



University of Essex

Your studies

Postgraduate Research PhD Student Handbook 2026-27



Welcome



Dear Student,

Welcome to the University of Essex.

Wherever you are in your academic journey, whether you are new to Essex or continuing your studies with us, you belong to a community that is ambitious, inclusive and committed to making a positive difference in the world. Essex is a place where ideas are valued, curiosity is encouraged, and people from different backgrounds come together to learn from one another.

At the heart of Essex is our belief that education has the power to transform lives. We are passionate about supporting student success and challenging expectations. We want every student to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their goals, contribute to their field of study and shape the future in ways that matter to them.

We are proud of our reputation for academic excellence, research with real-world impact and a culture that encourages you to think boldly and act with purpose. You'll

be taught, supervised and supported by expert staff whose work is helping to address some of the most important challenges facing society today. At the same time, learning at Essex is about much more than academic achievement alone. It is about developing your independence, discovering new perspectives, building lasting connections and preparing for whatever comes next.

One of the things that makes Essex special is our community. People often describe us as the world in one place, and that spirit continues to define who we are. We celebrate diversity, champion equality of opportunity and strive to ensure that everyone feels they belong. Your experiences, perspectives and ambitions enrich our community, and your voice matters.

Throughout your studies, there will be opportunities to explore new ideas, challenge assumptions and engage with people whose experiences may be very different from your own. We encourage you to approach these opportunities with curiosity, openness and confidence. Some moments will be exciting, others may be demanding, and there will inevitably be times when you need advice or support. When that happens, please remember that you are not alone. The University offers a wide range of academic, personal and wellbeing support services, and our staff are here to help you make the most of your time at Essex.

This handbook is designed to support you throughout your journey with us. It brings together important information about how the University works, the regulations and procedures that govern your studies, and the services available to support your success. I encourage you to return to this handbook whenever you need guidance, clarification or advice.

I hope your time at Essex inspires you to think differently, develop your talents and pursue your ambitions with confidence. We are proud to have you as part of our community and look forward to supporting you throughout your studies.

I look forward to seeing all that you achieve during your time at Essex.

Professor Frances Bowen

Vice-Chancellor

University of Essex

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Introduction

Your Student Handbook will tell you everything you need to know about the University, its academic policies and procedures, and the resources 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 or school 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 our [registration process](#) in order to begin your studies with us. Registration is not only a formal procedure to enrol you into the University but also connects you to 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 the following compulsory steps: activate your Essex IT account, provide key information about yourself as part of Online Registration (including payment of fees where required), complete an online Right to Study check and attend an in-person Right to Study check on campus, where you will collect your Student Registration Card. Once you've completed these steps, you'll be fully registered and 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. This is in line with Regulations relating to Registration 5.4.

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, your immigration status has changed, or you have

changed course and have been required to obtain a new visa. 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 duration of their course. If you were born outside the UK or Republic of Ireland, your [immigration permission](#) to study in the UK will be checked via the online Right to Study system, when you first arrive on campus, 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 with the UK Immigration Rules to maintain our sponsor status. Student visa holders 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.

Student visa holder attendance

You must attend in-person meetings with your Supervisor every month on campus and this will be monitored throughout your course. If your [attendance and engagement](#) falls below the Home Office expectations, or you are absent without permission for a period of time, we must take action, and this can include withdrawing our visa sponsorship. The International Services Team can provide [immigration information and advice](#) throughout your studies in relation to the UK's Student and Standard Visitor Immigration Routes.

Choosing your modules

You may have module options to select as part of your course structure. If you do, you must select the modules you wish to enrol on before the academic year begins. You can view and choose your specific options through the [eNROL system](#), unless you are studying part-time, in which case you should contact your department. New students can do so from the end of August and returning students can from the term preceding

the next academic year. Early module enrolment ensures that timetables can be scheduled effectively. If you experience technical issues with the eNROL system, please contact enrol@essex.ac.uk for support.

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 set up [your Essex IT account](#). This will give you access to your Essex [email](#), [Moodle](#), campus wifi, campus computers, Library resources and account and many more digital resources. When you set up your Essex IT account, you will need to register an external email address and passphrase so that if you [forget your Essex 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 & Microsoft 365

The University has a variety of online platforms, and [software and apps](#) designed to enhance your learning and help make processes, such as submitting coursework, easier. You can also enjoy full, free access to [Microsoft 365](#) — including Outlook, OneDrive, Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneNote — on your personal devices throughout your time at Essex.

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, contact the Student Services Hub, and much more.

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 the Colchester campus 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 [Career Services Team](#) 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 during your studies](#) before you start looking for a job. 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 our whole community. Our students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, and solely 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.

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 Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) student, or have any other requirements or needs, we want to welcome you with open arms.

You may be interested in information regarding our [postgraduate student community](#).

Environmental Sustainability and Responsibility

[Watch our short video, for an introduction to sustainability at Essex.](#)

The University of Essex is on an environmental journey, aiming to reach net zero carbon emissions from our energy use by 2035. This is done through a range of projects that drive energy efficiency and on-site renewable electricity generation. The Sustainability and Estates teams work on projects such as carbon reduction, reuse and recycling, and sustainable education, in collaboration with other departments and teams.

During your time at Essex there are opportunities for you to learn more about sustainable development and equip you with the skills and knowledge that will help you in your future choices – whether that's further study or the start of your career. Be sure to check your programme modules if you're keen to take environmentally-focused course options. You can access extra-curricular activities through Chart My Path and the VTeam, plus you can join the Sustainable Students Society. Your participation in all additional events is recorded on [Higher Education Achievement Record](#) (HEAR), your online CV. You can also access a range of information and simple courses via the Sustainability page on Moodle. We encourage you to [sign up to the Sustainable Essex Commitment](#), to show how you will do your bit.

There are easy everyday habits to help you do your bit too; bring your own takeaway cup to cafes on campus for a discount, and remember your bottle to refill at one of our many water fountains. There are lots of recycling bins across our campuses so that you can correctly separate all your waste. If you're living on campus, be sure to switch off lights and electrical items when not in use, and keep windows closed in colder months when the heating is on.

For any more information, [head to the sustainability pages on the Essex website](#). If you have questions or an idea for a sustainability event or project of your own contact

the Sustainability Team: sustainability@essex.ac.uk. Follow us on Instagram: [@uoe_susandgrounds](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) for the latest information.

Students' Union

We're famous for our [Students' Union at Essex](#), and for good reason. Here you are not just a member of a normal Students' Union, you are part of a family. They 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 they do. From deciding who leads the SU, including the PGR rep, to shaping your own experiences at Essex, they are here to represent your views and work with you to make amazing things happen.

Not to mention you'll find everything from bars, nightclubs, shops and coffee shops, run by the SU at our [Colchester](#) campus, as well as bespoke support for SU members in [Loughton](#).

Get involved!

There are opportunities to join [Sports Clubs](#), and get involved with competitive sports in our [BUCS teams](#).

We have over 100 [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](#).

Our [SU Advice](#) team are here to offer confidential, independent and impartial advice on a range of issues

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 a variety of 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:



[/uniofessex](#)



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[/Uni_of_Essex](#)



[/@uniofessex](#)



[/university-of-essex](#)



[/uniessex](#)

Our [Events calendar](#) brings together all the events happening across our campuses, so you can make the most of your time at Essex.

Departmental Information

Your department will provide additional information on [Moodle](#) relating to your department, course and modules. Please check your Moodle page to stay informed of any department-specific information. Each department also has a [departmental webpage](#) where you can read more about your department, its people, and research interests.

Meet the team

You can find a list of all staff across the University on our [people webpage](#) and can filter by department to see your departmental staff. Your department will also be able to provide information on your key contacts within their team.

Each department has a Departmental Disability Liaison Officer (DDLO). Further information on this role and the departmental officers can be found on the [DDLO webpage](#).

Your supervisor

In most cases, a supervisor will have been appointed for you during the admissions process, or will subsequently be appointed during the early stages of your registration with us. 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. In addition, if needed, the PGR Director within your department/school is also available to support you during your studies.

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 PGR 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/school 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 PGR 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.

Student visa holders must have in-person meetings every month during their studies. If you hold a Student visa and your supervisor is unable to meet you in-person, you must speak with your department as soon as possible to arrange to meet in-person with another academic member of staff to avoid breaching the study conditions of your Student visa.

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 PGR 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.

[Principal Regulations for Research Degrees](#)

Postgraduate Research 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.

Communications

The University will predominantly use email for routine communication between staff and students. Your Essex email address will have been added to the relevant email groups to ensure that you receive the essential information relevant to you. It is recommended that you check your Essex email each day to ensure you do not miss any important updates.

You will also automatically be subscribed to a small number of opt-out lists, again, based on your course. You can always [opt in or out](#) of these communications online.

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 considered 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 – A Welcome from the PGRE Team

Welcome to the University — we're genuinely delighted to have you join our postgraduate research community. Starting a new course is a big step, and the PGRE Team is here to help you navigate it with confidence. You're joining a vibrant, curious, and ambitious group of researchers, and we want you to feel supported from day one as you settle in, find your rhythm, and begin shaping your academic path.

As you get started, remember that support doesn't stop with us. Across the University, you'll find a wide range of services designed to help you thrive — from wellbeing and disability support, to library and digital learning resources, to careers guidance and skills development. Within your School and department, you'll also have access to specialist academic support, research training, and staff who can help you make sense of the expectations and opportunities specific to your discipline. Don't hesitate to make use of these; they're here for you.

One of the most important things you can do early on is familiarise yourself with the University's regulations, policies, and procedures. They set out the standards, responsibilities, and frameworks that shape your studies, and understanding them now will save you confusion later. Take the time to read them carefully — it's a small investment that pays off throughout your degree.

We're looking forward to working with you and supporting you as you grow, explore, and achieve. This is the beginning of something exciting, and we're glad you're here.

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 and meet in-person 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. Student visa holders must meet with their supervisor in-person each month, remote meetings are not permitted.
- Inform the relevant supervisor promptly if there are any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect your work. Notify the Supervisory Panel/Research

Students' Progress Board in writing of any extenuating circumstances that you believe have significantly affected your performance.

- Discuss any supervisory problems with your supervisor or the Head of Department or PGR 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.
 - 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.

Term	Week numbers
Autumn	2-11
Spring	16-25
Summer	30-39

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.

You will find that all activities and events make reference to the standard academic year terms and schedule noted above. However, some courses have different term dates, which can also be found on the [key dates](#) page, listed as 'course-specific term dates'.

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

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.

Study and Wellbeing Intervention Policy and Procedure

[The Study and Wellbeing Intervention Policy and Procedure](#) provides a framework to support students during their studies when it appears that their health and wellbeing is either disrupting or having a detrimental impact on themselves or on people around them. The policy applies to all students and aims to ensure students are offered appropriate intervention and support to succeed academically.

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 – askthehub@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 the 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](#).

Work Placements

Some courses have longer Professional Placements or a short placement. If placements are not available there are extra-curricular opportunities to gain work experience (please see below).

Your department/school will provide any further information on placement options, or extra-curricular opportunities available for PGT courses that are specific to your department/school.

It is your responsibility to find a work placement, however, the Industry Engagement and Placements Team can help prepare and support you and will advertise relevant placements. If you are interested in undertaking a placement year, or other work-based opportunities that may be available to you and your course, contact the [Industry Engagement and Placements team](#). If you have a Student visa, please be aware that the Immigration Rules restrict the length of placements and the type of work you can do.

Upon successfully securing a placement you need to inform the Industry Engagement and Placements team by contacting placements@essex.ac.uk. This is required to begin the placement approval process. Please note you must have approval from the Industry Engagement and Placement team before starting a placement.

For extracurricular opportunities, [Careers Services](#) are here to help. Use [Chart My Path](#) to find your personalised recommendations at Essex, and check out [Careers Connect](#) for part-time jobs, internships and career development support.

DBS checks for placements

Some placements may require a DBS check where you are engaging in regulated activity with vulnerable groups. This may include placements that are core, compulsory or optional, depending on the relevant module. Some activities may be carried out on an ad hoc basis for research purposes only, which are not required to meet the learning outcomes of the module or course, but will help inform your learning. More information about the DBS check process can be found on the [University's DBS webpages](#).

Safeguarding training

Prior to going out on placement students who are working with children or adults at risk should be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. The University offers a general [introduction to safeguarding Moodle module](#) which you are encouraged to complete at the same time as your DBS check. This training is additional to the mandatory safeguarding training that may be offered by your department/school and/or the placement provider.

Your department/school will provide any further information about safeguarding training as appropriate.

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.

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 or school, and the Dean.

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

If you are a financially **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.

If you are studying a course where an ATAS certificate is required and there are changes to your course, research area, supervisor or course length, you may need a new ATAS certificate. You can find further information on our [immigration webpages](#).

Student visa holders may not be able to change their course or study mode without first obtaining a new visa from overseas, if eligible. You can find information on the potential visa implications of a change to your course on our [immigration webpages](#). If you have any further questions you should contact the [International Services Team](#).

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 or school, Student Advisor 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 can find information on the visa implications of your decision on our [immigration webpages](#). If you have any further questions, you should contact the [International Services Team](#).

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 – askthehub@essex.ac.uk.

The Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service also provide free, confidential help and guidance for any concerns that you might have during your time at Essex. Contact wellbe@essex.ac.uk for advice on the support available for mental and emotional health, disability support, academic concerns, financial worries, and accommodation issues.

Periods of study

Research degree	Mode	Standard Period	Completion Period
Masters by Dissertation (<i>MA or MSc by dissertation</i>)	FT	One year	Up to one year
	PT	Two years	Up to two years
Master of Philosophy (<i>MPhil</i>)	FT	Two years	Up to one year
	PT	Four years	Up to two years

Doctor of Medicine (<i>MD</i>)	PT only	Two years	Up to one year
Doctor of Philosophy (<i>PhD</i>)	FT	Three years	Up to one year
	PT	Six years	Up to two years
Doctor of Philosophy Integrated (<i>PhD</i>)	FT	Four years	Up to one year
	PT	Eight years	Up to two years

Libraries and Knowledge Engagement

Library Services

The Library aims to provide all the resources you will need to succeed in your course. Its collections include a vast assortment of digital materials and printed texts and journals, made accessible via the [Library website](#) and [online reading lists](#).

Our [Research Support team](#), 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 that aims to support postgraduate research students and early career researchers by offering training and guidance covering topics 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.

The Albert Sloman Library (Colchester) is also home to a number of [Special Collections](#) which support the delivery of object-based learning, and provide primary source material for research across many subject areas and time periods. We are home to two major art collections; [ESCALA](#) (the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America) and the [University Art Collection](#).

Both our libraries offer a range of study spaces with some [bookable in advance](#). IT facilities including printing and borrowing a laptop are also available. Our [opening hours](#) are available on our Library website, with spaces at our Albert Sloman Library open 24/7 ([watch our video on where to find them](#)). Not forgetting our digital resources are always available, also through the [Library website](#). As a postgraduate student you also have access to the [Library Postgraduate Reading Room at Colchester campus](#).

If you have any questions about library services, there are a range of ways you can [get in touch with the team](#).

Ready to get started? See our Library website for everything you need for [Getting Started](#) with us.

Peer Review with the Essex Student Journal

Peer reviewing is a vital academic skill that can help you improve the quality of your own writing by providing feedback to others on theirs. [The Essex Student Journal](#) provides the opportunity for you to gain practical peer reviewing experience, with training, guidance, and support throughout.

This invaluable experience will enhance your expertise as an early career researcher, developing your understanding of the academic publishing process and providing an opportunity for you to contribute to the community. Peer reviewing is typically expected of researchers at all stages of their academic careers, so starting in our supportive environment will build your confidence for the future. 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.

Departmental/school training events

Your department/school will be able to provide further information about any training events they run.

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

Your department/school will be able to provide further information about any support or funding they have available for attending conferences and other events.

Academic skills support

Departmental/School support

Your department/school will provide any further information about specific academic support they provide.

Proofreading services

Before considering the use of proofreading services, all students should first discuss their work with their supervisors. 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 classes

Skills for Success provide a dedicated [PhD Language Support](#) module (SK038: PhD Writing Support) throughout the year, to help you develop your writing skills, presentation skills and confidence.

Skills for Success provides a range of [Academic English support classes](#) throughout the year, which all 1st-year students who have English as an additional language are invited to enrol on:

- SK020: Academic Writing Skills (part 1)
- SK025: Academic Writing Skills (part 2)
- SK035: Academic Speaking Skills (Discussions and Presentations)
- SK037: Academic Speaking Skills (Pronunciation and Speaking Strategies)
- SK038: PhD Writing Support
- SK051: Grammar Review

- SK335: Academic Reading Skills

These classes are free, voluntary and designed to help students improve their language proficiency and maximise their existing language skills in an academic context. Students do not have to attend all the classes – you can choose which sessions you would like to attend. There are no assignments or homework associated with these classes.

Options include 8-week, 6-week and 4-week modules. You can register for modules via eNROL, or contact us at any time at skills@essex.ac.uk. We also offer some online versions of these classes which you can enrol on via Careers Connect.

Skills@Essex

Skills@Essex is a bank of study skills resources on Moodle, designed to enhance your academic and personal development throughout your studies. All students have access to enrol on to [Skills@Essex](#).

This resource is designed to support your development during your time at the University. We offer a range of resources to supplement your studies, including:

Reading

- Academic argument
- Digital reading
- Reading for academic purposes

Writing

- Grammar
- Lab report writing for the biosciences
- Note-taking
- Process writing
- Quoting, paraphrasing and summarising
- Structuring academic essays

-
- Writing in the disciplines (example questions and answers)

Speaking, listening and presentations

- Effective presentations
- Speaking skills

Mathematics, statistics and coding

- Algebra
- Basic statistics
- Numeracy and arithmetic
- Python basics for beginners
- Scientific method

Research and referencing

- Academic integrity
- Literature search
- Referencing guidance

Study skills

- Critical thinking
- Digital skills at Essex
- Independent learning
- Preparing for your exams
- Revision skills
- Time management

General English classes for beginner/intermediate/advanced learners (GEC)

The [School of Language, Literature, and Media](#) 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

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 course, 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. Please see information about [Languages For All](#) on our webpage or email lalteam@essex.ac.uk).

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.

PhD Rules of Assessment

For students on a standard PhD, rules of assessment are not applicable, instead, students progress is monitored via their appropriate Milestones document (further details found within this handbook). For students on an Integrated PhD, their first year of study will be subject to the relevant [Rules of Assessment](#) for that course.

Academic integrity, academic offences and research misconduct

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.

Understanding the standards and expectations around responsible research practice is an essential part of your postgraduate journey. As you begin your studies, please take some time to familiarise yourself with the University's regulations, policies, and procedures relating to research conduct, including what constitutes research misconduct and how it is handled. This knowledge will support you throughout your degree and help you maintain the highest levels of integrity in your work. You can find clear guidance and further information [online](#).

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, self-plagiarism, using [Artificial Intelligence](#) such as ChatGPT to write all or part of an assignment unless specifically permitted to do so, falsifying data or evidence, and communicating with another candidate in an examination. Academic integrity and academic offences procedures may vary between modules. Students should

familiarise themselves with the procedures of the department responsible for each module they take.

Generative AI tools are now a common part of research, offering support with tasks like reviewing literature, analysing data, and drafting text. As a Postgraduate Researcher, it's important to use them responsibly, ethically, and in line with disciplinary expectations. The University's position on Gen AI in postgraduate research can be found [here](#). Along with practical advice to help ensure its use supports, rather than compromises, the integrity and originality of your work.

Dissertation extensions (Integrated PhDs only)

Postgraduate taught dissertations (or equivalent) are not counted as coursework and are therefore not covered by the policy on the late submission of coursework. Students can request an extension for their postgraduate dissertation if they find that, due to extenuating circumstances, they will be unable to submit the dissertation by the published deadline. Students can request a short informal extension from their department/school. Where a longer extension is required, an application for an extension to a postgraduate taught dissertation can be completed via the [online form on the ESF SharePoint website](#), for consideration by the relevant Faculty Dean (Postgraduate).

Ethics and integrity 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](#) in conjunction with the [Policy Statement on the Use of Animals in Research](#) 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.

Further information about the research ethics process can be found on the [University's ethics review webpages](#). Studies involving the NHS (i.e. patients, their data or samples; staff, their data or samples; sites; data extracted from or through clinical

systems) and studies involving human tissue or adults lacking capacity to consent are very likely to need some kind of NHS approval, such as ethical approval, governance approval or study registration. Even 'data only' studies, which do not involve direct contact with NHS staff or patients, will often require approval of some kind. Service evaluations, audits and similar involving the NHS may not require NHS ethical review. In cases where the project has not been defined as research by the HRA, ethical approval will need to be sought through the University's ethics review processes.

Doctorate level students may find it useful to complete parts of the [student research toolkit](#) to understand if HRA and HCRW Approval (or equivalent in Northern Ireland and Scotland) and/or NHS Research ethics review is required. If your study involves the NHS, you should contact the REO Research Governance Team (reo-governance@essex.ac.uk) at an early stage for advice about the ethics review process.

All research projects undertaken under the auspices of the University should observe a commitment to good research conduct. Information on research integrity can be found on the University's [research integrity webpages](#).

The University offers [training resources](#) to ensure you are familiar with best practice in research.

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. The University offers a general introduction to safeguarding Moodle module which you are encouraged to complete at the same time as your DBS check. This training is additional to the mandatory safeguarding training that may be offered by your department/school and/or the placement provider. Your Department/School will be able to provide further information about safeguarding training if applicable.

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](#).

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. Your department/school will provide information on what referencing style you must use. Guidance on your referencing style is available [online](#), including an [interactive referencing tutorial](#). You can also take the [Academic Integrity course](#) on Moodle.

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 or school 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.

The Board of Examiners

For Integrated PhDs, the Board of Examiners is responsible for confirming if the student has met the eligibility criteria to progress to the next year. You will receive an email to your Essex email account as soon as your results are published. You can find the publication schedule online.

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.

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 a research student on the first year of an Integrated PhD (a 4-year 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](#).

Students thinking about making an appeal are strongly advised to contact the [SU Advice Centre](#).

Computers, learning technologies and your information

Computers

Using a campus computer

Visit an IT lab to [use a campus computer](#). Many are open until late and some are open 24/7. Some labs may be booked for teaching, so it is best to check availability first. If you prefer to be on the move, you can [loan a laptop](#) from the Library for a few hours at no cost.

Printing, photocopying and scanning

All students can [print, copy and scan for free at Essex](#) subject to our fair use policy. You can print from a campus PC or from your personal device using our mobile print service. Campus printers can be found in or near to study spaces where there are computers. Find out how to print and how to top up your printer credit on the [Student Directory](#).

Please note that there are strict laws about [copyright](#) infringement; 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.

IT help and support

For IT help and support, visit the IT Services pages on the [Student Directory](#). You can also find information on free software available to students, account storage and how to print.

If you can't find what you're looking for, or if you need to talk to someone, contact the [IT Helpdesk team](#) who can assist you further.

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 including any change to your address or contact information which you can [manage and update online](#). If you have immigration permission to study with us and obtain a new passport

or visa during your studies, please ensure you bring this to your [Student Services Hub](#) so a scan can be taken for University record.

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 UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018, read our [Privacy Notice for students](#).

How to complain

If you are not happy with the way in which your personal data has been handled you should contact the Data Protection Officer as soon as possible, so that we can address any concerns. Complaints will be handled in line with the Data Protection Complaints Procedure.

If you are still not happy you then have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office.

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/school 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 bi-annually, and this will be running this year. 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 or school will also welcome your feedback. They will have a range of quick feedback mechanisms 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](#) can help. 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 students with disabilities or 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](#).

Support for students who are care experienced, estranged, primary carers and/or University of Sanctuary students

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.

The University of Essex is committed to providing an inclusive educational learning environment for all students. The [Student Reasonable Adjustment Policy](#) provides a framework for the effective implementation of a reasonable adjustment and to ensure the legal requirements of the [Equality Act 2010](#) are met.

Support for students who are pregnant

If you are pregnant, you are protected under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and are encouraged to contact your department/school or SWIS via the [Student Services Hub](#). You can talk through a variety of issues including; arrangements for maternity-related absence, financial implications, visa implications and emotional support.

Support for students who are parents or guardians

There is a wide range of information, support and advice available for parents and guardians studying with us available on the [Student Directory](#). Please contact the [Student Services Hub](#) or your department for further guidance or to discuss your individual circumstances.

Children or young people under 18 who are not registered students are not permitted to attend any University teaching events so it is important that you make adequate childcare arrangements to enable you to attend your teaching and assessments. If you have emergency childcare needs or other circumstances linked to caring responsibilities that affect your availability for teaching or assessment, we have support in place. It is important that you contact your department by [reporting your absence](#) as soon as possible to let them know you won't be there and to discuss your situation and any support they can offer. The University also has an [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#) where absence relates to missed assessment.

Financial Support for students with disabilities or additional needs

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.

We also offer bursaries for UK students who are [Care Experienced, Estranged or have Refugee status](#).

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 should 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.

Students' Union Council

Elected representatives from the campuses meet to vote on policies and shape the direction of the SU. In the past we have discussed and voted on topics like inconsistency of laundrette prices across accommodations and implementing a transparency policy. All topics brought to council are discussed and addressed.

Council also provides us with the opportunity to ask the Student Leaders questions about their ongoing plans and projects in the 'Student Leaders Q & A session'.

[SU Council](#) is made up of:

- Student Community Officers (SCOs)
- Student Representatives
- Student Leaders
- Key SU Staff

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 service

The University's counselling service is available to all registered students, including those who are intermitting on medical grounds. To learn more about the counselling service, visit the [counselling page](#) of the University website. You can also request counselling directly by completing this [form](#).

Digital wellbeing support

The Wisdom App gives you access to 24/7 support via live chat and instant calling with counsellors. You can discover health plans, workouts, recipes, track your sleep, and listen to the 'Peace of Mind' podcast. Access these resources through the [Wisdom website](#) or download the App from the [App Store](#) or from [Google Play](#). Use the access code MHA307573. For more information on the Wisdom App, watch this [video](#).

Student Wellbeing Support Line

Open 24-hours a day, including at weekends and bank holidays. Ring **0800 028 3766** for emotional support at any time.

Wellbeing Appointments for Students

Our team of Wellbeing Assessors offer a welcoming and friendly space where you will be able to talk about anything that is happening in your life.

We can help guide you to develop the personal resources and skills you need to navigate the challenges and opportunities of student life.

Our support is designed to be short term and intended to guide you on your next steps. If you need longer term support, we can help to signpost you to external health/wellbeing services and partnerships.

You can make an appointment, either in person, online via Zoom or by telephone, by emailing wellbeing@essex.ac.uk or calling 01206 873133.

UK immigration advice and guidance

[Immigration advice and guidance](#) is regulated in the UK by the [Immigration Advice Authority \(IAA\)](#) and can only be given by those that are authorised and competent 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.

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 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 bursary. You can find out more information, including what you may be eligible for on the [PGR Scholarships and Funding webpage](#) or your [department/school 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 UK visa extensions, housing, complaints, welfare and consumer issues.

Colchester students – suadvice@essex.ac.uk; 01206 874034

Loughton students – suaclo@essex.ac.uk; 01206 874034

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

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](#) is 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 should 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.

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

Book on to careers events, take career assessments, practice your interview skills, build your CV, and connect with employers on [Careers Connect](#) the online Essex careers and jobs portal. You will find hundreds of live opportunities from part-time jobs, internships & placements to graduate vacancies on the jobs board. You can login to [Careers Connect](#) with your Essex username and password.

Get experience

There are lots of ways to gain experience and develop your skills through our extracurricular offer, explore what is right for you via our [Get Experience](#) webpages.

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

Award documents

Award documents are issued upon final completion of an award. Upon conferral of your final award, your digital Award document will be available on your [GradIntelligence](#) account within 7 working days. In addition to your digital Award document, you will also receive a physical embossed and crested Award document either at Graduation or posted to you. You will be contacted by the Graduation and Awards team regarding issue of your printed Award document.

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 in the Sports Arena. All eligible students will be invited to attend a ceremony at the next available Graduation. Confirmed dates for future graduation ceremonies are [published online](#). It is essential that all students book their place at Graduation by the deadline provided.

The Graduation and Awards team will contact eligible students directly with more information, including eligibility and how and when to book their place at Graduation.

Documents and References

Getting documents

If you require a document to confirm your status as a student, a term date letter or a No Objection Letter for a visa, these are available via your Gradintelligence account. Full details on the documents that are available and how to access them can be found on the [getting documents webpage](#).

Academic references

If you require an academic reference confirming that you have studied or are studying here with your course details, please contact the [Higher Education Degree Databank \(HEDD\)](#), prospective employers, educational institutions, embassies and government offices can all use this service.

Requesting personal 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 your department/school for no longer than three years for taught students. Your department/school will provide information on any exceptions to this.

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 join a community of over 130,000 fellow graduates around the world. No matter where life takes you, we always want you to feel part of our community by keeping you up to date and involved with the University. You'll receive invitations to our alumni events, be given opportunities for networking and volunteering and receive special alumni benefits like generous discounts on postgraduate study. 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 will be in touch 15 months after you graduate with reminders about the Graduate Outcomes survey which is your opportunity to tell us how you're doing and give us feedback on your university experience.

Whatever you choose to do, please stay in touch. We'd love to hear where your Essex degree takes you.