



University of Essex

Your studies

School of Life Sciences

Postgraduate Taught

Student Handbook 2024-25



Welcome

Welcome to the School of Life Sciences and thank you for choosing to study with us.



Welcome to the School of Life Sciences. The School is a rich community of research, teaching, technical, and administrative staff, and postgraduate and undergraduate students, working together to provide learning, research and scholarship opportunities. You join in this community through your study, your participation in lectures/seminars and through your daily interaction with staff. We hope that your experience here will confirm the reputation of the School as a friendly, informal but supportive place in which to work and study, and that you will contribute positively to that atmosphere.

Undertaking a degree course is a major and important step in life, both in terms of personal development and in career planning. Studying for a degree is also a very complex activity, and science degrees in particular are very busy, because of the practical components. You may have concerns and questions about the organisation of your degree course, what is expected of you as a postgraduate student, what is the structure of the degree, what facilities are available, who to see, how is your work assessed etc.

The Postgraduate Taught Student Handbook should provide answers to many of your questions and clarify much about the organisation of the MSc Courses and the School. We hope that your time here will be stimulating and rewarding, and that you will use

the opportunities and facilities of the University and School to the full, to achieve your goals.

Professor Terence McGenity

Head of School



I am pleased to welcome you on your degree course for an exciting year of learning. This is an exciting time for you, and an important new chapter in your personal and professional development, which shall equip you with the skills needed in today's and tomorrow's dynamic academia and industry job markets.

Our labs and teaching rooms are fitted with state-of-the-art equipment and you will be immersed in an active research environment, with our lecturers providing research-led education with direct links to undergoing research in the School of Life Sciences. Our staff are looking forward to delivering a personalised hands-on experience in the lab, and to greeting you in lectures and tutorials, with the aim to provide an experience that brings out the best in you, and facilitates suitable cohort activities and networking opportunities.

We would like you to be active and contributing members of your learning environment and are prepared to listen to your suggestions. We hope that you stay inquisitive and utilise the opportunities that our inclusive postgraduate learning experience offers to you, and we are here to assist you on this journey!

Professor Vassiliy Bavro

Graduate Director (Taught)

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Introduction

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

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

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

Things might have to change and adapt over the year, so make sure that you're checking online and keeping in touch with your department or school for the latest updates. The [Student Directory](#) contains a wealth of other helpful sources of information which you may also find useful.

Practicalities and getting started

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

Registration (new students)

As a new student, you must complete the [registration process](#) in order to begin your studies with us. Registration is not only a formal procedure of enrolling you into the University, but also, connects you to a number of vital systems which allow you to access your online Welcome and Induction information and start your studies. Because of this, you'll be asked to complete compulsory steps, such as activating your Essex IT account, provide key information about you as part of Online Registration (including payment of fees where required), complete online Right to Study checks and attend an in-person Right to Study Check on campus where you will collect your Student Registration Card. Once you've completed these steps, you'll be able to begin attending teaching and engage with your course.

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

Registration (returning students)

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

If you are a student undertaking studies with us with a form of immigration permission, in some instances you may be required to undertake an additional Right to Study Check, before being permitted to re-register. This may be the case if one or more of your documents have expired, your immigration status has changed, or you have changed programme and have been required to obtain a new visa. You will be

contacted by our International Services Team if you need to complete an additional check.

Right to study

The University must ensure all students have the right to study at the University of Essex for the whole duration of their course. If you were born outside the UK or Republic of Ireland, your [immigration permission](#) to study in the UK will be checked via the online Right to Study system, when you first arrive on campus, and as necessary thereafter. Students have a duty to maintain valid UK immigration permission that allows study for the duration of their course, failure to do so may lead to withdrawal from the University under the [University's General Regulations](#).

Students with sponsored immigration permission

The University is a Student Sponsor with a track record of compliance and must ensure we remain compliant to retain our sponsor status. Students with a Student visa have [additional responsibilities](#) to the University and the Home Office. There will be conditions attached to your visa that restrict what you can do in the UK, breaking any of the conditions may mean you can't remain in the UK and complete your course. You are expected to attend your in-person teaching events and this will be monitored throughout your course. If your [attendance and engagement](#) fall below expected levels or you are absent without permission for a period of time this is likely to impact on the University's ability to continue to sponsor your Student immigration permission. The International Services Team can provide [immigration information and advice](#) throughout your studies.

Choosing your modules

You may have module options to select as part of your course structure. If you do, you must select the modules you wish to enrol on before the academic year begins. You can view and choose your specific options through the [eNROL system](#). New students can do so from the end of August and returning students can from the April preceding the next academic year. Early module enrolment ensures that timetables can be scheduled effectively. We'll talk more about how you might decide which modules to take in the [Learning and Teaching](#) section of this Handbook.

Explore your campus

There is a broad range of [facilities](#) across each of our campuses to support your experience at Essex, whether in person or virtually. For the latest information, see the updates on campus [services on campus](#).

Get connected

Your IT account

You will need to set up [your Essex IT account](#). This will give you access to your Essex email, [Moodle](#), campus wifi, campus computers and many more digital resources. When you set up your account, you will need to register an external email address and passphrase so that if you forget your Essex password you can also reset it using these details. If you have forgotten those also, you should contact the [IT Helpdesk](#). Make sure you keep your password safe and do not share it with others.

For a quick rundown of what you need when you first start, head to the [Getting Started with IT guide](#) on the Student Directory.

Campus wifi

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

Essex apps

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

MyEssex

[MyEssex](#) is your online account and can only be accessed via an internet browser. This is different to your applicant portal – you can use MyEssex to view your timetable, update your personal details, request replacement student cards or supporting documents, monitor your course progress, let us know if you'll miss a lecture or class, contact the Student Services Hub, and much more.

Find Your Way

When on campus, we know that finding your way can be challenging to start with. Our Colchester campus in particular can be difficult to navigate with a historically complex room numbering system! [FindYourWay](#) is our interactive campus map app designed to get you from A to B on either the Colchester or Southend campuses with quick and easy directions. You can download this app on your phone or tablet for free!

Working while studying

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

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

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

Your personal belongings

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

The Essex Experience

We are proud of our inclusive and international community. Our campuses are places where every single person can feel they belong and where you can find the world in one place. We have created a [Student Charter](#) as a pledge that every student signs up to when they join us. By signing up, you promise to uphold our values and to behave

in ways that strengthen and support our community. We promise to support you at every stage of your journey with us.

Embracing our values

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

Equality, diversity and inclusion

The University recognises the value of diversity and is committed to providing equal opportunities for both students and staff. Our students and staff are treated with dignity and respect on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, while still having the relevant impact and implications associated with race, ethnic or national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socio-economic background, family circumstances, religious or political beliefs and affiliations, or any other identity-forming characteristics, taken into consideration as necessary to ensure equal opportunity.

The University is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this [policy](#) is fully effective.

The School of Life Sciences has a large and vibrant community of scientists working at all levels in research, teaching, management and outreach. The University was awarded the Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award in November 2013 in recognition of its continuing work to support gender equality in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects and the School of Life Sciences achieved an Athena SWAN Silver Departmental Award in October 2020. We believe equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to our work, and the School has a webpage on Equality and Inclusion with a range of information and resources for staff and students.

Student communities

We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and inclusive community. We recognise the value of diversity and are committed to equality of opportunity within the University.

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

Environmental Sustainability for All

The University of Essex is committed to reducing its environmental impact by reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2035. The Sustainability team works on a range of projects such as like carbon reduction, reuse and recycling, and sustainable education. During your time at Essex there are extracurricular opportunities for you to learn more about sustainable development and equip you with the skills and knowledge that will help you in your future choices – whether that's further study or the start of your career. Be sure to check your programme modules if you're keen to take environmentally focused course options. You can access extra-curricular activities through Chart My Path and the vTeam, plus you can join the Students for Sustainability Group. Your participation in all additional events is recorded on [Higher Education Achievement Record](#) (HEAR), your online CV. There are easy everyday habits to help you do your bit too – bring your own takeaway cup to cafes on campus for a discount and remember your bottle to refill at one of our many water coolers. There are lots of recycling bins across our campuses to encourage mindfulness when disposing of your waste. If you're living on campus, be sure to switch off lights and chargers when not in use, and keep windows closed in colder months when the heating is on. For any more information, head to the sustainability pages on the Essex website. If you have questions or an idea for a sustainability event or project of your own contact the Sustainability team: sustainability@essex.ac.uk. Follow us on Instagram: @uoe_susandgrounds and [LinkedIn](#).

Essex Sport

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

[Join Essex Sport](#) and be part of something bigger. We're a community of like-minded individuals who are dedicated to enriching your experience at University of Essex. By fuelling your passion for all things active we help you make new friends, find new interests and be the best you. Whatever your sport, whatever your level, from fan to [professional athlete](#), we've got a place for you.

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

Students' Union

We're famous for our [Students' Union at Essex](#), and for good reason. Here you're not just a member of a normal Students' Union; you're part of a family. We work hard to support our PGT community, and are here from day one to the moment you graduate to support you in any way we can.

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

Get involved!

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

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

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

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

Chart My Path

Use Chart My Path to discover over 200 extracurricular activities offered at Essex, and get recommendations personalised to you. Log into [GradIntelligence](#) to get started.

Essex spirit, social media and what's on?

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

Follow us on social:



/uniofessex



/uniessex



/Uni_of_Essex



/uniofessex



/uniessex



/@uniessexonline



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

About the School of Life Sciences


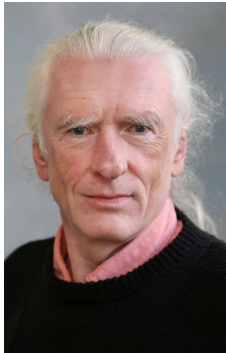
Meet the team



A full list of all staff can be found on the [School's webpages](#). Below is a summary of the roles of staff that can help you with a variety of areas during your time at Essex. ¹




Academic Staff

<p><u>Prof Vassiliy Bavro</u></p> <p>Postgraduate Taught Director</p> 	<p>Professor Vassiliy Bavro is the Postgraduate Taught Director.</p> <p>He oversees the management of all aspects postgraduate teaching in the School. Professor Bavro can also advise on Board of Examiners' outcomes and appeals and matters relating to the PGT Student Voice Group.</p> <p>Link to Research Area.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.19</p> <p>E-mail: v.bavro@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 2243</p>
<p><u>Dr Natalie Hicks</u></p> <p>MSc Tropical Marine Biology Course Director.</p> 	<p>Dr Natalie Hicks is the MSc Tropical Marine Biology Course Director. You can contact Natalie regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.3.08</p> <p>E-mail: natalie.hicks@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 3308</p>
<p><u>Dr Michael Steinke</u></p>		<p>Office: 3SW.4.10</p>

¹ Department/school information in this Handbook is correct at time of publication but there may be role changes within the department/school throughout the Academic Year. Students should consult staffing details held online for the most up-to-date information.

<p>MSc Marine Science and Sustainable Development Course Director.</p> 	<p>Dr Michael Steinke is the MSc Marine Science and Sustainable Development Course Director. You can contact him regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area.</p>	<p>E-mail: msteinke@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 3318</p>
<p><u>Dr Dima Svistunenko</u></p> <p>MSc Biotechnology Course Director</p> 	<p>Dr Dima Svistunenko is the MSc Biotechnology Course Director. You can contact him regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.05</p> <p>E-mail: svist@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 3149</p>
<p><u>Dr Andrea Mohr</u></p> <p>MSc Cancer Biology Course Director</p>	<p>Dr Andrea Mohr is the MSc Cancer Biology Course Director. You can contact her regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission,</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.15</p> <p>E-mail: amohr@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 2036</p>

	<p>withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area.</p>	
<p><u>Dr Ralf Zwacka</u></p> <p>MSc Molecular Medicine Course Director</p> 	<p>Dr Ralf Zwacka is the Director of Education for the School. He oversees the management of all aspects of undergraduate and postgraduate taught teaching in the School.</p> <p>Dr Ralf Zwacka is also the MSc Molecular Medicine Course Director. You can contact him regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.15</p> <p>E-mail: rzwacka@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 2036</p>
<p><u>Dr Antonio Marco</u></p> <p>MSc Health Genomics Course Director</p>	<p>Dr Antonio Marco is the MSc Health Genomics Course Director. You can contact him regarding attendance and progress, extenuating circumstances, requests for</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.3.06</p> <p>Email: amarco@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 3339</p>

	<p>intermission, withdrawal and changes of course approval.</p> <p>Link to Research Area.</p>	
<p><u>Dr Paul Dobbin</u></p> <p>Senior Tutor</p> 	<p>Dr Paul Dobbin is the Senior Tutor for the School. He provides pastoral support and advice to students who have issues that are affecting their studies. Paul can also be a point of contact if you do not want to approach your MSc Course Director.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.11</p> <p>Email: pdobbin@essex.ac.uk</p> <p>Tel: 01206 87 4867</p>
<p><u>Dr Angela Pine</u></p> <p>Disability Liaison Officer</p> 	<p>Dr Angela Pine is the School's Disability Liaison Officer (SDLO). If you have a disability, medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty Angela is the School representative who can help you to access your studies.</p>	<p>Office: 3SW.5.49</p> <p>Email: acpine@essex.ac.uk</p>

Professional Services Staff

<u>Maz Brook</u> School Manager	<p>The School Manager is the Professional Services Lead, with responsibility for managing educational, technical and research support in the School.</p>	Office: 3SW.4.02 Email: maz@essex.ac.uk Tel: 01206 87 2248
<u>Kathryn Hills</u> Education Services Manager (Part-time - Tue, Wed, Thur)	<p>Kathryn leads the Postgraduate Taught administrative support team in the School. She is also the School's Examinations Officer and can help with queries about rules of assessment, extenuating circumstances and student progress.</p>	Office: 3SW.4.04 Email: khills@essex.ac.uk Tel: 01206 874459
<u>Nicola Reason</u> <u>Postgraduate Taught Administrator</u> (Part time – Mon, Tue & Wed am)	<p>Nicola handles all matters relating to the administration of postgraduate taught students and is your first point of call for general and administrative enquires and matters relating to postgraduate coursework submission and marks. She is also secretary to the PGT Student Voice Group meetings.</p>	Office: 3SW.4.00 Email: lspgt@essex.ac.uk Tel: 01206 87 2051
<u>Tanya Devine</u> Postgraduate Taught Administrator (Part-time: Tue, Wed, Thur)	<p>Tanya handles all matters relating to the administration of postgraduate taught students and is your first point of call for general and administrative enquires and matters relating to postgraduate coursework submission and marks. She is also secretary to</p>	Office: 3SW.4.00 Email: lspgt@essex.ac.uk Tel: 01206 87 2051

	the PGT Student Voice Group meetings.	
<u>Kerry Alban</u> School Office Administrator	Kerry provides support to the School's Plagiarism Officer.	Office: 3SW.4.00 Email: kerrya@essex.ac.uk Tel: 01206 87 4074
Timetabling and Academic Administrator	You should contact the Timetabling and Academic Administrator with any issues you experience with your timetable.	Office: 3SW.4.00 Email: bstimetb@essex.ac.uk Tel: 01206 87 6380

Teaching staff and support

All teaching staff hold regular weekly academic support hours during term time. This is a time when you can meet with them about anything to do with your modules, from difficulties you might be having with your seminar readings, to discussions about feedback on your coursework. Students will be advised of the MSc Course Directors/Postgraduate Taught Director academic support hours by e-mail at the beginning of the Autumn Term.

Please note that academic staff do not hold regular academic support hours during the vacations, and may, on occasions, be away from the University on research trips and visits. Therefore, if you need to get in touch with them during the vacation periods, you should email them in the first instance.

Module Tutors

There are dedicated Module Tutors to support students for each module. The module tutor for each module can be found on Moodle. If you have a specific study question please contact the relevant [module tutor](#).

Your Personal Tutor

All undergraduate and postgraduate taught students have a Personal Tutor who will meet you soon after you arrive, and regularly throughout your course. Your Personal Tutor will be a member of academic staff and is someone you talk to about your course or any difficulties that may encounter. They can recommend and direct you to other support services that might be able to further help and support you. You can find out who your Personal Tutor is through [MyEssex](#).

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

Staff research interests

Research in the School is organised into four main groups:

- Genomics and Computational Biology
- Ecology and Environmental Microbiology
- Protein Structure and Mechanisms of Disease
- Plant Productivity.

Academic staff are actively engaged in research on topics across a wide spectrum, including: agricultural sustainability; coral reef ecology; virology and immunology; molecular complications of diabetes; oxidative stress; photosynthetic metabolism and plant responses to environmental stresses. Specific research interests for each academic staff member can also be found on their [Staff Profile page](#).

If you are interested in finding out more see the webpage detailing [our research](#).

Departmental/school 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.

Life Sciences Common Room

The School Common Room (3SW.4.11) is located on floor 4 of the School (turn left past the fish tank and it is on your left further down the corridor and is for the use of all students. It has tea and coffee making facilities, a microwave, fridge and a seating area.

Postgraduate training

Postgraduate Taught students are provided with structured training throughout their scheme of study. The Department/School offers a wide range of postgraduate taught modules that either explore particular fields and concepts or offer specific training in research methods and skills. Students should peruse the modules available and discuss with the Graduate Director Taught which of these modules would be suitable.

Printing, photocopying and scanning

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

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

Noticeboards

Every department and school has their own noticeboard providing information on staff, courses and classes, updates, careers, events and opportunities. The Postgraduate Taught Noticeboard is located outside the School Postgraduate Office (Room 3SW.4.00A).

Departmental/school prizes

Each year we are pleased to award prizes signifying excellence. The following prizes are available for award to postgraduate taught students:

- The Biotechnology Prize – Awarded for the most outstanding performance by an MSc Biotechnology student
- The Cancer Biology Prize – Awarded for the most outstanding performance by an MSc Cancer Biology student
- The Molecular Medicine Prize – Awarded for the most outstanding performance by an MSc Molecular Medicine student
- The Marine Biology Prize – Awarded for the most outstanding performance by an MSc Tropical Marine Biology student

Communications

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

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

Social media

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)

The use of personal devices

You can use laptops and tablet PCs during teaching classes for purposes related to the class you are attending. You should refrain from using your mobile phone during all teaching events, except in cases where a lecturer uses a programme which requires these devices to be switched on for participation.

Learning and teaching

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

The academic year

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

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

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

Some courses have slightly different term dates. However, you will find that all campus activities and events make reference to the standard academic year terms and schedule noted above.

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

My course

Each course at the University has its own syllabus, full details of which, including the aims and learning outcomes of your course, can be found in the University's [Programme Specifications Catalogue](#).

Your own course structure, including your specific programme specification, can be found in the MyStudy section of your [MyEssex](#) homepage.

Credits

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

Learning outcomes

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

Grade boundaries

On most Masters degrees, an overall mark of 50 is a pass. An overall mark of 60 is classed as a pass with merit, and an overall mark of 70 is classed as a pass with distinction. Methods for calculating your final postgraduate award classification vary across awards and may depend on other factors. Full details are set out in the [Rules of Assessment](#).

Module enrolment

Most modules taught reflect the individual research interests of members of our academic staff. New modules are regularly explored, researched and developed in collaboration with the University's Quality and Academic Development Team to expand our transformative educational offering at Essex.

The University provide [further guidance](#) on choosing modules, and meetings for first and second-year students will be held by your department or school where students can discuss their choices with their Personal Tutor. Your preferred choices must be submitted prior to the start of term through the [eNROL](#) system.

A full list of modules available can be found on this [webpage](#).

Changing modules

In instances where you need to make a change to your module choice, you may do so up until the second week of the Autumn Term. If you wish to change an optional module after the deadline, you should seek advice from the Department or School Office that runs the particular module that you may wish to change to.

Late changes may be permitted but will be subject to the approval of the department that runs the module and, in some cases, the relevant Dean. Late changes of modules that run for one term or less will not usually be permitted. Students may not change modules that are core or compulsory for the course for which they are registered.

Module Directors

Module Directors are responsible for individual modules. They design, teach and examine them. They monitor student progress and can also talk to students about any related academic issues.

Fitness to practise

[Fitness to practise](#) is only applicable to students on certain professional courses (such as nursing or social work) and is designed to ensure and regulate that a student is suitable for engagement in the relevant profession.

Study and Wellbeing Intervention Policy and Procedure

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

Employability modules

The BS985-7-AP (Professional Skills and the Business of Biosciences) module for MSc Biotechnology, MSc Cancer Biology and MSc Molecular Medicine provides students with insight into the functioning of Biotechnology and Bio-Pharmaceutical industries and have an introduction to some of the most timely and contentious topics in Biotechnology, Cancer Biology and Molecular Medicine and related subject areas. This will be underpinned by the development of transferable professional and research skills to enhance students' chances of success when seeking employment in the field. The ability to critically analyse, integrate and communicate in a multidisciplinary research environment provides the foundation for students' successful careers.

The BS708-7-AP (Professional Skills in Tropical Marine Biology) module will equip students with an ability to utilise modern learning technologies, secure employment, and to plan, integrate and communicate in a multidisciplinary research environment. Students will build a portfolio of professional skills that assist with finding employment along various career paths after postgraduate education. A combination of seminars and workshops is provided to include CV and application clinics, facilitate expedition planning, introduce health-and safety aspects of practical work, and increase numeracy skills.

Study Abroad

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

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

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

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

Work Placements

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

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

Upon successfully securing a placement you need to inform the Industry Engagement and Placements team by contacting placements@essex.ac.uk.

This is required to begin the placement approval process. Please note without approval from the Industry Engagement and Placement team you will be unauthorised to commence a placement.

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

DBS checks for placements

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

Safeguarding training

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

Module materials

Online reading lists for your modules can be found via the module Moodle page alongside other information and module materials.

Teaching timetable

Every student has a [personal timetable](#) published at the start of term which shows when and where your teaching is taking place, and Zoom links if teaching online. You can access your timetable on most mobile devices, including smart phones and tablets. You will need to have registered and activated your University of Essex log-in and selected all of your modules (if applicable) before you will be able to access your teaching timetable.

If you wish to report a timetable clash or request a class change, you should do so via the [online timetable](#).

During Welcome Week (week 1) you may find that your timetable is blank as teaching normally commences week 2. **Please be aware that there may be changes to the**

location of teaching during the year, so regularly check your personal [online timetable and Essex email](#) 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 on the [University's website](#).

Recording your attendance

We monitor your attendance at teaching sessions on campus using your [student card](#) and an electronic system of card readers. You must tap-in at a reader within 15 minutes of the teaching session start time for your attendance to be recorded accurately. Your attendance at online teaching sessions is monitored by reviewing your logins to sessions on Zoom. Once again you must log in within 15 minutes of the event start time for your attendance to be recorded. You are expected to attend all of your mandatory sessions on [your individual timetable](#) and [report an absence](#) if you are unable to do so. If you have a Student visa, you must attend all your timetabled teaching events in-person where this is available. Attendance at a teaching event via Zoom where the session was also delivered in-person will count as failure to attend. If you fall below the Home Office expectations we **must** take action, and this can include withdrawing our visa sponsorship.

If you have a Student visa, your academic engagement will also be monitored during your dissertation period to ensure you maintain regular in-person contact with your dissertation supervisor.

It is your responsibility to remember your student registration card and to tap-in correctly. [Lost or faulty cards](#) can be replaced at the Student Services Hub.

Please contact your Personal Tutor, department/school staff or the [Student Services Hub](#) for advice and support, particularly if you are going to be absent for several weeks.

Making changes to your study

Changing your course

If you are thinking about changing course, you will need to do so by a [certain date](#) and should first speak to your department or school, and personal tutor. They will be able

to provide advice about the things you should [consider](#) before changing your course. If you are thinking of undertaking a placement year, you should check the requirements for these programmes by contacting the [Industry and Placements](#) Team.

If you are studying a course where an ATAS certificate is required and there are changes to your course. Supervisor or course length, you may need a new ATAS certificate. Please contact the [International Services Team](#) if you have any questions.

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

Thinking of leaving or taking a break?

You may experience doubts at some point during your studies, if you're thinking about leaving Essex, we're here to support you and give you the advice you need to help you make an informed choice. You can contact your department or school, Personal Tutor or Student Services Hub to speak in confidence about your concerns, and also the [different options available to you](#) and the impact they may have.

You can find information on the visa implications of your decision on our [Immigration webpages](#). If you have any further questions, you should contact the [International Services Team](#). You should also be aware of how your funding may be impacted if you choose to take a break. You can do this by contacting the Funding Team – funding@essex.ac.uk.

Library and Cultural Services

Library Services

The Library aims to provide all the resources you will need to succeed in your course, via online reading lists and access to extensive collections of books, journals and a variety of other resources, both online and on our shelves.

The Library team can help you learn how to search effectively so you can find appropriate resources for your assignments. They can also provide advice on [referencing](#), academic integrity, evaluating sources and more. Our [Skills at Library](#) guide provides a range of online support in these areas, and our [subject guides](#) provide subject-specific guidance and resource recommendations.

In addition, the Library offers a programme of '[Workshops at Library](#)' sessions which cover key information and research skills, including searching for information, checking and evaluating sources, using AI ethically and referencing. The Library provides specific support for PGT students through the '[On Track for your Masters](#)' series, an annual programme of workshops to help you with a whole range of research skills, academic writing, and mathematics and statistical analysis support to help you complete your final project.

The Library is also home to a number of Special Collections which support the delivery of object-based learning across a variety of courses, and provide primary source material for research across many subject areas. We are home to two major art collections; [ESCALA](#) (the Essex Collection of Art from Latin America) and the [University Art Collection](#). Our Colchester Campus library houses [Special Collections](#), over 70 individual archives containing primary source materials and collections covering a variety of subjects and time periods. The collections provide a valuable resource for teaching, through object based learning and other sessions, and for research.

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

At our Colchester Campus, the **Albert Sloman Library** on Square 5 has a variety of study spaces, including individual and group work areas and bookable study pods and rooms. There is also a dedicated Postgraduate Study Room on the ground floor that is open 24/7 and accessible to postgraduate students via your student ID card. 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 experienced Library staff to help you through your studies and into whatever you choose to do after graduation. The Albert Sloman Library is open 24/7 during term time and offers a laptop loans service which is also available 24 hours a day.

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

Art Exchange

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

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

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

We want everyone to get involved and enjoy great art.

Lakeside Theatre

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

We produce a programme of diverse, dynamic and accessible live performances of theatre, music, comedy, dance, workshops, artist development and live art for audiences on and off campus. It is a learning and social experience for students that will deliver key life skills to enable them to respond to a rapidly changing world with creativity and personal and cultural confidence. Students' wellbeing remains at the

forefront of what we do which is why we provide opportunities for enjoyment, inspiration and creativity.

We believe that theatre is for everyone, you don't have to be studying drama or theatre studies to take part in or develop as an actor, producer, director, technician, or performer. That's why we have our [Homegrown Programme](#), to develop theatre makers at the University of Essex. Students, researchers, staff and alumni of the university can join the programme at any stage in their journey for support, guidance and opportunity to become a performing arts professional. Keep an eye out for our workshops and for when applications open up to our [Homegrown Studio Season](#), where you can perform on our stage!

The theatre and technical facilities are kept up to date, for student use in education and further skill building in modern practices nationally and internationally.

Publish with the Essex Student Journal

Publishing your writing with [the Essex Student Journal](#) provides the opportunity for you to develop your writing skills, showcase your work, and gain valuable experience in academic publishing and the peer review process. All PGT students can submit academic or creative writing regardless of your experience.

Our multi-disciplinary journal is run by and for students at the University, publishing the hard work of our students and giving you the ability to improve your writing through feedback from peer reviewers.

Not all universities have a Student Journal - this is a unique opportunity for you to publish a paper in your name and build your academic portfolio early in your career. We accept a wide range of submissions including creative writing, essays, case studies, research papers, dissertations, and academic blog posts.

If you are going on to be a PGR student at the University, you can become a peer reviewer for the Journal, developing vital analytical and feedback skills required for any future career.

Join our community of student writers to develop new skills and the best practices in writing. Find out more about the Essex Student Journal and embark on your academic

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

Academic skills support

Skills for Success are here to support you with everything that you need to do well in your studies that is not directly related to your course content – in other words, the skills that you need to be successful. 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, and provide a range of embedded teaching, [workshops](#) and [1:1s](#) on:

- [Academic writing](#)
- [Maths and stats](#)
- [Digital Skills](#)
- [Research](#) and [referencing](#)
- [English language](#)
- [Exam revision](#)

For more information, please contact skills@essex.ac.uk.

Departmental/School support

If you require extra support to develop your academic skills, you should discuss your needs with the relevant Module Supervisor, your Personal Tutor or the Course Director.

Proofreading services

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

All students should ensure that any agreement entered into with a proofreader conforms to the [University's policy and guidance on proofreading](#).

Language classes

Academic English support classes

Skills for Success runs a range of [Academic English support classes](#) throughout the year, which all new students who have English as an additional language are invited to enrol on. These classes are free, voluntary and designed to help students improve their language proficiency and maximise their existing language skills in an academic context.

Options include 8 week or 4 week modules and one-off, bookable sessions. You will be emailed on registration, or can contact us at any time at skills@essex.ac.uk.

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

The [Department of Language and Linguistics](#) offers the wider University of Essex community the chance to improve their English language skills through our [General English Classes](#). These classes are available to:

- Dependants and close family members of students and staff at the University of Essex
- International staff at Essex who may want to work on their general English and fluency skills
- International students currently studying at UEIC Kaplan
- International students currently studying at both UG and PG level at Essex who wish to develop their language skills

The classes, which take place at the Colchester Campus, will enable you to meet people from other countries and cultures and will help you develop your language skills. These classes are free and are taught at three basic levels: Beginner (A1/A2), Intermediate (B1/B2) and Advanced (C1/C2) and will focus on listening, speaking, reading and writing. Throughout the course, you will have a unique opportunity to

develop your conversation skills, by reflecting on real-life examples of how language is used in context.

Learning a language

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

Assessment and Academic Integrity

All schools and departments at the University 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.

Rules of Assessment

The [Rules of Assessment](#) are used to calculate your results. There is a main set of rules for [Masters](#) and other [postgraduate award courses](#), but some departments or schools also have [additional variations](#) which can be found alongside the Rules of Assessment for your year of entry.

In the School of Life Sciences, we do not have a variation to the Rules of Assessment:

Each module you take has a credit value which you are awarded if you successfully complete the module. You need to obtain a certain number of credits to be awarded your degree, and the Rules of Assessment and the Framework for undergraduate courses give you more information about this.

The following is only a summary of the key points. You should read the rules and make sure you understand them. If you need advice, ask your personal tutor, departmental administrators, or SU Advice.

Core, compulsory and optional modules

To understand the requirements to pass your course, you need to know the status of the modules that you are taking. You can find details of the status of your modules in Section C of your programme specification via [My Essex](#).

Core	You must take this module	Must pass this module. No failure can be permitted.
Compulsory	You must take this module	There might be limited opportunities to continue on the course/be eligible for the degree if you fail it.
Optional	You can choose which module to study	There might be limited opportunities to continue on the course/be eligible for the degree if you fail it.

Most modules in each year must be passed, with only a small number of credits, if any, being allowed to be failed in the degree. [The Rules of Assessment](#) set out the criteria for the condonement of failed non-core modules.

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.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT are open-access online tools that allow users to receive a detailed, fluent, and well-written response in a matter of seconds. Guidance for students on the acceptable use of AI is provided [here](#). 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, using Artificial Intelligence such as ChatGPT to write all or part of an assignment unless specifically permitted to do so, falsifying data or evidence, and communicating with another candidate in an examination.

Methods of assessment in the School of Life Sciences

Whether a module is core, compulsory or optional, all methods of assessment are compulsory. If you do not complete coursework or attend examinations, and do not have extenuating circumstances to support your non-submission or absence, then you are at risk of being withdrawn from the University.

A variety of types of assessment are used in the School of Life Sciences. The categories for Coursework are:

- Essays
- Worksheets, data analysis and interpretation (DAI) exercises
- Practical field or lab reports: including SPF (Scientific Paper Format) reports
- Posters
- Oral presentations
- Web-based, pod or vodcast productions
- Writing summaries, popular scientific articles
- In class tests

The details of assessments are given in the Module Handbooks. We use defined marks criteria to mark all assessments (see 'Marking' section). You should study the marks criteria carefully to fully understand what is expected of you for each assignment. The marks criteria will also be provided in the Module Handbook on Moodle.

Coursework

Coursework is compulsory in all modules and failure to participate in coursework is interpreted as evidence of lack of academic progress. Your academic progress is monitored throughout the year. In severe cases, students with poor academic progress can be required to withdraw from the University (even before the final examinations).

Assignment and Essay Length

Part of your training in writing assignments is to produce a piece of work by a given deadline and conforming to a specified length. The work should be clear, comprehensive and concise and should answer the question. Significantly exceeding the word limit is a way of seeking an unfair advantage. When a word limit is set all

students are expected to submit work within the limit and provide a word count on the title page. The word count should include all the main text but exclude figures, tables and the reference list.

Staff will pay strict attention to word limits. If you have a particular problem with the word limit, you should discuss your difficulties with the member of staff who set the work. If your work exceeds the word limit, it may not be concise or well-focussed on the question and will require editing. If your work is significantly (>10%) below the word limit it is likely that you will not have covered the material in sufficient depth and you may receive a lower mark as a consequence.

Preparation of assignments

You will be informed of assignment deadlines in the module handbooks and should manage the preparation and timely submission of your assignments. In some cases, specific teaching events are provided to discuss your progress and give you the opportunity to ask questions and discuss your approach.

Academic Writing Support

How to Approach Writing an Essay

An essay should be a well-structured and well-reasoned written argument answering a particular question. It should not only help others to assess how much you understand about a particular topic, but also act as a piece of creative work that enables you to explain your point of view about a subject area or helps you explore or develop your widening knowledge base.

When you are asked to write an essay, the first step is to read the title carefully and identify what exactly it is you are being asked to write. You should identify the key words in the question and properly understand what the question is asking and how you should write the essay.

The definitions of common 'process' words used in essay questions are listed below:

Compare

Look for and explain similarities and differences between arguments/approaches, and reach a conclusion about which is preferable.

Contrast

Set different ideas or concepts in opposition in order to bring out and discuss differences.

Criticise

Give your reasoned and well-informed judgement or opinion about the merit of theories, concepts or accepted truths, discussing the evidence.

Define

Set down the precise meaning of a word, phrase, concept or idea; in some cases, explain how the distinctions and assumptions implied in the definition are necessary.

Describe

Give a detailed account of.

Discuss

Explore an issue by reasoned argument, debate and give reasons for and against.

Enumerate

Write in a list or outline form, giving points consistently one by one.

Evaluate

Make an appraisal of the worth of something, which can include your own well-informed opinion.

Explain

Clarify, make plain, interpret or account for; in some cases, give reasons for differences of opinion or for results, and try to analyse causes.

Illustrate

Use a figure, diagram or examples to explain or clarify an issue.

Interpret

Clarify the meaning of: make clear and explicit, also usually giving your judgement.

Justify

Show and explain adequate grounds or evidence for decisions, or examples.

List

As in 'Enumerate', write an itemised series of concise statements.

Outline

Organise a description under main points and subordinate points, omitting minor details and stressing the arrangement or classification of things.

Prove

Establish that something is entirely accurate by citing factual evidence or giving clear, logical reasons.

Relate

Show how things are related to, or connected with, each other or how one causes another, correlates with another, or is like another.

Review

Make a survey of a point or idea, examining the subject critically.

State

Present the main points in brief, clear sequence, usually omitting details, illustrations or examples.

Summarise

Give a brief account of the chief points or substance of a matter.

Source: Wye College External Programme

Organising Your Thinking

Organise your thoughts by producing a scheme or plan of the essay topic. There are many ways of arranging your ideas on paper, but what is important is that it helps you

clarify the interrelationships, ideas, concepts, and examples you will be writing about. This will also be something concrete to which you can refer as you write, keeping your ideas and arguments progressing in a logical and ordered way. One way of putting your initial thoughts down on paper is in the form of a spider diagram, mind map, or network, which clusters and links ideas together (see below).

Alternatively, a hierarchy is a more ordered, structured way of organising information under different headings and subheadings. Try to experiment with a number of techniques before deciding which is best for you.

Preparation always requires time, but it is a mistake to start writing before you have a definite plan and before you have thought matters out. Be selective about the information you provide.

The Mind Map Method

Unlike conventional linear notes which work down the page, this method involves starting in the middle of the page and working outwards. The title/main idea/topic is written in a box or bubble in the centre of a plain sheet of paper. Then, major points/themes are written along lines radiating out from the centre. Subsidiary points branch off from these main branches. A key word or phrase is used to encapsulate each point - the rationale being that if the word/phrase can be summoned up, the whole point will return to mind, in more detail. Dotted lines/arrows can be added in, to bring out links and connections; different coloured pens used, to highlight main points, and so on. Around these basic guidelines you develop your own system.

From: Wye College External Programme

Essay Structure

Your essay should be well structured. There should be:

- A clear **introduction**, which should state briefly the material you are going to cover and act as a lead into the subject of the essay.
- A **middle section**, which forms the discussion or main body of your essay.
- A **conclusion**, which very concisely rounds off your writing.

Your prepared plan outlining what you intend to cover in each part of the essay will give you something to refer to as you write. It will also help you maintain a clear, unified

and precise piece of writing. Note, however, that there is never only one way of writing to produce a sound and relevant answer.

Your writing should be composed of paragraphs, which together clearly convey to the reader the content, structure and thread of your argument. You should, as you write, be aiming for clarity of expression and, as the essay may have a word limit, you should make sure that every word you write counts (see George Orwell's six rules below).

George Orwell's Six Elementary Rules for Good Writing

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech that you are not used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a scientific word or jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

Also try to avoid verbose or long-winded language or expression. What matters about an essay is quality of writing rather than sheer quantity of words. Your essay should also be clearly referenced (see guidance below) and you are advised to be familiar with and closely follow the advice given in this handbook

avoiding cheating and plagiarism).

Style of Writing

Use the **third person** (this means not using 'I'). You will be expected to use the third person as it enables you to show that you are being objective. You could try using:

'This essay discusses the importance of ...'

'This research shows that ...'

When you have thought about what you are going to write, you should ideally produce a first draft of your work in one sitting. It is true that many new ideas tend to occur

whilst you are actually writing. Interrupting your writing might cause you to produce a piece of work that is stilted or less thorough than it might otherwise have been. After completing your first draft, it is a good idea to put your work to one side and come back to it after a day or two to re-read what you have written and check it for errors. Whilst you review your essay draft you should be asking yourself whether you have kept to the main themes, as suggested by the essay question or title; if each paragraph is a natural and logical unit; if you have included an adequate number of relevant examples; and if the general effect of your writing is what you intended. You might find it useful to ask somebody else to review your work and to offer some constructive criticism, and to spot flaws and weaknesses. It is also useful to remember that diagrams and tables can often convey ideas in a concise and immediate form.

The entire process of writing an essay, then, should follow this basic pattern:

- Read the question carefully
- Think about the question
- Order your thoughts and ideas, produce a plan, gather source material
- Write a draft essay
- Review your work
- Correct and redraft your work
- Produce a final copy

The main things to bear in mind to achieve a good essay are:

- Logical, well-reasoned argument
- Relevance of examples, diagram and argument
- Effective use of source material
- Clear and easily understood presentation

Referencing in coursework

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

Referencing allows you to give credit to others' ideas, work, research, theories, concepts, outcomes and results, and demonstrates your breadth of reading and

knowledge on a subject. If you do not reference properly, this could amount to [plagiarism](#), which is an [academic offence](#).

There are styles of referencing which will determine exactly how you format your reference. Your departmental referencing style is Harvard. You must use this referencing style. Guidance on your referencing style is available [online](#), including an [interactive referencing tutorial](#). You can also take the [Academic Integrity course](#) on Moodle.

Submission of coursework

You should submit all coursework online via [FASER](#) – the University's online submission system. You are encouraged to log on to FASER at the start of the year so that you understand how it works before you reach your first deadline. There is a trial module and deadline available for you to use as a practice submission, as well as helpful guidance on [how to use FASER](#).

You can upload as many draft versions of your work as you like and are encouraged to use this as a safe and secure area to store your coursework. This can help to avoid the problem of your computer crashing at the last minute and your important files being lost. In cases where multiple versions are uploaded you will **need to make any which you do NOT want to be included in the final submission a 'draft'**, otherwise the most recently uploaded file will be taken as the final version. The maximum file upload size is **50MB**.

Only Microsoft word or PDF files should be uploaded to FASER unless otherwise specified.

Problems with FASER

If you have technical difficulties when submitting your coursework to FASER, you should contact the [IT Helpdesk](#). They can advise on any system or computer problems. This will count towards your claim when submitting a late coursework extenuating circumstance form should you need to.

If you are confused or unsure how to upload or are having any non-technical difficulties, you should contact your Postgraduate Administrator.

Late submission of coursework

We have a [single policy](#) at the University of Essex for the late submission of coursework in postgraduate taught courses: all coursework submitted after the deadline will receive a mark of **zero**. No extensions will be granted. The policy states that the mark of zero shall stand unless you submit satisfactory evidence of extenuating circumstances that indicate that you were unable to submit the work by the deadline, but have been able to within the relevant Late Submission timeframe.

Where a student is unable to undertake the assessment by the deadline, and it is deemed impossible to consider a late submission request due to the nature of the assessment (e.g. absence from in-class tests, practical assignments and presentations), an [extenuating circumstances](#) form should be submitted which will be considered by the Board of Examiners.

Dissertation extensions (PGT Only)

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

Return of coursework

Marked work is returned electronically via FASER. You will receive an email notification alert when your marked work is available.

Marked work is normally returned within four weeks of submission.

Ethics in research

All research involving human participants and animal subjects, whether undertaken by the University's staff or students, **must** undergo an [ethics review](#) by an appropriate body and ethical approval **must** be obtained before it commences. You should first read the [Guidelines for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Subjects](#) or

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

Further information about the research ethics process can be found on the [University's ethics review webpages](#).

Studies involving the NHS (i.e. patients, their data or samples; staff their data or samples; sites; data extracted from or through clinical system) and studies involving human tissue or adults lacking capacity to consent are very likely to need some kind of NHS approval, such as ethical approval, governance approval or study registration. Even 'data only' studies, which do not involve direct contact with NHS staff or patients, will often require approval of some kind. Service evaluations, audits and similar involving the NHS may not require NHS ethical review. In cases where the project has not been defined as research by the HRA, ethical approval will need to be sought through the University's ethics review processes. If your study involves the NHS, you should contact the REO Research Governance Team (reo-governance@essex.ac.uk) at an early stage for advice about the ethics review process.

Examinations

Examinations will either be in person in an invigilated setting on campus, or remote via FASER or Moodle. To find out whether your exam is in-person or remote, you can check the [module directory](#). Your personal exam timetable, when available, also has this information.

Exam timetable

The University [publishes the dates for exam periods](#) at the start of each year, including the date on which your personal exam timetable will be issued for each period. A link to your personalised exam timetable will be sent to your Essex account when it is ready to view.

Attending an in-person exam

You must bring your registration card and exam entry form to any invigilated exams on campus. You may not be allowed entry without these. You will be able to download and print your exam entry form when you view your personal exam timetable.

For exams that are more than 1 hour long, you will not be allowed to enter the examination room if you arrive later than 55 minutes after the start of the exam. If your exam is 1 hour long or less, you will only be admitted up to 10 minutes after the start of the exam. You will be able to download and print your exam entry form when you view your personal exam timetable.

Attendance at examinations, whether in-person or remote, is compulsory and if you do not attend them and do not have [extenuating circumstances](#) then you are at risk of being withdrawn.

Calculators in examinations

If you are allowed to use a calculator in your examinations, the only models you are permitted to use in invigilated exams are the **Casio FX-83GT** or **Casio FX-85GT** series (CW, X or PLUS).

The only exception is for certain **Finance** exams that require a **financial** calculator, in which case you may use the **Hewlett Packard 12c** (all variants) or the **Texas Instruments BAI Plus** (including the BAI Plus Professional).

Open and closed-book exams

You should check the module directory to see whether your exam is open or closed-book. Your department or school will provide further guidance on how to prepare for your exams and on what materials can be taken into an open-book exam. You should also check the information published on the exam web pages.

Revision classes

Revision classes for individual modules will be scheduled and communicated throughout the year.

Exam stress

[Exams create stress](#) for most people, but there is a lot that you can do to prepare for them and help manage the levels of stress associated with exams. The University's Skills for Success Team offers a series of [Exam Workshops](#) which are run by specialist staff. These sessions cover revision planning and techniques, as well as sessions on relaxation and how to cope with stress. Staff in the [Student Services Hub](#) can also provide sessions on stress management if required.

Access to your exam script

If you want to see your script for an invigilated exam, you should make the request to the department or school responsible for the module within four weeks of the exam. The department or school should either: let you see the script in the presence of one of the staff responsible for teaching the module or give you a copy or summary of the examiners' comments on your performance. If you need to undertake an exam as part of reassessment on a module, your department or school will provide you with written feedback on any elements being reassessed.

Feedback on your exam script will not include a discussion of the mark. The marks will have been approved by external examiners and ratified by the Board of Examiners.

Moderation and marking

The [University's Marking Policy](#) can be found online and includes our policy and procedure on the moderation of work.

Marking

All student work is marked in line with the University's Marking Policy. Within this policy, moderation is the default approach to assuring the quality and standards of marking, with double marking used in certain situations. Some types of assessment may be single marked, including where they contribute only a small amount of the overall module weighting. The full procedure and assessment marking requirements and detailed definitions can be found in the [Marking Policy](#).

Moderation and double marking

Moderation is a process separate from that of marking and provides assurance that assessment criteria have been applied appropriately. Moderators review a sample of the marked student work and liaise with the first markers if they believe that the marks are not at the correct level or do not reflect the assessment criteria or feedback given. In some situations, double marking is used instead of moderation. This means that two markers each mark the work and then agree a final mark for it.

External Examiners

External Examiners are experienced academics from other universities, but may also be from industry, business or the relevant profession depending on the requirements of the course. They give an impartial view of the course and independent advice to ensure that modules and courses at the University meet the academic standards expected across UK higher education. You can find more information about the role of External Examiners on our [External Examiner roles and responsibilities webpage](#).

Re-marking of coursework

You may, under certain circumstances, have the right to request a re-mark of your coursework. Should you feel that your work needs to be reviewed and potentially re-marked, you should first contact your department or school to advise you accordingly. The [Marking Policy](#) sets out the grounds on which a request for re-marking can be submitted.

If a request for a re-mark is accepted, your marks are **not guaranteed** to increase, however, **the mark awarded after re-marking will override your original mark**. Therefore, please be aware that in all incidences where coursework is re-marked, it is possible that your marks could go down as well as up.

Appeals

[Appeals on academic grounds](#) can only be made following the meeting of the Board of Examiners and the publication of your results. All academic appeals should be submitted within 10 working days of the publication of your results by the Board of Examiners. You can only appeal your results on limited grounds. As such, we strongly advise all students thinking about making an appeal to contact the [SU Advice Centre](#).

Feedback

A very important part of our teaching and your learning is the feedback that we give you on all assessed coursework; this may be comments written directly on your work, or on marks criteria grids, or it may be more general feedback included when the work is returned. You should review carefully and learn from all these sources of feedback.

If you need to undertake any reassessment on a module, your department or school will provide you with written feedback on any elements being reassessed. You will receive written feedback following reassessment.

The Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners meet at the end of the Summer Term to consider marks for taught modules and final boards meet in the Autumn. For courses which start in January the final boards are in the Spring Term, and there may also be boards in September.

Boards of Examiners use the Rules of Assessment to determine whether:

- you have passed the modules you have studied and can be awarded credits;
- you have met the requirements to progress to the next year of your course (*if you are on a course which lasts more than one year*);
- you have met the requirements to pass your course;
- you are eligible to receive a merit or distinction.

If it determined that you have not passed sufficient credits to progress to the next stage of study, or, for final year students, to graduate, the Board of Examiners will also determine:

- what reassessment you could be offered and when you can take it²

Student visa holders can find the visa implications for each of the possible decisions that the Board of Examiners can make on our [Immigration webpages](#). If you have any further questions, you should contact the [International Services Team](#).

² The Board of Examiners will not be aware of any student's immigration status. As a result, some reassessment options may be offered that are not compatible with individual student visa rules. All options should be considered in conjunction with applicable visa restrictions.

Publication of results

The publication schedule for results can be [found on the website](#). You will receive an email to your Essex email account as soon as your results are published online.

Failure to pass

The following is only a summary of the key points. You should [read the rules](#) and make sure you understand them. If you need advice, ask your personal tutor, departmental administrators, or SU Advice.

If you **fail your course**, you are not able to repeat it. The [Rules of Assessment for Postgraduate Taught Awards](#) only allow reassessment for up to a maximum of 60 credits worth of modules for taught Masters degrees. The Board of Examiners will inform you if you are eligible for reassessment once it has considered your marks.

If you **fail your dissertation** you may be permitted by the Board of Examiners to resubmit your work, provided you meet the criteria as set out in the [Rules of Assessment for Postgraduate Taught Awards](#). Alternatively, if you have obtained enough credits in your taught modules, you may be eligible for another award such as a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate.

Credit accumulation

You can decide if you want to [accumulate credit](#) by taking individual modules with the aim of achieving a postgraduate award; this is called [Modular study](#). The Rules of Assessment are different when you study individual modules. There are opportunities to achieve postgraduate awards through credit accumulation study in an increasing number of departments or schools, as an alternative to standard full or part-time study.

Reassessment

You may only undertake reassessment if the Board of Examiners says that you may do so.

If you have to take compulsory reassessment, whether coursework or examination, it is really important that you do this. If you do not, it is likely that you will be unable to progress with your studies at the University. The Board of Examiners will not consider permitting you to proceed carrying fails if you have not attempted the reassessment.

Reassessed modules are normally capped at the pass mark of 50 unless you have extenuating circumstances which are accepted by the Board of Examiners.

In the School of Life Sciences, reassessment is conducted through coursework. Students undertaking coursework reassessment in any modules will be required to submit/resubmit all individual assignments they have omitted to hand in/failed, and the marks they receive will be integrated with the marks of those assignments they originally passed.

Dissertations are re-assessed in the way described in the Rules of Assessment.

Students with a Student visa expiring before their reassessment will need to know whether they are required to be in the UK before requesting further sponsorship to complete their studies.

Resit exams

[Resit exams](#) are usually scheduled in late August and early September or 'out of residence' in the summer of the following year. A considerable amount of useful revision material for each module is available on Moodle. Students can contact staff, particularly Module Supervisors for the modules they are resitting, if they need help with revision or specific queries (do not leave this until the last minute as staff availability will be reduced throughout the summer). Staff can give individual feedback on summer exam performance, if requested.

Exit awards

If you decide to withdraw from your course before you finish, or you fail too many credits to be awarded your degree, you may be awarded a qualification at a lower level, if appropriate and applicable.

Student visa holders should be aware that obtaining a lesser award will impact eligibility to apply for a Graduate visa after completion of studies. Further guidance about the Graduate route and eligibility criteria can be viewed on our [Immigration webpages](#).

Extenuating Circumstances

[Extenuating circumstances](#) are circumstances beyond your control which cause you to perform less well in your assessment than you might have expected, or in some instances, may prevent you from submitting coursework or attending an exam entirely. In general, valid extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect you for any significant period of time and/or during assessment.

If you do need to make an extenuating circumstances claim, you should first read the guidance very carefully and seek advice from [SU Advice](#) or the [Student Services Hub](#). Please be prepared that you may need to include supporting evidence with your claim. Extenuating Circumstances claims must be submitted via MyEssex by the [appropriate deadline](#) noted.

Your department or school 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, such as permitting further reassessment opportunities for uncapped marks. Please note that extra marks **cannot** be given in light of extenuating circumstances.

Computers, Learning Technologies and your Information

Computers

Using a campus computer

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

IT training and help

If you need help with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, or EndNote, book on our digital skills training through [CareerHub](#). You also have unlimited, free access to [LinkedIn Learning](#), an online video training platform, using your Essex IT account. You can choose what you would like to learn and when. LinkedIn Learning is a great tool for both personal and professional development.

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

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

Learning technologies and systems

Learner Engagement Activity Portal (LEAP)

[LEAP](#) is our student centred, personalised engagement tool. LEAP displays [your engagement](#) with university resources and activities. An algorithm within LEAP gives a weighting score to each activity and combines your use of these resources and activities to produce an overall engagement indicator.

There are 5 engagement indicators (high, good, partial, low and very low) which will help you map and better understand your engagement pattern over time based on your class attendance, utilisation of Moodle etc. Full details on the resources included

in LEAP, the engagement ratings and how LEAP uses your data can be found on the [LEAP webpage](#).

By providing you with a more holistic view of your studying experience, LEAP offers you the opportunity to take control of your own learning and make more informed choices about your studies, enabling you to:

- Reflect on your academic activities and overall engagement to make informed decisions about your academic studies
- Review the notes created in LEAP from meetings with Tutors or other university staff
- Check your attendance and ensure the information is correct

Tutors and other university staff may use the information in LEAP to:

- Suggest ways you could achieve better outcomes
- Check that all is well and offer information, advice and guidance
- Help you in areas of your studies that you find challenging

The University has a [Student Engagement Policy](#) which provides a structured approach based on support and mutual decision-making to maximise the success and achievement of every student.

Moodle

[Moodle](#) is our online learning environment. It holds key course and module materials, discussion forums, chat facilities, quizzes, surveys, glossaries and wikis released by your lecturers.

FASER

[FASER](#) is our **online coursework submission and feedback system**. Use it to check coursework deadlines, upload coursework and receive electronic feedback all in one place.

Online reading lists

Reading lists can be accessed [online](#). Use this service to find out the details of each week's reading and to access resources through the Library.

Listen Again

Did you miss something? Our [Listen Again](#) digital recording service lets you listen again to lectures so you grasp every detail. It's available in teaching rooms or lecture theatres where you see the sign. Lecture videos are normally uploaded on Listen Again 24 hours after the lecture.

Zoom

You can use Zoom to join online lectures delivered by the University or attend online meetings and tutorials. If your lecture or class is going to be online the link to join will be available in your individual timetable 48 hours before the class.

This [quick start guide](#) gives you an introduction to the essentials of joining and participating in a Zoom webinar or meeting.

Your information

Changes to your information

During your period of study at Essex, you may wish to be known by a preferred name or update your legal name on our student record database (ESIS) if your circumstances change. It is important you keep your information up to date, including any change to your address or contact information, which you can [manage and update online](#). If you have immigration permission to study with us and obtain a new passport or visa during your studies, please ensure you bring this to your [Student Services Hub](#) so a scan can be taken for University record.

Your personal information

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

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

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

Student Voice

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

Student Representatives

You can [contact or volunteer](#) to be a [Student Representative](#) who represent the voice of fellow students in departmental Student Voice Groups (SVG) and other University level committees.

Student Voice Groups

[Student Voice Groups](#) (SVGs) are made up of [Student Representatives](#) and members of staff. SVGs typically meet once per term and provide an accessible arena for students to discuss with staff issues connected to teaching, learning and student support. They also provide an opportunity for the department or school to consult with students and receive feedback on new proposals. Such proposals are recorded in SVG logs, where specific details are requested in order to facilitate the feedback.

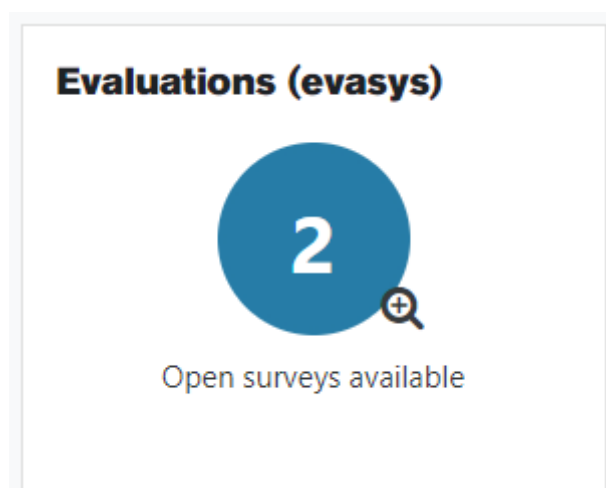
Student surveys

[Student satisfaction surveys](#) enable the University to gauge overall satisfaction amongst students. When the results have been reviewed and analysed, the University can then enhance your experience of learning at Essex by closing the feedback loop.

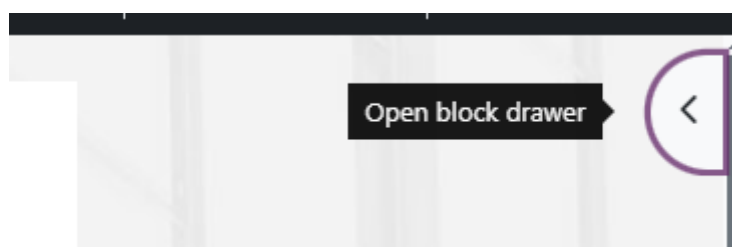
Student Module Feedback

At the end of each term, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback and comments on your modules via the University's [Student Module Feedback](#) process. All students will receive an email from University of Essex Surveys (no-

reply)@essex.ac.uk inviting you to complete a brief online survey for each module undertaken over the preceding term. Available surveys are also accessible via the Evaluations block on the right-hand side of your [Moodle](#) homepage. This will display to the right of your Moodle page when you have open surveys that you haven't yet completed, as below:



To see this, you may need to click to expand the block drawer, using the arrow shown below:



These surveys allow you to provide some information on your experience of each of the modules you have studied, to say what worked well and to give constructive feedback on how they can be further improved. This is critical for the University to understand what works well, and what could be improved, from the perspective of students. All feedback will be summarised and discussed by SVGs and will inform reports written for central University committees as part of our quality assurance processes.

There are also many [other satisfaction surveys](#) taking place, to ensure students are happy with the services the University of Essex provides.

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

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

You Matter

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

Student Services Hub

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

To contact the Student Services Hub please use this link to access our web pages and talk to us on Live Chat: [Ask the Hub](#)

Support for students with disabilities or additional needs

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

If you are [care experienced, estranged from your family, primary carer and/or University of Sanctuary](#) student please contact the Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Service (SWIS) for further information about support that may be available to you.

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

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

Support for students who are pregnant

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

Support for students who are parents or guardians

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

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

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

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

Essex Access Forum

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

Seeing a doctor

If you're studying on a course for more than six months, you're required to register with a local doctor. Our Colchester Campus has its own [health centre](#) or you can use the [NHS Choices postcode](#) finder to find your nearest doctor. If you require emergency medical or mental health services, there are a [number of options available](#) both through the NHS and also the University, regardless which campus you are studying at.

Counselling service

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

Digital wellbeing support

SilverCloud offers a broad range of programmes to support students with their wellbeing, mental health and long-term conditions. Use your Essex email to sign into a programme of your choice. Visit the [SilverCloud](#) platform.

Togetherall is a digital, peer support, mental health platform where you can share your lived experiences and learn from the experiences of others in a safe and anonymised global community. Use your Essex email to [register on the platform](#).

Student Wellbeing Support Line

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

Wellbeing appointments for students at Colchester, Southend and Loughton

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

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

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

You can make an appointment by emailing wellbeing@essex.ac.uk.

We offer in person appointments, or online via Zoom, or via telephone (01206873133).

UK immigration advice and guidance

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

Money management

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

If you get into financial difficulty, you should get help and talk to someone **as soon as possible**. The sooner your problem is identified, the sooner it can be solved. You may be eligible to [apply for financial support](#) to assist you with short-term unexpected and unforeseen costs while studying at Essex.

Funding opportunities

There are lots of funding opportunities available to UK, EU and International students offered by the University and by external companies and organisations. This may be in the form of a student loan, a scholarship, or a bursary. You can find out more information, including what you may be eligible for on the [PGT Scholarships and Funding webpage](#).

Students' Union Advice

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

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

Southend students – suacsou@essex.ac.uk; 01702 328235 (term time only)

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

Residence Life

Our [Residence Life team](#) is here to help you settle in and support you during your time living on campus. Residents' Assistants are student staff who organise social and community events to help you make friends and adjust to university life. You can find out about all our exciting events by following us on [Facebook](#) or by checking out the University [Events page](#).

Religion, faith and beliefs

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

Harassment support

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

We encourage a culture of dignity and respect. We're committed to upholding an environment that's free from any form of harassment or bullying. Though rare, these incidents can occur and if they do our [Report and Support Service](#) is on hand to help.

Health and safety on campus

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

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

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

All students residing on campus **must** complete the Moodle [Fire Safety Course for Residents training](#).

If you have any health and safety concerns or need to report an incident, please use the [University's reporting service](#) to notify us.

Making a complaint

The University is a large community engaged in many activities of both an academic and non-academic nature. From time to time, you may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of your dealings with the University and, when that happens, it is important that the issue is dealt with constructively and as quickly as possible without risk of disadvantage or recrimination.

The University aims to resolve complaints quickly and informally in accordance with the [Student concerns and complaints procedure](#) which can be found on our website.

Student Development

Careers Services

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

CareerHub

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

Get experience

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

- Find the right activity for you with **Chart My Path**, and to get recognised on your HEAR for your extracurricular achievements with the **Big Essex Award**. Log into [GradIntelligence](#) to get started.
- Explore Essex Interns to access paid internships with University departments/schools and local businesses that have been exclusively designed for Essex Students. Log into [GradIntelligence](#) to get started.
- Apply for [Career Mentoring](#) and be matched with an industry expert to expand your network, learn from their experience and explore options for your future.
- Calling our Black students! Unlock your academic potential and cultivate research skills through our digital **Black Researchers' Hub**. Explore on [GradIntelligence](#) today.

Volunteering

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

You Are Essex

Graduation and Awards

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

Award documents

Award documents are issued after each year of study and upon final completion of an award. Digital copies of Award documents will be uploaded to your [GradIntelligence](#) account, which you will be able to access for free even after Graduating. You will be able to log into your account at any time in your career and access these documents.

Your full academic transcript will be available electronically via your [Higher Education Achievement Record \(HEAR\)](#). Your [Higher Education Achievement Report \(HEAR\)](#) not only showcases a full record of your academic achievements, but also any activities you have undertaken and logged through the [Big Essex Award](#), and any other awards and prizes that you may have received.

This will be updated after the successful completion of each year of study, and a final HEAR will be issued upon conferral of your final award. If you are studying an award for which the University is currently unable to issue a HEAR, then you will receive a printed copy of your Transcript.

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

Graduation ceremonies

The culmination of all your hard work! [Graduation](#) ceremonies take place at our Colchester Campus in the Ivor Crewe Lecture Hall with a departmental Reception held

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

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

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 project or dissertation supervisors, year organisers, and core course supervisors are likely to be more suitable than lecturers that have taught you on an introductory 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 125,000 fellow graduates around the world. We'd love to keep in touch and invite you to our alumni events, networking and volunteering opportunities, as well as offer you special alumni benefits. Want to know more? Visit [our website](#).

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

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