s Programme Specifications Catalogue.
Your own course structure, including your specific programme specification, can be found in the MyStudy section of your MyEssex homepage.

**Credits**

Your course will be made up of a certain number of credits, depending on your level of study and specific postgraduate course. Each year of study will hold a credit value, with credits allocated to each module. You will need to meet the required learning outcomes and assessments to be awarded credits.

**Learning outcomes**

Each course has learning outcomes which need to be met in order to progress. Course learning outcomes are categorised into knowledge, intellectual, practical and key skills, and are also defined more specifically at a modular level. Having this information means that you can measure your progress against the outcomes, for example when reviewing coursework feedback.

**Making changes to your study**

If you feel as though your research has changed direction and that it would be appropriate to change your degree title, please discuss this with your supervisor, as they'll be best placed to advise on the most suitable option. You may also feel it appropriate to change to a differing degree type (from PhD to MSD for example), again please discuss this with your supervisor in the first instance.

Once you have decided that you want to change your degree title, you will need to make a formal request using the online Change of Course/Degree title form (available here: [www.essex.ac.uk/esf/](http://www.essex.ac.uk/esf/)).

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

If you are a sponsored student, you should discuss any proposed change with your funding body and/or check its terms and conditions. If you are a UK Research and Innovation funded student, you should contact the Postgraduate Research Education team to discuss your request to change your mode of study.

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

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

**Thinking of leaving or taking a break?**

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.
You can contact your department, supervisor or Student Services Hub to speak in confidence about your concerns, and also the different options available to you and the impact they may have.

**Periods of study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research degree</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters by Dissertation (MA or MSc by dissertation)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Philosophy (MPhil)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>Five years</td>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Medicine (MD)</td>
<td>PT only</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>Seven years</td>
<td>Six years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy Integrated (PhD)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>Five years</td>
<td>Four years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Eight years</td>
<td>Nine years</td>
<td>Eight years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Doctorate</td>
<td>FT/PT</td>
<td>See individual programmes</td>
<td>See individual programmes</td>
<td>See individual programmes</td>
<td>See individual programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Course materials**

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.

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

**Library Services**

The library provides access to an extensive digital library of books and journals to support your research. As well as a team of specialist Academic Liaison Librarians who can advise on appropriate resources for your area, there is also a Scholarly Communications and Research Support team, who can advise on a variety of topics including open access and how/where to publish your work. Online support in these areas can be found in the Library’s Research Support guide. A range of workshops and training sessions are also held throughout the year through Newcomers, a collaborative network.
run by Library Services, the Research Enterprise Office, and the UK Data Archive that aims to support researchers, and offer training across the research lifecycle.

At our Colchester Campus, the Albert Sloman Library on Square 5 is open for long hours and has a variety of study spaces, including a dedicated Postgraduate Study Room. The Library offers a dedicated Helpdesk, live chat and the opportunity to book appointments with specialist staff to help you through your studies and beyond.

See the Library website for the latest information on all our libraries and the services available, including opening hours.

**Research Skills Development**

**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 and for conference attendance. You can find out more information via:

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/research.aspx

You can contact the Proficio team at: proficio@essex.ac.uk

**University and departmental training events**

In your first year you will take GV994, which is a Professional Development Seminar run by our Academic staff aimed toward helping you with every aspect of your PhD, from research Design to finding a job. This is a timetabled event and is compulsory, the Module outline can be found via the Module Directory online:


**Assessment and Academic Integrity**

Undertaking a research degree varies for each person. Some are predominantly lab based, others require significant library research, and some must undertake taught modules. All schools and departments at the University employ a variety of assessment methods, and these will be tailored based on your research area and the course you’re on.

**Ethics in research**

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 should first read the Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants and then submit an Ethical Approval application form via ERAMS. You should be aware that ethical approval cannot be granted retrospectively so it is very important that you make your application before you start to recruit participants or collect data from them.

Research involving the NHS may require and research involving human tissue or adults lacking capacity to consent will require Health Research Authority and / or NHS Research Ethics Committee approval.

Research involving vulnerable groups may require a DBS check if you are engaging in regulated activity. More information about the DBS check process can be found on the University’s DBS webpages.

Risk assessments in research

If the research you are undertaking could potentially harm participants, researchers or the University (e.g. risks to physical or mental health, safeguarding or reputational, legal or financial risks) you will need to carry out a risk assessment, which you may be asked to provide as part of the ethics approval process. Your academic supervisor will be able to advise you on this.

You can book onto Research Risk Assessment training online, where there is also further information about risk assessment and managing health and safety risks.

If you are planning to carry out research abroad it is important that you research your destination, so that you are aware of security, safety or culture issues that may affect you or your research. The University has comprehensive travel insurance, which you will be able to arrange by completing the online Travel Insurance Application Form.

Academic Integrity and Academic Offences

The University expects students to complete all assessment with honesty and integrity 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.

Academic Skills and Support

Every student arrives at Essex with the same spirit of determination but different experiences of education and levels of academic readiness. Skills for Success can help you identify your talents and strengthen those areas you need to develop.
We are committed to ensuring that every student is able to get the most out of their academic study and achieve their potential on their course, which is why Skills for Success team is available to help by providing support, resources and workshops on:

- Academic writing
- Maths and stats
- Digital Skills
- Research and referencing
- English language
- Exam revision

The Skills for Success team can also provide further learning and study skills information and support for disabled students.

**Departmental Support**

**Senior Personal Tutor, Study Skills Officer, Departmental Disability Liaison Officer**

The Senior Personal Tutor (SPT) has a number of advisory roles within the Department of Government.

Email: govsenioradviser@essex.ac.uk

If you are having any issues that are affecting your studies, whether they are academic or personal, the SPT is able to provide guidance. The SPT also provides guidance on change of course, special syllabus requests, intermissions and extenuating circumstances.

**Study Skills Officer**

The SPT is also the Study Skills Officer for the department and holds one-to-one Study Skills Sessions, covering topics such as how to structure essays and reference correctly. A timetable of available appointments will be available for you to sign up to these sessions. Alternatively you can email for an appointment to govpgquery@essex.ac.uk.

**Departmental Disability Liaison Officer (DDLO)**

If you have a disability, medical condition, specific learning or mental health difficulty, there is a network of support for you. As well as a team of specialist advisers based in the Student Support Office, each department has a representative to help you to access your studies; the SPT is this representative in the department.

The DDLO:

- Is a representative in the department who has an awareness of disability issues and the reasonable adjustments which may be required under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Has knowledge of the subject area you are studying and the structure of the department.
- Can provide advice about the University's specialist support services.
- Can act as a link between the department and Student Support; you can disclose, or discuss your needs, confidentially to them.
- Can liaise with lecturers if you are worried about talking to them about disability related difficulties.
- Can assist if you feel the reasonable adjustments recommended are not being implemented by the department.
- Is a person you can contact if you are experiencing problems with your academic progress as a result of a permanent or temporary disability, medical condition or specific learning difficulty and who will be able to find out about the options available to you.
- Will listen to your concerns confidentially.

Contact the DDLO at email: govdlo@essex.ac.uk

Proofreading services

Before considering the use of proofreading services, all students should first discuss their work with their supervisor(s). Many students seek ‘proofreading’ services at some point during their studies, but different types of editing can occur under this name which may not be appropriate in an academic context where work is assessed and could potentially qualify as an academic offence. The University is keen to ensure as far as possible that students understand what proofreading work should entail and the acceptable boundaries to which any proofreading or editing must adhere to.

The University maintains a list of local freelance proofreaders who offer services to students and staff at Essex that have read and agreed to abide by the University's policy and guidance on proofreading.

Language classes

English classes for dependants

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

Learning a Language

Learn a language at Essex to increase your global and cultural awareness. Language learning can give you the confidence to work and travel internationally, expand your options for studying abroad, and get a competitive edge when you’re looking for a job. There are a number of ways to do it, so look online to discover the best option for you.

Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances beyond your control which cause you to perform less well during your studies than you might have expected or to miss an assessment or milestone. In general, valid extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affects you for any significant period of time and/or during assessment.
Your department will review your claim at your Supervisory Panel and RSPB and determine an appropriate course of action to take into account your extenuating circumstances, if appropriate.

If you do need to make an extenuating circumstances claim, you should first read the guidance very carefully and seek advice from SU Advice or the Student Services Hub. Please be prepared that you may need to include supporting evidence with your claim. Extenuating circumstance claims must be submitted to your Graduate Administrator in your department/school by no later than two weeks before the meeting of the Supervisory Panel, or by the deadline published by the department/school if different. It cannot be guaranteed that forms submitted after this date will be referred to the panel/RSPB. You should also ensure that you record at least a brief summary of your extenuating circumstances on your Supervisory Panel report form.

**Submission of Thesis**

**Thesis Submission Pre-Examination**

All candidates for a Masters by Dissertation (MAD or MSD), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Medicine (MD), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and Professional Doctorate must submit an electronic copy of their thesis for examination.

The electronic copy should take the format of one PDF document containing all chapters, references and appendices.

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

You should submit the following as attachments via email to: pgrsubmission@essex.ac.uk:

a) A single PDF copy of your entire thesis; and

b) A submission form (RD1) completed and signed by yourself.

**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 and Retention**

Your thesis will be made open access when deposited in the online Research Repository. Students wishing to place a restriction or embargo on their thesis must do so via the Approval of Title (intention to submit) form prior to the submission of their thesis for examination.
When depositing your thesis in the online Repository you will be required to read and accept the conditions stipulated in the Thesis Deposit Agreement. The Thesis Deposit Agreement outlines the availability of the thesis and how it will be stored in the Repository.

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. More information on the examination process and viva can be found on the Student Directory.

Exit Awards (Professional Doctorate students only)

If a student does not meet the progression requirements on the Professional Doctorate, or the examiners feel that the thesis has not met the requirements for the Professional Doctorate, they may be eligible to receive an exit award or lower award, as appropriate for the course. Details of the available exit/lower awards can be found in the Code of Practice: Professional Doctorates.

Appeals

PGR students wishing to appeal against either a progress decision (a recommendation made by the Research Students’ Progress Board (RSPB)) or an examination decision (an outcome decided upon by the examiners following a viva voce) should follow the Appeals Procedure.

Please note that research students on the first year of an Integrated PhD (a 4-year programme) or a research student on a Professional Doctorate programme who wishes to appeal against a progress decision of the RSPB (e.g. being downgraded or discontinued) should do so in accordance with the above procedure. However, students who wish to appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners’ consideration/decision of their taught marks should appeal in accordance with the Academic Appeals Procedures for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Programmes of Study.

Professional Doctorate Rules of Assessment

The Rules of Assessment are used to calculate the results for Professional Doctorates.

Each module you will take will have a credit value which you are awarded if you successfully complete the module. You need to obtain a certain amount of credits to be awarded your degree, and the Rules of Assessment give you more information about this.
Student Voice

At the University of Essex, the views, ideas and feedback of our students are at the heart of what the University does. The time students take to offer feedback is hugely appreciated and this feedback, both positive and developmental, is used to help make short and longer-term improvements, both to the experience of current students, but also for Essex students of the future. You can do this in a number of ways at Essex through your Student Voice.

Student Representatives

You can contact or volunteer to be a student representative who represents the voice of fellow students in departmental Student Voice Groups (SVG) and other University level committees.

Student Voice Groups

Student Voice Groups (SVGs) are made up of student representatives and members of staff. SVGs typically meet once per term and provide an accessible arena for students to discuss with staff issues connected to teaching, learning and student support. They also provide an opportunity for the department or school to consult with students and receive feedback on new proposals.

Student Surveys

Student satisfaction surveys enable the University to gauge overall satisfaction amongst students. When the results have been reviewed and analysed, the University can then enhance your experience of learning at Essex.

A new PGR Student Voice Survey will be launching in 2021, designed by students for students, details of which will be emailed to all students nearer the time.
You Matter

We know university life can throw up all kinds of concerns and questions. Everyone has mental health – sometimes your mental health may be good, other times it may be not so good. It could be stress related to deadlines, general worries or concerns about friends and family members. Whatever is worrying you, if you need some information, advice or support, the University offer a wide range of services and support to help you.

Student Services Hub

If you need practical advice, a confidential conversation, or general information and guidance on University life, no matter what the issue is, the Student Services Hub is the place to go. You can find out about health and wellbeing, accommodation, careers services, money matters and much more. Your questions matter and you'll get answers from our team of experts.

To Contact the Student Services Hub please use this link to access our web pages and talk to us on Live Chat: Ask the Hub

Support for disabilities and conditions

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

Funding opportunities

UK students may be eligible for a Disabled Students’ Allowance grant. If you are not a UK student, you may be eligible for other grants and funding. We would recommend you contacting the Student Services Hub to discuss all the options that may be available to you, as well as for general advice, support and information on health and wellbeing issues.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

If you have a permanent or temporary disability that may mean you have difficulty in evacuating one or more areas, you can arrange for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

Seeing a Doctor

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. If you require emergency medical or mental health services, there are a number of options available both through the NHS and also the University, regardless which campus you are studying at.
**Counselling services**

Our University offers a wide range of services and resources to support all of our students with a variety of counselling opportunities.

If you feel you would benefit from support, including counselling, please contact your Student Services Hub. You can find more information, including the full range of counselling services available to you.

**UK Immigration Advice and Guidance**

Immigration advice and guidance is regulated in the UK by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) and can only be given by those that are authorised to do so. We publish lots of information and guidance on our website for students and you can contact one of our authorised advice services via the ‘ask us a question section’ for further advice about the UK’s student immigration rules.

**Money management**

If you get into financial difficulty you should get help and talk to someone as soon as possible. The sooner your problem is identified, the sooner it can be solved. You may be eligible to apply for financial support to assist you with short-term unexpected and unforeseen costs. Advisers in our Student Services Hub and our independent Students’ Union Advice can listen and talk you through the issues you are experiencing.

**Students’ Union Advice**

Our SU Advice service also 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
Southend students – suacsou@essex.ac.uk; 01702 328235 (term time only)
Loughton students – suaclou@essex.ac.uk; 01206 874034

**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.
**Religion, faith and beliefs**

We’re proud of our vibrant and diverse multicultural community and welcome everyone, of all faiths and none. The calm, friendly and supportive atmosphere in our Faith Centre is a welcoming place for staff, students and the wider community to meet, interact and engage with each other.

**Harassment support**

We are Essex. We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive student community. We offer a wide range of support to individuals and groups of student members who may have specific requirements, interests or responsibilities – to help you fulfil your potential.

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 Harassment Report and Support Service of trained Harassment Support Workers are on hand to help.

**COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**

The health and wellbeing of our students is our priority. This means we are constantly monitoring advice from the UK Government, Public Health England, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the World Health Organisation, and updating our guidance for students in line with their advice.

Our guidance to students on protecting yourself and others from COVID-19 is updated regularly. It is advisable to check the page frequently to be sure you are up to date with the latest guidance and information from the University.

**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 information and advice.

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

Please take note of our advice on the safe use of electrical items and prohibited electrical items in residential and non-residential areas.

All students residing on campus should complete the Moodle Fire Safety Course for Residents training.

If you have any health and safety concerns or need to report an incident, please use the University’s reporting service to notify us.
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.

The University aims to resolve complaints quickly and informally in accordance with the Student concerns and complaints procedure which can be found on our website.
**Student Development**

**Careers Services**
The Career Services team offer a programme of information, advice, guidance and support through various events, workshops and one-to-one sessions. We also have teams dedicated to Work Based Learning, Placements and Internships that can provide information and support as needed. Find out more about the Career Services available to you here: [https://www1.essex.ac.uk/careers/](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/careers/)

**CareerHub**
Find hundreds of part-time jobs, internships and graduate vacancies, book on to careers events and workshops, take career assessments, practice your interview skills, build your CV, and connect with employers on CareerHub, the online Essex careers and jobs portal. Login with your Essex username and password.

careerhub.essex.ac.uk/students/login

**Big Essex Award**
The Big Essex Award is a way to get recognition for the extra-curricular and voluntary activities that you complete during your time at Essex, both on and off campus. All verified activities will be included on your university transcript, the Further Achievement Report (FAR). Postgraduate students can use GradIntelligence to record any extra-curricular activities you may be involved in through the Big Essex Award.


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

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

**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. Sign up for Essex Interns to kick-start your career.

[www.essex.ac.uk/careers/internships](http://www.essex.ac.uk/careers/internships)
You Are Essex

Your Award Certificate

Once your exam board has met, it can take between 7-10 working days for your results to be confirmed and published. The University's exam board and publication of results schedule is updated in the summer term, and you will be notified once this information is available online. As soon as your results are ready, you will be sent an email and directed to a password protected web page. You will be able to see your marks obtained and any decisions that you must make in order to progress to the next stage of study.

Upon graduating from your studies, you will receive a degree certificate and a copy of your academic transcript. You will also be invited to attend the next Graduation ceremony available to you.

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.

Students with exam boards held in Autumn term will be invited to attend our Winter Graduation ceremony where these are held; students with exam boards held in Spring or Summer term will be invited to attend our Summer Graduation ceremony.

GradIntelligence

If you studied an undergraduate degree with us at Essex, you would have had access to your Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) record which would also show any awards or additional achievements you have received formal recognition for. However, this is currently only available for undergraduate awards; postgraduate students can instead use GradIntel to record any extracurricular activities or achievements during your studies, such as the Big Essex Award.

References

Requesting references from members of staff

If you require a personal reference, always ask permission from a member of staff before giving their name as a referee. You should consider from whom it is most appropriate to request a reference and who will be best equipped to evidence your character and performance in the subject.

For example, final year project supervisors, year organisers, and core course supervisors are likely to be more suitable than lecturers that have taught you on a first-year option course. Every reasonable effort will be made to meet a request for reference for a student who has undertaken study within our Department. Requests received from students who have graduated from the University within the last
three years will be prioritised. Requests received outside of this period may, of course, be met if a member of staff is equipped with the necessary information and is willing to provide a reference.

It is always helpful if you can provide the member of staff with details about the course or job you have applied for and, if relevant, a CV or other summary of your qualifications and experience. Please try to ask for references in good time – it is not always possible for a member of staff to write a reference immediately.

**Copies of references**

A copy of any reference provided will be retained within our department for no longer than three years for taught students.

**Alumni**

Essex is forever and although your time here will fly by, you’ll be part of the Essex family for life. When you graduate, you’ll get an alumni card and join a community of over 100,000 fellow graduates around the world. We’d love to keep in touch and invite you to our alumni events, networking and volunteering opportunities, as well as offer you special alumni benefits. Want to know more? Visit our website!

**What comes next?**

The world is your oyster! The options and opportunities open to you as a graduate can be overwhelming. You may know the exact path and next steps that you wish to take, or you might not, and this is okay. Our Careers Services can offer information, guidance and advice on your different options after graduation and you can return to Essex for these services at any time.

Whatever you choose to do, please stay in touch! Keep us up to date with your achievements and explore the variety of ways through which you can give back to Essex too.