Welcome

Welcome – Dr Corinne Whitby, Graduate Director (Research),

A warm welcome to the School of Life Sciences. We hope that you will enjoy your time here and make the most of the exciting opportunities available. You are an important and integral part of the School community, contributing to its research activities, which fall into four groups: Protein Structure and Mechanisms of Disease, Genomics and Computational Biology, Ecology and Environmental Microbiology and Plant Productivity. Each research group brings together several academic staff and their associated teams, who collaborate on projects, scholarly activity and knowledge exchange.

In the UK, academic research outputs are assessed periodically by the government in a process called Research Assessment Framework (REF). In the last REF, 85% of our research was rated as being of internationally recognised quality. This means that the School has an excellent research environment, which encourages novel ideas, critical reasoning and communication skills. Our strong focus on research means that you will be supervised by some of the leading academics in your chosen fields. You will work closely with your supervisor, technical staff, postdoctoral scientists and other postgraduate students.

Our postgraduate programmes require commitment and hard work. However, the rewards for your endeavours are that you will carry out novel research, grow into highly skilled, independent research scientists, and along the way you will develop long-lasting friendships and collaborations.

We are committed to your career development and we will offer advice and resources to help you. It is essential that you plan ahead and take the necessary steps to develop your career and gain the necessary skills that a competitive job market demands. I shall look forward to seeing you in the School and wish you all the best with your postgraduate research studies.
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Introduction

This Handbook is designed to provide you with an overview of all the essential information about the University and the School. Your Student Handbooks provides details of your department, including staff and contact details, facilities and ways to communicate and receive updates, as well as information relating to your course of study at Essex, including Rules of Assessment and the related policies, prizes awarded by the department each year, student feedback and meetings, and University regulations regarding progress, appeals and extenuating circumstances.

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

Essex is about more than just getting a degree: we have so much to offer our students! This Student Handbook contains information on your Essex Experience, including the Students’ Union, sports clubs and societies, Essex Sport, Careers Services, campus information, IT support and services and our extensive range of student support and services.

The Student Directory contains a wealth of other helpful sources of information which can be found at https://www.essex.ac.uk/student.
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.

Complete your Registration

Whilst you have accepted your offer and made your way to Essex, you still need to officially register yourself. At the start of each academic year, all new and returning students are required to register at the University. Registration is not only a formal procedure of enrolling you into the University, but it also connects you up to a number of vital systems you will need access to, including your IT account. As part of this process, you will need to complete online pre-arrival, physically attend a registration event on campus, and also activate your IT account.

To begin your registration, use one of the links below:

New students: https://www.essex.ac.uk/welcome/registration

Returning students: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/registration/returner-registration

Explore your Campus

There is a broad range of facilities across each of our campuses to support your living and learning experience at Essex. We provide study-based services, like the IT helpdesk and group study pods, but also various food and drink venues and leisure facilities. The Students’ Union also runs a wide range of facilities, bars and general stores. Full details on all on-campus facilities feature on our student webpages and in the campus guide you received with your welcome information when you joined us as a student member.

https://www.essex.ac.uk/life/student-facilities

Get connected

Your IT account

You will need to set up your IT account and create a password through the University website www.essex.ac.uk/it/getaccount. You will need to register an external email address and passphrase to set up your account. Once you’re set up, you can access your email, log on to lab computers, connect to campus wi-fi, and much more.

You must change your password within four weeks of your account being created, and then once every four months after that. You should receive email notifications to change your password shortly before it is due to expire. The easiest way to change your password is online at: www.essex.ac.uk/password. If you have forgotten your password, you can also reset it through this link using your external email address and passphrase. If you have forgotten those also, you should either visit the IT Helpdesk or call 01206 872345. Make sure you keep your password safe and do not share it with others!

Campus Wi-fi

Wi-fi is available across all campuses. Simply find the ‘eduroam’ network on your device and use the same log in details as your IT account to connect up!
**Essex Apps**

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

**MyEssex**

MyEssex is your online account. You can use it to see your timetable, keep your personal details up-to-date, request replacement registration cards or supporting documents, such as council tax exemption certificates, see how you’re doing on your course, 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, giving you access to comprehensive information about living and learning at Essex. The app provides an interface of icons that act as a portal through to a variety of useful links, areas and resources. PocketEssex links to many areas that MyEssex does in a handy app form, but also takes you through to many other key contacts and resources, such as the Students’ Union, FindYourWay and the Library.

**Find Your Way**

We know that finding your way from one room to another can be challenging to start with. Our Colchester campus in particular can be difficult to navigate with a historically complex room numbering system that leaves even our final year students still baffled! FindYourWay is our interactive campus map that can either be accessed via PocketEssex, downloaded as its own app, or via web browser. It is designed to help you get from A to B on either the Colchester or Southend campuses with quick and easy directions. [http://findyourway.essex.ac.uk/](http://findyourway.essex.ac.uk/)

[https://www.essex.ac.uk/myessex/](https://www.essex.ac.uk/myessex/)

**Your personal belongings**

University insurance cover is very limited for the belongings of students using graduate study rooms. Therefore, you are strongly advised to take out personal insurance cover for your possessions. This is especially important for items of particular value, such as personal electronic devices (i.e., laptops, phones and tablets). The University does not cover costs for personal damage or loss of your possessions; only in instances where the University has been negligent would a claim be viable for compensation for personal belongings.

**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(s). If you require immigration permission to study in the UK, this will be checked when you first register on your course and as necessary thereafter.

For Tier 4 sponsored students, you will have conditions attached to your leave restricting study and work; some nationals are required to register with the Police. You are expected to have the finances in place to pay your tuition fees and living costs throughout your course and do not have access to state housing or benefits.

The Tier 4 rules and guidance include restrictions relating to the length of time you can spend studying in the UK and academic progress; this may mean you are unable to take an academic option offered to you or that we can’t continue to sponsor you under Tier 4. The University has many duties as a Tier 4 sponsor and must ensure we remain compliant in order to retain our Tier 4 licence. Find out more on the University’s website: [https://www1.essex.ac.uk/immigration/](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/immigration/) and [https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations](https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations)
If you would like to get additional support with your English language skills, you can find helpful information and a range of resources here: https://www.essex.ac.uk/welcome/international-students

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

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

https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/language-and-linguistics

ecdis@essex.ac.uk
The Essex Experience

The University and the Students’ Union have developed our Student Charter as a part of our ongoing commitment to create an outstanding environment that offers the highest standards of teaching, research and support in an international and multi-cultural community. The Student Charter reiterates that you are a member of the University of Essex community, not just while you are a student or recent graduate here, but for life. You can read the full Student Charter at: www.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/charter

You are welcomed to a truly diverse community where differences are celebrated and individuality is valued. Your contribution is welcomed and encouraged based on your own thoughts and experiences. As part of our community you will have the freedom to explore, experiment, and challenge your discipline and have your ideas shaped by peer and professional knowledge from all over the world.

Your time at Essex will be an experience beyond the classroom; there is so much available to all students so you can make the most of your time at Essex and have a truly unforgettable Essex Experience.

Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

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

The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is fully effective. You can find out more information on the University’s policy, and get in touch with any comments or questions, here:
https://www.essex.ac.uk/information/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-policy-and-strategy

Our School has a large, vibrant community of scientists working at all levels in research, teaching, management and outreach. We achieved a Bronze Departmental Athena SWAN award in April 2017.

Embrace the Essex Values

We are different at Essex. We are brave, we are bold, and we embrace challenges and drive change. Our values are underpinned by this very culture. While we full heartedly encourage students to challenge the status quo and explore the unknown, we expect that students do so respectfully, intelligently and act as true ambassadors for the University.

The University’s Code of Student Conduct can be found on the website: www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations

Essex Spirit, social media and events

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

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

**International Students**

We are proud to be a global community and we recognise that living and studying in the UK may be very different from your own country. Essex has a wide range of support covering academic and health and wellbeing issues. Our friendly and professional staff will be able to guide, give advice and assist you during your time at Essex.

You can find helpful information here –

https://www.essex.ac.uk/welcome/international-students and http://www.essex.ac.uk/student/student-communities/international

**Mature and part-time students**

We appreciate that studying as a mature student can present challenges. This is particularly true if this is your first experience of higher education and you have other commitments and responsibilities to meet, such as work and family. We want you to be aware of the support available so that you can make the most of your time at Essex.

You can find more information here: [www.essex.ac.uk/students/groups/mature-students.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/students/groups/mature-students.aspx)

**Student Ambassadors**

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

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

**Essex Sport**

Be active at Essex! Learning doesn't just happen in the classroom. Keeping active during your studies can help relieve stress, increase productivity, provide a sense of community and improve your employability.

Essex Sport offers a great range of sport courses, social active sessions, over 300 fitness classes a month and a state-of-the-art gym, so there’s something for everyone!

Visit the Essex Sport website or download the app to discover all the ways you can keep active during your time at Essex.

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

https://download.mobilepro.uk.com/a/1CJ8?p=4?pv=1
Students’ Union

We’re famous for our Students’ Union at Essex, and for good reason. Here you’re not just a member of a normal Students’ Union; you’re part of a family. We’re here to cheer you on as you walk into exams and to help you absolutely destroy the competition in interviews and land your dream job. The Students’ Union is run by students for students, and you have the ability to shape what we do. From suggesting what we serve in our venues, to changing aspects of your course, we are here to represent you and work with you to make amazing things happen. There are opportunities to join 45 different Sports Clubs, to get involved with our BUCS teams which offer a wide individual championships programme of activities taking place across the year and lots of competitions take place on Wednesdays and weekends, or if you don’t want to commit to a regular team check out our Just Play programme of activities.

https://www.essexstudent.com

Get involved

We have 120 existing Societies where you can meet people with similar interests, challenge yourself with something new or, if you can’t find what you’re looking for, start your own society!

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

https://www.essex.ac.uk/life/colchester-campus/get-involved
About the School of Life Sciences

Meet the team
A full list of all academic and professional services staff for the School of Life Sciences can be found on our website at: https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences/people. Below is a summary of the roles of staff that you are likely to be in contact with most frequently.

Graduate Director for Research Students
Dr Corinne Whitby ext: 2062 cwhitby@essex.ac.uk Room 5.13

Graduate Administrator (Research)
Emma Revill ext: 3321 ecrix@essex.ac.uk Room 4.01A

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

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

a) Members of staff are expected to continue to carry out their role as Supervisor during periods of research leave.
b) Members of staff on research leave are not expected to attend Supervisory 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 periods during their research leave, an alternate member of staff should be named (by the Graduate Director of Research, in consultation with the Supervisor) as a local contact for the supervisee student. The local contact is not meant to act as a substitute supervisor (see point (A) above) but to serve as a designated point of contact in the Department during the period when the Supervisor is out-of-residence.

Staff research interests
Our academics carry out research that tackles some of the key problems of the modern world. Our work is interdisciplinary and frequently involves collaboration with other institutions in the UK and internationally.
For example, Professor Leo Schalkwyk has led pioneering research in to gene activity and Alzheimer’s disease as part of an international project led by the Universities of Essex and Exeter. Dr Michelle Taylor embarked on an Antarctic research trip to investigate little-known marine life in the Weddell Sea.
Dr Vassiliy Bavro is researching antibiotic resistance, and how bacteria manage to evade antibiotics.
In a project that brought together the ancient world and cutting-edge technology, Professor Nelson Fernandez utilised ancient DNA analysis to show that a local Roman burial ground contained family burial sites.

Our work covers multiple areas of research within biological sciences. Discover more about our staff and their work via https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences/people/academic

**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 has 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.

**School Common Room**
The Darwin School Common Room, 4.11, is located on 4\textsuperscript{th} floor and is for the use of all students/undergraduate students/postgraduate students.

**Postgraduate (Research) Study Room**
All postgraduate Research students can use the hot desk facilities in the Postgraduate Research room, 4.01. For desk space, please see Emma Revill

**Postgraduate Lockers**
Lockers are available in the Postgraduate Research room, 4.01. Please speak to Emma Revill if you are interested in using a locker.

**Postgraduate Training**
In addition to laboratory/field work and laboratory training directly related to your research topic, research students are also required to attend a more formal, structured training programme.

**Printing, photocopying and scanning**
All students can print, copy and scan for free at Essex! There are over 100+ multi-function devices that can be used at various locations across our three Campuses, including in the following areas:

- All IT labs
- Silberrad Student Centre
- Albert Sloman Library
- Orangery
- Limehouse
- Roding House and Unit 4 (Loughton)
- Gateway Building (Southend)
- The Forum (Southend)

Simply log in to the devices using your Essex login and password, or tap with your student card. These devices can also scan to email and feature mobile printing. Whilst printing is free for all students, please think of your carbon footprint and only print if necessary.

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

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.

https://library.essex.ac.uk/copyright

You can also use the photocopier/scanner located in the Postgraduate Research room 4.01.
**Noticeboards**
Every department and school has their own noticeboard(s) providing information on staff, courses and classes, updates, careers, events and opportunities. The Postgraduate Research noticeboard is located opposite room 4.22.

**Pigeonholes**
The Postgraduate Research pigeonholes are located in the Darwin School Common Room, 4.11. Please ensure to regularly check your pigeonholes.

**HEROES: Helping Each other with Research On Empirical Subjects**
HEROES is a group of empirical minded PhD students. HEROES stands for Helping Each other with Research On Empirical Subjects.

**Departmental prizes**

**Best Scientific Article Prize**
The purpose of this prize is to encourage PGR students to produce manuscripts for publication in peer-reviewed journals. The prize for the best article will be a certificate signed by the Head of School and the Dean of Faculty plus a financial gift. Full details on the award will be circulated via email.

**Communication**
It is important to keep up to date with information relating to your School and degree. This section also summarises how the department/school will communicate updates with you and provides some guidance on communicating with University staff.

**Email**
The University's policy is to use e-mail for routine communication between staff and students. Your Essex e-mail address will have been added to the relevant e-mail groups specific to your department or school, course and modules to ensure that you receive the essential information, updates and general communication related to your study and issues that may affect you. It is therefore vital that you check your Essex email regularly. It is recommended that you check your Essex email each day to ensure you do not miss any important updates to classes and assessment.

If you are elected to a Student Representative position, work as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, or volunteer in another form or means, it is even more important to regularly check your Essex email as should other students and staff need to get in touch, they will do so via your Essex email.

You will also automatically be subscribed to a small number of opt-out lists, again, based on your course. These will be used to send useful information and, while some of this may be about events, marketing or other opportunities, we try to avoid sending too much. To opt in or out of such lists, please visit:

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/it/services/forms/default.aspx

While email can be a quick and easy means of communicating, you should still consider how you structure and write each email to ensure it is appropriate when contacting members of staff at the University.

**Our website and Moodle**
Each department and school has its own section of the University website. This is an important source of information and news about all aspects of your studies. You can find the School website here [https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences](https://www.essex.ac.uk/departments/life-sciences) and Moodle here: [https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3238](https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3238)
**MyEssex**

Your MyEssex student portal will alert you to updates about modules and other aspects of your course and studies. It is important that you check your MyEssex regularly, as well as email, to ensure you have the most up to date information.

**By telephone**

You will only be contacted via phone in emergencies, or when it is otherwise necessary to receive an immediate response, but you should ensure that you provide the University with a contact number with your personal details.

**By text message**

In instances where a last minute change has been made, and the department or school need to communicate this with short notice, you may receive a text message to communicate the change, such as a lecture or class cancellation. You should ensure that you provide the University with a contact number with your personal details.

**By letter**

Letters may be attached to your Essex email or posted to your term-time address, so please make sure the University has got your current contact details. Your address and contact details can be updated via the MyEssex portal.

**Social Media**

The School of Life Sciences has its own Facebook page via https://www.facebook.com/UOELifeSciences/ through this page you can see our latest news, upcoming events and open day information.

We also have a specific Facebook group for PGR students https://www.facebook.com/groups/1000658820109646/ where you can share tips, ideas and relevant research links.
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

The supervisor-student relationship is an interactive one where communication will take place between both with the supervisor offering advice to the student throughout the PhD. The relationship will change over the period of study, from the supervisor being more prominent in the first year with the student gradually becoming more independent. Communication will take place either face-to-face or via electronic means, to engage in discussion/review of the work and progress. These meetings will be at least once a month (and bi-monthly for part-time students).

If any difficulties arise during the course of your work or supervisory arrangements it is preferable that they are raised initially with your Supervisor. If this is not possible, speak with Emma Revill who will arrange an appointment for you with the Graduate Director (Research). Problems of a more general nature, applying to several postgraduate students, may be raised at the Postgraduate Research Student Voice Group.

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

- Read the documentation provided, including the regulations for your degree, the Code of Practice and details of the departmental supervisory arrangements.
- Attend meetings with your supervisors and Supervisory Panels as arranged, and prepare adequately for them, notifying your supervisor in the event of unavoidable absence.
- Keep in regular contact with your supervisor. Students and supervisors are required to communicate, whether face-to-face or by electronic means, to engage in discussion/review of the student's work and progress at least once a month (and bi-monthly for part-time students).
- Provide updates on progress as outlined in the Progress and Appeals Procedures for Research Degree Students.
- Carry out, as far as possible, the work agreed with your supervisor and submit written work as agreed so that you meet the required milestones.
- Familiarise yourself with the departmental milestones for your degree and the requirements for your chosen thesis format. The milestones are designed to help you submit your thesis by the deadline and are used to assess your progress during your period of study. The milestones will be considered at your RSPB which takes place twice a year (or equivalent for part-time students). It's important you review your milestones regularly to ensure you'll be ready to submit your thesis by the required date.
- Familiarise yourself with University and subject-specific guidelines on ethical research, including data protection matters, and with health and safety and intellectual property regulations and obtain ethical approval as appropriate.
- Familiarise yourself with the expectations and conventions regarding academic referencing other people's work.
- Attend any research training and generic skills courses as agreed with your supervisor.
- As requested, submit reports on progress to professional practice and research supervisors, Supervisory Panels, or the departmental Research Students' Progress Board.
- Keep a record of your personal progress, including a copy of agreed training needs, courses that need to be attended and when they are attended. This may take the form of a log book or research portfolio to be signed off by your supervisor.
- Inform the relevant supervisor promptly if there are any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect your work. Notify the Supervisory Panel/Research Students' Progress Board in writing of any extenuating circumstances that you believe have significantly affected your performance.
Discuss any supervisory problems with your supervisor or the Head of Department. Alternatively, if you feel unable to talk to a member of the departmental staff, please contact the Postgraduate Research Education Team to discuss the concerns. Any discussions will remain confidential if requested. Students may request a change of supervisor but should note that it may not always be possible for suitable alternative arrangements to be made.

- You must present your thesis for examination by the end of the final term of your 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 meetings with their professional practice supervisor.
- Maintain a professional practice portfolio which forms part of the assessment for the degree.

Full details of the PGR milestones can be viewed via the Moodle page
https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3238

**The academic year**

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

<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.

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

The official University teaching day runs from 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday and you are expected to be available during these times in term time to attend teaching events.

**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. Information about teaching timetables, including requesting a class change, reporting a timetable issue and accessing your individual timetable can be found here.
https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/timetables/your-timetable

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

**Course structure**

Each course at the University has its own syllabus, full details of which can be found in the University’s Programme Specifications Catalogue at:

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/programmespecs/

Programme specifications provide key information, including the aims and learning outcomes of your course. Your own course structure, including your specific programme specification, can be found in the MyStudy section of your MyEssex homepage.

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/myessex/

**Learning Outcomes**

Each course has learning outcomes, as outlined in the Programme Specifications. Course learning outcomes are categorised into knowledge, intellectual, practical and key skills, and are also defined more specifically at a modular level highlighting the particular aims, learning outcomes and methods of assessment for each module. Having this information means that you can measure your progress against the outcomes, for example when reviewing coursework feedback, and they can be used to guide you when undertaking independent study.

**Changes to study**

You should discuss any proposed change of degree title with your supervisor. Once you have decided you want to change your degree title, you will need to make a formal request using the online Change of Course/Degree title form (available here: www.essex.ac.uk/esf/)

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

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

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

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

*Thinking of leaving or taking a break from your studies?*

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

**Intermission** is a temporary withdrawal or leave of absence from the University and provides you with the opportunity to take a break from your studies. Normally, this is for reasons beyond your control (e.g. health or personal problems) although other reasons are permitted. Intermission must be approved by the University first, so if you are thinking about intermitting, we strongly advise you to contact your department and your Student Services Hub to talk to one of our advisers.
You should also read our guidance on intermitting very carefully at www.essex.ac.uk/see/intermit. If your intermission is agreed to, we will also give you the advice and support you need to help you carry on with your studies.

**Withdrawing** is the formal process for permanently leaving your programme of study and the University. If you are thinking of withdrawing, you should seek advice from your Department or the Student Services Hub at the earliest opportunity. It is very important that you discuss your circumstances with the University and follow the formal procedure for withdrawing. If the university is not formally notified, then you may risk continuing to incur further tuition or accommodation fees. More advice and information is available at www.essex.ac.uk/see/withdraw.

### Periods of study

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

Please read carefully our guidance on Tier 4 and course changes here:

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/immigration/studies/changes_course.aspx

### Course Materials

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

### Library Services

At our Colchester Campus, the **Albert Sloman Library** on Square 5 is open 24/7 and has a variety of study spaces over six floors, including individual and group work areas. The Library offers a wide range of learning resources, online and in print, with a dedicated Helpdesk, live chat and the opportunity to book appointments with your Subject Librarian to help you through your studies and beyond.

library.essex.ac.uk
The library has a team of Subject Librarians who can help you to find appropriate resources for your assignments and show you how to search effectively. They can also provide advice on referencing and academic integrity, using reference management software, and evaluating sources. Find out who your subject Librarian is and get help with your subject area at library.essex.ac.uk/studyres

Skills for Success
We are committed to ensuring that every student is able to get the most out of their academic study and achieve their potential on their course. Whether you need support with researching, assignment writing, mathematics and statistics, digital skills, or English language for academic purposes, support is available to help you succeed during your time at University. Reach your potential and enhance your chances of success with classes, workshops, drop-in clinics and on-line resources. Find out more at: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/academic-skills

The use of proofreading services
Many students seek 'proofreading' services at some point during their studies, but different editing practices at times go on in this name that may not be appropriate in an academic context, and could potentially qualify as an academic offence. In a context where work is to be assessed, the University is keen to ensure as far as possible that students understand what proofreading work should entail and the acceptable boundaries to which any proofreading or editing must adhere to.

The University maintain a list of local freelance proofreaders who offer services to students and staff at Essex that have read and agreed to abide by the University’s policy and guidance on proofreading. The University’s full policy and guidance can be found along with the list of local freelance proofreaders on the website:
https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/academic-skills/proofreading

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

Learning a Language
Learn a language at Essex to increase your global and cultural awareness. Language learning can give you the confidence to work and travel internationally, expand your options for studying abroad, and get a competitive edge when you're looking for a job. There are a number of ways to do it, so look online to discover the best option for you.
www.essex.ac.uk/study/why/languages
Research Skills Development

Proficio

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

You can contact the Proficio team at:

proficio@essex.ac.uk

University and departmental training events

DOCTORAL WELCOME CONFERENCE
This is designed to introduce participants to researching at Essex and to mark the start of their doctoral journey with us.

GRADUATE LABORATORY ASSISTANTS
All new research postgraduates must complete the training course if they wish to become Graduate Laboratory Assistants in undergraduate practicals. If you are in further completion or about to enter further completion you are not allowed to undertake the role of Graduate Laboratory Assistants. You will be notified of dates for training via email. Students should discuss with their supervisor if they wish to be considered for these duties.

THE SCHOOL POSTGRADUATE TRAINING PROGRAMME
This programme starts in Week 1 and continues throughout the year. Most of these training seminars and meetings are compulsory and progress is conditional on adequate attendance. They cover topics of common importance to all Biological Sciences research students, and have been designated by the Research Councils as topic areas in which graduate students must receive training. There is a training programme for each year of study and include sessions on writing a Literature Review, Annual Report writing, preparation of a thesis (includes School guidelines on the preparation of a thesis), and preparing for the viva. Information on training sessions throughout the year will be emailed directly to you.

UNDERGRADUATE/POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT COURSE MODULES
Students are encouraged to attend undergraduate and/or postgraduate lectures (usually not more than 2 course units, 40 contact hours per year) to provide additional academic background necessary for their research project. You should discuss possible course choices with your supervisor.

SCHOOL SEMINARS
Research students are expected to attend the regular School Seminars held during term time. These usually take place on Thursdays from 1.00 – 2.00pm. It is important to continue to extend your general scientific education. The seminars are selected to be of wide biological interest.

POSTGRADUATE MENTORING SCHEME
The University has a postgraduate mentoring scheme where you can contact two current Biological Sciences students with questions related to study and University life. You can contact the mentors via https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/study-resources/mentoring/default.aspx
**SCHOOL MENTORING SCHEME**

The School of Life Sciences is committed to supporting staff and research students at all stages of their careers. A School Mentoring Scheme has been established as a result of an action from the School’s Athena SWAN Bronze Department Award. This voluntary scheme is open to all academic and research staff and PhD students.

**Aims of Scheme**

The Mentoring Scheme aims to support individuals' at various stages of their professional or personal development. Mentors will provide support, give advice and guidance on career/ personal development and provide opportunities to reflect on progress. The scheme supports both traditional mentoring with senior staff as well as peer mentoring and can be either long-term or short-term to suit individual needs. Through the establishment of the Mentoring Scheme we aim to:

- Support staff and students at key career transition points
- Provide guidance on career and personal development

Further information can be found on the School Mentoring Scheme Moodle page. To request a mentor or to sign up as a mentor for this scheme, please contact the Mentoring Coordinator (Dr Dawn Farrar, dfarra@essex.ac.uk).

**SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES AND CONFERENCES**

It is really useful to join a scientific society and become part of the wider scientific community. In addition, societies hold conferences where you can meet key researchers and hear about new work, often before it is published. You may also have the opportunity to present your own work in a talk or poster. Some societies provide funds to students to attend these conferences. Your supervisor will be able to advise on which society or societies is appropriate for you to join and further information is available on the Early Career Researcher Resources Moodle. These conferences and other meetings in the UK or abroad are considered very important parts of your scientific training. If your studies are funded by a studentship or scholarship, your sponsors will probably have allocated funds for you to participate in at least one major conference. Your supervisor will keep you informed about these conferences or meetings and may be able to provide some financial support. The School may be able to help as well and a call for requests for funds to attend a meeting or conference is made each term by Email.

**PRESENTING YOUR WORK**

Throughout your period of study you will be expected to present your work orally to audiences, typically in the informal setting of your laboratory group meetings or in your Research Group meetings. The annual Graduate Forum (above) provides a more formal meeting structure for poster and oral presentations. Some PhD students in their third year may, in addition, be invited to present a seminar to a wider School audience, for example during the weekly School Seminar Programme. Presentation of your results in a poster or talk and the opportunity for discussion is an important part of participating in a conference or meeting.

**COHORT BUILDING EVENT**

In 2017 the School held the first postgraduate cohort building event. The event brought together postgraduate students and postdoctoral scientists from all the diverse disciplines within the School to promote interdisciplinary knowledge and exchange of techniques. The event comprised of talks from each of the seven research groups, an interactive session on networking, an alumni presentation, a motivational lecture by an eminent guest speaker and the opportunity to attend a careers workshop to provide targeted careers advice. A similar event will be held in 2019 and registration information will be circulated via Email.

**THE GRADUATE FORUM**

This is a compulsory one-day event held in September each year and must be attended by all research postgraduate students. First year students are required to present a poster, second years to give a 10-minute oral presentation and third years to co-ordinate the event. Students are responsible
for the planning and the organisation of the Graduate Forum, including the programme for oral and poster presentations, preparation of abstract booklet, organising publicity and refreshments. There are prizes for best oral and poster presentations. There will be seminars on poster preparation and also oral presentation for second and third years respectively, in the Summer Term (see your Training Programme timetable).

RESEARCH GROUPS
Students will be members of one of the research groupings: Protein Structure and Mechanisms of Disease, Genomics and Computational Biology, Ecology and Environmental Microbiology and Plant Productivity. These groups have regular research meetings which students should attend. Laboratory groups, research workers and students supervised by individual members of staff, also have regular lab meetings.

Details of any Departmental support or funding for attending conferences/other events – PGR Travel Fund
The School is willing to consider an application to help fund your attendance to a key conference or workshop. It is a rolling call for applications. The maximum amount to be awarded is £300.00, however, in exceptional circumstances this may be increased. Forms should be completed and submitted to the Emma Revill and include a written statement in support from your supervisor. The applications will be considered by the Head of School and Graduate Director.
Assessment and Good Practice

All schools and departments at the University should employ a variety of assessment methods designed to ensure that the learning outcomes of each module, and course, have been successfully met by the student.

The Principal Regulations and the Codes of Practice are extremely important documents that set out both your responsibilities and the responsibilities of the University to you; take time to familiarise yourself with them. They outline the roles and responsibilities of you, your supervisor, your Supervisory Panel and the Research Students’ Progress Board.

www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations

Rules of Assessment

All schools and departments at the University should employ a variety of assessment methods designed to ensure that the learning outcomes of each module, and course, have been successfully met by the student.

The Principal Regulations and the Codes of Practice are extremely important documents that set out both your responsibilities and the responsibilities of the University to you; take time to familiarise yourself with them. They outline the roles and responsibilities of you, your supervisor, your Supervisory Panel and the Research Students’ Progress Board.

www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations

PRINCIPAL REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH DEGREES AND THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/regulations-higher;
https://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/codes-higher

The Principal Regulations and the Code of Practice are extremely important documents that set out both your responsibilities, and the responsibilities of the University to you. Take time to familiarise yourself with them. They outline the roles and responsibilities of you, your supervisor, your Supervisory Panel and the Research Student Progress Board.

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ppg/pgr/assess-rules.aspx

SUPERVISORY BOARD

All research students have a Supervisory Board; the role of the Supervisory Board is to review the student’s progress. The Board consists of the supervisor(s) plus at least one other member of academic staff who should Chair the Board. The supervisor nominates the other member(s) of the Supervisory Board who should be generally familiar with the field of research so they can meaningfully review the student’s progress but they are not directly involved with supervising the research project. The composition of an individual’s Supervisory Board will be notified to the student before or at the time the first report is submitted i.e. towards the end of the Autumn term. The Supervisory Board formally meets with the student at least twice a year, in December and in June (subject to your start date, please refer to the flow chart). The system of Supervisory Boards is intended to give the students a different perspective on their work and also experience of discussing and defending their work. They may also give feedback on written work such as the Annual Reports. The Supervisory Board also reviews training undertaken and further training needed.

After each meeting the Supervisory Board will agree on a report which is sent to the Graduate Administrator (Research) and the student. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the student is
informed of any recommendations made by the Board. The board report form is submitted to the Research Students Progress Board where all recommendations are approved and confirmed. A copy of all board report forms are then submitted to the Postgraduate Research and Education team.

GENERAL POINTS
You will have at least two meetings each year with your Supervisory Board and you are required to produce the documents described below, depending on the stage of your programme, that will form the basis of the meeting. Please refer to the flow charts (which are in your pack and also emailed to you) to find the deadlines for handing in these documents. Hard copies of your documents should be given to each member of the Supervisory Board and an electronic copy to the Graduate Administrator (Research).

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

IMPORTANT POINTS
It is most important that you understand the function of, and engage fully with, the Supervisory Boards (sometimes referred to as “Boards”), as they are designed to help you. Some of the functions that they serve are:

- An opportunity to communicate your research, clearly articulating your aim and key hypotheses, both in general discussion and via presentations.
- More specifically, an opportunity to discuss your research with someone other than your supervisor or co-supervisor, namely the “supervisory board member”. They should be considered as a “critical friend”, who can provide advice on your research with an external perspective and help if there are any supervisory issues. You should get to know your supervisory board member.
- An opportunity to reflect on progress and clarify expectations in terms of the quality and quantity of your work.
- An opportunity to get feedback on specific pieces of written work that have been set to encourage you to keep up to date, e.g. general project plans, training plans, a literature review that will serve as the Introduction to your thesis, reports in scientific paper format that migrate into draft thesis chapters and/or papers. It should be recalled that there are few jobs without deadlines. Therefore, keeping to these deadlines is an important aspect of your training and also spreads the workload, thus alleviating future stress.
- An opportunity to defend your research after questioning. Scientists must ask and address critical questions, so you should consider the Boards as training in this respect (it is not expected that you will have all the answers, but it is expected that you will reflect on the questions).
- An opportunity to ask about training needs and career opportunities.
- An opportunity to inform the Board members about any difficulties and mitigating circumstances that may have affected progress.

We have a duty to you, the University and sponsors to have formal measures to assess progress. You should not worry unduly about the Boards, as they should follow the natural progression of a hard-working postgraduate researcher rather than dictating the progress. Use the Boards to your advantage, e.g. to put in the extra hours to read and critique key papers, to analyse your data rigorously, to prepare professional figures, to think more broadly about your research, to ask whether your hypothesis is justified and is it being tested rigorously. However, you should not curtail experiments because of the Boards.

If problems arise, then talking about them early and trying to resolve them will benefit everyone. You should not wait until the Boards to do so, but please do additionally discuss any issues at the Boards. Please also note that you should read and reflect on the Board reports. By signing at the end you indicate that you are content with the report.
You will have at least two meetings each year with your Supervisory Board, and you are required to produce the documents described below, depending on the stage of your programme, that will form the basis of the meeting. Please refer to the flow charts (which are in your pack and also emailed to you) to find the deadlines for handing in these documents. Electronic copies of your documents should be given to each member of the Supervisory Board and the Graduate Administrator (Research), but also ask whether the Board members would like a hard copy.

It is important that you submit documents to your supervisors in time for them to provide feedback and for you to act on it. The final documents should be sent by the specified deadline.

In addition to the information provided below, there are two documents that must be submitted before each board (at the same time as the other documents):

- Specific sections of the Board Report, such as: a check-list, an opportunity for you to comment on progress and any points that you’d like to discuss at the Boards.
- Your training document, which is a living document where you record training and, importantly, highlight your training needs.

**FIRST YEAR**

**Interim Board:**

Each student is required to produce a short written report (1000 words maximum) two months after the commencement of their programme. This will:

- briefly describe the background of the research project, including a few key references
- present the aims and hypotheses of your research project, together with an explanation of your approach (a schematic is often helpful for this)
- include an outline plan for the year ahead, with more emphasis on the first 6 months, including some experimental detail

Your report will be discussed at your Supervisory Board. Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will write a report summarising progress, highlighting strengths and any shortcomings, and recommending whether you are allowed to proceed to the next stage. These reports are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

**First Submission of the Literature Review / Introduction to your Thesis:**

You are expected to formally submit your Literature Review / Introduction to your Thesis (see below for more details) at the start of Term 2 to your supervisors, supervisory board member and Graduate Administrator. You will receive feedback by email or an informal meeting. The supervisors are primarily responsible for providing feedback, but the supervisory board member should also offer generic advice.

**First-Year Board:**

The documents required are:

- Revised Literature Review / Introduction to your Thesis (see below for guidance)
- First-Year Annual Report (see below for guidance)
- Plan and timetable of work for next year
- 10-minute presentation on your research

**Literature Review / Introduction to your Thesis**

An extensive Literature Review should be produced, discussing the background of your project and placing it in the context of previous work in the field. The Literature Review will evolve into the Introduction to your Thesis. It is essential that you become familiar with the literature in the area of your research as it will dictate your aims and hypotheses and thus your approach. Therefore, the
Literature Review is regularly updated. A draft should be presented to your supervisor in the first term, and a version formally submitted at the beginning of the second term. You will receive further feedback on this version, and you are expected to submit an updated version for the First-Year Board. A good literature review will be integrative and critical, proving added value with, for example: tables compiling data from different literature sources, meta-analysis, and self-constructed conceptual figures. There will be a seminar on the approaches to writing the Literature Review in the Autumn Term (see your Training Programme timetable). The Literature Review should:

- be thorough and logically structured
- be 5000-10000 words in length
- be fully and correctly referenced (consult the Guidelines for Referencing below)
- have an abstract of approximately 300 words that outlines why the research area is important and summarises what major conclusions can be drawn from the review

First-Year Annual Report

This should succinctly summarise results to date. The format of this report should follow the requirements of the doctoral thesis, so that you can practise writing clearly and logically and presenting data in the correct manner. It is important that you use abbreviations, species names, etc. correctly, and present references in the correct format in the text and in the reference list.

The First-year Annual Report should be no more than 3000 words (figures, tables and the reference list are in addition to this). Make sure the pages are numbered. The report must have the following:

- Title page (title, your name, supervisor’s name, year of study and date).
- Summary/Abstract (approximately 300 words) explaining why the work is important, the purpose of the research, the methods used, summary of key results and main conclusions.
- Brief Introduction, which sets out the scientific question you are investigating, but should not be an extensive review of the literature because you have already written a Literature Review.
- Methods, which should be complete with a description of all the methods used.
- Results, which should be presented in exactly the same way as for the final thesis or for publication. Figures and tables should be numbered, and figures should have legends, and tables should have headings. The legends should be clear and self-explanatory and contain the key to symbols or lines used in the figure. Microscope images, maps etc. should have scale bars. Statistical analysis, if appropriate, should be included. The results section should also have a written description or commentary on the data you have presented, highlighting key results and trends.
- Discussion, in which you address what your results mean. You need to set your findings in the context of the existing body of knowledge. You should discuss any possible limitations in your methods and the reliability of your results.
- Reference list, which must be correctly and consistently formatted.
- Appendix, which is optional and may contain extra experimental detail or results.

With your report you must also include a plan and timetable of work for the next year; include an outline timetable for further experiments over the next year, including more detail for the work to be done over the next 6 months.

Finally, you are expected to prepare and present a 10 minute powerpoint presentation in preparation for your confirmation board.

Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will then write a report summarising progress, highlighting strengths and any shortcomings, and recommending whether you will be allowed to proceed to the next stage. The report will include specific recommendations of how the Literature Review, presentation and Annual Report can be improved, in preparation for the Confirmation Board. These reports are considered at a meeting of the RSPB, which makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).
In the September of your first year, you are expected to attend and present a poster on your research at the Annual Graduate Forum.

SECOND YEAR
Assessment in the second year is critical for the confirmation of your progression onto the PhD programme through a successful performance at the Confirmation Board.

Confirmation Board:
The first Board of the second year is the Confirmation Board to which students submit:
- Draft Thesis Chapter or Paper (3000 to 5000 words), most likely developed from the Annual Report, having taken account of suggestions for improvements of the Annual Report and including new data
- Updated Literature Review (5000 to 10000 words)
- Outline plan of work for the next 12 months (1 page maximum).
- Statement of how the recommendations from the previous Supervisory Board have been addressed (1 page maximum)
- 10-minute presentation on research

The format of both the Literature Review and the draft Thesis Chapter or Paper are the same as described above for the Annual Board. If a draft paper is submitted, then it is fine for the format to comply with that of the target journal.

At the Confirmation Board the student will be expected to deliver a 10-minute presentation to the Board members, who will then ask questions relating to the presentation, Literature Review and Draft Thesis Chapter / Paper.

In recommending confirmation of PhD status the Confirmation Supervisory Board will assess:
- The quality of the literature review as a comprehensive and critical appraisal of the current status of the research area
- That the appropriate methodologies have been used for satisfactory data collection
- That a sufficient amount of quality data has been generated, adequately analysed and discussed
- The quality of the oral presentation and the answers to questions after the presentation

The Confirmation Board can make the following recommendations to the RSPB:
- Confirm continuation on PhD programme
- Defer a decision to the next Supervisory Board
- Continuation on MPhil programme
- Discontinuation

If the decision is deferred to the next Board, students will submit an improved draft Thesis Chapter or Paper and an updated presentation. The format of the second Confirmation Board will be the same as the first Confirmation Board. Students are entitled to two attempts of the Confirmation Board.

Second-Year Annual Board (moving to Year 3 for submission):
If you were confirmed to proceed onto the PhD programme, the next Board will be the end-of-second-year board and you must submit the following:
- Complete Thesis Chapter / Paper or two Draft Thesis Chapters / Papers (complying with the length / formatting as in your Confirmation Board). Also provide a brief narrative (~10 lines) indicating the advance since the Confirmation Board. Note that these are Results chapters and not the Literature Review / Introduction.
- Chapter-by-chapter thesis outline, highlighting sections that are complete, nearly complete, ongoing and planned.
- Plan and timetable for the next year (outline the work for the next academic year in more detail and include the experiments planned for the next 3 to 6 months). Consider how you will submit within the three-year standard PhD period
Generally, at this stage, you are working on multiple chapters simultaneously, and so there is flexibility in what you present. The overarching consideration is that you demonstrate continued progress and present your research to thesis standard. Discuss what you plan to present with your supervisors. Also, at this stage, it is important that you have a vision of your thesis in terms of how the chapters will be structured, so take the planning process seriously. The University is keen to encourage submission within the period that most students are funded. It is recognised that some students receive funding for longer than three years. Nevertheless, it is good practice to aim for submission within the three-year standard period.

This Board Report will summarise progress, highlighting achievements and any shortcomings, and recommending whether you are allowed to proceed to the next year. The reports from the Supervisory Board are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team for the Dean’s approval (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

In the September of your second year, you are expected to give an oral presentation on your research at the Annual Graduate Forum.

**THIRD YEAR**

**Interim Board (due to submit):**
The focus is now on completing your practical work and on continuing to write up your thesis and any papers. Depending on your previous submissions, on-going progress, and the nature of your project, there is flexibility as to what you may submit as the first document for this Interim Board:
- You may submit two complete Chapters or two Papers that are in draft (e.g. advances of those presented at your End-of-Second-Year Board); in which case you should additionally provide a brief (~10-line) narrative indicating the advances since your last Board. Alternatively, you may prefer to present a third results Chapter (draft or complete) to the Board. In all cases comply with the formatting requested for documents at the Confirmation Board.

The remaining documents are:
- Updated chapter-by-chapter thesis outline, highlighting sections that are complete, nearly complete, ongoing and planned
- Updated plan and timetable until the submission of your thesis. Consider how you will submit within the standard three-year PhD period and outline plans for publication

Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will write a report summarising progress, highlighting strengths and any shortcomings, and recommending whether you are allowed to proceed. In addition, feedback will be given on draft chapters and feedback/support toward producing a paper for submission to a journal. The reports from the Supervisory Board are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team for the Dean’s approval (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

**Third-Year Annual Board (due to submit):**
At this stage it is expected that you will have three near-complete results Chapters, with at least one of them progressing towards publication (while also recognising that theses develop in different ways). For this Board you should submit:
- One new (or heavily improved results Chapter / Paper draft
- Updated chapter-by-chapter thesis outline, highlighting sections that are complete, nearly complete, ongoing and planned.
- Updated plan and timetable up to the submission of your thesis. Consider how you will submit within the standard three-year PhD period and outline your plans for publication
You will receive feedback on the final draft of your thesis. You need to demonstrate that you have a clear timetable to submission. Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will write a report summarising progress, highlighting strengths and any shortcomings, and recommending an intended submission date. If, the Board agrees that you are not ready to submit, you will enter the Completion Period. Your progress during Completion Period will then be monitored on a term-by-term basis. The reports from the Supervisory Board are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team for the Dean’s approval (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

In the September of your third year, you are expected to **attend and organise** the Annual Graduate Forum.

**COMPLETION PERIOD**

If you need to use the Completion Period to prepare and submit your thesis, your progress will be monitored on a term-by-term basis. For each term that you remain in the Completion Period there will be one formal meeting with your supervisors, at which progress is recorded. These meetings do not involve your supervisory board member, but you are welcome to seek their advice as normal.

**Completion Period 1:**
The documents required for this Completion Period Meeting 1 are:
- completed **final draft for submission** (or a draft that is close to submission)
- **timetable** to thesis submission

**Completion Period 2:**
The documents required for this Completion Period Meeting 2 are:
- completed **final draft for submission** (or a draft that is close to submission)
- **timetable** to thesis submission

**Completion Period 3:**
The documents required for this Completion Period Meeting 3 are:
- completed **final draft for submission**
- **timetable** to thesis submission

The documents are discussed at each of your Completion Period meetings and an agreed submission date finalised. You will receive detailed feedback on your draft final submission. Following this meeting the Supervisory Board will write a report summarising progress. The reports from the Supervisory Board are considered at a meeting of the RSPB and this committee makes recommendations on progression to the Postgraduate Research and Education team for the Dean’s approval (which includes upgrade, downgrade and discontinuation).

Full details of these key stages can be viewed via the PGR Milestones document on Moodle [https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3238](https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3238)

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

All research involving human participants, whether undertaken by the University's staff or students, must undergo an ethics review by an appropriate body and ethical approval must be obtained before it commences. You can find our Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants here - https://www.essex.ac.uk/staff/research-governance/ethical-approval-resources-for-applicants - along with a link to the online Ethical Approval application form in ERAMS (https://erams.essex.ac.uk/do/essex-login/login).

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

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 will also find information about risk assessment and managing health and safety risks on the student directory. Or email our health and safety team (safety@essex.ac.uk) for advice or to book onto Research Risk Assessment training: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/health-and-safety

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.

You will find information about overseas travel and travel insurance on the Student Directory: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/health-and-safety/overseas-travel

SCHOOL SAFETY

The University's Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy, sets out the health and safety responsibilities of all University employees according to their job role. The responsibilities of employees and managers are also summarised in the Employee Guide to the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy. Both documents can be found either on the safety notice board adjacent to the main entrance, from David Knight or by following the link at http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/default.shtm

The School has produced specific guidance and, where appropriate, safety standards and codes of practice for a range of activities. Further information can be found on the Biological Sciences safety intranet site, which can be found at http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/default.shtm

SAFETY GLASSES

There is a School rule (supported by legislation) requiring you to wear safety glasses in all laboratories. Some areas have a risk assessment which says that glasses need not be worn, for example, when using a microscope; these areas will be made known to you when you are in the lab.

SO PLEASE NOTE – the general rule is that you must wear safety glasses in the laboratory
ORDERING AND STORES

You can obtain items (e.g. stationery, photocopying cards) from the Stores on the second floor (Room 2.07). The purchase of other materials and equipment using School order forms should be made in consultation with your supervisor or the technician in charge of your laboratory.

For up-to-date opening hours and information: [http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/lab/admin/stores/default.htm](http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/lab/admin/stores/default.htm)

USE OF EQUIPMENT

Many items of equipment are heavily used and their use must be reserved in advance on an appropriate booking sheet. Only people whose names have been approved in writing may use the autoclaves. Please inform your supervisor of any faulty equipment by email.

REPAIRS

If you find any equipment that is broken or not functioning properly you should complete a repair form on the Intranet ([http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/lab/faults/default.htm](http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/lab/faults/default.htm)). Failing this you should notify the technician in charge of your laboratory. **You should never try to repair equipment yourself.**

LATE WORKING

a) The normal working hours of the School are 8.00 am until 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

b) Those working in the School outside working hours must have a late working pass.

c) The late working register by the entrance door must be signed, with the exception of those working between 7.00am and 8.00am on weekdays. This book is checked regularly by Security Officers for persons present in the building and is particularly important in the event of a fire alarm evacuation.

d) Researchers working after 10.00 pm and before 7.00 am must obtain written permission from their supervisors and notify the Technical Services Manager in advance.

e) Such permission may only be given for periods of 7 days.

f) Those working after 10.00 pm should inform patrol officers at the Information Desk before 10.00 pm or starting work if this is later.

g) After completing a session of late work, the worker should inform the Information Desk that he/she is leaving the building.

You will only be issued a late working pass when you have been fully trained in the laboratory. To obtain this a passport size photograph should be attached to the Late Working Pass Application form ([http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/documents/forms/default.shtm](http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/documents/forms/default.shtm)). There is a photo machine outside Students Union Bar. You will also be given a copy of Late Working Pass Procedures which must be followed. Passes will be issued by David Knight, the Technical Services Manager in room 4.02, and must be carried at all times and produced when asked by a Security Officer ([http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/security/default.shtm](http://bsintra.essex.ac.uk/safety/security/default.shtm)).

LABORATORY NOTEBOOK

All PhD students receive one complimentary laboratory notebook per academic year. The laboratory notebook facilitates the keeping of a valid record of your research work. Accurate records will allow you to prove when a particular idea was generated. It will also allow you to register details of each experiment and when they were done. This Notebook belongs to the student/researcher and the supervisor or head of laboratory. The School requires that you adhere to a set of guidelines in completion of the Notebook and these will be circulated via email.

All MPhil/PhD students have a supervisor or supervisors. Your most important academic contact in the School is your supervisor. Your supervisors will guide you in your studies including your training in the laboratory. Students meet with their supervisors on a regular basis. The frequency of meeting will vary with different projects and also at different stages of your studies but is likely to be weekly or fortnightly. Meetings and discussions with supervisors should be recorded in your laboratory.
notebook. Consultation with your supervisors is particularly important when you are writing up your thesis. The supervisors should see all chapters with time to make comments and suggest revisions before your deadline for submission.

A full description of the responsibilities of supervisor and student are described in the accompanying document “Responsibilities of Supervisor and Student” and in the Code of Conduct https://www.essex.ac.uk/governance/regulations. As research students you are entitled to six weeks annual leave which must be agreed with your supervisor and the Graduate Office. As detailed in the code of practice any research time conducted outside the UK must be approved by the Head of School. A form must be completed which can be obtained from the Graduate Office.

**Academic Integrity and Academic Offences**

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

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

If you aren’t sure what the conventions are, particularly in relation to referencing, you should ask your department and contact Skills for Success via the Student Services Hub.

More information about academic offences and getting support can be found at:

[www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/academic-offences.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/policies/academic-offences.aspx).

**Submission of Thesis**

**Thesis Submission Pre-Examination**

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

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

They **must** be adequately secured (for example in spring-back binders or comb binding and **not** in ring binders or lever arch box files). They **must not** be overfilled and to avoid all risks of coming open and jeopardising examination, two binders **must** be used, if required. All registration fees and debts must be paid before the thesis can be accepted for submission.

You should submit to the Silberrad Student Centre:

a) **Two** copies of the thesis or dissertation.

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

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

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

All submitted copies of the thesis belong to the University and shall be returned to the candidate following the viva.
Thesis Submission for Award
Following the completion of the examination process, the candidate will be notified via email that in order to gain their award they must submit one electronic version of their thesis to the online Research Repository. Following the receipt of this deposit, the candidate will be awarded their postgraduate research degree.

Thesis Deposit
Detailed thesis deposit instructions to the Repository can be found here: [http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/research-thesis.aspx](http://www.essex.ac.uk/reo/repository/research-thesis.aspx)

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

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

Retention
Your thesis will be made open access when deposited in the online Research Repository. The Thesis Deposit Agreement outlines the availability of the thesis and how it will be stored in the Repository. You may request for an embargo to your thesis, details of which can be found on the intention to submit form.

Full details of the requirements for thesis submission can be found at: [https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/thesis-submission-deposit.pdf](https://www.essex.ac.uk/-/media/documents/about/governance/thesis-submission-deposit.pdf)

Examiners and the Viva
Your supervisor will not normally be present during your viva and will not normally have any contact with your examiners other than to arrange their appointment.

Referencing
Respecting authorship through good academic practice is one of the key values of higher education in the UK.

The University takes academic offences very seriously. You should read the sections of this handbook which refer to referencing, coursework and examinations very carefully.

Referencing is a key academic/scientific skill. It is how you will acknowledge all sources used within a piece of work. You must reference all works used directly (quotes) and indirectly (paraphrasing and summarising).

Referencing allows you to give credit to authors'/researchers' concepts and ideas/results, demonstrate your breadth of reading and knowledge on a subject, direct readers to your sources, and avoid plagiarism.

You should always use the best available sources of evidence, such as peer reviewed journals and recognised books.

Your departmental referencing style is [INSERT REFERENCING STYLE HERE] To find out about your departmental referencing style and for help with referencing, visit the library website: [library.essex.ac.uk/referencing](http://library.essex.ac.uk/referencing), or take the Academic Integrity Moodle course: [https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=5844](https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=5844)
**Extenuating Circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances beyond your control which cause your progress to be negatively impacted upon, including performing less well in your experiments or absent for several weeks. In general, extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect you for any significant period of time.

Your department will review your claim at an Extenuating Circumstances Committee and determine whether it will be accepted or rejected. The Board of Examiners will determine an appropriate course of action and the corresponding methods, to take into account your extenuating circumstances, if appropriate, such as deferring progression decisions.

If you do need to make an extenuating circumstances claim, you should first read the guidance very carefully and seek advice from SU Advice (www.essex.su/advice) or the Student Services Hub (www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/default.aspx). Please be prepared that you may need to include supporting evidence with your claim. Extenuating circumstances claims should be submitted to Emma Revill. You can access the form via our Moodle Page https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=3238

Further information and the full Extenuating Circumstances Policy can be found on the website: https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/ext-circ.aspx
Computers, Learning Technologies and your Information

Computers

Using a campus computer

If you need to use a computer on campus our computer labs are the perfect place to study or work. We also have group study pods which are ideal for group projects. You can find a full list of computers available to use on our website: https://www1.essex.ac.uk/it/labs/usage/. Many labs stay open until late and some are open 24/7. Labs may be booked for teaching, and so it is best to check availability first.

As part of your IT account at Essex, all students have full access to:

- **Office 365**
  Office 365 is an online version of the Microsoft Office suite of programmes. You can access these by logging into your account from anywhere, which means you can use Microsoft programmes from at home too.

- **1TB of OneDrive cloud storage space**
  OneDrive lets you create, edit, and share documents online so you can access them from anywhere in the world and from any device.

- **1 GB of local storage**
  This is known as your M: drive. You can only access this when logged onto a lab computer on campus. Go to 'This PC' and select the M: drive network. If you want to access documents saved here from your personal laptop, you will need to either save them in your OneDrive or transfer the documents in another secure method, such as via USB.

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

IT Help and Guidance

You can search the Student Directory for more IT information, including how-to guides, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to video screencasts.

https://www.essex.ac.uk/student

If you can’t find what you’re looking for, or if you need to talk to someone, then the IT Helpdesk team are here to assist you further. The contact details for your campus Helpdesk can be found online along with the opening times: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/it-services/it-helpdesk

Learning Technologies and Systems

eNROL

The eNROL system is an online tool to review and select available modules specific to a particular course and year of study. The majority of Postgraduate Research students will not need to use eNROL.

eNROL: https://www1.essex.ac.uk/enrol/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2Fenrol%2F
**Moodle**
We use Moodle as our online learning environment, to enhance face-to-face teaching. It lets you get to course materials, and has built-in features to enhance learning such as discussion forums, chat facilities, quizzes, surveys, glossaries and wikis.

https://moodle.essex.ac.uk/

**Talis Aspire**
Talis Aspire is our online reading list system. Use it to find out the details of each week’s reading and to access resources through the library.

https://essex.rl.talis.com/index.html

**Your information**

**Changes to your information**
During your period of study at Essex, you 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. Information about updating your name on your student record is available at: https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/default.aspx

**Keep your information up to date**
During your period of study at Essex, your details may change, including your name. It is really important that your information on our student record database (ESIS) is accurate, so make absolutely sure that if your circumstances change that you let us know. Equally, you may wish to be known by a preferred name. You can add this to your record for staff to use, and find more information about updating your name on your student record at: https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/course-admin/default.aspx

**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. Where possible, we will ask you for your permission to share.

You have a right to ask for copies of information we hold about you.

www.essex.ac.uk/records_management/request

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.

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/records_management/policies/students.aspx
**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. 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.

**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.

https://www.essexstudent.com/representation/

http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/student_representation/student_rep.asp

**Student Voice Groups**

Student Voice Groups (SVGs), formerly known as Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs), are made up of elected 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 academic department/school/centre to consult with students and receive feedback on new proposals.

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/student_representation/SVGs.asp

**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.

There are many satisfaction surveys taking place, to ensure students are happy with the services the University of Essex provides. From time to time you will be invited to participate via an email.

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

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

Student Services Hub

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. Ask us about health and well-being, accommodation, careers services, money matters and much more. Your questions matter and you'll get answers from our team of experts.

Colchester: askthehub@essex.ac.uk / 01206 874000
Southend: askthehub-sc@essex.ac.uk / 01702 328444
Loughton: askthehub-lc@essex.ac.uk / 020 8508 5983

Health Centre

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

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

Disability and emotional wellbeing

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

You can find out about the support we offer here:

www.essex.ac.uk/students/contact/help.aspx

UK students may be eligible for a Disabled Students’ Allowance grant. See our webpages for more information, including application forms and key changes:

www.essex.ac.uk/students/disability/funding.aspx

Your Student Services Hub provides advice, information and support on a range of health and wellbeing issues.

www.essex.ac.uk/students/health

Counselling services

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

Validium

The University works in partnership with an organisation called Validium to offer short-term counselling to help you explore and work through problems and difficulties that are causing distress and interfering with your life at University.
You might be worried, depressed, confused or feeling bad about yourself. There might be a problem in your family, friendships or with your partner, or you might be experiencing difficulties with your work and exams. Counselling can provide a safe space for you to talk through and explore your feelings.

You can also contact the Validium 24-hour Student Wellbeing Support Line. You will be able to have an initial chat, in confidence, about the difficulties you're experiencing and the support available to you.

Call **0800 970 5020** or **+44 141 271 7168**.

**Chat with Charlie**
Chat with Charlie offers online mental health support every evening between 6pm – 10pm. You can get support with exam stress, relationships, low mood, anxiety or anything else which may be troubling you, however big or small it may seem.

Log on just to chat or find out how to get additional support. For more information, contact wellbeing@essex.ac.uk.

https://mnessexmind.org/chat-with-charlie/

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

www.essex.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/nightline.aspx

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, on the website: https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/mental-and-emotional-health/counselling

**Money management**
If you get into financial difficulty you should get help and talk to someone as soon as possible. The sooner your problem is identified, the sooner it can be solved. Advisers in our Student Services Hub and our independent SU Advice can listen and talk you through the issues you are experiencing.

www.essex.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/money/

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

www.essex.su/advice

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

Southend students – suacsou@essex.ac.uk, 01702 328235 (term time only)
Residence Life
Our Residence Life team is here to help you settle in and support you during your time living on campus. Each residents’ assistant (RA) is assigned an area and will aim to get to know you and organise a range of social activities. Plus they can help if you’ve got any concerns or complaints. Residence Life operates outside of office hours when other University support services are closed.

https://www.essex.ac.uk/life/accommodation/living-on-campus/residence-life

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.

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

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

https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/report/report-harassment
https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/equality-and-diversity
https://www.essex.ac.uk/welcome

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.

https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/student-communities
https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/access-and-disability

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

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

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).

https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/emergencies/fire-emergency-action
https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/fire-safety/peep

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

https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/health-and-safety/electrical-safety
You will find further health and safety information connected with your studies and life on our campuses in the Student Directory under health, safety and wellbeing.

https://www.essex.ac.uk/student

If you have any health and safety concerns or need to report an incident, please do get in touch:

https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/report

**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.

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/experience/complaints.aspx
Student Development

Careers Services
Get valuable, one-to-one advice from careers specialists throughout your time at Essex and beyond. You can access our services via the Student Services Hub or log in to CareerHub+ whether you have one hundred questions or just don’t know where to start! We offer one-to-one advice and guidance, job-hunting workshops, CV and job application reviews, and online services for creating CVs, interview preparation and job vacancies. www.essex.ac.uk/careers You can also undertake many courses that include a Placement year – for more information, see your department handbook and email placements@essex.ac.uk.

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

Big Essex Award
The University’s Big Essex Award gives you recognition for all your extra-curricular achievements. All of your Big Essex Award activities can be recorded through GradIntel. Get involved and get ahead of the game.
www.essex.ac.uk/careers/bige

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

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

GradIntel
Postgraduate students do not currently have access to the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR); this is only available for undergraduate students. However, you can use GradIntel to record any extra-curricular activities you may be involved in through the Big Essex Awards but not full access to your academic achievements.


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

Requesting 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 https://www.essex.ac.uk/alumni

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

Spread your wings graduand; but you can always come back! As an alumnus of Essex, you can take advantage of generous discounts on further postgraduate qualifications or research degrees should you chose to return to study at Essex now, or at any time in the future.

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/masters/loyalty/

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

https://www.essex.ac.uk/postgraduate-research-degrees

www.essex.ac.uk/coursefinder