Welcome

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 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, health, employment, behaviour and values over the life course and through successive generations. We hope that our research contributes to a fairer, happier and more sustainable world, particularly through better-informed policy making.

ISER is home to four major research programmes:

- The ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change (MiSoC), directed by Prof Emilia Del Bono.
- Understanding Society, The UK Household Longitudinal Study, successor to the British Household Panel Survey, directed by Prof Michaela Benzeval.
- The Centre for Microsimulation and Policy Analysis (CeMPA), directed by Prof Matteo Richiardi.
- Survey Futures, directed by Prof Peter Lynn

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 2021, conducted by the UK Higher Education Funding Council, ISER staff members contributed to the Economics, Sociology, and Public Health units of assessment. The REF confirmed that the University of Essex is one of the top three UK universities for research excellence in the social sciences.

I hope that you will enjoy your stay at Essex, not only working hard but also enjoying the opportunities provided by a vibrant international University community and by the beautiful and historic surroundings of North-East Essex and Suffolk. We wish you a happy and productive stay at Essex, and good luck with your studies.

Meena Kumari, Director of ISER
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**Introduction**

Your Student Handbook will tell you everything you need to know about your department, the University its academic policies and procedures, and all of the resources that are available to you.

At Essex we put the success of our students at the heart of everything we do, and want to support you to achieve outstanding outcomes. We are absolutely determined to provide you with the best Essex education and student experience we can, while safeguarding your health and wellbeing.

We celebrate diversity and challenge inequality. We are 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 (New Students)

As a new student, you must complete the registration process in order to begin your studies with us. 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. Because of this, you’ll be asked to complete compulsory steps, such as activating your Essex IT account, provide key information about you as part of Online Registration (including payment of fees where required), attend an in-person Right to Study Check on campus and collect your Student Registration Card. Once you’ve completed these steps, you’ll be able to begin attending teaching and engage with your course.

You should ensure you have completed the registration process, including payment of your fees (where required) by the published Latest Registration Deadline for your course. If you do not do this, you may not be allowed to register and begin your course with us.

Registration (Returning Students)

As a returning student, you will need to ensure you complete Online Registration and pay your fees (if required to do so) at the start of each academic year to be able to continue your studies with us. It is essential that you complete all required steps, by the published Latest Registration Deadline, otherwise you may not be allowed to continue your studies with us.

If you are a student undertaking studies with us with a form of immigration permission, in some instances you may be required to undertake an additional Right to Study Check, before being permitted to re-register. This may be the case if one or more of your documents have expired, or your immigration status has changed. You will be contacted by our International Services Team if you need to complete an additional check.
**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 aren’t a UK or Irish national, your [immigration permission](#) to study in the UK will be checked via the online Right to Study system, 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](#).

**Students with sponsored immigration permission**

The University is a Student Sponsor with a track record of compliance and must ensure we remain compliant to retain our sponsor status. Students with a Student visa have [additional 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. You are expected to attend in-person meetings with your Supervisor every month and this will be monitored throughout your course. If your [attendance and engagement](#) fall below expected levels or you are absent without permission for a period of time this is likely to impact on the University’s ability to continue to sponsor your Student immigration permission. The International Services Team can provide [immigration information and advice](#) throughout your studies.

**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](#).

**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](#) (subject to our fair usage policy) on campus, connect to campus wifi, and much more. When you activate your account, you will need to register an external email address and pass phrase so that if you [forget your password](#), you can also reset it
using these details. If you have forgotten those, you should contact the IT Helpdesk. Make sure you keep your password safe and do not share it with others. For a quick rundown of what you need when you first start, head to the Getting Started with IT guide on the Student Directory.

**Campus wifi**

If you are studying on any of our campuses, connect to our wifi by finding the eduroam network on your device. Use your Essex email and password to join.

**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 and can only be accessed via an internet browser. This is different to your applicant portal – you can use MyEssex to 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 that can be downloaded on your phone or tablet for free. It acts as a portal through to a variety of areas and resources that will be useful for you throughout your studies. 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 app designed to get you from A to B on either the Colchester or Southend campuses with quick and easy directions. You can download this app on your phone or tablet for free!
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 are 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

We are proud of our inclusive and international community. Our campuses are places where every single person can feel they belong and where you can find the world in one place. We have created a Student Charter as a pledge that every student signs up to when they join us. By signing up, you promise to uphold our values and to behave in ways that strengthen and support our community. We promise to support you at every stage of your journey with us.

Embracing our 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 encourage you to challenge the status quo and explore the unknown, we expect all of our students do so respectfully, intelligently and act as true ambassadors for the University. Our Code of Student Conduct 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 providing equal opportunities for both students and staff. Our students and staff are treated with dignity and respect on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, while still having the relevant impact and implications associated with 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 identity-forming characteristics, taken into consideration as necessary to ensure equal opportunity.

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

ISER was awarded the Bronze Award for AthenaSWAN in 2022 and is committed to ensuring an inclusive environment that celebrates our diverse community. We aim for inclusivity in our research and the teams that work together to deliver our research. Our goal is that all staff and students will have the same opportunities and will be treated equally. Please to speak to your supervisor, the PGR Director or a member of the ISER EDI Group if you have any concerns or issues.
**Student communities**
We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive community. We recognise the value of diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity within the University.

We offer a wide range of support to individuals and groups of student members – 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 want to welcome you with open arms. The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is fully effective.

**Environmental Sustainability**
We have made commitments as a University to reduce our impacts on the environment, including reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2035. In December 2020 we declared a climate and ecological emergency and developed a sustainability strategy that sets out our ambitions up to 2026. Our Sustainability team works on a range of projects from energy efficiency to extracurricular activities to help everyone at Essex live, study and work in environmentally-friendly ways. Everyone is encouraged to do their bit, and there are simple steps you can take as a student: remember to bring a reusable cup for takeaway drinks, and a bottle that you can refill at one of our many water fountains. If you live on campus, switch off electrical items that aren’t in use, and be sure to keep windows closed in colder months when the heating is on. For more information, contact the Sustainability team – sustainability@essex.ac.uk.

**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.

Join Essex Sport and be part of something bigger. We’re a community of like-minded individuals who are dedicated to enriching your experience at University of Essex. By fuelling your passion for all things active we help you make new friends, find new interests and be the best you. Whatever your sport, whatever your level, from fan to professional athlete, we've got a place for you.
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 and our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter 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 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 PGT 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 Sports Clubs, and get involved with competitive sports in our BUCS teams or if you don’t want to commit to a regular team, or would rather not play competitively, check out our Just Play programme run by the Students’ Union.

We have over 120 Societies where you can meet people with similar interests, challenge yourself with something new or if you can’t find what you are looking for - Start your own.

We also train, recruit and support hundreds of student reps each year. These reps gather feedback to share student viewpoints on academic experiences. You can find out more about student reps including how to sign up and getting trained here.

We also have our very own lettings agency (SUHomes), to offer help and support to students to find off campus accommodation.

Chart My Path

Use Chart My Path to discover over 200 extracurricular activities offered at Essex, and get recommendations personalised to you. Log into GradIntelligence to get started.
**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) /uniofessex  
![Instagram](/uniessex) /uniessex  
![Twitter](/Uni_of_Essex) /Uni_of_Essex  
![Vimeo](/uniessex) /uniessex  
![TikTok](/unessex) /@uniessexonline

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 the Institute for Social and Economic Research

Meet the team

A full list of all academic and professional services staff for the Institute for Social and Economic Research can be found on our website. Below is a summary of the roles of staff that you are likely to be in contact with most frequently. ¹

**Meena Kumari**  
Director of ISER (Head of Department)

**Cara Booker**  
Director of Graduate Studies

**Janice Webb**  
Graduate Administrator

**Angela Newsam**  
Head of Operations

**Sarah Williamson**  
Research Funding Manager

**Kim Bones**  
RTSG enquiries

*Information Technology & Security Manager:*

**Sam Wright**  
iserisms@isermail.essex.ac.uk

*IT Support: (ISER Intranet: only accessible when connected to the University internet or VPN)*  
https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/request/

**ISER Research Staff (at 1 September 2023):**

**Edith Aguirre**  
Senior Research Officer

**Tarek Al Baghal**  
Professor of Survey Methodology & Deputy Director, Understanding Society

**Silvia Avram**  
Senior Research Fellow

**Michaela Benzeval**  
Professor of Longitudinal Research & Director, Understanding Society

¹ Department/school information in this Handbook is correct at time of publication but there may be role changes within the department/school throughout the Academic Year. Students should consult staffing details held online for the most up-to-date information.
Zsofi Boda  Reader
Cara Booker  Senior Research Fellow & Graduate Director
Magda Borkowska  Senior Research Officer
Patryk Bronka  Senior Research Officer
Jonathan Burton  Associate Director Surveys, Understanding Society
Pablo Cabrera Alvarez  Senior Research Officer
Paul Clarke  Professor of Social Statistics
Emilia Del Bono  Professor of Economics & Director of MiSoC
Clare Fenwick  Senior Research Officer
Paul Fisher  Senior Research Fellow
Laura Fumagalli  Research Fellow
Paul Garcia  Senior Research Officer
Emily Grundy  Professor of Population Science
Karon Gush  Senior Research Officer
Angus Holford  Senior Research Fellow
Annette Jäckle  Professor of Survey Methodology & Associate Director Innovations Understanding Society
Olena Kaminska  Research Fellow
Selin Koksal  Senior Research Officer
Meena Kumari  Professor of Biological and Social Epidemiology & Director of ISER
Peter Lynn  Professor of Survey Methodology & Deputy Director of ISER
Damian Machlanski  Senior Research Officer
Memory Mhembere  Research Data Manager
Jamie Moore  Research Fellow
Alita Nandi  
Senior Research Fellow & Associate Director  
Outreach, Understanding Society

Angelina Nazarova  
Senior Research Officer

Daria Popova  
Senior Research Fellow

Birgitta Rabe  
Professor of Economics

Kelly Reeve  
Research Officer

Matteo Richardi  
Professor of Economics & Director of CeMPA

Paulo Serodio  
Senior Research Officer

Justin Van De Ven  
Research Fellow

Jim Vine  
Senior Research Officer

Carla Xena  
Research Officer

Wei Xun  
Senior Research Officer

Departmental Disability Liaison Officer (DDLO) – to be appointed shortly.

**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. We recommend that you consider attending the ‘Making the most of your supervisor’ training course, provided through Proficio.

If you have a disability, long term medical condition and/or Specific Learning Difference and have not registered with Student Wellbeing & Inclusivity Service, to discuss your support needs, please email include@essex.ac.uk.

**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, 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 Panels 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 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.

The Supervisory Panel (SP) and Research Students’ Progress Board (RSPB)

These are the formal committee meetings at which an individual student’s work, training/skills development, and progress are reviewed against the published milestones. Progress decisions are considered by the SP with a recommendation being made to the RSPB. This includes Confirmation of Status and entry to the next stage of study or period of completion, along with extensions, downgrading and discontinuation. The final RSPB decisions and/or recommendations are reported to the relevant Faculty Dean (Postgraduate).

Your Supervisory Panel is composed of you, at least one of your supervisors and one other academic who acts as Chair. In exceptional circumstances where the sole supervisor is on study leave, an acting supervisor may attend.

The RSPB comprises senior members of academic staff and is chaired by the Graduate Director or Head of Department/School. 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.
Staff research interests

Inequalities are a central theme of most of our research, whether that be with respect to gender, ethnicity, disability, income, or any one of several other factors. Our research aims to identify and quantify inequalities and to understand the processes by which they are caused and by which they can be reduced. Recent research has covered topics such as improving measurement of poverty and social exclusion, the gender gap in pay progression, evaluation of the health impacts of Universal Credit, the impacts of universal free school meals in England, development of European child wellbeing pilot study, addressing long-term socio-economic impacts of aging in Europe. We also use microsimulation models to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on income and welfare policy responses and to major income supplementation policies to reduce inequalities.

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.

ISER Common Room

The ISER Common Room (2N2.6.24) is located on level 6 of the Social Science Research Centre (SSRC building) it is shared by the UK Data Archive and all members of ISER (staff, research students, visitors) and is for the use of all ISER postgraduate students as a study room. 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.

Postgraduate (Research) Study Room / Lab

While there is no formal postgraduate (research) study room or lab, all students can book meeting rooms in ISER to for study or to conduct interviews. The Essex Lab can also be booked for larger experiments.
**Postgraduate Lockers**

Lockers are available offices 2N2.5A.07 & 2N2.6.01 and allocated on a first-come first-served basis. If you would like to be allocated a locker, please speak to Janice. Key lockable storage is available in 2N2.5B.01 and 2N2.5B.16.

**Postgraduate Training**

PGR students all have access to Proficio; our innovative professional development scheme, unique to Essex. We believe that your academic and professional development is vital to your growth as a postgraduate research student and we give you funds that can be spent on a variety of courses and conferences.

As a postgraduate research student, you will be registered on the Proficio system. You will need to complete the Training Needs Analysis (TNA) on Moodle in order to unlock your Proficio funding account. The enrolment key is ‘PGRstudent’.

In addition to the centralised training provision, students can also access a wide range of postgraduate taught modules that either explore particular fields and concepts, or offer specific training in research methods and skills. Students should peruse the modules available and discuss with their supervisor which of these modules would be suitable.

**Printing, photocopying and scanning**

All students can print, copy and scan for free at Essex subject to our fair use policy. You can even print from your mobile by sending your file to mobileprinting@essex.ac.uk using your Essex email.

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, only print if necessary and check your available quota.

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.

**Noticeboards**

Every department and school has their own noticeboard(s) providing information on staff, courses and classes, updates, careers, events and opportunities. ISER’s
noticeboard is located on level 5B adjacent to the output room (2N2.5B.18). Outlook Noticeboard: Add the “ISER notice board” (select from address book) to your Outlook calendar to view ISER events, meetings and copy to your own calendar

Publications
Reference books are available from the ISER Research Library [2N2.5B.04] and may be borrowed for short periods of time. Information on resources and how to obtain material can be found here (only accessible when connected to the University internet or VPN).

Pigeonholes
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.

Social Media
ISER hosts several social media accounts, below is a list:

ISER:
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/iseressex/
Twitter: @iseressex

Understanding Society:
Instagram: usociety
Twitter: @usociety

Youtube

MiSoC:
Twitter: @MiSoC_Essex

Centre for Microsimulation and Policy Analysis:
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

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.

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.

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 that 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 logbook 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, other members of your supervisory board the PGR Director or the ISER Director. 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.
  o 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 where applicable and attend meetings with your professional practice supervisor. For more information on this, please refer to the section on taught modules in this handbook.
  ▪ Complete the work required for your taught modules.
  ▪ Maintain a professional practice portfolio which forms part of the assessment for the degree.

The academic year
Postgraduate Research students are expected to work on their theses throughout the calendar year, and are not subject to the same academic year term structures as that of taught students. As a reference point, 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.

Some programmes have slightly different term dates. Please consult the department whose modules you wish to attend for their term dates. 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 where applicable, and unless otherwise advised by your Department.

**My programme of study**

Each programme of study at the University has its own syllabus, full details of which, including the aims and learning outcomes, can be found in the University’s Programme Specifications Catalogue.

Your own programme structure, including your specific programme specification, can be found in the MyStudy section of your MyEssex homepage.

**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.
Until the final term of your standard period, 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. Students with a Student visa may not be able to change their course without first obtaining a new visa from overseas, if eligible.

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.

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.

You should also be aware of how your funding may be impacted if you choose to take a break. You can do this by contacting the Funding Team – funding@essex.ac.uk.

**Periods of study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research degree</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Standard Period</th>
<th>Completion Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masters by Dissertation <em>(MA or MSc by dissertation)</em></td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>One year</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters by Dissertation <em>(MA or MSc by dissertation)</em></td>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Philosophy</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Two years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree Type</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Additional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MPhil)</td>
<td>PT</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>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>FT</td>
<td>Three years</td>
<td>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)</td>
<td>PT</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>Up to one year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor of Philosophy Integrated (PhD)</td>
<td>PT</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Library & Cultural Services**

The Library provides access to an extensive digital library of books, journals, databases and more 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 Research Support team, who can advise on a variety of topics including open access, online research profiles, and how/where to publish and promote 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 & Cultural Services and the Research Enterprise Office that aims to support researchers, and offer training across the research lifecycle. Signing up to the Newcomers mailing list is the best way to keep up to date with the latest training and development opportunities, and it also provides a platform to network with fellow early career researchers. If you have any questions about Library services, there are a range of ways you can get in touch with the team.
At our Colchester Campus, the **Albert Sloman Library** on Square 5 has a variety of study spaces, including a dedicated Postgraduate Study Room that is open 24/7. You’ll need you student card to access this space, so be sure to bring it with you during your visit. The Library offers in-person assistance at the Helpdesk in the ground floor foyer, as well as email, telephone, and live chat support. They also provide the opportunity to book appointments with specialist staff, who can help you through your studies and into whatever you choose to do after graduation.

See the [Library website](#) for the latest information on all our libraries and the services available, including opening hours.

**Art Exchange**

Placing students at its core, Art Exchange is a place where art, artists and the campus community come together. Our programme of exhibitions and activities are here to get you inspired, make new friends – or simply to chill while having fun making art.

We show international art by established and emerging artists throughout the year, building up a dynamic programme by working closely with the campus community, as the art on our walls is co-created by students and responds to what matters to them.

Alongside exhibitions, our exciting programme of events and art classes and are free for students. Led by professional artists, they support students’ creativity, confidence and wellbeing - as well as being great fun!

We want everyone to get involved and enjoy great art.

**Lakeside Theatre**

The [Lakeside Theatre](#) provides a warm, welcoming social hub of creativity at the heart of the University to foster the living learning community.

We produce a programme of diverse, dynamic and accessible live performances of theatre, music, comedy, dance, workshops, artist development and live art for audiences on and off campus. It is a learning and social experience for students that will deliver key life skills to enable them to respond to a rapidly changing world with creativity and personal and cultural confidence. Students’ wellbeing remains at the forefront of what we do which is why we provide opportunities for enjoyment, inspiration and creativity.
The theatre and technical facilities are kept up to date, for student use in education and further skill building in modern practices nationally and internationally.

**Study Abroad**

As a postgraduate student there are a variety of opportunities through Essex Abroad to have an international experience. Providing you with the chance to enhance employability, gain valuable transferable skills and develop as individuals.

**Essex Abroad** have a wide range of **summer programmes** suitable for postgraduate students including summer schools abroad, volunteering programmes, international internships and research abroad opportunities which are open to all Essex students. These programmes vary in duration, location and cost. Find out more about Essex Abroad opportunities. For information regarding your funding during a study abroad, you should liaise with the Funding Team – funding@essex.ac.uk. Students with disabilities should also liaise with the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service – include@essex.ac.uk.

The University of Essex is a founding member of the YUFE Alliance. YUFE (Young Universities for the Future of Europe) is a collaboration of 10 different European institutions, providing you with the opportunity to study across multiple partners virtually or physically; as part of your degree or in addition to it. YUFE aims to be a leading model of a young, student-centred, non-elitist, open and inclusive European University.

As a University of Essex student, you can obtain an international experience through YUFE, taking anything from academic to language courses, or even entrepreneurship courses; allowing you to go the extra mile and stand out from the crowd. Find out more about YUFE and how to apply on our dedicated section on the Essex Abroad YUFE webpage and through the YUFE Virtual Campus.

**Peer Review with the Essex Student Journal**

If you are interested developing the vital skill of peer reviewing academic papers, the Essex Student Journal provides the ideal opportunity to do so, with training, guidance, and support to help you become a proficient peer reviewer.
This invaluable experience will enhance your expertise as an early career researcher, developing your understanding of the academic publishing process. Peer reviewing is typically expected of researchers at all stages of their academic careers, so starting in our supportive environment will ensure you feel confident moving forward. The analytical skills you develop are transferrable to a wide variety of other professions too.

Not all universities have a Student Journal, making this a unique opportunity for you and the authors. Our multi-disciplinary journal, run by students, for students, showcases the hard work of our undergraduates and PGTs and, through a double-blind peer review process, supports them to develop their writing skills and produce high quality outputs.

If you are interested in developing your skills and helping others to do the same, find out more about joining our vibrant community of peer reviewers at the Essex Student Journal and embark on your academic peer reviewing journey with confidence.

If you have any questions, get in touch with the Journal Team via journal@essex.ac.uk.

**University and departmental training events**

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.

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.

**Departmental support or funding for attending conferences/other events**

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. UKRI-funded studentships 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 will not be able to claim it back. If you are in doubt, consult Sarah Williamson (ISER’s Research Funding Manager).

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.
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 and animal subjects, 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 Subjects or Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Animals 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. You should contact the REO Research Governance Team (reo-governance@essex.ac.uk) at an early stage.

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 work. 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.

**Referencing**

Respecting authorship through good academic practice is one of the key values of higher education in the UK. Referencing is how you acknowledge all sources used within a piece of work. You must reference all work used whether cited directly (quotes), or indirectly (paraphrasing and summarising).

Referencing allows you to give credit to other’s ideas, work, research, theories, concepts, outcomes and results, and demonstrates your breadth of reading and knowledge on a subject. If you do not reference properly, this could amount to plagiarism, which is an academic offence.

There are styles of referencing which will determine exactly how you format your reference. ISER does not have a universal reference style. Check with your supervisor or discipline for the appropriate referencing style to use. Guidance on referencing styles are available online, including an interactive referencing tutorial. You can also take the Academic Integrity course on Moodle.
**Academic Skills Support**

There are a variety of skills and training opportunities available for postgraduate research students from [Skills for Success](#), covering a range of aspects across the research and thesis writing process. We also run a dedicated English language support class for international PhD students.

We are committed to ensuring that every student is able to get the most out of their postgraduate research, and are here to help all year round, providing support, resources, workshops and 1:1s on:

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

Some of these services are open to all students at the university, whilst others are specially tailored to research students. All are designed to help you develop your academic and language skills no matter what department you are attached to, or what stage you are at.

All services are free, and have no limits on the number of bookings you can make.

**Departmental Support**

IT Support: (ISER Intranet: only accessible when connected to the University internet or VPN) [https://iseriwww.essex.ac.uk/request/](#)

RTSG enquiries: kbones@essex.ac.uk

ISER Research Library Support: iserlib@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.

All students should ensure that any agreement entered into with a proofreader conforms to the University’s policy and guidance on proofreading.

Language classes

Academic English Support
Skills for Success run a dedicated PhD Language Support module throughout the year, to help you develop your writing skills, presentation skills and confidence. They also run a range of Academic English Support classes which are available throughout the year. Modules include Academic Writing, Speaking, Reading, Grammar Review, and Exam Preparation and Writing Skills. Bookable workshops and 1:1 support are also available.

General English classes for beginner/intermediate/advanced learners (GEC)
The Department of Language and Linguistics offers the wider University of Essex community the chance to improve their English language skills through our General English Classes. These classes are available to:

- Dependants and close family members of students and staff at the University of Essex
- International staff at Essex who may want to work on their general English and fluency skills
- International students currently studying at UEIC Kaplan
- International students currently studying at both UG and PG level at Essex who wish to develop their language skills
- Refugees and asylum seekers who hold an ARC card, or a letter granting them Immigration Bail

The classes, which take place at the Colchester Campus, will enable you to meet people from other countries and cultures and will help you develop your language skills. These classes are free and are taught at three basic levels: Beginner (A1/A2),
Intermediate (B1/B2) and Advanced (C1/C2) and will focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing. Throughout the year, you will have a unique opportunity to develop your conversation skills, by reflecting on real-life examples of how language is used in context.

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 affect 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 wish 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.

Students thinking about making an appeal are strongly advised to contact the SU Advice Centre.
Taught Modules

Teaching timetable

Most PGR students won’t be required to undertake taught modules, and so a teaching timetable isn’t applicable. For those students who do undertake taught modules as part of their course, you’ll have a personal timetable, this shows you when your teaching is taking place, as well as who is teaching you. Check your personal online timetable regularly for up to date teaching information. You will need to have registered and activated your University of Essex log-in before you will be able to access your teaching timetable.

Information about teaching timetables, including accessing your individual timetable can be found here. If you wish to report a timetable clash or request a class change, you should do so via the online timetable.

You can find the location of your teaching rooms and get directions quickly and easily using the interactive campus map, Find Your Way.

Marking criteria

The University’s Marking Policy can be found online and includes our policy and procedure on the moderation of work.

Marking criteria are designed to help students so that they know what it is they are being assessed on and what is expected from them. The marking will vary depending on what you are studying.

Additional information regarding marking, assessment, examination and feedback can be found in the handbooks of the departments administering the taught modules.
**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 represent 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. Such proposals are recorded in SVG logs, where specific details are requested in order to facilitate the feedback.

**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 by closing the feedback loop.

The University runs a PGR Student Voice Survey. If eligible, you will be invited to participate via email.

If you have some feedback but don’t know who to tell, email: studentvoice@essex.ac.uk

Your Department will also welcome your feedback. They will have a range of quick feedback mechanism for you to use. Contact your departmental office if you are not sure what these are.
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 additional needs

We encourage all new students with a disability, long term medical condition, specific learning difference or mental health condition to disclose and register with the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) so that we can plan how best to support you in your studies.

If you are care experienced, estranged from your family, primary carer and/or University of Sanctuary student please contact the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) for further information about support that may be available to you. You may also be eligible for one of our bursaries that is available to provide additional funding.

UK students may be eligible for a Disabled Students’ Allowance grant. If you are not a UK student and you have a disability, you may be eligible for other grants and funding. We would recommend that you contact 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).

Essex Access Forum

The Essex Access Forum is a university-wide discussion and advocacy forum and consultation body working to support excellence in all aspects of physical and non-physical access at Essex (student education, staff employment and visitor experience). Membership is open to both staff and students, with and without disabilities.

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.

Wellbeing drop in

The Wellbeing Assessors provide support to students with anything affecting their wellbeing, mental health and/or disability. You can speak to a Wellbeing Assessor for support and advice at our wellbeing drop-in sessions in person. If you would feel more comfortable with a telephone or Zoom appointment, you can still request this via our online appointment form.
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

Financial Support Officers in our Student Services Hub and our independent Students’ Union Advice can provide money management and budgeting advice and can talk through any financial issues that you may be experiencing and how best to tackle them. You can also ensure that you keep your finances on track by working through some free online money management modules offered by Blackbullion.

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 while studying at Essex.

Funding Opportunities

There are lots of funding opportunities available to UK, EU and International students offered by the University and by external companies and organisations. This may be in the form of a student loan, a scholarship or a studentship. You can find out more information, including what you may be eligible for on the PGR Scholarships and Funding webpage or your Department page.

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, Student/Tier 4 visa extensions, housing, complaints, welfare and consumer issues.
We also have our very own letting agency SU Homes designed to offer help and support for students to find off campus accommodation.

**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, provide advice and support with any wellbeing issues and organise a range of social activities to help you connect with others. Find your RAs contact details on your flat kitchen poster if you live on campus. You can find out about all our exciting events by following us on Facebook or by checking out the University Events page.

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

**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 **must** 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.

**Your information**

**Changes to your information**

During your period of study at Essex, you may wish to be known by a preferred name or update your legal name on our student record database (ESIS) if your circumstances change. It is important you keep your information up to date, which you can [manage and update online](#).
Your personal information

We collect and hold lots of information about you, your course, and your progress so that we know who you are, what you’re doing, and how you are getting on. This means we can support you and also improve our services to reflect the need of our students.

All information about you is kept securely, and access to your information is only given to staff who need it in order to do their job. You have a right to ask for copies of information we hold about you.

To find out more about what information we collect, what we do with it, who gets to see it, and your rights under the Data Protection Act 2018, read our Privacy Notice for students.
Student Development

Careers Services
The Career Services team offer a programme of information, advice, guidance and support through events, workshops and one-to-one sessions. With teams dedicated to supporting work-based learning, placements, internships and professional development, we'll provide the information and support you need to thrive.

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.

Get experience
Develop your skills and showcase your potential through our extracurricular offer:

- Find the right activity for you with Chart My Path, and to get recognised on your HEAR for your extracurricular achievements with the Big Essex Award. Log into GradIntelligence to get started.
- Discover paid internships with local businesses that have been exclusively designed for Essex Students – sign up to Essex Interns to find out more.
- Apply for Career Mentoring and be matched with an industry expert to expand your network, learn from their experience and explore options for your future.
- Calling our Black students! Unlock your academic potential and cultivate research skills through our digital Black Researchers’ Hub. Explore on GradIntelligence today.

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.
You Are Essex

Your Award Certificate

Upon conferral of your award, all graduates will receive both an electronic and hard copy Award Certificate. Your electronic Certificate will be available on your GradIntelligence account within 5 working days of your conferral and your hard copy Certificate will be posted to you within 10 working days of being printed. You will be contacted to ask for confirmation of the most suitable address to use, or you may opt to collect this at a Graduation ceremony if preferred.

If you undertook taught elements as part of your studies and require a transcript, you can request this by contacting the Graduation and Awards team at award-docs@essex.ac.uk.

Graduation ceremonies

The culmination of all your hard work! Graduation ceremonies take place at our Colchester Campus in the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall with a departmental Reception held afterwards on campus. All eligible students studying at our Colchester, Loughton and Southend Campuses will be invited to attend their course’s ceremony at the next available Graduation. Confirmed dates for future graduation ceremonies are published online.

We hold two Graduations per year: one in Spring and one in Summer. More information on the dates and ceremonies held for each Graduation, including eligibility and how and when to book your place at Graduation, will be published at the start of each academic year on the Graduation webpages.

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 and postgraduate taught awards; postgraduate research students can instead use GradIntel to record any extra-curricular activities or achievements during your studies, such as the Big Essex Award.
If you undertook taught elements as part of your studies and require a transcript, you can request this by contacting the Graduation and Awards team at award-docs@essex.ac.uk.

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.
We will be here for you wherever life takes you next. You might know the path you wish to take, but if you need help to reach your goals, our Careers Services Team offer information, guidance and advice on your different options after graduation. Careers support is for life as an Essex graduate and we’ll be with you every step of the way. We are proud of our world-class research at Essex and your invitation to contribute is lifelong. As an Essex graduate, you can also take advantage of generous discounts on further postgraduate study and postgraduate research degrees.

Whatever you choose to do, please stay in touch. We’d love to hear where your Essex degree has taken you.