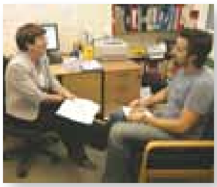
LSE Teaching and Learning Centre

Handbook for PhD SUPERVISORS

2013

Teaching and Learning Centre

LSE's Teaching and Learning Centre complements and supports the work of PhD supervisors in several ways.



One to one support and advice on all aspects of doctoral supervision is available from senior staff in the Teaching and Learning Centre: email **tlc@lse.ac.uk** or phone 020 7955 6624 to request a meeting.

For your students, a programme of interdisciplinary workshops to support them in their thesis writing and help them strengthen the impact of their research. See the inside back cover of this handbook for the 2012/13 programme.

Expert signposting to all of LSE's central services and support units for doctoral students and supervisors, including the Research Degrees Unit, training providers, counselling and disability services.

IMPORTANT NOTES

This handbook was produced in the autumn of 2012. References, names and contact information were correct at the time of going to press, but as changes may occur over time readers are recommended to check the web-based edition (where you will also find direct links to internal and external references) for updated information – see Handbook for PhD supervisors at **lse.ac.uk/tlc/publications**

A hard copy edition of this handbook will be produced only every two to three years, other than the "At a glance" insert in the centre which will be updated and circulated at the start of Michaelmas Term each year.

There are three styles of box used throughout the handbook:

- bordered white boxes for key information (internal and external policies and regulations, formal responsibilities and expectations, etc.);
- tinted boxes for case study illustrations of current LSE practice and information of general interest;
- solid boxes with white-out text for ideas or anecdotal information.

To improve findability, some of the policy related documents that are referred to in this handbook are currently being migrated to the Policies and Procedures section on the School's intranet. Please therefore check there – **http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/polices/home.aspx** – using the search or A-Z list functions.

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The purpose and aims of this handbook


Dr Liz Barnett

This handbook is designed first and foremost to improve the quality and consistency of the LSE doctoral student experience. Emphasising the doctoral process as a whole, rather than the various policies and procedures related to different stages in that process, it adopts a "life cycle" approach, working through the student's association with LSE from admission through to completion.

The primary aims of the handbook are:

- to provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of PhD supervisors and doctoral programme directors;
- to bring together in one document links to LSE information and regulations pertinent to doctoral programmes;
- to point supervisors and doctoral programme directors to key people involved in supporting doctoral programmes and students and to ideas for strategies to respond to a wide range of supervisory situations and challenges.

The handbook is set in the context of the significant changes to doctoral research and supervision that have taken place since 2004. These changes (summarised at Appendix 1) include a number of developments aimed at improving PhD submission and completion, increased expectations from UK research councils related to doctoral training requirements, new requirements arising from LSE's achievement of Doctoral Training Centre status from the Economic and Social Research Council, and recommendations from the 2012 Woolf report. As a result, the handbook sets out some specific recommendations and requirements on effective practice; points supervisors and doctoral programme directors to important aspects of LSE regulation, policy and procedure; and includes guidance, ideas and examples of different practices from across LSE and relevant external sources. In addition to consulting the handbook, it is important that all supervisors and doctoral programme directors are fully acquainted with their departmental PhD handbook and use the cross references and links in this handbook to other parts of the LSE website and relevant external websites.

As this is the first published edition of this handbook, we would very much appreciate your feedback. Please send any comments, suggestions or ideas to Dr Liz Barnett in LSE's Teaching and Learning Centre: l.barnett@lse.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Dr Kate Exley, Consultant in Educational Development, who co-authored this handbook together with Dr Liz Barnett, Director of the LSE Teaching and Learning Centre. Dr Exley has published widely and is editor of the Routledge Press series "Key Guides for Effective Teaching in Higher Education". She undertakes staff development projects in universities across the UK, has contributed extensively to academic and GTA development at LSE and in recent years has run a one-day training for new PhD supervisors at the LSE.

Thanks also to Louisa Green, Research Degrees Unit Manager; Simeon Underwood, Academic Registrar and Head of Academic Services; Professor Andrew Murray, Chair of the Research Degrees Sub Committee; and Dr Sunil Kumar, Dean of Graduate Studies, for their contribution of ideas, detailed reading of the handbook and editorial guidance.

Several other colleagues in the Teaching and Learning Centre have played their part in preparing this handbook, including most notably Jane Hindle and Jess Hann. Finally, thanks to the LSE Design Unit for their work in bringing the final product to completion.

Section 1: Overview of research degrees at LSE

1.1 Introduction to research degrees: local and national contexts

LSE has one of the largest concentrations of social science doctoral students in the country. This is recognised by the UK's main national funder of social science research, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which in 2010 conferred Doctoral Training Centre status on the School. Between 180 and 200 new doctoral students are admitted to LSE each year and (as of the end of the academic session 2011/12) the School has around 1000 registered doctoral students, of whom 180 each year successfully complete their PhDs. The education and development of these students is a vital activity for the School: they are the next generation of scholars, the source of many new and original ideas in our disciplines and they contribute enormously to the teaching of our undergraduate students.

What is a PhD?

There is an extensive literature devoted to the question "What is a PhD?", and this is a useful question to ask yourself and to discuss with your colleagues and doctoral students prior to becoming a supervisor yourself. Don't simply rely on your own doctoral experience – as this section will point out, doctoral programmes differ internationally and are undergoing considerable change internationally, nationally and locally. Increasingly the view expressed, particularly in the UK and across the rest of Europe, is that the PhD is an apprenticeship in research and a form of training in how to do research. This is quite a change from how it was previously seen by many – as the "master work" of the new researcher. However, the form of the apprenticeship may look very different in different disciplines.

LSE staff and students come from over 160 different countries, and many staff and students have gained their (earlier) degrees in other educational systems. Even supervisors who completed their PhD in a UK university need to be aware of the recent changes to the doctorate here. HE institutions, funding bodies and governments are all asking questions about the purpose of the PhD, what PhD "programmes" should involve, how long this (final) phase of formal education should take, what becomes of PhD students once they graduate, and the relative value for money of the PhD as a process for academic development and research training and for the production of research output, compared with other forms of training and development.

In the UK there is an overarching guide to what the PhD will comprise, set out as follows by the Quality Assurance Agency.

Doctoral degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
- a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

Source: The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Appendix 3 in Doctoral Degree Characteristics (QAA, 2011).

Major changes to doctoral studies in the UK

The major recent changes in the UK include:

- a much stronger focus on research and other training as part of the PhD (most clearly articulated in Chapter 4 of the Roberts Review, which in turn led to investment in doctoral skills development) and concomitant expectations about the relationship between education and employability as well as the economic value of research;
- emphasis on timely submissions and completion of research degrees (pushed through the UK research councils);
- changes to funding for doctoral students: LSE now has institutional Doctoral Training Centre status from the ESRC which means that ESRC awards are allocated centrally (in the past, individual departments held recognition for their own programmes);
- making the degree more internationally "transferable" or recognised, including through the impact of mobility across Europe and the Bologna process.

As well as this national dimension, given the international nature of LSE staff and students it is also worth considering similarities and differences with doctoral programmes elsewhere. To give a couple of quick characterisations:

Compared with the US:

- The UK PhD is shorter – typically four rather than six years' duration.
- The UK social science PhD is considerably less structured/taught – though this is changing.
- Funding for PhD studies is harder to come by, though LSE is moving towards more "fully funded" PhDs from 2013.
- At LSE, PhD students will have much less likelihood of having their own workplace (desk/office).
- At LSE, PhD students may well have quite similar and extensive opportunities to gain teaching experience, and to receive training in HE teaching.
- Students in the UK have fewer academic staff directly involved in supporting their research. However this is starting to change. At LSE, we have moved from a single supervisor to a team supervision model, with many variations around what "team" might mean.

Compared with Sweden:

- UK PhD students are treated as "students", whereas Swedish PhDs are essentially "staff", appointed to a funded role for a specified period.
- Far fewer PhD students in the UK will be assured of funding for the duration of their studies.
- The UK final PhD "examination" is a private exercise, with the student usually viva'd by two examiners, neither of whom will be the supervisor, whereas in Sweden the PhD requires a public, oral defence, with an "opponent", an examination board of around five people, and the right for interested public to be present and ask questions.

These are just two examples. Many more could be drawn out. The main point though is that both staff and students need to start the process by discussing and clarifying what the PhD involves in the UK/LSE context, irrespective of their own prior doctoral research experiences.

What has stayed the same ...?

Despite the changes to the UK PhD, there are some features of the PhD experience which remain unchanged, and which make this a distinctive and highly unusual aspect of the educational process. In particular, unlike taught programmes

- the student very often sets his/her own question or focus of enquiry, this is a more distinctive feature of the social sciences than, say, the natural sciences;
- the student may rapidly become more knowledgeable on this question than the supervisor;
- there is a tension between what the student may decide to do (eg change direction minimally, or substantially) irrespective of what the supervisor may wish, or indeed feel competent, to supervise;
- what the student wants out of the process and what the student gets out of the process is not well-defined nor indeed is it easily planned by the department in which the student is registered;
- the "predictors" of success are much less certain than earlier educational phases;
- more students drop out of research study than drop out of undergraduate or taught MSc studies.

Taking all the above into consideration, it is clear that PhD supervision is a very different type of relationship to that which most tutors have with students on taught programmes.

1.2 Research degrees at LSE: broad categories, School regulations and "team" supervision

At LSE, "research degrees" fall broadly into three groups.

1. MPhil registration initially, and then upgrade to PhD registration. This is common in all departments except Economics and Government. On rare occasions, a student may not be upgraded but may complete the MPhil. However this does not constitute a separate programme per se.
2. MSc/MSc (Research) (one or two years) leading on to MPhil registration, and subsequent upgrade to PhD (common in several departments).
3. MRes (one or two years) leading directly to PhD registration (Economics and Government departments only up to 2013; Economic History and Finance also following this approach from 2013).

In both (2) and (3) students may opt to finish their studies at the end of the Masters year or may fail to progress if they do not achieve the necessary grades. Where students progress, in all three cases, there are two possible formats to the final submission:

- a "big book" thesis; or
- a (connected) series of papers, with introduction and conclusion.

Not all departments offer both of these options.

In the UK, there are other forms of thesis (eg thesis by publication, Professional Doctorates). LSE does not currently offer these or other alternative options.

School regulations

Putting detail on the different research qualifications, LSE regulations (published in the School's Calendar) indicate the following:

General requirements

31. In addition to the special requirements set out in regulations 33 to 36 for both the PhD and the MPhil, the thesis will:

31.1 consist of the candidate's own account of his or her investigations. Work already published, either by the candidate or jointly with others, may be included only if it forms an integral part of the thesis and so makes a relevant contribution to its main theme and is in the same format as the rest of the thesis. The student must clearly state the part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow researchers;

31.2 be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument;

31.3 alternatively, a series of papers, with an introduction, critical discussion and conclusion, may be submitted instead of a conventional thesis provided that such a format is permitted by the student's departmental guidelines and that the thesis conforms to those guidelines. A thesis that contains only joint papers is not acceptable. It must contain linking materials which must be solely the work of the candidate. The part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow researchers must be clearly stated by the student;

31.4 be written in English (except where the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair has given permission for it to be written in another language) and must be presented in line with published School guidance;

31.5 include a full bibliography and references.

Source: Regulations for Research Degrees

Additional requirements for a PhD thesis

33. The scope of the thesis will be what might reasonably be expected after three or at most four years of full-time study.

34. The thesis will:

34.1 form a distinct contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power;

34.2 give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, and include a discussion on those findings, and indicate in what respects they appear to the candidate to advance the study of the subject; and so demonstrate a deep and synoptic understanding of the field of study;

34.3 demonstrate research skills;

34.4 be of a standard to merit publication in whole or in part or in a revised form (for example, as a monograph or as a number of articles in learned journals); and

34.5 not exceed 100,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices). In appropriate circumstances the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may grant permission for a thesis to exceed the normal length.

Source: Regulations for Research Degrees

Additional requirements for an MPhil thesis

35. The scope of the thesis will be what might reasonably be expected after two or at most three years of full-time study.

36. The thesis will:

36.1 be either a record of original work or of an ordered and critical exposition of existing knowledge and will provide evidence that the field has been surveyed thoroughly;

36.2 give a critical assessment of the relevant literature, describe the method of research and its findings, and include a discussion on those findings;

36.3 not exceed 60,000 words (including footnotes but excluding bibliography and appendices). In appropriate circumstances the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may grant permission for a thesis to exceed the normal length.

Source: Regulations for Research Degrees

"Team" supervision

LSE now operates "team" supervision for its research degrees. In most cases, doctoral students will have two supervisors, in some cases more than that, and both/all supervisors will be full time LSE faculty (and in the case of the primary supervisor have passed major review). In a few cases, one or more members of the supervisory team may be from outside LSE – though in such cases, the primary supervisor must be a full time member of the LSE faculty. As a result, supervisory teams can take a variety of formats, for example:

- "primary" and "secondary" supervisor;
- "joint" supervisors;
- "supervisor" and "advisor".

For further information and examples of different supervisory teams and ideas on establishing effective supervisory working relationships see 3.2 (page 22).

1.3 Respective roles and responsibilities: students, supervisors and doctoral programme directors

The respective responsibilities of the key players in the PhD process at departmental level – students, supervisors and doctoral programme directors – are set out below.

Student	Supervisor	Doctoral programme director
• Submit written work regularly as requested by their supervisors. • Word-process all material in a format agreed with their supervisors. • Take responsibility to seek out their supervisors, not vice versa; students should have their own programme of topics for discussion. • Take note of and act on the guidance and feedback from their supervisors. • Secure their supervisors' approval if they want to issue questionnaires and, if they wish to use the School's address for this purpose, the text of any communication must be approved by the supervisors before it is sent. The student must also ensure that they comply with the School's Ethics Policy.	• Be familiar with School and departmental regulations and seek advice where necessary • Be aware of any additional conditions that relate to a student's funding. • Have knowledge of a student's subject area and theoretical approach. • Meet regularly with their students as set out in their own departmental guidelines (School-wide minimum: two to three meetings per term and recommended one hour duration, as far as possible uninterrupted by telephone calls, personal callers or departmental business). • Deal with urgent student matters/ problems by phone, email or in person at short notice. • Assist new students to identify their research training needs at the outset, plan their time and draw up a framework within which the research is to progress.	• Ensure that supervisors have the training and support they require to undertake effective supervision. This might include recommending a supervisor to attend various training courses, conferences and seminars; teaching relief; and adjustment of other departmental responsibilities to take account of the supervisory load. The appraisal system might be used to identify training needs but the doctoral programme director should also consider reviewing supervisors' responsibilities on an annual basis. • Allocate supervisors to appropriate students. • Ensure that no student is allocated to a supervisor who has an insufficient knowledge of the student's area of research and theoretical approach. • Ensure that all doctoral students have a lead supervisor who is a current full-time member of the academic staff of the School.

Student	Supervisor	Doctoral programme director
• Make themselves familiar with, and ensure that their research complies with, the School's Regulations on Assessment Offences: Plagiarism and the Regulations on Assessment Offences: Offences Other Than Plagiarism. The School considers plagiarism a serious offence and any accusation of plagiarism will be dealt with under these regulations. • As a matter of courtesy, inform supervisors of other people with whom their work is being discussed. • Take responsibility for and ownership of all materials relating to the research including those presented for review, upgrade and final examination. • Alert the supervisor(s) to any issues arising that might impact on their ability to progress with the research. • Inform the Research Degrees Unit in advance if they want to interrupt their studies or intend to withdraw from their course.	• Advise research students on course choice to complement their field of research. • Give students written and/or oral feedback on written work, within one month of it being submitted (where this is impossible, the student should be advised as to when they can expect feedback). • Introduce the student to the wider research community within LSE and outside the School. This includes advice on conferences, learned societies and publication. • Assist the student with his or her applications for funding to research councils and other organisations. • Be involved in any fieldwork risk assessment completed by the student. • Alert the doctoral programme director to any student difficulties likely to impact on their ability to progress/complete. • Advise continuing students whether the research can feasibly be completed in the recommended period or whether a more realistic project should be attempted. • Nominate the external and internal examiner for a student's viva and arrange a mutually convenient date for the viva (three months after submission is a reasonable maximum in most circumstances).	• Ensure that academics do not have sole supervisory responsibility for research students until they have passed their major review. • Ensure that no supervisor is overloaded with supervisory responsibilities – the supervisor's total workload should be taken into account when establishing his or her appropriate maximum number of research students. • Ensure the orientation of new research students is effectively implemented • Develop appropriate research training. • Ensure that progress monitoring procedures for all doctoral students are properly carried out. • Monitor submission rates in the department. • Act as an advocate for doctoral students in the department.

In addition to the above, the head of department has overall responsibility for:

- the quality of the doctoral programme in the department;
- ensuring there is a doctoral programme director;
- ensuring that supervisors are properly trained and mentored in their supervisory role;
- discussing any matters concerning the maximum number of supervisees a supervisor should have with the Pro-Director Teaching and Learning and the Vice-Chair of the Appointments Committee as appropriate;
- alerting the Pro-Director Teaching and Learning to any other serious concerns regarding the doctoral programme.

Specific expectations of supervisors (for instance in terms of timing and frequency of supervision meetings with students) should be set out in departmental PhD handbooks. The role of the supervisor and the building of the supervisor/student relationship is developed further in Section 3.

1.4 A supervision timetable – from initial contact through to completion

Compared with taught degrees, the annual and programme cycles for students on research degree programmes is much less easy to define and map out. Different supervisors and different disciplines may have very different ways of doing things. However, there are still some standard milestones to keep in mind.

The following timetable considers different activities that doctoral programme directors and supervisors may consider once they have agreed to take on a new student and reflects the "life cycle" of a doctoral student. Note that it omits the various Masters' year(s).

	Doctoral programme director: activities, roles and responsibilities	**Supervisors: activities, roles and responsibilities**
First year: Michaelmas Term		
September to December	• Prepare PhD handbook • Organise orientations • Ensure no supervisors have excessive supervision load • Establish supervisory teams (note: the primary supervisor is appointed when an offer of a place is made to a student; the remainder of the supervisory team should be appointed no later than the end of the Lent Term of the student's first year) • Training/briefing/mentoring arrangements for new supervisors • Planning for departmental seminars and other structured/taught aspects of doctoral programme provision • Consider PhD mentoring scheme (see page 21 for details) • Establish "doctoral programme committee(s)" responsible for upgrade/progress monitoring (some departments opt for a consistent team, others have "student specific" teams) – see 4.2 (page 23)	• Pre-arrival contact (where appropriate) • Involvement in orientations • Seek out training/mentoring support if new to supervision/LSE • If working with a joint supervisor or secondary supervisor, agree in advance of meeting with student how you may best operate together; then discuss (preferably all together) with student • Arrange supervision meetings – suggest at least three meetings in the first term • Early meetings with supervisees to discuss expectations, course requirements, training and development needs, early research ideas, and establish ways of working, ways of recording meetings and clarify requirements for successful completion of the first year • Consider "group" tutorial/meeting with all supervisees, so that they can form their own support group/ advise each other

	Doctoral programme director: activities, roles and responsibilities	Supervisors: activities, roles and responsibilities
First year: Lent Term/Summer Term		
January – June	• Run/organise departmental seminars for PhD students, and liaise with others outside the department as appropriate to address other aspects of PhD training/development (eg contact with Teaching and Learning Centre, Careers, Language Centre, Methodology Institute) • Advise on timing for making decisions concerning registration in the second year • Organise and brief staff on progress monitoring/ upgrade • Ensure there is proper feedback to students following progress monitoring/upgrade meetings • Ensure that decisions concerning end of first year review/upgrade are formally noted and reported to Research Degrees Unit • NOTE: National monitoring about departmental submission rates does not "count" students who leave during the first year of registration. As such, this is an important point at which departments should try to make some assessment as to whether selected students are likely to complete. This does not necessarily mean they should be upgraded at this point, but the end of first year review needs to be rigorous. In the long run this is also fair to the student – investment in a PhD is often high compared with possible financial returns, and if they show little aptitude for independent research, the costs could well outweigh any benefits of continuation	• Continue with regular supervision meetings, and ensure some kind of record of these meetings is kept by you and/or student – see 3.3 and 3.4 (pages 24-25) • Encourage submission of written work as appropriate and provide timely feedback; at this stage, ensure the student is fully aware of disciplinary writing conventions, referencing and citation, and understands plagiarism and the need for academic integrity/ honesty both in undertaking and writing up research – see 5.4 (page 41) • Check progress on any required courses and any necessary training • If you have concerns about your student, seek advice early, either from doctoral programme director or from others in the School (see centrespread) as appropriate; establishing how a research student is progressing is particularly important in the first year • Help student prepare for end of first year assessment/review/upgrade as appropriate • Consider advising student concerning teaching/ research work during their second year; if they plan to teach, ensure they are pointed to the required training (delivered by the Teaching and Learning Centre) • Where student will undertake fieldwork, ensure they have undertaken risk assessment and given due consideration to ethical matters – see 5.2 (page 37) • Ensure Research Degrees Unit is informed of student registration status for the following year • Ensure any reporting requirements of research councils/other funding bodies are fulfilled as necessary

Details of all central services mentioned in this table can be found in the "At a glance" insert in the centre.


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LSE

	Doctoral programme director: activities, roles and responsibilities	Supervisors: activities, roles and responsibilities
Second year/middle years		
	• Review supervisory arrangements, and ensure that sabbatical leave/staff buy-out/other staff absence is appropriately covered so that all students can receive effective supervision • Organise, as necessary, reviews of any students whose progress was considered problematic during first year review • Keep track of student registration status (some will move from full time to part time at some stage; others will interrupt their studies – see 7.4 (page 54)) • Organise upgrade reviews/ annual monitoring of upgraded candidates – see Section 4 • Be aware of students likely to complete early in the following year and ensure that supervisors are aware of procedures for appointing examiners, etc. • Explore any problems with progression, and ensure that these are addressed as early as possible; where necessary, contact either the Research Degrees Unit or the Dean of Graduate Studies	• Continue with regular supervisory meetings, and encourage regular submission of written work, which should be returned to the student, with written/recorded comment, in a timely fashion • Explore with students ways of staying in touch with each other, with the department, with the discipline more broadly, as they move into the phase of more independent research • Make arrangements for on-going support to students away from the School on fieldwork • As appropriate, check on student teaching/ research/ outside workloads and advise them as necessary – see Section 9 • Be prepared to advise students on other aspects of their professional development (eg attendance at conferences, presenting at conferences, writing for publication, maintaining some breadth in their on-going studies) – note that the Methodology Institute, Teaching and Learning Centre and Careers may be able to assist
Final year – the run up to completion/viva		
	• Organise review process for students at the end of their third year of full time study or equivalent for part timers. This review should include from the student a clear plan to completion. Where a given student is not on track for timely completion, this is the point to explore with the supervisory team what support might be helpful (eg clearer deadlines, explore funding options, consider coaching). • Exercise continued vigilance concerning potential problems with progress/completion	• At least three months prior to a student completing, discuss and select examiners – contact Research Degrees Unit for guidance • Ensure student is fully informed about requirements for thesis formatting and binding, submission and examination • Continue with regular supervisory meetings and provide prompt feedback on written work • Encourage student to attend Teaching and Learning Centre sessions on viva preparation and/or similar departmental provision • Advise on job search and/or encourage student to make use of specialist PhD careers adviser • Prior to the viva, discuss with the student whether you will/will not be present at the viva – see Section 8
Post-viva		
		• Ensure department and Research Degrees Unit are fully informed of outcome • As appropriate, there may be the need for on-going support and advice; 5% of theses require substantial work, which usually has to be completed within 18 months

Section 2: Pre-arrival: recruitment and selection of students

2.1 Taking stock: preferences and expectations

Being a supervisor at LSE represents a significant personal investment and commitment. There are many benefits that come with the role – the stimulating and rewarding nature of working alongside high quality students, the acknowledgement of your standing in the field implicit in your ability to attract such students, the opportunities for collaborative work (with students and any joint supervisors), the expansion of your international network of colleagues by former students, to mention only a few – but the commitment to students is a long one. They will be at the School for a minimum of three years if they are full time and for at least six years if they are part time, and on-going work with former students often long outlives the formal requirements of the research degree programme.

Having made the commitment, it is worth thinking about what can be done from the outset to attract the best students to want to come and work with you. In the social sciences it is not uncommon for students to approach you and ask you to supervise them. These students are aware of your research interests and profile, and see you as the expert who can best advise them. It is worth reviewing the ways in which you can raise your research profile, especially via the internet, so that prospective students are better aware of what you do.

Do you have a personal web page on your department's site? What does it say about your research interests, experience and approach to supervision? Is the list of conferences, publications and projects up to date? Do you have an entry in LSE Experts (lse.ac.uk/experts)? Do you have materials in LSE Research Online (http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/)?

Secondly, it is worth considering in more detail exactly what you are looking for in a student. What do you consider to be the characteristics of a "good" prospective student? How would you prefer to be able to work with a student? How might your interests and prospective student interests relate, connect and complement each other? Given the stage of your own career, are you interested in supervising someone whose proposal looks quite straightforward, do-able, achievable – essentially building on what you can see to be already sound foundations in the discipline? Or are you interested to work with someone who is proposing striking out into less known, riskier, more challenging directions where there may well be greater possibility of more challenge for you and uncertainty of success?

Thirdly, who would you enjoy co-supervising with? Most LSE students will have a supervisory team and the relationship between supervisors can also provide opportunities for stimulating and mutually beneficial work. What would you look for in a supervising colleague? To what extent would you choose to work with someone with a similar outlook to yourself or would you seek a colleague with a different complementary skills set and viewpoint? What are the consequences of these preferences in the subsequent ways that you will need to work together to best support the student?

2.2 Advising prospective students

If either your current MSc students or interested external applicants contact you to enquire about doctoral study, point them to the LSE Graduate website and also to your departmental website. The latter should provide them with details of departmental research and study activities, staff, students and alumni, and current projects, events and collaborations. If departments feel it appropriate, prospective students can be invited to speak with current students or willing alumni to find out more about the way the department functions and practical concerns such as work space and computing facilities. LSE also has an open evening each November for prospective graduate students.

It may also be useful to encourage prospective students to think long and hard about whether doing a PhD is really the right thing for them and to realise how different doctoral study is to earlier forms of education. The Quality Assurance Agency and the National Union of Students provide a useful, free guide, The UK doctorate: a guide for current and prospective doctoral candidates (available at the QAA Publications site and also accessible through the LSE Admissions website). This gives information about the different forms of doctoral qualification in the UK and details the national standards that students are expected to meet, as well as providing guidance on what they can expect by way of supervisory and institutional support. The following questions are proposed as a way getting prospective students to think through the reality of doing doctoral study.

Questions to consider

1. What does the institution expect of its research students in terms of time spent researching, undertaking training or attending "taught" elements, and other responsibilities?

2. What are the roles and responsibilities of doctoral supervision at the institution, and what provision is there for change of supervisor if my supervisor leaves or takes a sabbatical?

3. What facilities and resources am I likely to need for my project and will I be able to access them?

4. What costs am I likely to incur that are not included in the annual tuition fee, such as travel for research purposes, conference attendance, bench fees or specialist equipment?

5. How will I be supported in finding opportunities to attend conferences, give presentations and publish?

6. Will I be given opportunities to teach, and, if so, how much teaching is available/expected, and what support will be available to me as a novice teacher?

7. What support is available (in my subject) for research and professional transferable skills development? Are there required courses I need to take?

8. How does the institution promote an engaging and interdisciplinary postgraduate research environment?

9. How are the concerns of doctoral students represented at the institution?

10. What provision is there for arranged suspension of study (for example, for parental leave) and will I be able to return to my research if I suspend my study for some reason?

11. What happens if I don't complete my research?

12. What employment opportunities are available for someone researching in my field and how will this doctoral qualification enhance my career prospects?

Source: The UK doctorate: a guide for current and prospective doctoral candidates, QAA and NUS (currently in draft)

In addition a student considering coming to LSE may want to think about the pros and cons of living and studying in London. The richness of the local academic community, massive library and other opportunities available here need to be balanced against the high cost of living, transport and the stresses of big city life.

Among the many sections of the LSE website that prospective doctoral students might be pointed to, these may be particularly useful:

- the Graduate pages, which include the graduate prospectus, application information and videos about graduate study at LSE;
- the School Calendar, which includes programme regulations;
- Theses Online, which holds previous students' PhD theses.

2.3 The application process: overview

PhD application is generally a multi-stage process.

1. Informal contact. At LSE, as noted above, many students thinking of applying for a PhD will initially approach potential supervisors directly. Use this opportunity to start to get a feel for the person and their interests and possible synergies with you and your work. However, avoid giving any suggestion that you are willing to take them on and point them to the formal application process. If prospective students have questions about that process, these may be better directed to the relevant departmental administrator.

2. Formal application considered by department. It is essential that all students make a formal application and that they are assessed to ensure that they meet the basic criteria set by the School and the department (see 2.4 below). All departments will involve academics in the selection process and also take into consideration the availability of staff able to supervise any student that meets the essential criteria and has put forward a potentially interesting research proposal.

3. Shortlisted candidates are interviewed, with preliminary offer made pending confirmation of funding and other relevant conditions. Following assessment and shortlisting on the basis of the paper-based or online application, the School now requires that all shortlisted applicants are interviewed (see 2.5) prior to being offered a place.

4. Central School funding decisions. The School is moving to fully funded PhDs (see the Financial Support Office website for details of the different scholarships available through both LSE and the research councils) and, as such, those shortlisted candidates who do not indicate that they have their own funding and who are considered outstanding will then need to be considered by a central panel in the School which decides where offers of funding will be made. Note that at the doctoral level there may well be active competition with other institutions to encourage the very best students. Wherever possible, check in advance what their funding options may be.

5. Offers to students not funded by LSE. Students who are not offered funding through the School, but who meet the basic criteria and are interested in undertaking research in an area where there are supervisors available, may be offered places conditional on an undertaking to finance themselves. It is important to make clear to such students both the likely costs of doctoral study at LSE in your given discipline (including costs for fieldwork, language tuition, conference attendance and so forth), and to emphasise that there are unlikely to be any sources of funding available through the School should their own funding source prove insufficient once they have started the programme.

In most departments, the doctoral programme director and/or a PhD admissions selector has a key role to play in the selection process, and individual supervisors may have only a limited role (although you should be consulted if you are being considered as the primary supervisor). Whatever your situation, it is worth familiarising yourself with the process as set out in 2.4 and 2.5 below. If you find yourself asked to take on the supervision of students part-way through their doctoral study (in other words you "inherit" a student), 2.6 (page 19) provides some thoughts on how to manage this.

2.4 Formal entry requirements

LSE sets rigorous criteria for doctoral students. The four year (full time) maximum registration period and the move in the School to fully funded students makes effective selection even more important. The basic School-wide admissions criteria were agreed by Academic Board in 2005 and are as follows:

PhD students will be accepted on the basis of the strength of their thesis/project proposal, their motivation and their prior academic attainment as the main factors leading to confidence in their chances of completion.

Source: Academic Board, March 2005, AB/19

The formal selection criteria from 2013 forward are:

- Transcripts of degree courses undertaken to demonstrate minimum of 2(i) undergraduate degree classification and merit level or above at Masters level, normally in a subject appropriate to the research, to include merit in the dissertation (where one exists) or equivalent. Some departments require evidence of achieving the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) General Test score of at least 800 within the last five years.
- A research proposal following a specified format.
- Specified English language qualifications if English is not the student's first language or if the language of instruction of their previous degree is not English. The standard requirement is overall grade 7 in IELTS, with at least 6.5 in all sections and a minimum of 7 in the writing component. Some departments set higher IELTS requirements.
- Submission of a piece of assessed work from the most recent programme of study.
- Two academic references.
- Evidence of funding options and provision of the application fee.
- Indication of visa situation, including making application in sufficient time to allow for visa processing.

2.5 Detailed consideration of potential applicants: from shortlisting to interviewing

As noted earlier, the precise composition of selection panels will vary by department. In some cases, the doctoral programme director or departmental PhD admissions selector may undertake an initial check of applications and reject any that clearly fail basic criteria. In most cases, a small panel will then undertake the process of shortlisting applications, to identify those which meet the essential criteria (outlined in 2.4 above, plus any department-specific criteria) that can be demonstrated through the written application documentation – this might be done at a meeting or through the distribution of papers. Appendix 2 provides an example of one department's paperwork for the initial assessment of applicants. It is important to keep clear records of applicant attributes set against the selection criteria so that there is an audit trail should a student appeal against rejection or there be any other challenge to the application of proper selection procedures at any point.

There will then need to be some cross-checking in the department on the availability of staff with the right research background and who are likely to be on the staff for the foreseeable future, to enable the department to consider a given applicant.

The School expects that there should be at least two possible supervisors for each possible applicant, and that each primary supervisor should have a supervisory load of no more than 8 students at any one time. Pre-major review staff cannot act as primary supervisors. Note that a department may have to turn away a potentially excellent student because it does not have the capacity to offer that student a place at that time due to supervisors not being available.

Interviews

As noted earlier, all departments are now expected to interview all students they are considering accepting, with certain limited exceptions. (Please contact the Research Degrees Unit – see the "At a glance insert in the centre for details – if you are considering interview exemptions.) The UK Quality Code Chapter B11 (at the QAA website) recommends that at least two members of staff are involved in the decision to offer a PhD place to a student.

The primary aim of the interview is for you to gain further information about the candidate's motivation, commitment and potential for study at the doctoral level. It also provides the opportunity to find out more about a student's personality and approach, so that you get a sense of how easily a productive working relationship could develop, and, importantly – given that strong candidates will be applying to a number of international institutions and is therefore also "selecting" – to "sell" the benefits of doing a research degree in your department and in the School.

What are you looking for in the interview?

Doctoral students are expected to have particular attributes and the interview will be an opportunity for you to get further information on the candidate's:

- ability to process complex concepts, reason analytically and critically;
- ability to evaluate own work and the work of others;
- capacity to conduct independent research as well as to accept guidance from others;
- enthusiasm for research and for situating research more broadly;
- motivation and perseverance in achieving objectives;
- organisational skills;
- capacity to establish good working relationships;
- personal and academic integrity.

Organising the interview

Your department is responsible for making the arrangements for the interview, which will generally include:

- establishing the format in which the interview will be conducted – in person, by telephone or by Skype/video conference;
- contacting the student to inform them of the interview time, place and date;
- asking the candidate if they have any special requirements due to a disability – see 3.6 (page 29) for more guidance on this;
- giving the candidate information about the format and schedule of the interview and who will be involved;
- booking rooms, catering, audio-visual equipment, etc.
- ensuring there are people who can meet and greet candidates on the day and give guided tours of the department and the School if appropriate.

It is important to be clear about your particular role in both the organisation and conduct of interviews as this will vary across the School.

Conducting the interview

A key point to remember is that the interview is a two-way process – you (preferably with a colleague, so that you can double-check your impressions and opinions afterwards) are interviewing the candidate but in many respects the candidate is also interviewing you. Consider how you will put the candidate at ease so that an open and honest conversation can take place.

It is helpful to begin the interview by welcoming the candidate and giving them some information (about the programme, the department, the School) before beginning to ask questions, and letting them know that you and any fellow interviewers will be making notes during the interview. You could then start with some relatively open questions – about them, their interests and their past experience – so that a rapport is established between you, before moving on to more specific and demanding questions: some generic examples are given in the box below. You will also want to use the candidate's written application and documentation to craft some individual questions, and to draw out how successfully the candidate meets any of the selection criteria that were not evidenced clearly enough during the shortlisting phase.

Further information and guidance about interviewing prospective doctoral students is provided at LSE's Graduate website.

Be prepared to answer questions from the candidate, as they will want to gain a fuller understanding of what doctoral study at LSE involves. Typically this may include information about the particular doctoral programme, the department or the School as a whole. For example:

Appendix 3 shows an example of interview questions for PhD applicants used by the Department of Media and Communications.

- How many other PhDs are working in this research area and in the department as a whole?
- Are there any journal clubs/research reading groups in the discipline?
- What is the publication rate of PhD students?
- What are the submission and qualification rates for PhDs in the department?
- Is there funding available to attend national or international conferences and meetings? Or to do fieldwork?

At the end of the interview, it is helpful to

- ask if the candidate has any further questions;

Some sample interview questions

Motivation for doctoral study (at LSE)

- Please tell me something about you, what you have been doing/studying/working on during the past year?
- What made you apply for this programme at this particular time? Why did you choose LSE? What made you choose this department?
- Where do you anticipate/hope a PhD will lead in terms of your career development?
- What contribution do you think you will be making to your chosen field of research?

Readiness for doctoral study

- What is the relevance of your previous study to your proposed research?
- What potential areas of research have you identified? How did you arrive at these? What interests you about them?
- Have you previously led seminars/taught undergraduates?
- How do you intend to fund your study?

Depending on specific circumstances

- Are you aware of the requirements of the programme (including taught courses)?
- What are you expecting by way of supervisory arrangements?
- How do you anticipate combining the demands of doctoral study/completing a PhD with other commitments you might have?

- thank them;
- let them know what will happen next and when they will hear from you.

Taking notes

The importance of keeping detailed notes of the interview cannot be over-emphasised. They provide not only a prompt for your memory of a particular applicant but also proof of a fair and proper selection process, should this ever be challenged.

An interview pro-forma is the easiest and best way of ensuring equality in the process and provides a standard template for recording detail and outcomes. Completed pro-formas should be kept in a secure and confidential place and seen only by relevant people and used for relevant purposes, in accordance with School obligations under the Data Protection Act.

Appendix 4 provides an example of an interview pro-forma used by the Department of Mathematics.

Offering places

Formal offers of places will be sent out via the School's admissions office, along with any information on funding awards and visa requirements where relevant. Please do not offer informal advice/feedback on offers. If an applicant chases up their application with you advise them they will receive feedback from the School's admissions office in due course.

In most cases, successful students will start their programme at the start of the normal academic year in October. In a few cases, where there may be difficulties related to, for instance, visas or funding, entry may be delayed.

2.6 Inheriting a student

For some staff, their supervisory relationship with a student doesn't start until part-way or well into the doctoral programme. This may be the approach in a few departments where there is a taught Masters element to the programme. Much more commonly, it will happen as the result of either an existing supervisor leaving or taking sabbatical/research buy-out, or the breakdown of an earlier supervisory arrangement. In such situations the second supervisor is likely to increase his/her role and become the primary supervisor and a new supervisor (often a new member of the academic staff) is recruited to the supervisory team. This can be a tricky place to start as the student is likely to have an established way of working with their previous supervisor(s) which may or may not have been successful. In either case a precedent has been set and expectations have been informed by the earlier experience that are likely to impact on the future supervision.

For the "new" supervisor it is clearly worthwhile:

- understanding the past history and the events that have led to the change in supervisory arrangements and to anticipate the likely consequences of these changes; and
- clarifying expectations, from the perspectives of the department, the supervisory team (past and present) and the student

as this change will involve several people and perhaps the resolution of a number of complex issues.

It is important to capture any decisions reached and agreements made in writing, so look for as much prior information as you can get hold of – progress reports, supervisory records, course attendances, etc. These may all be recorded on the electronic PhD log that staff are encouraged to maintain (see page 25) and which may make the "back story" quite clear. If not, then talking to others will be particularly important.

Section 3 The first year: building the supervisory relationship

At the start of the doctoral programme, although both student and supervisors may well be keen to get up and running with the research itself it is important to invest some time on effective orientation and in establishing the supervisory relationship and ways of working together. Being clear and explicit about expectations, roles and responsibilities and clarifying what a research degree is all about can go a long way to help avoid misunderstandings and difficulties further down the line. It is clear from research into the doctoral student experience that the two crucial elements that will make or break a student's doctoral experience, beyond their personal circumstances and motivation, are their relationship with their supervisor(s) and the extent to which they feel part of an active research community.

3.1 Orientation

Orientation takes place at three different levels:

- orientation to the School
- orientation to the department/research group/academic hub
- orientation to the supervisory team and to those other doctoral students most closely linked to the new student's interests.

It is easy for orientation to become a deluge of information. To avoid this, plan orientation activities which spread over the first term at least, aiming to help the student to establish new ways of working and learning, to get to grips with the "local culture" and to become part of one or more local research communities.

Appendix 5 provides a checklist for supervisors to use with supervisees through the first few months.

School and departmental orientations are discussed below; supervisory team orientation is covered at 3.2 (page 22).

Orientation to the School

All new students should receive a welcome pack from the School prior to arrival with information on registration and on making early contact with their department and with the Research Degrees Unit. You can usefully familiarise yourself with this, and where necessary point new students to the relevant offices.

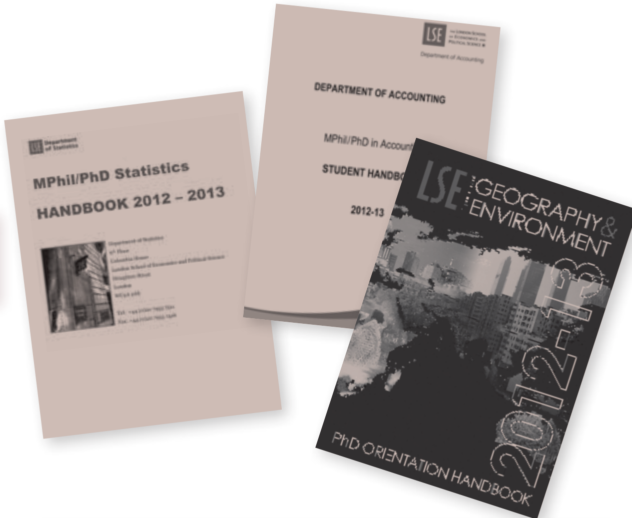
It is a good idea for new students to attend as much of the formal School orientation as appropriate so that they can better understand the context in which they will be working for the next few years. Check out the Student Services Centre's "Your first weeks" website which covers a lot of basic ground for newcomers to London and LSE and will also provide the date of the Dean's Orientation for doctoral students.

The Teaching and Learning Centre runs a series of introductory sessions as part of its academic and professional development programme for doctoral students – see the "At a glance" insert in the centre for contact information. These sessions provide an informal opportunity for new students to make connections across disciplines and departments and encourage them to start talking to each other about their research ideas. The interdisciplinarity of a lot of doctoral research is such that many students find their contacts with students in other departments to be highly beneficial.

Departmental orientation

Doctoral programme directors are responsible for organising initial departmental orientations. These again take different forms: half-day "talking heads" events, with staff from the home department and from central services such as the Teaching and Learning Centre, Language Centre, Careers, IT Services and the Library; informal parties; more interactive events such as "away-weekends" which bring together both taught Masters and new doctoral students.

Most departments then have a number of structured sessions scheduled through the first term/year aimed at introducing students to each other, to research in the discipline and to the research community. Further details on this, and some ideas, are given in 3.5 (pages 26-27).



Doctoral programme directors are responsible for producing departmental PhD handbooks. It is important that all supervisors have up to date copies, and are aware of any changes to procedures as the majority of changes apply to all research students when they are introduced.

Continuing PhD students can be an incredibly useful source of support for new students, both in terms of transmitting key information about practical issues and in helping them to feel part of the research community within the department.

Programme directors and supervisors can foster this peer support in more or less formal ways. A number of departments have introduced "PhD mentoring" systems, based on a model developed by students in the Institute of Social Psychology with initial set-up supported by Teaching and Learning Centre funding. Although the schemes work differently in different departments, in the basic model students are "paired up" with a mentor who is a year or so ahead of them (the scheme is for all students, not just new students) and the pairs are encouraged to meet a few times during the year for mentoring discussions. Pairings may be random, or based on shared research interests and/or having the same supervisor(s). In another variation, senior students organise "mentoring tea-parties" at which they talk about their experiences to date – this may work well in disciplines where a large proportion of the students may be away on fieldwork during the second and third years, and hence not easily available for any continuous form of mentoring.

Peer support can usefully go well beyond this early mentoring phase. Many research students are highly experienced and creative individuals and, with minimal support, can plan and organise a range of events for themselves and their peers. There are several examples from across the School of postgraduate-led events such as reading/journal clubs and writing groups, which can be particularly beneficial.

The majority of new research students join the School at the start of the academic year and will automatically be invited to many of the above events. New supervisors should try to attend at least some of the orientations provided, so that they are familiar with what their supervisees will learn about. Supervisors may choose to supplement these formal meetings with informal ones, for example bringing continuing and new supervisees together.

It is particularly important to ensure that:

- students who have previously studied at LSE do not assume that they know how things work, and skip orientation – they will miss out on useful information, and may not appreciate their somewhat different status and the advantages it can bring (for example, IT Services' treatment of research students as staff);
- if students arrive after the various orientation events have taken place, they are still introduced to the full range of departmental and School support available.

3.2 Establishing the supervisory working relationship

As noted earlier, LSE has moved to a policy of "team supervision" with a variety of systems operating. Where there is a primary/lead/first and secondary/associate supervisor both may have the necessary expertise to oversee the student's work, but the secondary supervisor may take a back seat, standing in only if the primary supervisory is on sabbatical for example, or may take a key role in the review process (see Section 4). Alternatively, the secondary supervisor may be pre-major review, and essentially be mentored by the primary supervisor, but might take an active role. Where there are "joint" supervisors it might be because they have complementary skills (for instance, one with a theory perspective, the other with particular expertise in methods or context). Where there is a "supervisor" and "advisor" the latter might primarily be there for pastoral support or to help with any misunderstandings between the supervisor and student. Occasionally students will have a second supervisor from another department, or possibly even another institution/country.

Whatever the model, agreeing how the supervisory team will operate is very important, as is ensuring that everyone involved is clear about how it will operate. Three steps may be worth considering here:

1. *Clarifying departmental supervisory norms.* From experience, a regular source of student dissatisfaction can arise when students within a department talk to each other and realise that, for example, speed or quality of feedback on written work or supervisor accessibility is very different. It is worth open discussion of this among colleagues, with reference both to School-level expectations and any specific expectations set out in the departmental PhD handbook.
2. *Establishing basic working arrangements in the supervisory team.* Prior to the first meeting with the doctoral student, those staff involved in the supervisory team can usefully meet to discuss, for example, your differing supervisory styles, your respective roles and responsibilities (for monitoring progress, offering feedback, etc.), how supervisory meetings can best be organised/attended/recorded.
3. *Establishing the working arrangements between the supervisory team and the student.* At an initial meeting between student and supervisor(s) some time needs to be spent addressing the following questions: How are we going to work together? What do you [the student] expect from us individually/collectively? (Share with your student ideas discussed in 2 above.) How often shall we meet? How can we best contact each other in between scheduled meetings? Different students will have different opinions, experiences and preferences and although the general aim should always be to be fair and equal with all of your students this does not necessarily mean working with everybody in exactly the same way. So negotiating and agreeing such day to day supervisory arrangements can be very helpful in avoiding problems associated with misaligned expectations. Any arrangements made will need to be periodically reviewed and relationship ground rules re-negotiated as the needs of students are rightly anticipated to change during their studies. It is worth keeping a written record of what is agreed – ideally on the PhD log (see 3.4, page 25) – for future reference.

Guidance for supervisors about what would be useful to consider during early meetings may well be provided by individual departments, but for some general suggestions see the box below on cross-departmental communication and, opposite, illustrations of supervisory practice from various LSE departments.

Cross-departmental communication

Where members of a supervisory team come from more than one department:

- the review, progression and upgrade procedures of the department in which the student is registered (home department) will normally apply;
- clear information on supervision arrangements across departments should be provided in the home department handbook for PhD students.

If a student seeks informal advice from supervisors in other departments/elsewhere it is the student's responsibility to inform his/her supervisor. However it is helpful if academic colleagues also report this to the relevant supervisor where known.

Case study illustrations of LSE supervisory models

GOVERNMENT

Each research student in the department has a supervisor.

An important, and early, task of the supervisor is the provision of advice about which additional courses (especially in the Methodology Institute) it may be useful for students to attend.

Staff members who are on leave are strongly encouraged to carry on supervising their doctoral students. If they do so, they must arrange, in consultation with the research student tutor, for the appointment of a full-time member of staff to act as official supervisor for the duration of the leave.

In addition to a supervisor, the department's arrangements ensure that each student has either a second supervisor or an advisor. First year MPhil students are asked to find an advisor before the end of their first Lent Term so they are able to attend the upgrade review in the Summer Term; they will usually do so in consultation with their principal supervisor.

The role of advisor is a flexible one, but in general includes:

- acting as a substitute in administrative matters in the absence of a single supervisor;
- providing a supplementary source of advice and encouragement on the broad direction of the research;
- constituting a second point of contact in the wider departmental network on which students can draw (for example, for references and general academic contacts).

Advisors are not however joint supervisors and will not see students with the same regularity as supervisors. Unlike supervisors (whether single or joint) they are not necessarily specialists in the student's thesis area; they are there instead as "another ear". They can give supplementary advice on how to organise work, and should receive copies of whatever substantial written work is submitted to the supervisor. However, their role in relation to such work will be to give general, strategic advice rather than detailed commentary on the text. Advisors will also normally take part in the end-of-year review panel … Students with advisors on leave will be allocated an alternative by their supervisor for the duration of the leave.

In addition to whatever use they wish to make of the advisor, students are encouraged to make contact with whichever members of the department (and members of other departments) can help with their research.

MATHS

Supervisor and second supervisor

During the application process, it will have been agreed with each arriving research student who their supervisor is to be.

The role of the supervisor is to direct the student's research programme. That will normally involve proposing an area of study, suggesting research papers or books to read, pointing out particular research problems for the student to work on, and providing detailed feedback on work done. The supervisor will also offer advice and guidance on how to get research published, how to prepare and give talks, which conferences to attend, and which taught courses to take. The exact nature of the supervisor's role will vary to some extent from student to student, depending on their needs.

More formally, the supervisor is responsible for making regular reports on a student's progress. Once the student is ready to submit their thesis, the supervisor will recommend the appointment of the examiners, and arrange for the examination to take place.

Each research student is also assigned a second supervisor. This is another member of the department, normally with research interests or expertise related to the area of the student's research. If the student's main supervisor has limited experience of PhD supervision, then a second supervisor will be appointed who has such experience. Typically, a second supervisor will be assigned towards the end of the student's first term of registration, following consultation with the student and the supervisor.

The second supervisor is an additional source of advice and guidance for the student. They will keep themselves informed about the student's progress, and will be able to act, in most respects, as a back-up if the supervisor is away from the department for a period of time, for instance on sabbatical leave. In some instances, a student will consult with their second supervisor about research topics, but this is not always appropriate or necessary.

Some students in the department have two co-supervisors instead of a supervisor and a second supervisor. It is possible for supervisory arrangements to change in the course of a student's studies, with the agreement of all parties, for instance if the student's research interests change or if a supervisor leaves the department.

ANTHROPOLOGY

On admission to the department, whether registered for the MSc in Social Anthropology (Research) or the MPhil/PhD, students are normally assigned two research supervisors, with whom they are expected to meet regularly during the course of their studies.

In some cases, students are assigned a lead supervisor and an adviser rather than them having two "equal" supervisors; in these cases they will meet more regularly with the lead supervisor while the adviser will have more of a back-up role.

Arrangements for supervision sometimes change during the course of a PhD, not least because most PhD students are based in the department for a number of years, during which time their supervisors may retire, go on research leave, etc. It sometimes happens that one supervisor will take on primary responsibility for the supervision of a given student, or that a student – for reasons related to his or her research – will wish to make new supervision arrangements.

Ideas for agenda items for early supervisory meetings

The student's situation

Why does your student want to do a PhD? What do they like and dislike about the research they have done already? Do they have any personal issues which will/may affect their ability to undertake their PhD work (eg disability, funding, family circumstances)?

Meetings

In making arrangements you will need to consider the following: What time of day? For how long? Where? How often to meet? How will meeting agendas be set? Who will attend? How will meetings be confirmed or cancelled?

Keeping a record

Meetings and agreed actions should be documented. Who does this and how is the record kept? See 3.4 below for information about the PhD log, the School's preferred mode of record keeping.

Contact

How will your student contact you? How will you contact your student? How quickly will you respond to queries or questions?

Feedback

What will you give feedback on (spelling and grammar, methodology, errors, for instance)? How quickly will you return work? Can they expect praise and criticism?

The annual cycle

When are you very busy and less available? When are you away? What are the monitoring arrangements during the year? What are the "given" staging posts? What is expected of the student at those staging posts?

Support

Who else can help? How can they be contacted? What can they do?

Beginning to identify individual training needs

What can the student do well already? What can't they do? What do they know? What don't they know? What methodological training have they had? What analytic/quantitative/ qualitative skills do they have or may they need? Identifying the gaps in abilities, skills and knowledge will be an ongoing process for both student and supervisor – see 3.5 (page 26).

Their anticipated "trajectory"

How long do they expect to be working on their PhD? Have they thought about future career? Do they know others who have been through/completed/dropped out of a PhD?

A checklist for what could usefully be covered at an orientation with new doctoral students appears at Appendix 5.

3.3 Ongoing supervisory meetings in the first year

After the initial orientation period, there are likely to be at least two kinds of meetings that take place regularly between students and supervisors. There are the informal, drop-in, unscheduled meetings that are very important for the supervisory relationship and help communicate interest and enthusiasm – these might happen face to face, via the telephone or Skype or in written formats such as email – and the more formal meetings which take place in person and are planned in advance according to an agreed schedule and timeframe.

The minimum number of meetings that a student can expect to have is three meetings per term in the first year and two meetings per term thereafter, with meetings anticipated to last at least an hour. This is the School minimum. Departmental expectations may be more demanding, and it is these expectations that supervisors should adhere to. Where a student misses two or more formal scheduled meetings with their supervisor, please inform the Research Degrees Unit.

Formal supervisory meetings should take place in an environment free from distraction and interruption, where both student and supervisor feel able to do and say what they need in order to progress the work. It is also increasingly important that the outcomes of these formal supervisory meetings are accurately recorded in some way acceptable to student and supervisor (see 3.4 below).

Having supervisory meetings is important to provide support and guidance for your students but it also provides a means to monitor the progress of your students. This aspect of the supervisor's role is considered further in Section 4.

3.4 Record keeping

Keeping a record of meetings and other communications between student and supervisor(s) is a necessary part of effective supervision for many reasons.

- Having a record of what was discussed and agreed helps the student have a clear idea of how to move forward effectively.
- Any misunderstandings/miscommunications can be identified before they may become problematic.
- Records help to structure subsequent meetings and give supervisors a useful aide memoire about students whom they may not have seen for a month or so.

- Records can easily be circulated among the supervisory team, so that everybody is kept aware of progress and/or problems.
- Where a new supervisor takes over or joins an existing supervisory team, the record can provide useful background information and help them see what advice and support has been offered earlier in the process.
- If complaints arise about the frequency or quality of supervision, records of meetings or other contact can be used in support of a supervisor's position where necessary.
- For international students on visas, records of meetings can function as proof of contact points.

Keeping records of meetings and other communications need not be time-consuming, especially if a protocol is established as soon as possible in the supervisory relationship. You may decide as supervisor to type up your own meeting notes and email them to your student. Alternatively, you may prefer to hand over responsibility for this to your student. This can be useful as a way of signalling your expectation that they take responsibility for meetings and spell out what they have taken from each meeting in terms of actions arising/next steps, rather than encouraging them to look to you for guidance and follow-through. You will still want the student to email you their notes or (better still) complete the electronic PhD log (see below) and have an agreement with them that you may amend anything you consider factually incorrect or add your own additional note should the need arise. If your student meets other members of the supervisory team separately, ensure that your student also takes responsibility for keeping them in the loop, so that for example those not present at the meeting can simply be copied in on the post-meeting note.

A sample pro-forma to record a formal supervisory meeting is offered at Appendix 6.

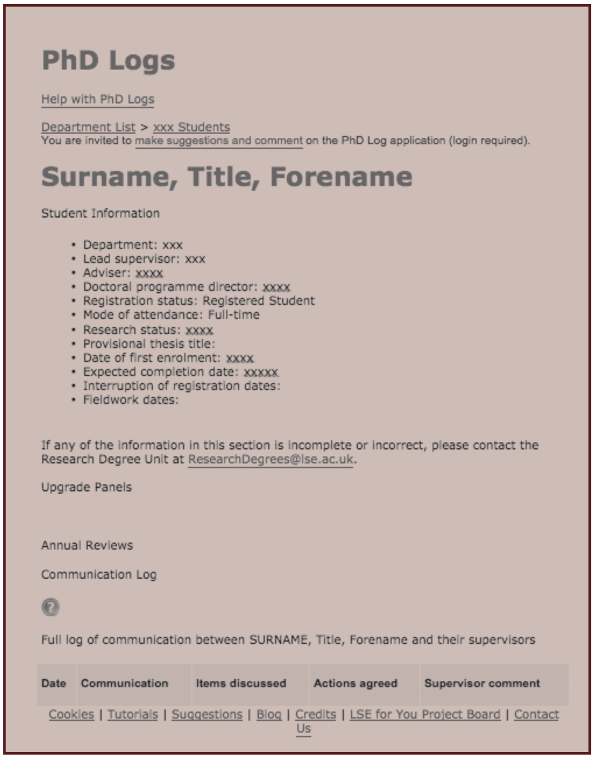
The LSE PhD log

The School has introduced a PhD log for all doctoral students and their supervisors. The intention is that this system will facilitate ongoing supervisory meetings and key decisions made through monitoring and review events, and also possibly be a way for the student to keep track of their continuing professional development activities.

The Research Degrees Unit sets up the log (in LSE for You) and inputs the following data for the student:

- Department
- Lead supervisor
- Adviser
- Doctoral programme director
- Registration status
- Mode of attendance
- Research status: Master of Philosophy / PhD
- Provisional thesis title
- Date of first enrolment
- Expected completion date
- Interruption of registration dates
- Fieldwork dates

Once the log is established, the student, all supervisors involved with that student, the doctoral programme director and the doctoral administrators are all able to view the individual student's screen. At present entries may be initiated only by the student, but work is ongoing to enable the supervisor(s) to enter information too. The log allows for a brief record of supervisory meetings as well as for additional documents (such as draft work and feedback) to be attached to the meeting record. It also includes the opportunity to record the dates and outcomes of all the student's formal monitoring (annual) reviews and upgrade decisions.



PhD Logs

Help with PhD Logs

Department List > xxx Students
You are invited to make suggestions and comment on the PhD Log application (login required).

Surname, Title, Forename

Student Information

- Department: xxx
- Lead supervisor: xxx
- Adviser: xxxx
- Doctoral programme director: xxxx
- Registration status: Registered Student
- Mode of attendance: Full-time
- Research status: xxxx
- Provisional thesis title:
- Date of first enrolment: xxxx
- Expected completion date: xxxxx
- Interruption of registration dates:
- Fieldwork dates:

If any of the information in this section is incomplete or incorrect, please contact the Research Degree Unit at ResearchDegrees@lse.ac.uk.

Upgrade Panels

Annual Reviews

Communication Log

Full log of communication between SURNAME, Title, Forename and their supervisors

Date	Communication	Items discussed	Actions agreed	Supervisor comment

Cookies | Tutorials | Suggestions | Blog | Credits | LSE for You Project Board | Contact Us

3.5 Addressing training and development needs

One of the most important early supervision conversations will be to explore your student's training and development needs. What prior methodological courses have they undertaken? What analytical skills do they already have? Will they need further advanced technical skills? Have they got sufficient breadth and depth in their theoretical understanding of their particular area of interest? Given that in recent years the broader training and development requirements of doctoral students has become much more explicitly emphasised by funding bodies and potential employers, and departments themselves have put in place more formal programmes of study for doctoral students, it is worthwhile reviewing with students both what they expect and what your department expects from them. Supervisors are uniquely placed to steer the student through the complex array of training provision available within the department, within the School more widely, within the discipline and even externally. Supervisors can also play a crucial role in motivating students to engage with different forms of training and development, identifying any early difficulties that may arise and finding ways to address them.

The examples below give a flavour of the kinds of taught requirements for doctoral students within departments.

GENDER

In their first year, both full time and part time students attend (in an auditing capacity) the core course of the MSc Gender: GI400 Gender Theories in the Modern World (which runs throughout Michaelmas and Lent terms). Full time students take the half unit GI402 Gender Knowledge and Research Practice in the Michaelmas Term. Part time students take this course in either their first or their second year. There are advantages and disadvantages attached to both, and you should discuss these with the director of the PhD programme and/or your supervisor when you arrive. You also attend a fortnightly PhD training seminar for GI-registered students.

STATISTICS

Students are expected to attend courses suggested to them by their supervisors and do well in any mandatory summer examinations. They should also complete any necessary training in research techniques and/or computing.

The department has been closely involved in the development and expansion of the London Taught Course Centre for PhD students in the Mathematical Sciences (hereafter London Taught Course Centre). Our involvement in the London Graduate School in Mathematical Science and the London Taught Course Centre highlights our commitment to widening PhD training by adding our expertise and resources to this collective drive for excellence in the development of doctoral students and teaching in statistics and mathematics.

The London Taught Course Centre is run by a consortium of universities in the London region, including the Statistics and Mathematics departments at LSE. Its aim is to ensure that all mathematical sciences research students have a broad mathematical culture covering at least one (and ideally more) of the three areas of pure mathematics, applied mathematics, and statistics, but also to offer students opportunities to acquire a working knowledge of classical results and recent developments in their own broad research fields, but outside the specialised domains of their individual research projects. The programme started in October 2008.

We recommend that students should ideally attend four courses in the first year of study followed by two courses per year thereafter, subject to consultation with their supervisors.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

The MPhil/PhD programme includes taught courses on both methodology and theory. The precise courses you are required to attend may vary from student to student, and you may be exempt from some or all of these course requirements, depending on your prior experience and qualifications. These matters should be discussed with your supervisor at your first formal supervision meeting. The criteria for successful completion of these courses are given in the School calendar

Department of Methodology

The Department of Methodology offers a core methodology course, PS457 Fundamental Research Methods for Social Psychology. In addition, the Department of Methodology offers a range of courses more directly suited to covering the methodological and practical matters concerned with completing PhD research.

Additionally, you are strongly recommended to attend at least one of MY451, MY452, MY455, MY456, MY453 or MY421.

Core courses

The core course that you are required to take will depend on the stream of the MPhil/PhD programme on which you are registered; your performance on this course will be formally assessed. The courses are, respectively, for the streams in Social Psychology, Organisational and Social Psychology, Social and Public Communication, and Health, Community and Development. ... For a detailed outline of course content, teaching arrangements, assessment and reading lists, please refer to the School Calendar.

Specialist option courses

You will be expected to follow a specialised option course, assessed by course work alone. The range of options available in 2011-2012 is … [14 PS level 4 courses listed]. Plus any other option course which is offered in the School and is relevant to your research, subject to the consent of your supervisor and the teacher responsible for the course.

MANAGEMENT

Your supervisor should, after discussion with you, taking into account your pastexperience and qualifications and research area, determine precisely which training courses you should take.

ACCOUNTING

In your first year, you will attend the following two compulsory accounting courses:

- AC500 Accounting, Organisations and Society (not examined)
- AC502 Foundations in Accounting, Organisations and Institutions (H) (examined by means of a 6,000 word essay)

In addition, you should take two examined postgraduate-level courses to the value of at least 1.5 units in your first year (or split across your first and second year). You can choose from the following list …[list of 23 level 4 courses from across several LSE departments listed] ... or select any other postgraduate level course which is available in the School, in areas related to your research topic, with the permission of the Programme Director. You are required to pass these courses with a mark of at least 65% in order to proceed to the second year.

Students are required to make seminar presentations in each year of study and are required to attend the department's Accounting Research Forums. You are also encouraged to attend any other relevant seminars in related areas. Further particulars about the programme are available online via the School Calendar.

In addition, supervisors may want to point students to the range of courses available through the Department of Methodology (see Timetables MY500+ entries).

Department of Methodology

A key function of the Department of Methodology is to provide training for PhD and MSc students in the design of social research and in qualitative and quantitative analysis. Students should seek advice from their departments or supervisors on which Department of Methodology courses they are required to take.

Historically, one of the main reasons for the establishment of the Department of Methodology was the identification by the Economic and Social Research Council of a "methods gap" in the training of research students and the publication by the ESRC of guidelines for PhD programmes in the social sciences. Among the stipulated requirements was a set of research skills for each discipline. Given the considerable overlap in these research skills across departments, the Department of Methodology was established to meet some of these needs efficiently.

Department of Methodology courses are open to all students taking MSc or PhD programmes. This means that research students are welcome to attend any of the Department's courses. They should check their departmental requirements with their research tutors or supervisors, and information on courses can also be obtained from the Department's Manager, John Fyson, in Room B807, Columbia House. Details of each course can be found at the LSE Calendar (lse.ac.uk/calendar).

If students are in receipt of ESRC or other UK research council funding, there are further guidelines that set out the skills that a doctoral research student is expected to develop during their study – see the training guidelines on ESRC's website.

In addition to disciplinary and methodological elements, UK research councils continue to highlight the importance of "transferable" or "generic" skills development during the research degree programme (and indeed build these into their training guidelines). This aspect of doctoral development was first prioritised in early 2002 as a result of the Roberts Review.

Despite the welcome current moves by the Funding Councils to improve the quality of PhD training, institutions are not adapting quickly enough to the needs of industry or the expectations of potential students. The Review therefore believes that the training elements of a PhD – particularly training in transferable skills – need to be strengthened considerably. In particular, the Review recommends that HEFCE and the Research Councils, as major funders of PhD students, should make all funding related to PhD students conditional on students' training meeting stringent minimum standards. These minimum standards should include the provision of at least two weeks' dedicated training a year, principally in transferable skills, for which additional funding should be provided and over which the student should be given some control.

Source: Roberts Review: SET for success, April 2002

Within LSE, much of this wider skills development takes place within departments. In addition, there is central provision through the academic and professional development programmes run by the Teaching and Learning Centre and Careers – see inside back cover – including events associated with different stages of the PhD, support on academic writing and writing for different audiences, preparing for conferences, teaching in HE, and guidance on job search and networking. LSE is also part of the Bloomsbury Postgraduate Skills Network and, through the Teaching and Learning Centre, alerts doctoral students to the training available at all its member institutions. The Teaching and Learning Centre also offers introductory training and a formal teaching certificate for any doctoral students who take on teaching roles at LSE – see 9.3 (page 65) for more on this – as well as funding for departmental and inter-departmental events/activities.

Examples of departmental activities funded by the Teaching and Learning Centre's Researcher Development Fund

The Economics and Philosophy Reading Group included participants from a number of LSE departments (Economics, Philosophy, Government, Mathematics and Operational Research). Up to 20 people attended each Reading Group session, whose focus ranged from decision theory to game theory and econometrics. The group also organised a highly successful end-of-year workshop, Decisions, Games and Logic, with three invited speakers and about 25 participants, mainly graduate students and postdoctoral researchers from Amsterdam, Lausanne and London. The event included tutorials on decision theory, game theory and logic, as well as graduate presentations on the intersections of these disciplines, providing an opportunity for the exchange of ideas between graduate students from different universities and from diverse departments within LSE.

The London PhD Poster Day was organized by the Management Department and involved PhD students from other LSE departments and London universities. The event gave students the opportunity to present and exhibit summaries of their research to academics and other PhD students and to receive constructive comments and feedback on their work to date. Each LSE student was offered a subsidy for the professional printing of his/her poster from the funds provided. The workshop helped developed participants' research management, communication and networking skills, giving students an opportunity to make new contacts with academics and students from other departments and universities.

Nationally, doctoral students may wish to access the resources and events offered by Vitae, a networking organisation that specialises in supporting professional and employment skills development. Another potentially interesting source for training is the ESRC's Researcher Development Initiative.

It is worth noting that training and development isn't just about going on courses and attending workshops. The vast majority of development takes place through less formalised experiences such as observing colleagues and by regular engagement and participation in departmental activities such as departmental research seminars and journal clubs.

It can be helpful for students to keep track of the training and development they have undertaken. Here, it is worth noting that much of the centrally provided training and development (from, for instance, the Teaching and Learning Centre, Library, IT Services) is now accessed via the School's training and development booking system (lse.ac.uk/training) which maintains a printable training log for everyone who uses it. Careers has its own system for accessing training and booking careers appointments, called LSE CareerHub.

3.6 Sources of specialised support

Different expectations

At the start of this handbook, attention was drawn to the very varied backgrounds and prior educational experiences of LSE supervisors. The same – and more so – can be said of new doctoral students. The culture shock experienced by students moving to London and starting their studies at the School may be a significant factor for supervisors to consider in the early days of the PhD. Students will experience the challenge of learning how to operate in a new institution, a new city and a new country to greater or lesser extent depending on the degree of "difference" they meet. Many will come from very different educational systems. For some, the relationship between student and teacher may have been much more hierarchical, and based on respecting and following one's teachers rather than evaluating, critiquing and challenging their ideas and writings. As such, there may well be the need to re-negotiate and clarify the student/supervisor relationship – and to do so with both patience and tact.

Direct or indirect discrimination can have a negative impact on some international students. Whether this takes the form of misunderstanding of religious or cultural requirements or aggressive or patronising attitudes from those they come into contact with, it can be very distressing and destabilising. A key aspect of supervision is to encourage students to let you know if they feel that they are being discriminated against. Indirect discrimination, such as the timing of meetings or training events that clash with important prayer times or requiring students to travel or work when this is against their beliefs, are areas that supervisors have the most influence on eliminating.

If you have early concerns about how a student is settling into LSE/London/UK, it is worth being aware of the following:

- LSE's Student Counselling Service (lse.ac.uk/counselling), which includes specialist support for PhD students;
- the LSE Interfaith Centre (lse.ac.uk/chaplaincy) which provides pastoral and spiritual support to students of all faiths and none and has recently published a Religion and Belief Guide (available

at lse.ac.uk/chaplaincy or in hard copy from the Teaching and Learning Centre: tlc@lse.ac.uk);

- the many LSE Students' Union faith societies;
- the School's policies on freedom of speech and anti-harassment;
- the wider over-arching Ethics Code;
- guidance for staff on consensual relationships (which may occasionally be relevant to PhD supervisors and their research students, and also research students who are involved in teaching undergraduates) accessible through the HR website.

Two other areas which may need to be explored, and where the School can provide specialised support, are

- students' English language ability and familiarity with UK/LSE expectations about academic writing, academic citation and oral presentation;
- disclosure and acknowledgement of student disability.

These are explored in more detail below.

Academic English and academic writing

The doctoral admissions process includes English language assessment. While this is a useful first indicator of English proficiency, it is not wholly reliable as an indicator that your student will be able to use English consistently at the level required for doctoral research. Many international students will benefit from ongoing English language support which may usefully focus on specifics – oral presentation, thesis writing conventions, speed reading and comprehension, English for teaching purposes – or provide more general support. The LSE Language Centre (see the "At a glance" insert in the centre for contact details) offers a wide array of support to students, with specialist support for doctoral students.

On writing, it is worth checking at an early stage how familiar your student is with the academic referencing and citation conventions of your discipline and School expectations on academic integrity and avoidance of plagiarism. These are addressed in particular detail in Section 6, but here it is worth highlighting that:

- the Library offers extensive online guidance for students on referencing and citation, along with a course offered throughout Michaelmas and Lent terms through the Methodology Institute (MY592);
- the School is licensed to use iThenticate, text-matching software which can be used both to check for possible plagiarism and as a developmental tool for students early in their doctoral programme to ensure that they develop appropriate habits that will ensure academic integrity.

Disabled students

Disability is a source of student difference which may or may not be apparent or declared prior to your first meeting with a student. A student's disability may be recognised under the Equalities Act (see Appendix 7) and may impact (both positively and negatively) on their research. Try not to make assumptions, either if you already know that a student is disabled, or if they have not indicated a disability. If and when you do know about a student's disability, raise the subject as early as possible and explore it openly and with sensitivity.

Different individuals will have very different experiences and requirements which may have an impact on:

- basic access to rooms and equipment;
- reading, writing and/or presenting;
- participating in seminars;
- planning and organisation of the research;
- accessing learning opportunities/resources such as teaching, internships, fieldwork;
- assessment processes;
- perceptions of others;
- self-perception/confidence and personal resilience.

Where the impact could hold the student back, it can often be addressed through support which may include:

- assistive technologies;
- access arrangements/transport;
- non-medical helpers such as support workers, specialist tutors, library assistance, note takers;
- most importantly, a good supervisory relationship based on trust, openness and honesty.

In recent years, the number of LSE doctoral students declaring a disability has increased, as students have become less worried that they will face discrimination. By declaring their disability, they can ensure that reasonable adjustments will be put in place to support their education. The funding councils, such as ESRC, are actively promoting equality, and set out how disabled students can apply for a Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) to support them through their studies (for details see ESRC Postgraduate Funding Guide). LSE's Disability and Well-being Service (lse.ac.uk/disability) may be able to provide some funding to support the specific educational needs of disabled students who do not have access to DSA funding.

In addition, the School has an anticipatory duty to provide accessible education and is exploring new ways to celebrate diversity across the organisation. For example in 2010 the School ran the first national Disability Identity conference, and has an active Disability Equality Research Network. Nationally, the Premia Project run through Vitae has an extensive collection of materials on making research education accessible and on supervising research students which all staff are strongly encouraged to read.

Note: Some students opt to declare a disability part-way through their studies for a variety of reasons and others may become disabled during their studies. One particular physical disability that often emerges during doctoral studies is RSI (repetitive strain injury), for which the LSE Treatment Clinic is able to provide information and treatment.

Section 4: Annual reviews, upgrade and ongoing monitoring

4.1 Monitoring progress

The very different ways in which a doctoral student's development and progress are benchmarked, compared to, say, a taught Masters student, mean that there is a significant dependency on the research supervisor to help the doctoral student understand and judge their progression. This section provides an overview of approaches to and mechanics of progress review, outlining the different approaches used by departments at LSE. For further details on the kinds of challenges that may arise from the review process, see Section 7.

Supervisors will be monitoring progress informally and continuously through supervisory meetings and the regular contact they have with their students. In addition, the School requires that departments also formally review the progress of all their students at the end of the first and the third years in ways that best suit the needs of the discipline and the nature of the research being carried out by students.

A typical schedule for monitoring the progress of full time doctoral students is given below.

Timeframe	Focus for monitoring
6 month review (informal)	To assess how the new student is adapting both to the programme and to working with you/others. This may include seeking feedback on student progress in any taught elements and reviewing initial progress as well as the suitability of the selected research topic and methodology.
9 month review (informal)	Particularly important for students whose initial progress is causing some concern. Now might be the time to explore with them alternative options including non-continuation (this may be beneficial to both the student, in terms of reducing time and funds invested in a project that is not looking worthwhile, and institutionally, given that students who drop out in their first year of study do not get included in calculations about non-completion).
First year review/ upgrade (formal)	The end of the first year is a key decision making point. For many departments it is also the point at which they upgrade from Masters to doctoral level, though in a few departments this latter decision is left until, for example, a major tranche of data collection or fieldwork has been undertaken. The focus for this review should be on whether the student has (a) fulfilled any formal departmental taught course requirements, (b) identified and got a clear plan for a viable independent research project and (c) in some departments, already made clear progress in terms of specifying aims, methods and theoretical framework. At a more abstract level, those involved in assessing the student need to be convinced that s/he is developing the independence and self-motivation needed to sustain a further three years of primarily solo research activity. The format for this review will vary (paper-based, "viva" style, team/panel assessment). The outcome of the review should include detailed feedback, clear recommendations about progression, and, in the case of any concerns about progress, clear progress targets for the student.
18 month review (formal)	For those students whose progress was causing concern at the end of their first year, there is normally another review within six months to check that targets are being met and progress is adequate.
Second year review (formal)	The focus for review at the end of the second year is likely to be light touch (assuming the 12 month or 18 month reviews were positive) – essentially requiring confirmation from the supervisory team and the student that work is more or less on track. By this stage, the student should be well into the detail of their research and be producing regular updates and submissions to their supervisor.
Third year review (formal)	The focus of the review at the end of the third year should be on plans for completion. As such, it might include a forward planning document setting out submission dates for drafts of major parts of the thesis, as well as a more detailed "countdown to submission" (see Section 8) indicating any possible issues which may intervene. It may also include actual submission of a major tranche of the thesis or some kind of "conference" style presentation, in preparation for job seeking and/or conference papers/early publications.

4.2 Reviewing progress in the first year, including upgrade

The first year of doctoral study is a year of transition and huge change for the student. They will find out a lot about themselves and how they can study more independently and work effectively as a researcher. The majority of LSE's doctoral students make this transition successfully and embrace the challenges of the PhD, but not all of them do: around 7% drop out of their programme within the first year. For some, this is down to the realisation that doctoral study is not for them; for others, the department decides they have not reached the required level; for yet others, personal circumstances lead to either temporary interruption or withdrawal.

The processes of review and upgrade vary markedly between departments at LSE as can be seen at pages 34-35, where a range of examples are shown. New supervisors can get a feel for their own department's practices by checking their departmental PhD handbook and asking for a detailed briefing from the doctoral programme director. Seeing examples of "passed" and "failed/referred" student submissions may be helpful and academic mentors can provide useful insights into the kinds of issues that arise at this stage, and proffer ideas about how best to support and manage students through the process. For some students, the review provides crucial feedback that helps to rescue them and/or their project. For all students review should involve the provision of detailed, constructive and timely feedback.

Crucially, the outcome of review should be communicated to the student clearly and in writing.

It is clear that a well-timed review aids timely completion of the whole PhD – and those students who have a delayed review are more likely to submit after four years (full time). For the minority of students who do not progress, it is also vital that this decision is made as soon as possible, to enable the student to complete the MPhil realistically or make alternative plans.

Upgrade from MPhil to PhD

The department will make a decision on whether to upgrade a student from the MPhil to the PhD programme at the first formal review or within one year (or two years for part time students) of it. If a student is not upgraded he/she is entitled to resubmit work and be re-examined under the same principles governing the first attempt within a further six months for a final decision. Where a final upgrade attempt is unsuccessful the student will normally be permitted to continue in registration and submit for the degree of MPhil if he/she so wishes. The Research Degrees Manager will inform the student in writing of a final decision, and the reasons for it, not to upgrade to PhD status.

Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraphs 22, 24, 25

The upgrade review is particularly important as a management step in the doctoral process. Decisions made at upgrade set the future course of action for the student and cannot be reversed.

When: Typically towards the end of the first year, though some departments leave it until after the student has completed their major fieldwork activities. Some departments combine the first year review and the upgrade procedures while others treat them separately.

How: In some departments the student's progress is scrutinised by two people, for example the primary supervisor and one other academic from the department. However, many departments are now using a team approach in which a group of three or four academics review the progress of several students. The review team will include the student's supervisor. The latter approach is seen as having a number of advantages – it enables a more consistent standard and view to be applied to all students and perhaps allows a more objective decision to be reached. It also lessens the supervisor's role, so decreasing the potential conflict for the supervisor of on the one hand wanting to support their own student, and, on the other hand, feeling concerned about making difficult decisions.

What: The upgrade review often includes the submission of a significant piece of written work (a progress report, a literature review, a work plan, for instance), together with an oral presentation (which could be viva-like, a presentation to a research committee and/or a departmental seminar presentation). Some departments also require research students to have passed formal course assessments at a particular grade.

No matter what the format the review's aims are shared across the School:

- Can the student demonstrate that they have made appropriate progress?
- Do they have clear plans of how to take their research forward?
- Are colleagues convinced that the quality of the research is of an appropriate standard?
- Has the student demonstrated they have the abilities and motivation to complete the PhD successfully?

A student can have two attempts at upgrade, with the second submission due within six months of the first. The student can appeal against the decision reached by the department but must do so within four weeks of the date on which they are notified (see Appeals regulations for research students on the Research Degrees Unit website).

A student's registration cannot be terminated on the basis of failure to upgrade alone, as at that point a second decision could be made, namely that the student attempts to complete an MPhil.

Again, as noted earlier, the outcome of the upgrade process should always be communicated to the student clearly and in writing.

4.3 Subsequent progress reviews

While many students are away on fieldwork during the second and/or third years of their doctoral studies, and others become engrossed in the research and writing process, it remains important for regular contact between student and supervisor to be maintained and for regular reviews of progress to take place. After the first (full time) year, students are entitled to a minimum of two meetings per term with their supervisor and will need to be advised of any specific/additional review requirements. Many departments now review their entire doctoral student body at the end of each year and, even where this is not common practice, supervisors are expected to indicate to the Research Degrees Unit whether their students can re-register each year.

The School now requires that all (full time) students are reviewed at the end of their third year and that they provide a completion timetable which they must discuss with their supervisor(s). By actively planning forward, it may be possible to ensure firstly that all parties are aware of time constraints and secondly that possible blocks and hindrances can be anticipated or actively addressed, rather than being allowed to build and so get in the way of timely completion.

4.4 Record keeping

Reference has already been made to record keeping (see 3.4 at pages 24-25). It should go without saying that keeping a clear and agreed record of monitoring and review outcomes is vital, and that formal decisions on student registration should always also be reported to the Research Degrees Unit. It can help to defuse problems which may arise at a later stage; it can save time for all concerned should problems arise; and, should any problems escalate, it may provide the audit trail necessary to manage complaints and appeals both for internal purposes and, where the need arises, as evidence to external bodies such as the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Case study illustrations of LSE monitoring and upgrade procedures

Important note: These examples are extracted from departmental PhD handbooks from 2011/12 and may no longer be up to date. Please check most recent handbooks for current departmental requirements.

ECONOMICS TRACK 1
(5 MRes Papers + 1 PhD-qualifying paper)

(note Economics has 2 tracks)

Progression to year 2 of MRes in Economics
In order to progress unconditionally from the first to the second year of MRes registration, students are required to achieve pass marks of 50% or higher in papers 1, 2 and 3. Students who do not attain this standard may proceed to the second year with up to two resit papers, only with the permission of the MRes programme director, with the restriction that they can sit a maximum of four exams (including resits and EC599) in year 2.

Award of the MRes in Economics
The award and classification of the MRes degree is consistent with the School's Scheme for the Award of a five-unit Taught Masters degree. Students are required to achieve a pass mark of 50% in papers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. One failed paper (but not a bad fail of 29% or less) can be compensated for by a mark of 55% or higher in another paper.

Progression to PhD registration
For PhD registration students are required to achieve three marks of 60% or higher and two marks of 50% or higher in MRes papers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Two marks of 60% or higher are required from the MRes core papers 1, 2, and 3. A mark of between 55% and 59% in one of these core papers can be condoned by a mark of +70% in another core paper and/or a mark of between 50% and 59% in one of these core papers can be condoned by a mark of +70% in the EC599 research paper.

Students missing the overall progression requirement by one paper are permitted to progress to PhD registration, but will subsequently need to resit and pass the paper to the necessary standard to continue their PhD registration. Students will also need to pass their PhD-qualifying field course (paper 6), which is taken in the first year of PhD registration, with 50% or higher.

Students missing the progression requirement by more than one paper are required to pass those papers to the necessary standard before PhD registration can be permitted.

Throughout the course-work portion of the MRes or MRes/PhD programme, students failing a paper or missing a progression mark will have to retake that paper within one year of the original examination. In exceptional circumstances, the Graduate Studies Sub-Committee can grant permission to a candidate to resit a paper in a subsequent year. Students can resit each paper only once. Students registered for the PhD remain subject to the relevant MRes regulations for any courses or examinations they are completing. Students who have been permitted to progress on to the PhD without satisfying the complete progression standard will have their PhD registration discontinued if they fail to reach this standard at resit.

A student can appeal against the department's decision on progression to PhD according to the appeal's procedures against decisions on upgrading to PhD in the School's Regulations for Research Degrees.

Award of the PhD in Economics
Award of the PhD is contingent on meeting the progression requirements for the PhD, passing the PhD qualifying field with a mark of 50% or higher, and on the completion and defence of an original research thesis, in accordance with LSE regulations.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Guidelines on preparing the thesis proposal for upgrade
Formally, the Thesis Proposal should contain a substantive statement of the aims, theories and methods proposed for the thesis, a tentative chapter outline, an indicative bibliography and a timetable for completion.

Every student will work in a particular way that suits them. However, it is generally the case that the early stages of research are concerned with defining a precise research topic and conducting a literature survey. It is not uncommon for the initial development of this part of the work to be hesitant, hazy and frustrating; crises of confidence are a normal part of this process. It is also quite common to begin with a rather large and all-encompassing research topic, and gradually to hone it down into something which is sufficiently precise to be tractable in a short period of time.

You may also find, as part of the way through your literature survey, that there are papers that have addressed the topic that you are interested in. In many ways, this is a benefit, because it frames the topic for you. Your approach might then be to attempt to re-frame it, and find alternative explanations for phenomena. Throughout this period, discuss your thoughts (however ill-formed they may appear to you!) with your supervisor(s). Also, try talking to students in their second or third years of study about their experiences.

The precise details of the Thesis Proposal and its format will vary from one student to another and they should be discussed with your supervisor(s). An MC500 seminar, early in ST, will also address the specific requirements of the upgrade document.

… [detailed specification of questions the proposal should address provided here] …

What to expect in the upgrade viva
The upgrade viva generally lasts about 1.5 hours. It is recorded and the student will receive a copy of the recording, together

with a formal written response from the Chair and written comments from each committee member.

The viva is conducted by the student's thesis committee, which is chaired by the director of the PhD programme or another senior member of the department and also includes the principal and second supervisor. Before the viva, the members of the committee will have read the submission and exchanged written comments. Normally, the chair will invite the student to say what the research is about, expecting a few sentences, lasting no more than 2 or 3 minutes – not the history of the project but a brief summary of it. This should be seen as the opening of an informal discussion rather than a presentation or a speech. The committee will then ask questions about theory, conceptual framework and methods, as necessary. The aim is to ensure that the student has an interesting project, which is manageable in a reasonable timeframe, and that there is coherence between research questions, theoretical approach and research design. It can be a quite stressful experience, but one which, provided that the outcome is positive, provides an instructive dry run for the viva voce PhD thesis final examination.

When the viva is finished, the student will be asked to leave while the committee has a short chat, then invited back and told the result, together with brief comments. If it is felt that the work has not met the required threshold, the student is invited to either a) resubmit entirely or b) resubmit some component. The latter may also be requested if the student passes the review, but needs to clarify some aspect.

Normally for full time students any resubmission is considered by the end of October following a June viva, with re-registration contingent on passing. Whether or not a second viva is required is up to the committee. If the upgrading is successful, the thesis committee will subsequently be available to offer feedback on developments and progress towards completion: subsequent to the viva voce examination, you should feel free to approach members of your thesis committee for clarification of points they raised.

Re-registration for the second year of the programme (or for the third year in the case of part time students) will normally be conditional on passing the upgrade. Students should not plan to take leave of absence for fieldwork before passing the upgrade.

GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT

Upgrade from MPhil to PhD status

You will have noted that all first year research students are initially registered for an MPhil and have to be upgraded to PhD status. The upgrade from MPhil to PhD usually occurs during the second year of full time registration (or its equivalent), with the exact timing dependent on student progress. For their formal upgrade review, students are required to submit a written upgrade report consisting of an extensive revised research proposal, two substantive draft chapters or papers (of which one can be a literature review) and a detailed plan for completion. The material is evaluated by an upgrading committee that will recommend transferral to PhD registration if the work is judged to be of sufficient quality and quantity. The upgrading committee is normally formed by the student's main supervisor, review supervisor and a third member of staff with relevant expertise. The upgrade is also dependent on students having completed all required training courses and having made a satisfactory research presentation in their doctoral presentation workshop.

Section 5: Preparing students for their research work

5.1 Doing research: styles of working

Doctoral students at LSE are engaged in a wide variety of very different research activities using one or more of the following approaches:

- desk/library-based, theoretical research;
- secondary analysis of high quality existing data sets and sources;
- empirical work that draws on a wide variety of sources/archives/existing data sets that are dispersed (nationally/internationally);
- case-based studies, often focused on organisations both local and further afield;
- field-based and empirical studies producing original data through ethnographic, qualitative and/or quantitative approaches.

Many research projects involve more than one style at different stages of the work and specialised supervisory arrangements may need to be made for particular periods (eg overseas fieldwork). Similarly, the different processes, practices and issues to be considered for the various research fields lead quite naturally to very different working patterns and engagements with supervisors.

5.2 Planning the research: ethical clearance, risk assessment, leave of absense

Once a student has shaped their research proposal, with guidance from supervisors, they will then need to develop a plan to implement the study. Good plans include clear milestones with concrete deliverables to enable students to see their progress and supervisors to monitor their development. Depending on the nature of the study there may be a number of specific elements to consider in the plan, for instance

- ethical clearance;
- risk assessment (including health and safety concerns);
- arrangements for leave of absence to study away from the School.

Ethical clearance

> All students must ensure their research complies with the School's Research Ethics Policy.
>
> Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 19

Ethics training is considered to be important part of research development and you will therefore need to work closely with your doctoral students when they are considering the ethics of their research proposal and how they can ethically gather and work with research data. Students should particularly consider ethics when devising research proposals that involve human participants, personal, medical or other sensitive data and/or the use of methodologically controversial approaches.

The student will need to weigh up, with your support, consideration of risk to the research participants versus benefits from the research and to think through especially carefully the likely impact on participants or vulnerable groups of any data collection methods. Certain groups are considered particularly vulnerable – children, vulnerable adults, or students when they are participating in research as students, for instance – or may be placed in a vulnerable position in relation to research; some participants will have diminished ability to give informed consent and are therefore less able to protect themselves and require specific consideration.

Care will also be needed if students wish to access sensitive information, the publication or analysis of which may have far reaching implications for them as well as the research subjects. Similarly, the use of other people's primary data may need clearance or raise the need to address concerns about its interpretation.

Students should review the Research Division's Ethics policy and guidance and, where appropriate, complete the Research Ethics Review Questionnaire with the support of their supervisors and then submit it to the Research Division. The questionnaire will then be reviewed by the School's Research Ethics Committee.

Risk assessment

For students who are working primarily on the LSE campus, using library and electronic resources, the health and safety risks should be minimal and are essentially similar to those for staff and taught students more generally. Nonetheless, the School has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to undertake assessments of its work activities in order to identify significant risks, and determine what measures are required to manage these risks. In this context, it is worth ensuring that your students are aware of:

- the School's health and safety policy, procedures and training – see the School's Health and Safety website (lse.ac.uk/healthAndSafety);
- the observation that many research students (and staff) at some point experience repetitive strain injuries (RSI) and/or eye strain from excessive use of the computer – again, LSE's Health and Safety team has guidance and support for this, including regular advisory talks on good working posture/workstation layout, and students should be encouraged to seek advice as early as possible if they have problems;

- lone-working arrangements – doctoral students often opt to work on campus late into the evenings and at weekends, and need to ensure that they are aware of fire procedures, how to summon emergency support, etc., and the importance of informing security if they are on site "out of hours" – see the Health and Safety website;
- facilities and support for expectant mothers.

Where students are undertaking research that takes them off site and particularly if they are undertaking work overseas, more rigorous health and safety consideration is needed. First, you will need to ensure that your student has completed the Application to undertake fieldwork form on the Research Degrees Unit's web page which includes a health and safety risk assessment. There is also further detailed guidance on the Health and Safety's Fieldwork and other off-campus academic-related activities page.

While your student may have thought of many issues, do ensure that they have checked with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office concerning the country they will be going to, and that they have up-to-date vaccinations and good health insurance. Also agree with your student how you will contact each other and how they will keep you updated on their progress: this might take the form of agreed email contacts and/or Skype conversations on a regular basis, or contact via a known third party.

If as a supervisor you have concerns about the risk assessment, do please raise them with your doctoral programme director and also seek advice from the Dean of Graduate Studies (email: pg.dean@lse.ac.uk).

Leave of absence

Your student may have the opportunity to spend a short period of time studying at another institution as part of a research exchange programme with an affiliated, overseas institution. Alternatively, as indicated above, they may need to carry out an extended piece of fieldwork that will require them to spend several months away from the School. In these cases, you need to be aware of the following regulation:

> The Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may allow students to be absent from the School for fieldwork or study elsewhere and will set the conditions which will apply. These conditions will include regular contact with their supervisor(s). Absence from the School will not normally be allowed in the first year of registration. A fee will be payable for the period of absence, and any such period will count towards the minimum and maximum number of years of study required by the School. Students undertaking fieldwork or study elsewhere must carry out a risk assessment in collaboration with their supervisor before starting the period of absence.
>
> Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 17

Very occasionally, your student may wish to live outside the UK for part of the time that they are registered for their doctoral studies.

> In exceptional circumstances the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair may permit students to reside outside the UK during their period of registration. Non-resident registration status will not normally be permitted in the first year or in any subsequent years where a student is required to attend classes at the School.
>
> Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 18

In all cases the student will need to apply for formal permission to do so by completing the appropriate form(s), all available on the Research Degrees Unit's Studying elsewhere page:

- Application to study elsewhere
- Application to undertake fieldwork
- Application to reside outside the UK

The completed application form(s), signed by the student, the primary supervisor and the doctoral programme director, should be returned to the Research Degrees Unit. The application will then be considered by the Research Degrees Subcommittee Chair. Requests are not always granted and it is important that all sections of the forms are completed fully.

If you are unsure what type of application your student should be making, contact the Research Degrees Unit for further guidance: researchdegrees@lse.ac.uk

5.3 Doing the research: key considerations

In addition to thinking through health assessment and ethical issues, it is worth considering how other people may be involved in your student's research, how permissions can be sought to undertake particular activities (eg sending out surveys or accessing large scale data sets), and how your student maintains their data and thesis versions both to avoid catastrophic data loss and to ensure that you and the student have a good record of the progress of the research.

5.3.1 The involvement of other people

Several different parties may be involved in a student's research, including:

- others in a research team;
- individuals employed by the student to undertake specific elements of work;
- research subjects;
- funders/sponsors;
- co-authors.

It is important for all parties in the supervisory team to be aware of these different potential stakeholders, and to advise students on how to make appropriate and ethical use of their involvement and how to refer to and/or acknowledge their contribution in the thesis.

Others in the research team

The development of independence is an important aspect of doctoral studies. However, research work is often a collaborative process with a range of people involved in the work in a variety of ways. The guidance and advice provided by the supervisor is a good example of this. In some disciplines "group-based" research is the norm and although this is less common in the social sciences there are still many cases of academic collaboration. For PhD students it is vital that their individual role and input to such joint ventures can clearly be explained and evidenced in their thesis.

> The student must clearly state the part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow researchers.
>
> Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 31.1

As doctoral research progresses, your student may consult many others, including experts outside the department and indeed the School. It is the student's responsibility to keep you informed of other people consulted, but you also need to know about such contacts, particularly when you come to selecting examiners (who should not have had substantive involvement in the student's work – see Section 8), so do please raise questions about this in your supervisory meetings.

Individuals employed by the student to undertake specific elements of work

When undertaking research projects it is likely that a range of people will be supporting the student and perhaps be directly involved in the research process. For example, the student may employ people to translate primary sources or translate and transcribe interview recordings for them. In some cases, the student may ask people "on the ground" to collect data for them or help in developing software to analyse their data. Such support is acceptable but must at all times be fully disclosed to the supervisor and in the final thesis.

What is not acceptable is to have third parties actually doing the academic work on behalf of the student, for instance producing the academic arguments, interpreting the findings, writing parts or all of the thesis. There is now formal guidance on this - see Section 6 on the writing process and supervisor involvement.

Research subjects: obtaining informed consent

Researchers are legally obliged to obtain written, informed, valid consent from the subjects they collect data from. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that individuals have been given sufficient information to ensure that they fully understand what is involved in the research and what will happen to their personal data. This information must be presented in a form that can be unambiguously understood (via an information sheet), and subjects' consent must be given voluntarily and not under duress or any undue influence. Further guidance, including an "Informed consent" factsheet, can be found on the Research Division's Ethics guidance and forms page.

Your students should discuss with you how they are going to explain the research to their research subjects both orally and in writing and you should approve the information sheet they produce to help them do this.

All volunteers should be given information about

- the nature of the research project and what it is for (including any possible benefits);
- the methods to be used;
- the confidential nature of the data collection and whether individuals will at any stage be identifiable;
- who will collect the personal data and/or sensitive data (including the name of project, department and telephone number);
- who will have access to the data, including any external organisations;
- the circumstances in which data may be disclosed to those allowed access;
- the arrangements for storing the data, whether copies will be made, etc;
- whether the data could be used in research projects in the future;
- whether there are any implications or risks for the volunteers who are taking part in the project;
- when and how the research and its findings will be disseminated (it is important that your student indicates that their final thesis will be accessible through LSE Theses Online, LSE Research Online, as a thesis hard copy, and possibly published in papers/books, etc.).

Volunteers should be given plenty of time to read the information sheet and be encouraged to ask questions and consider the implications of their decision. Your student should ask volunteers to sign and date the consent form only if and when the volunteers are convinced that they have fully understood the information.

If there is any doubt that the subjects are not capable of giving their informed consent then their consent by proxy is required. Research involving such individuals (eg children) should be considered by the Research Ethics Committee and advice taken.

Funders/sponsors

Some doctoral students may have funding from external sponsors interested in the outcomes of their research. In such cases, it is vital that the student, the sponsor and you are all clear that the sponsor has no rights over the research approach or the nature, analysis and publication of the findings.

There may, however, be some possibility of delaying public access to the thesis, should it contain sensitive information relevant either for a funder or indeed other interested parties in the research:

> A candidate may apply to the Research Degrees Subcommittee for restriction of access to his or her thesis and/or the abstract for a period of up to two years. Such a request can be on the grounds, for example, of commercial exploitation or patenting or for the protection of individuals. In all other circumstances, a thesis will be placed in the public domain immediately after the award of the degree.
>
> Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 41

Co-authors

In some disciplines it is common practice for supervisors to co-author papers with their doctoral students but it is also true that detailed publishing practices do vary significantly. It is important to be clear on when a student can publish their work, particularly where they are doing the thesis by paper option, but also where a planned paper might comprise a significant part of a doctoral thesis.

> Work already published, either by the candidate or jointly with others, may be included only if it forms an integral part of the thesis and so makes a relevant contribution to its main theme and is in the same format as the rest of the thesis. The student must clearly state the part played by the candidate in any work done jointly with the supervisor(s) and/or fellow researchers; ... alternatively, a series of papers, with an introduction, critical discussion and conclusion, may be submitted instead of a conventional thesis provided that such a format is permitted by the guidelines issued by the student's department and that the thesis conforms to those guidelines. A thesis that contains only joint papers is not acceptable.
>
> Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 31

Where you and your student do decide to co-author some work, there are some "ground rules" worth establishing from an early stage. How are you going to be acknowledged? What are the cultural norms for your discipline? Does the supervisor usually go first or last in a list of authors? Who should be named as the corresponding author? How will co-authorship actually work in practice? Discussing these questions and agreeing how you'll proceed (ideally in writing) can help to avoid many future communication problems.

5.3.2 Permissions

For use of the LSE logo/headed paper/address

If the student wishes to issue questionnaires, interview schedules and/or interview guides they should first secure approval from the supervisor(s). If they wish to use the School's address for this purpose, the text of any communication should be approved by the supervisor(s) before it is sent. The student should also ensure the work complies with the School's Research Ethics Policy.

For use of data sets and sources

Access to many government and European Union data sets is often available only to researchers employed by a registered institution. The head of the institution usually signs the contract so that all departments can access the data. The researcher cannot sign on their own behalf. LSE's Library has a specialist adviser on working with data sets and runs associated training as well as an extensive Library Companion for Data Users Moodle site.

For publications

Doctoral students will need to be aware of the formal rules and expectations attached to the reading and use of published work in research. These include correct attribution practices, the requirement for written permission, especially if an original work is altered in any way, and the appropriate ways of obtaining rights to reproduce illustrative materials such as images, diagrams and tables.

Again the Library has a lot of advice for researchers on accessing, obtaining permissions and citing the work of others – see their training (lse.ac.uk/library/training) and Library Companion for Researchers Moodle site.

5.3.3 Keeping track of data

Nowadays, the vast majority of the student's work will be stored on computer. It often takes some serious data loss for individuals to realise that they do not have robust back-up systems in place. To give some examples:

A PhD student had all his data on his laptop with no other back-up. He fell asleep on the tube going home one night, woke suddenly and realised he was about to miss his stop. He ran off the tube only to realise he'd left his laptop on the tube. He was very fortunate to retrieve it the following day from lost property – but could have lost his entire data set.

Another PhD student had been working hard on a major chapter for several hours. She'd forgotten to set her "back-up" facility. A sudden thunderstorm with lightning brought down the power in her area and she lost her full day's work. Once power was restored, she sorted out her back-up, and started making regular use of an external drive for double back-up.

A student returning from fieldwork in a quite hostile environment had his laptop with much of his data seized at a border. Eventually, after difficult negotiations, the laptop was returned and all the data was still there. But it was a long and worrying wait …

Using a couple of stories of this nature may help focus your student's attention on the importance of back-up!

Once the process of analysis gets started, it is also worth discussing with your student how to track back through their analysis, interpretation and presentation of their research findings to the original raw data. Agreeing how the data is to be stored and catalogued, especially if there are data security issues to bear in mind, should be part of the initial research plan.

5.4 Academic integrity: referencing citation, plagiarism, thesis version control

For many students, a major component of their doctoral studies will involve reading relevant literature, writing notes and developing theoretical ideas. There will be a lot of analysis of the work of others, reflection and writing on that work and synthesis of different ideas. Even more so than in earlier phases of university study, your doctoral students will need to be assiduous in maintaining their references, keeping track of what they have read and where their own writing draws on the work of others. Skills of literature search and literature management will need to be honed. Encourage your students to make use of relevant software (such as EndNote) to keep track of references and to develop good referencing and citation practice. The Library offers significant training in this area, in particular through the MY592 course Workshop in Information Literacy: finding, managing and organising published research and data, and the various Library Companion Moodle courses, as well as specific training in the use of EndNote. If your student develops good habits from the start it can save them huge amounts of time later.

Early on, check that your student is aware of the School definition of plagiarism (see facing page).

Another tool to alert your students to is iThenticate software. This is a text-matching programme used both to teach people about appropriate referencing and citation and to detect text misuse and possible plagiarism. The software is freely available for use by doctoral students on drafts of their work and students can have accounts set up for them by the School's Research Degrees Unit. It should be noted that from 1 January 2013 to 30 September 2013, the School will be compulsorily testing all theses submitted for examination through iThenticate as part of the PhD submission process (see 8.2, page 61, for further details).

What is plagiarism?

1. All work for classes and seminars as well as scripts (which include, for example, essays, dissertations and any other work, including computer programs) must be the student's own work. Quotations must be placed properly within quotation marks or indented and must be cited fully. All paraphrased material must be acknowledged. Infringing this requirement, whether deliberately or not, or passing off the work of others as the work of the student, whether deliberately or not, is plagiarism.
2. The definition of a student's own work includes work produced by collaboration expressly allowed by the department or institute concerned or, at MPhil/PhD level, allowed under the Regulations for Research Degrees. If the student has not been given permission, such work will be considered to be the product of unauthorised collusion and will be processed as plagiarism under these regulations.
3. Students should also take care in the use of their own work. A piece of work may only be submitted for assessment once. Submitting the same piece of work twice will be regarded as an offence of 'self-plagiarism' and will be processed under these regulations. However, earlier essay work may be used as an element of a dissertation, provided that the amount of earlier work used is specified by the department and the work is properly referenced.
4. Each department and institute is responsible for instructing students on the conventions required for the citation and acknowledgement of sources in its discipline. The responsibility for learning the proper forms of citation lies with the individual student.
5. The LSE's Statement on editorial help for students' written work sets out what the School considers is and is not permissible by way of editorial help with their written work. Contravention of the statement, whether deliberately or not, is plagiarism.

Source: Regulations on assessment offences: plagiarism

Early use of such software, along with guidance and support on proper referencing and citation right from the start of your supervisory relationship with your student, should ensure that inadvertent plagiarism is kept to an absolute minimum.

The School reserves the right to submit any part of a thesis to any software designed to identify plagiarism or to take any other steps it considers appropriate to identify possible plagiarism.

Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 27

Version control

Students will be revising their writing of key documents, reports and thesis chapters over a period of time. In order to keep track of the feedback you and others in the supervisory team give, and for the student to maintain usefully filed versions of their work, it is helpful to discuss and agree the processes and procedures for version control. Some basic advice might include the following.

- Ask the student to keep all versions of their work – they should not simply overwrite an old version with a new version.
- Develop, with the student, a system for naming updated versions of the same document – simply dating the version can work well (rather than ending up with documents labelled "The final, final version").
- Keep a record of the feedback you provide to students, and the date it is given.
- If two supervisors are giving feedback, work on the same document, so you can see the comments made by the other supervisor when you make yours.

The Versions Toolkit: for authors, researchers and repository staff on the Library website suggests the following version names for journal articles at different stages from drafting to publication – so this is also a useful discipline to get into from the start of doctoral study.

Draft
Early version circulated as work in progress

Submitted version
The version that has been submitted to a journal for peer review

Accepted version
The author-created version that incorporates referee comments and is the accepted for publication version

Published version
The publisher-created published version

Updated version
A version updated since publication

The electronic PhD log (see page 25) is a useful tool in respect of version control:

- It provides the option to attach documents (and in so doing avoids you having your email account filled with long attachments).
- It illustrates the progress the student is making and enables you or the student to back-track, in case a good idea may have been forgotten along the way.
- On the very rare occasions when there are concerns about who has been involved in writing the thesis when it reaches viva stage and beyond, it may provide important evidence of authorship.

section5 research preparation

Section 6: Supporting the writing process

6.1 Promoting good writing practice

Most supervisors would agree that students should be encouraged to write – and write frequently – from the start of their doctoral studies. This is important for a number of reasons:

- The process and discipline of writing itself stimulates thinking and the development of ideas: to write is to think, and is a normal part of everyday academic life.
- It is much easier to have meaningful and satisfactory supervisions/tutorials based around written work that has been submitted and read in advance.
- Potential problems, for instance over language, writer's block or misunderstandings related to academic integrity, can be identified at an early rather than a late stage.
- The more you write the better you become at it – and the less you write, the more rusty you get.
- The longer a project is left "unwritten" the more daunting it becomes: this may be the start of a vicious circle, with consequences for submission rates and times.

Students may well be reluctant to follow advice to write early and often, because they perceive the commitment of ideas to paper as something to be avoided until those ideas are perfectly formed. They may claim they are not ready to write, that they haven't read enough to be able to write. In this context, "Don't get it right, get it written" may be a cliché, but the message is a pertinent one. Text does not have to be perfect - or even good – straight away because it is almost certain that text produced early on in the PhD will either be jettisoned from or substantially re-written in the final draft.

There are a number of ways in which doctoral programme directors and supervisors can help students develop their writing practice by building writing into the departmental PhD programme. It is common practice, for example, for students to be offered the opportunity to write and present a paper as part of the research training seminar in the first year. It could be helpful to encourage students to circulate the written version of their paper in advance of the presentation, to enable them to practise writing for a wider audience. This has the additional benefit of helping to produce more useful feedback to the presenter.

The "milestone" of the upgrade or first year review is usually the first opportunity students have to write a substantial chunk of text. Individual supervisors can help students to complete this task more successfully by requesting "mini-milestone" documents during the first two terms (such as a page on the core research question, two pages on the review of a specific aspect of the literature). Alternatively/additionally, programme directors might choose to dedicate one or two sessions in the research training seminar to (peer) review of such written materials.

Students can also be encouraged to support each other in developing writing practice, for example by creating informal writing groups/circles for which members produce material that is (constructively) criticised.

While it may be relatively easy to encourage frequent writing during the first year of a PhD, when the students are mostly in situ and in reasonably regular contact with the department, the task becomes more difficult in subsequent years, especially if students leave LSE, and often the UK, for fieldwork. It is precisely during this period, however, that students need to be reminded of the importance of regular writing and encouraged to do it, to avoid ending up with daunting quantities of undigested "data". A fieldwork diary or research log is a good way of maintaining the writing habit. Supervisors might also encourage students to produce more substantial analytical pieces of text at certain points, to assist the development of ideas.

However diligent a student has been about producing written work over the course of the PhD, it is inevitable that there will be an intensive phase of writing towards the end of the process. The production of the first complete draft presents opportunities as well as challenges, however. Students – even those with well-thought-out plans - can discover that it is only when they fit everything together that they fully understand the essence of what it is that they are trying to say. Such "eureka" moments are satisfying for both student and supervisor, though they are likely to require re-working or even abandonment of text produced earlier on in the PhD, especially core argumentative passages such as the introduction, and chapter conclusions. Learning to let go of old writing is another important part of completing the PhD process.

6.2 School expectations of supervisor feedback on students' written work

> LSE requires that a student should be given some response on written work, either orally or in writing, within one month of it being given to the supervisor. If it is not possible to meet this deadline, the student should be informed and given an indication of when they will be able to receive a response. Note: this is a minimum requirement – some departments may have more rigorous expectations and supervisors are expected to comply with those departmental norms.

The extent and nature of feedback on written work will very much depend on what it is that has been submitted. A chapter draft from a final year student will probably require closer scrutiny than a few pages of literature review from a first year, but whenever students have worked to produce material they deserve to have it read and commented upon. Written comment (even just a few notes on the submission) usually proves more useful in the longer term than purely oral feedback.

As there may often be quite a time lag between submissions from your student, you may want to encourage them to attach a cover sheet to any work they submit. The following format has proved useful for some:

Suggested PhD work submission pro-forma

Name:

Which year of your PhD you are in: 1st / 2nd / 3rd / 4th / other

Target end date:

Up-to-date thesis title:

Up-to-date chapter structure with full headings:

Highlight where today's chapter or bit of work fits within this:

Current thesis synopsis (ensure this is updated for the first meeting each academic year):

Give details of your last meeting date and the action points that you agreed to do for this meeting:

Source: Patrick Dunleavy, LSE, "Manage your supervisor" workshop for students, 2007

Anyone interested in offering audio feedback may want to explore this first with their student, to check that the student would find it useful, and then with the Centre for Learning Technology to get advice on practical implementation.

It is up to individual supervisors to decide how much they choose to comment on style, spelling and grammar in their students' work – though it is always worth discussing with your students what they might find most useful, talking to others in the supervisory team, so that you are not duplicating work, and getting a feel for departmental norms. On the last, an open discussion with your mentor (for new staff) or organised at the departmental level by the doctoral programme director can be a useful way of sharing norms, such that there is equity of approach between students and across supervisors. It may well be that a wide range of approaches is useful particularly at an early stage. However, as the student gets down to working on final drafts it is important that it is their voice that comes through, and not that of their supervisors.

There are a range of feedback options – from direct edit of the student's text or use of electronic "comments" boxes, to hand-written comments which might include detailed editorial work and suggestions for additions and/or omissions, or simply general indications of areas of strength and weakness. For some, the "track changes" function in Word may be a useful first step – giving detailed guidance on writing style early on. Others may feel it is inappropriate; indeed, some students may find it a very invasive and demoralising approach. If you have discussed and agreed with your student that "track changes" is appropriate and acceptable, do encourage them not to use the blanket "accept all" option – you want them to be learning from your detailed feedback, rather than simply accepting it!

6.3 Other forms of editorial assistance

Given the many and various ways in which students might receive support for their writing – whether through working with others (as discussed at 5.3.1, page 38), supervisor involvement (6.2 above) or language training – the School has set out guidelines on what is and is not permissible and how students should acknowledge any editorial assistance they receive in their thesis.

Statement on editorial help for students' written work: guidance for students, supervisors and examiners

* **Any written work a student produces (for classes, seminars, examination scripts, dissertations, essays, computer programmes and MPhil/PhD theses) must be solely his/her own work.[1] Specifically, a student must not employ a "ghost writer" to write parts or all of the work, whether in draft or as a final version, on his/her behalf.[2]**
* **This guidance is for use when a student is considering whether to employ a third party such as a professional copy editing or proof reading company when producing work in draft or final version.**
* **It also applies when a student seeks editorial help from other, non-professional third parties, such as fellow-students or friends.**
* **It is not concerned with the regular and iterative interaction between student and tutor/supervisor(s) on draft versions of his/her work throughout the registration period. The student's tutor/supervisor is not regarded as a "third party" for this purpose.**
* **For research students, further guidance is included in the Handbook for PhD supervisors produced by the Teaching and Learning Centre.**
* **If a student contravenes this statement, this will be considered an assessment offence and investigated in accordance with the Regulations on assessment offences: plagiarism**

1. If the student chooses to employ a third party, it is his/her responsibility to give them a copy of this statement. When submitting work the student must acknowledge what form of contribution they have made, by stating for example, "this thesis/essay/dissertation was copy edited for conventions of language, spelling and grammar by ABC Editing Ltd".

2. A third party cannot be used:

2.1 to change the text of the work so as to clarify and/or develop the ideas and arguments;

2.2 to reduce the length of the work so that it falls within the specified word limit;

2.3 to provide help with referencing;

2.4 to correct information within the work;

2.5 to change the ideas and arguments put forward within the work; and/or

2.6 to translate the work into English.

3. A third party can be used to offer advice on:

3.1 spelling and punctuation;

3.2 formatting and sorting footnotes and endnotes for consistency and order;

3.3 ensuring the work follows the conventions of grammar and syntax in written English;

3.4 shortening long sentences and editing long paragraphs;

3.5 changing passives and impersonal usages into actives;

3.6 improving the position of tables and illustrations and the clarity, grammar, spelling and punctuation of any text in or under tables and illustrations; and

3.7 ensuring consistency of page numbers, headers and footers.

4. The third party shall give advice by means of tracked changes on an electronic copy or handwritten annotations on a paper copy or other similar devices. The student must take responsibility for choosing what advice to accept, and must him/herself make the changes to the master copy of the work.

[1] Except where the School's regulations might permit it to include the work of others, eg Regulations for Research Degrees (paragraph 31.1) permit a thesis to include the work of others and individual programme regulations for taught students permit group work.

[2] This does not preclude the use of a "scribe" where verbatim dictation might be required for a student with a particular disability.

Source: Academic Board, July 2012

6.4 Helping students who get stuck

Implementing some of the strategies outlined in 6.1 above should help students to avoid significant problems with writing. It is inevitable, however, that some students will get stuck at some points. You may well recognise symptoms of "writing avoidance" and procrastination: your student will start running additional analyses on their data, for example, or perhaps take on extra teaching duties, become deeply involved in organising other activities in the department, or simply not show up to agreed meetings or fail to get work to you to an agreed schedule. If/when this happens there are a number of solutions that you as the supervisor can suggest:

- cutting down on the "displacement" activities (sometimes easier said than done!);
- employing new writing strategies such as:
  - "free writing" for five minutes: set a stopwatch and just write down whatever comes into the head without stopping and checking – this gets a separation between the creativity of writing and editing which can be very helpful;
  - using mind mapping to help lateral thinking and to see ways of linking ideas and themes together;
  - writing short paragraphs (2 or 3 sentences) on the main ideas, printing them off and physically moving them about to find a sensible ordering and logical flow;
  - taking regular breaks and having treat rewards for achieving writing goals.

You can also refer students to the wide range of writing support for doctoral students available from the Teaching and Learning Centre. This includes:

- workshops on structuring and writing PhD theses;
- general writing workshops that cover techniques such as "free writing";
- media writing courses;
- one-to-one sessions with the study advisers and/or LSE's Royal Literary Fund Fellows.

Details are available through the Teaching and Learning Centre (see the "At a glance" insert in the centre) or at lse.ac.uk/tlc/PhD

Students and/or programme directors who set up initiatives to support the development of good writing practice, such as writing circles or inter-departmental workshops, can apply to the Teaching and Learning Development Fund (lse.ac.uk/tlc/funding) for start-up funding if it is needed.

6.5 English language issues

English language proficiency is part of the selection criteria for doctoral students, but as noted earlier, some non-native English speakers will require further language assistance. In addition, some students who are proficient in English may still face stylistic issues such as writing in the passive voice, over-worked prose and over-use of jargon. Encourage students to make full use of the facilities in word processing packages to check their grammar and sentence structure. In addition, where appropriate, encourage them to make use of the Language Centre provision (see centrespread) for doctoral students.

6.6 Ensuring awareness of academic integrity

As noted in Section 5, part of the discipline of good writing is appropriate referencing and citation. Encourage your students to keep their referencing on track from the start, rather than trying to play "catch up" later on. The latter is fraught with difficulties, as students make increasing use of internet sources. Draw their attention regularly and from an early stage to the School's Regulations on plagiarism and other aspects of academic integrity – see 5.4 (page 41).

section6 writing

Section 7: What to do if things go wrong …

This chapter recognises that completing a doctoral programme is very demanding and can be affected by a wide range of academic and personal issues that are frequently unpredictable and always specific to the individual student. It also recognises that if you are aware of potential problems it may be possible either to avoid them happening at all, or at least identify them early enough to be able to overcome them.

7.1 Six different kinds of challenge

Some doctoral students sail through their studies with ease and fulfilment, and share real intellectual partnership, challenge and interest with their supervisors and other colleagues. Others have great intellectual talent, but face real personal challenges, some of which they may come to their supervisors for assistance with. Yet others may have made a mistake in coming into doctoral research at all, or find the actuality of it does not meet their expectations and struggle with elements or all of the experience. Over many years of supervision, most supervisors will come across some students who fit into all of these categories, and many into combinations of them. Here are some of the challenges that may emerge, and pointers to possible ways of working with them.

Challenge A: "Not suited to doing a PhD"

Challenge B: "De-railed by life events"

Challenge C: "Not progressing"

Challenge D: "Having problems with the research project"

Challenge E: "Having problems working with the supervisor"

Challenge F: "Inherited student"

Challenge A: "Not suited to doing a PhD"

Your student did very well in his MSc studies and his research interest sounded well in line with your own. Your early meetings with the student suggested that he was keen to "get on with the research", but you have concerns that his prior experience has not fully equipped him with what he needs. He is resistant to the required departmental seminars/courses – you've heard from a colleague running one such course that his attendance is spasmodic and contributions limited. He hasn't turned up to departmental seminars – says he does not find the work of other PhD students that interesting, as they are not relevant to his field. However, he keeps sending you detailed research outlines and plans of the empirical work he'd like to do. This is poorly conceived and lacks connection to any kind of theoretical framework. Initially you gave him encouraging but detailed feedback trying to help him re-frame his ideas. At first he was responsive, and re-worked things, but kept returning to his original approach. More recently, his response to your feedback has been defensive, suggesting that perhaps you do not have the expertise he needs to help him with this research. He is already asking to move to a different supervisor, although you are the obvious choice for his research subject.

Suggestions

This student is in his first year and is registered as an MPhil candidate. He has not been upgraded yet and this is an important aspect of this particular case. If doctoral studies are not for him, now is the best time to address the situation.

The student may be actively enquiring about changing his supervisor. This is permissible, but is not guaranteed (for more on this see 7.4, Procedure D, page 55). Indeed, it does not sound as if this would be an appropriate solution. Clearly if the student pushes the point, he would have the right to have the option considered and, as such, you would want to discuss the case as soon as possible with any co-supervisors and with the doctoral programme director. What might then prove useful is for you, possibly together with the other supervisor/doctoral programme director, to meet with the student to re-state departmental expectations about the first year. In this meeting, you may also want to set out the first year review/upgrade requirements, and clarify what can happen at that point (continuation; continuation with conditions; de-registration). This student will need to be aware of the possible outcomes – but also need to be clear on the departmental expectations (eg concerning workshop/seminar attendance), and recognise (if this is indeed the case) that the feedback you are providing is justified. Do ensure that the meeting is followed up with a written note from you to the student, with the supervisory team and doctoral programme director copied in, specifying departmental expectations, possible outcomes of review/upgrade and suggested next steps.

Another way of looking at this situation is that the student may be very disoriented and not settled either in London or with his studies. You may want to explore non-work matters with him, encourage him to voice any problems he is facing, and see if there might be an alternative interpretation to what he is expressing. Should it transpire that he has other concerns, then it may be more appropriate to refer him to one of the support services listed in the "At a glance" insert, or to find more proactive ways of introducing him into the doctoral peer group and activities, possibly setting up a peer mentor.

Challenge B: "De-railed by life events"

A student came to you with excellent recommendations and was awarded an ESRC fellowship. She has progressed well through the first year of her doctoral studies and been upgraded to the PhD registration. Now, halfway through her second year, she is experiencing a personal issue (eg ill health, pregnancy, a personal problem) that means she is currently not able to work full time on her PhD. She ultimately wishes to continue.

Suggestions

The earlier good progress and proven ability of the student, together with her desire to continue with the PhD when she is able to, are positive aspects of this case. It would appear that the student needs to consider various options based on a realistic sense of how long her current circumstances might persist, and may also need support in negotiating with the funding council.

The student may be able to interrupt her studies (generally preferable when a situation is finite), change her registration status to part-time (generally preferable when a situation is open-ended) or (for example) take maternity leave. If it is clear that even once she can get back to more serious focus on her work she may need longer to complete, then she may get some further reassurance by understanding when and how she can apply for an extension to her studies. At the same time, she will need to give serious consideration to her funding requirements. Obviously the ESRC has anticipated this kind of situation, and has its own procedures in place – see Section 4 of the Postgraduate Funding Guide for Accredited Doctoral Training Centres (PDF available on their website). The Research Degrees Unit and the Financial Support Office at LSE can provide further advice on, respectively, School regulations and the conditions of ESRC funding and options available to students.

Again, as with the first case, this student may be experiencing stress and distress, and may benefit from pastoral support offered within the School. The Student Counselling Service (see centrespread) may be worth mentioning. Similarly, with her agreement, if you are aware of another doctoral student who has faced similar circumstances, peer support might be worth exploring. Finally, if, for example, the student is pregnant, you might point her to LSE's Advice for pregnant students or those with children which lists the many sources of financial, practical and other support available at the School.

Challenge C: "Not progressing"

Your student started well and was enthusiastic throughout the first year. She attended all sessions, worked hard, did the assignments, and had interesting ideas for her research. She successfully passed the upgrade, and got down to work on the main data collection/analysis stage of her research. However, you are starting to see signs that give you cause for concern. Each time you contact her for a meeting, she puts up delaying tactics. She appears to be facing some problems with access to one of her data sources. She's started to change her ideas about her primary research question. She often cancels meetings at the last moment due to poor health. She has missed various deadlines you have set her to try to get her to write. When she does get anything written in to you, the writing appears to be confused. She's also taken on some teaching responsibilities - you've heard from the course tutor that she's been somewhat unreliable, and there have been some student complaints about her.

Suggestions

Clearly something is wrong here – and it is not at all clear what. However, you probably need to step back from focusing on the research and discuss with the student how things are going more generally. There are many possible explanations for her behaviour, but leaving them to sort themselves is not the best option. You may already have some ideas of what is going on with her and would find it helpful to get some specialist advice prior to meeting with her, so you could, for example, discuss on a "no names" basis as you feel appropriate with specialist advisers at the School such as:

- the Teaching and Learning Centre's Academic and Professional Development Adviser to PhD students and research staff, one of the mental health advisers in the Disability and Well-being Service, or one of the counsellors in the Student Counselling Service;
- the Research Degrees Unit;
- Financial Support Office;
- International Student Immigration Service.

For details of all of these, see the"At a glance" insert in the centre.

Also, check with others in the department, colleagues in the supervisory team, the doctoral programme director and any teachers she is working with. Any or none of the procedures in 7.4 (page 54) may then be worth exploring. However, the sooner the problem is understood, the higher the likelihood that it may be successfully resolved.

Challenge D: "Having problems with the research project"

Your student has been through upgrade, and is well into the heart of his study. However, he has recently seen an article that seems to be replicating some aspects of his work and, at the same time, he has hit a major snag with getting access to what he considers to be a crucial component to his data collection. He is panicked by what he's seen as well as with his current data difficulties and comes to you for urgent guidance.

Suggestions

This problem probably requires at least two tacks. Firstly, the student needs some reassurance that all his work to date is not wasted, and guidance on how to integrate what he has learnt from this new work into his own study. Secondly, he needs guidance and support on the data collection element. This might require review, as a matter of urgency, of his research plan to consider viable options for progression. Does the student need additional training to be able to tackle the problem? Does the supervisor need to intervene on the student's behalf? Does the direction of the work need to be changed? The important factor here is to respond promptly and not let the situation drift – not only would this put the prospect of completing in 3-4 years at risk but it will also be very sapping of morale and motivation for the student.

Again, this student might benefit from extending his collegial network – he may be so focused on his research that he cannot see round it. Options here might be encouraging a presentation in a departmental seminar (sharing his problem with others), attending a relevant conference or participating in some internal networking events, for instance, those offered under the Teaching and Learning Centre's Academic and Professional Development Programme: see lse.ac.uk/tlc/PhD.

Challenge E: "Having problems working with the supervisor"

The relationship between you and one of your students has completely broken down. There are personality clashes that have been exacerbated by very different views on the direction the work should take. The student has complained about a lack of support and trust and you feel that the student is unwilling to take advice.

Suggestions

Supervisors are normally assigned to students either at the time an offer of admission is made or, where there is a strong taught element to the programme, towards the end of the first year of registration. If the initial allocation of supervisor turns out to be inappropriate, a change of supervisor may be effected through the doctoral programme director at the request of either the student or supervisor. Such changes are likely to be disruptive, even when handled smoothly, so the earlier the change can be made the better (preferably in the first year).

The student may well already be thinking about lodging a formal complaint and, as such, you as supervisor may want to check what is involved in this situation. Indeed if you feel that the student is unjustified in their complaint, you may want to ensure that your voice is heard. A number of people may get involved, both within and beyond the department. You may want to seek early advice from the doctoral programme director or – particularly if you are relatively new member of staff – from your mentor. You may also want to raise any concerns you have with the Research Degrees Unit manager and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies. Should a formal complaint progress, see 7.4, Procedure F (page 55) for further details.

Challenge F: "Inherited student"

You have been in your department for two years. You were asked by your doctoral programme director to take on a student who has been in the department for six years. Your mentor is her "primary supervisor" but you work alongside him and will take over responsibility for the student as soon as you have passed major review (due later this year as you are being fast-tracked). The student's most recent supervisor recently left for a new post outside the UK. Her first supervisor was an eminent professor in the department who tragically died shortly after the student was upgraded. You are now the closest match for the student in terms of the research she is doing, though her work is somewhat tangential to your own. She started her studies with some funding from her family, but her family then faced financial hardship and funds stopped arriving. She was keen to complete her studies, but has moved from full time to part time status and taken on assorted jobs (teaching in the department, library work and some external work) to help finance her studies. She is very keen to complete, but you have seen a recent draft of a major part of her thesis and find it to be poorly constructed, and in need of some additional data collection and analysis if she is to produce a convincing argument. You have very limited "back records" on the student – she is known by colleagues and is likeable, hard-working and an excellent teacher, but no one else has been involved in her supervision other than the colleague who has now left.

Suggestions

This is a difficult situation to find yourself in. To some extent, a range of unfortunate circumstances have worked against the student and the department. The student has invested a lot of time and effort in her work and has also contributed a lot to the department. It may be that with some careful re-working her research will be viable. You may also want to explore discussing the option of working for an MPhil even though she has been upgraded. You may also wish to discuss with your mentor what the implications of taking on primary supervisor responsibility for this student may be for your own professional development, especially if you have already had some promising enquiries from new applicants much closer to your own interests.

However you go ahead, do not attempt to shoulder this burden alone – make full use of all support available, through detailed consultation with your mentor, the doctoral programme director, the Research Degrees Unit manager and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies. Before you give much feedback to the student, explore what support she might be able to access, whether financial, pastoral, guidance on writing, support for her methodological approach, etc. – contact details for the relevant offices around the School can be found in the "At a glance" insert in the centre.

7.2 Mitigating challenges

If and when challenges arise they can take a considerable amount of time to deal with and are often upsetting and disruptive. It is therefore worthwhile exploring ways of avoiding the problems in the first place or at least of addressing them as early as possible.

Knowing the research area, the study methods, the student and the department, the supervisor is in a very good position to predict areas that may prove to be problematic. That said, there are some obvious aspects to consider.

Getting the right student

Take care in the recruitment and selection process, really investing the time to get to know more about the candidate and their motivations and abilities before you agree to supervise them. Scrutinise references, samples of their written work, their personal statement and their motivation to undertake the doctoral programme. If in doubt, say no!

Looking out for early warning signs

Students who are beginning to have problems often show a particular set of behaviours and "symptoms" which an observant supervisor may spot, such as:

- postponing supervisions;
- making excuses for unfinished work;
- focusing on the next stage, not the current task;
- making frequent changes to topic or method;
- filling time with other things – teaching, other work, doing courses;
- resisting advice or criticism;

- procrastinating on writing;
- intellectualising practical problems;
- blaming others for shortcomings;
- failing to integrate earlier work.

Keeping in touch with the student and acting early

The focus on the research proposal and planning drives higher levels of contact between student and supervisors in the early stages of the work. In the final phase, the need to give feedback on drafts and planning for completion of the work also encourage higher levels of communication and interaction. It is often the middle period of the PhD when contact can become more sporadic and distant, especially if the student is working away from London, doing fieldwork, etc. This is the time to ensure that you keep in touch and don't let the months slip by.

Keep good supervision records so that you can track such signs and understand the timing – and be prepared to intervene and require a student to attend a meeting, with an agenda that encourages discussion of other things going on around the research, rather than just focusing on the research itself.

Planning for "independence"

Personal and cultural differences mean that some students may initially struggle to develop independence and build the confidence to trust their own judgement. You can support this process by guiding them to set research tasks and hurdles that will give early indications of success and progression or, conversely, a failure to meet targets – in which case you may need to recommend support interventions. Different supervisors can behave in quite different ways, of course – some are "hands off" or laissez faire in their approach, while others are hands on, setting goals. This is something useful to discuss directly with your student – what do they expect, and possibly need, at different points in the doctoral process? You may need to accommodate those needs at times but also find ways of building confidence in more dependent students, so that over time they are more able to rely on their own judgement.

7.3 Planning ahead

If you have a planned period away from the School, eg a sabbatical or a maternity leave, or are intending to leave or retire from LSE, it is helpful if you can plan ahead so that your students have continuity in their supervision. Discuss this with the doctoral programme director and head of department and actively participate in negotiating "cover" for your students or nominating replacement supervisors who are informed and up to date with the progress of the students. It is not always possible to do this, especially if you need to take time off at short notice for ill health or other unexpected personal reasons, but even then try to keep your students informed and if necessary negotiate different roles in the supervisory team, even if only temporarily. Again, these are situations where good record keeping can be very useful particularly for any incoming short- or long-term supervisor (see 3.4, pages 24-25).

7.4 Procedural matters

The LSE Research Degrees Unit can provide guidance on policy and procedure for both students and supervisors and should be consulted early when a difficulty becomes apparent. The Research Degrees Unit Manager and the Research Degrees Unit website are key sources of help with these matters.

The rules and regulations governing doctoral degrees are regularly reviewed and occasionally revised; and it is vital that the most up to date documentation – available at the LSE Calendar – is consulted.

The following Procedures are considered below:

Procedure A: Interruptions to study

Procedure B: Requests for extensions

Procedure C: De-registering a student

Procedure D: Changing supervisors and/or departments

Procedure E: Changing registration status – full time, part time, etc.

Procedure F: Complaints

Procedure A: Interruptions to study

Any student can apply for an interruption to studies. However, approval for a period of interruption is not guaranteed and normally cannot be made retrospectively. Circumstances in which an interruption would be approved include: illness or personal problems which have resulted in the student being unable to work on their thesis, employment commitments, maternity leave. Students can interrupt their studies for a minimum of one full term and a maximum of two years. This is likely to have a range of personal and professional consequences – for the student for instance, if the student is an international student in the UK on a visa, any change to the registration will mean the student needs to return to their home country and may need to apply for a new visa; and applications should therefore be considered on a case-by-case basis with the supervisors and advisers in the Research Degrees Unit. If a student has ESRC or other research council funding, they need to contact the Financial Support Office for advice on research council rules on interruption.

For further information, see the Interrupting an MPhil/PhD programme page on the Research Degrees Unit website.

Procedure B: Requests for extensions

Students first registering in or after the 2006/07 academic session are subject to a maximum period of registration of four years (12 terms) if full time and eight years (24 terms) if part time. Students first registering before the 2006/07 academic session are subject to a maximum period of registration of six years (18 terms) if full time and eight years (24 terms) if part time.

As set out in paragraphs 5, 7 and 8 of the Regulations for Research Degrees, extension beyond the maximum period will only be allowed in exceptional cases by permission of the Chair of the Research Degrees Subcommittee. If permission is granted, only one extension of registration beyond the maximum period will be permitted. Requests should normally be submitted in the penultimate year of registration (following the third year review or equivalent for part time registration).

To apply, students need to complete the Maximum period form and submit it to the Research Degrees Unit.

For further information, see the Extending your maximum period page on the Research Degrees Unit website.

Procedure C: De-registering a student

On rare occasions it may be necessary to de-register a student. Alternatively a student may decide independently that continuing with the PhD is not what they want to do.

If a student decides to withdraw from their programme, they need to complete a Withdrawal form which is available from the Research Degrees Unit website. In such cases, it is also important for the student to be aware of any financial consequences (especially if they are grant-funded) and any visa requirements.

Where it is the decision of the department to de-register a student, for example on the basis of them failing to make satisfactory academic progress, the student has the right to appeal against that decision within four weeks of the date of the notification. Please see Appeals regulations for research students, paragraph 2, on the Research Degrees Unit website for further details.

Procedure D: Changing supervisor and/or department

In exceptional circumstances, School regulations allow for changes in both supervisors and the department in which the student is registered. This may be the result of a change in the direction and focus of the research project or because of a breakdown in the supervisory relationship. Changes are always disruptive, even when managed well and the transition is smooth, so keeping open good lines of communication and being explicit about what can happen when is important. The circumstances for change agreed across the School are as follows:

> If the initial allocation of supervisor turns out to be inappropriate, a change of supervisor may be effected through the Doctoral Programme Director and/or Head of Department on the initiative of the student or supervisor. However, a change of supervisor cannot be guaranteed nor is it possible to guarantee a change to a particular academic.
>
> Source: Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 16

This is certainly a situation where advice from others is important. Early contact with the Research Degrees Unit Manager and/or the Dean of Graduate Studies is strongly recommended, as well as discussion with the doctoral programme director and any other staff involved in supervising the student to consider next steps, particularly where there has been a breakdown in communication.

Procedure E: Changing registration status – full time, part time, etc.

Part time registration is available to students who need to spread their studies over a longer period because of outside commitments. However, it is important to be aware that data shows that students who move from full time to part time study and those who are only ever registered as part time have a much lower rate of completion than full time students.

Students will be eligible to register on a part time basis if they are in one or more of the following categories and can provide appropriate documentary evidence:

- employed or self-employed where the employment is in excess of 20 hours per week;
- on the basis of a protected characteristic recognised in the Equality Act 2010.

For further information, see the Request to change to full/part time study page on the Research Degrees Unit website.

Again, the student's financial situation and visa requirements may need to be considered in exploring any move from full to part time registration. In addition, your own situation needs to be considered: Will you be able to continue to work with them over the extended period, or may it be necessary to make new supervisory arrangements?

Procedure F: Complaints

Many students complete their PhD without any significant worries or difficulties. However, occasionally there are problems, misunderstandings and dissatisfaction that can affect both the student and the supervisor. If this happens the key thing is to act as soon as you become aware of the problem. There are two likely forms of complaint from students. The first, outlined below, may arise during the lifetime of the doctoral programme, or be the result of student upset following failure to complete, and is essentially focused on the student's concern with the quality of support s/he has received. The second (dealt with in 8.4, page 65) concerns student appeal against the actual result, ie contesting the result of the examination. As with other forms of examination, the student is allowed to present mitigating circumstances in respect of a result, but a formal appeal can be taken forward only where the student can show that the examination procedures were incorrectly implemented; students cannot formally appeal against the academic judgement that is made.

Student complaints should initially be raised within your department. The Research Degrees Unit can advise both student and supervisors on due process and help you ensure that the School's rules and regulations are adhered to – please consult them as soon as a problem arises.

So, if a student does complain,

- act;
- don't keep it quiet; instead talk to others and get advice – use the full supervisory team, Research Degrees Unit Manager, Dean of Graduate Studies and other LSE support offices as appropriate;
- document what you do and say, and assemble all relevant documentation including anything that pre-dates the complaint.

If the student makes a formal complaint the School will respond to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the student and supervisor – and notify the complainant in advance of any disclosure. Every effort will be made to act sensitively and expeditiously and avoid the victimisation of anyone involved (and to take disciplinary action when it appears that the complaint is either frivolous or vindictive). All complaints will be considered on their individual merits and in accordance with the School's Equality and Diversity policy.

Depending on the nature of the issue it may be necessary to escalate your response and the chart facing indicates how to do this.

For any of these problems, it is vitally important that records are kept, noting the dates, participants and key points of any meetings, formal and informal.

Escalating concerns

Nature of problem: primarily personal/financial

Check out concerns with others in the supervisory team.

↓

Talk to your doctoral programme director.

↓

Seek advice (possibly initially on no-names basis) from relevant support services (see the "At a glance" insert in the centre for contact details):

Student Counselling Service

Disability and Well-being Service

Research Degrees Unit

Financial Support Office

Advisers to male/women students

Dean of Graduate Studies

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In some cases, usually where there is a long term mental health issue that is having clear impact not only on the student but also on others, there may need to be a case conference (usually chaired by the director of the Teaching and Learning Centre), which may lead to interruption of studies or, in rare circumstances, to disciplinary procedures to manage the student.

Nature of problem: primarily to do with the quality of work

Ensure that the student is fully aware of the expectations of the department. Direct them to relevant parts of the departmental PhD handbook as well as LSE regulations. Give the student written notice of your expectations with some agreed deadlines/milestones that you expect the student to achieve.

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Check out concerns with others in the supervisory team.

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Talk to your doctoral programme director, who may wish to discuss with the head of department.

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Discuss with the Research Degrees Unit/Dean of Graduate Studies and check out implications related to funder(s).

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Make effective use of internal review and upgrade procedures. If in any doubt, do not upgrade and set out in writing clear requirements and timeframe for re-submission of upgrade documentation.

Nature of problem: primarily to do with breakdown in relationships between student and supervisor/department or formal student complaint or disciplinary procedures

In the case of a student complaint, the flow chart below outlines the procedure to follow. You may also wish to consult the School's official policy, on the Regulations website.

Speak to the student and other members of the supervisory team as soon as possible. If in any doubt take advice from the Research Degrees Unit.

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Discuss with the doctoral programme director, head of department, Dean of Graduate Studies or advisers to male and women students as appropriate, to achieve informal local resolution which will not be kept on record.

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If informal resolution not accepted, the student must submit a formal complaint to the School Secretary within five working days of the informal process ending, or a decision being taken not to use it. The complainant should set out the nature and time of the alleged breach, or breaches, of the procedure (as identified in the School's Regulations), as well as the identity of the person or people involved; and s/he should attach any evidence. The Secretary may handle the case her/himself or ask for a nominee. However s/he will make the final decision.

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The complainant may challenge this decision by writing to the Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning no later than five working days after receiving the Secretary's response. If s/he upholds an appeal, the Pro-Director will conduct his/her own investigation, or nominate an appropriate member of staff to do so. The Pro-Director will decide how to resolve the complaint at the end of the investigation, which should take no more than twenty working days from the date s/he received the complaint. S/he will convey his/her decision in a Completion of Procedures Letter.

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The student can report to the Office of Independent Adjudication for HE (OIA) externally to LSE.

In the case of bringing a disciplinary procedure against a student (which now includes harassment), see the School's Disciplinary regulations for students.

Section 8: PhD submission and follow-up

This section draws extensively on The Doctoral Examination Process: A Handbook for Students, Examiners and Supervisors, by Penny Tinkler and Carolyn Jackson, referenced in full in the Annotated bibliography.

8.1 Overview

Timely successful completion of a doctoral thesis is the most obvious indicator of success of the PhD process, and generally the cause for celebration by the student, supervisors, peers and colleagues in the department and discipline more widely, not to mention friends and family, and quite possibly sponsors/funders. It may also be an anxious and unsettling time for both student and supervisor, as it will signal changing relationships and transition.

On the other hand, failure at this stage can be a monumental blow – and one that some never recover from in either personal or career terms. For many students, the result is somewhere between these extremes. At LSE on average, 10% of students each year are given up to eighteen months to undertake more detailed work on their thesis prior to re-submission. The majority of students are expected to make minor corrections/improvements within three months. Fewer than 15 per cent of students achieve a straight pass without the need for any revisions.

Role of the supervisor	Role of the doctoral programme director
• Help student to decide when to submit • Prepare the student for the viva process • Nominate examiners • Arrange the examiners' meeting • Know when/that the thesis has been submitted to the Research Degrees Unit • Be available on the day of the viva • Provide follow-up as necessary to the candidate post-viva	• Ensure that the supervisor is fully aware of LSE regulations pertaining to PhD submission/examination • Offer advice/guidance/training, particularly to new supervisors, on examiner selection and the examination process • Ensure that the examiner appointment process is carried out expeditiously • Review the iThenticate reports on submitted theses and handle appropriately (pilot from January 2013) • Be aware of any issues/concerns arising from the examination process/outcome and follow up as necessary • Ensure that submission and completion data held centrally are accurate, based on your insider knowledge of the department

8.2 The timeline to submission and viva

Since 2006/07 all doctoral students have been expected to submit their thesis in four years (full time) or eight years (part time). Supervisors have an important role to play in helping students to meet this deadline, and in identifying any students who may over-shoot it sufficiently far enough in advance as to work out how to manage the situation (see 7.4, Procedure B (page 54) on requests for extensions). The final stages of the process can take quite a long time to organise, so it is worth planning out the steps well in advance. The following timeline is based on a full time student.

Time	Task
End of student's third year	Review/plan for completion and post-thesis life plans (academic career? other?)
6-7 months before submission deadline	Expect submission of major parts of the thesis for final review. Watch out for procrastination on the part of the student/anxiety/likely difficulties with analysis/writing, possible impact of other research being published, etc. Note: it is the responsibility of the student to indicate when they feel ready to submit, although as supervisor you can provide guidance.
3-4 months before submission deadline	Ensure student submits their completed sections of the examination entry form and consider discussing potential examiners with them. Note: choice of examiners rests with you as supervisor, with the ultimate approval of the Research Degrees Subcommittee, not the student.
2-3 months before submission deadline	Contact potential examiners and, on the basis of negotiations with them, complete thesis submission form, making the nomination case for the externals. Note: if the examination entry form is submitted too early (ie more than one year prior to submission), it will be necessary to submit a new form – as such, ensure this process is timely, but not over-ambitious.

Between submission of the thesis submission form and actual thesis submission	Following submission of the form to the Research Degrees Unit, the Research Degrees Subcommittee considers nominations and approves examiners. The Research Degrees Unit will contact examiners, providing them with necessary guidance re viva examination and possible outcomes and making them aware of any special circumstances that may be relevant (eg disability requirements). Once the Unit has confirmed with you that the examiners have been approved, you can make preliminary arrangements with them and the candidate for the actual examination, usually once it is clear when the thesis is likely to be ready for submission.
1-2 weeks prior to submission (dependent on advice from binders)	It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their thesis is (soft) bound in a timely fashion.
Submission date	It is the responsibility of the student to submit two soft bound copies, formatted as required, to the Research Degrees Unit and, for all theses submitted from 1 January 2013 until 30 September 2013 (at least) to the iThenticate software.
Shortly after submission	Where applicable, the doctoral programme director must review the iThenticate report to decide if there is or is not anything in it that requires further investigation prior to the viva. The doctoral programme director should confirm with the Research Degrees Manager who will offer advice on individual cases which may require further action. It may be the case that the doctoral programme director will ask the supervisor to review the iThenticate report.
Up to 3 months after submission	If the doctoral programme director confirms that the examination can go ahead, the Research Degrees Unit will then send copies of the thesis to examiners.
No more than 3 months after submission	The supervisor will confirm viva arrangements with the examiners and student.
Within 2 weeks of the viva	Each examiner will prepare an initial report and reach a tentative conclusion. No later than one week before the viva the examiners exchange their preliminary reports with each other. At this stage, examiners may as necessary consult with the supervisor and/or Research Degrees Unit.
The viva takes place	
After the viva decision is confirmed	Examiners may choose to give an oral indication of their decision on the day. The external examiners must submit a joint report to the Research Degrees Unit, who will email the outcome to the candidate as soon as they have the final decision.
Further follow-up	The supervisor should arrange to meet with the student, particularly if there is further work to be undertaken. If the candidate receives an unconditional pass or a request for minor amendments, then the Research Degrees Unit will inform them of any further official actions required, and student and supervisor will also often wish to meet and discuss and where necessary agree further steps. Students who have between 3 and 18 months of revision are re-registered (with no fee payable for the re-registration period) and the supervisory team is expected to continue. In some cases, particularly where extensive revisions are recommended, the primary supervisor may want to seek advice and guidance from the doctoral programme director/Research Degrees Unit/Dean of Graduate Studies and others. The student may also want advice from other sources.

8.3 Roles for the supervisor during the submission, viva and follow-up processes

As with other aspects of the PhD process, the UK thesis examination process differs from thesis examinations in other parts of the world. Given that many LSE supervisors have undertaken their doctorate elsewhere, it is important that these distinctions are noted. Within the UK, and indeed within LSE, no one viva will be quite like another, and students will have heard many viva stories and no doubt some viva myths before they go to their own viva. Again, it is worth supervisors considering this, and helping students understand the key elements of the process. A useful starting point is to recognise the purposes of the viva. These are usefully summarised by Tinkler and Jackson as:

- examination of the candidate, in the light of (institutionally) established criteria;
- checking the student's understanding and ability to produce research to the required standard;

- clarifying areas of weakness/seeing if the candidate can defend contentious elements;
- ensuring the work is the student's own;
- exploring where the work might go next;
- seeing how the research fits into the wider context;
- testing oral skills;
- helping the examiner make final decisions on borderline cases.
- a ritual/rite of passage into the academic profession.

In terms of the criteria, for LSE these are set out in the Regulations as follows:

Requirements applicable to theses submitted for the degrees of MPhil and PhD

29 Most of the work submitted in a thesis must have been done after the initial registration for a research degree, except that in the case of a student accepted under regulation 4 there will be allowance for the fact that his or her registration began at another institution.

30 Except where the School has agreed to a collaborative arrangement with another institution, a candidate will not be allowed to submit a thesis which has been submitted for a degree or comparable award of any institution. He or she may however incorporate in the thesis any work that is the result of previous study, provided that the work which has been incorporated is indicated on the examination entry form and on the thesis.

...

[Please refer to page 7 of this handbook for paragraph 31 of the Regulations.]

32 For the examination, the candidate will be required to provide the Research Degrees Unit with enough copies of his or her thesis, submitted in accordance with the School's instructions.

...

[Please refer to page 7 of this handbook for paragraphs 33, 34, 35 and 36 of the Regulations.]

Helping your student decide when to submit

Deciding that one's thesis is ready or soon to be ready for submission can be a difficult decision for a student to make – but it is important and necessary that they ultimately make that decision themselves. This is formally set out in the Regulations for Research Degrees, paragraph 38. The role of the supervisor here is to give encouragement, to provide fair and honest feedback on the student's work, and to draw attention to the deadline set and any necessary processes that need to be undertaken. It may be useful for the supervisor in particular to:

- ensure effective follow-up after the third year review (however that is carried out) and talk through the timeline to completion with the student – if there are concerns, then the supervisor may encourage the student to discuss their situation with others including the Research Degrees Unit;
- advise the student on the examination entry processes and importance of submitting necessary forms in good time (see 8.2 above);
- watch out for evidence of procrastination or possible blocks, such as postponement of submission of drafts, or the student taking on "distracting" duties, eg heavy teaching load or external employment;
- advise the student on financial support to assist speedy completion;
- point out departmental/School events focused on completion;
- encourage the student to apply for (academic and other) jobs to provide a clear incentive to complete;
- provide clear advice on finishing tasks such as checking references/final editorial work/proof reading/use of iThenticate software – see 5.4 (page 42) for further details.

Should a student decide to press ahead with submission against your advice, do ensure that you raise this with others in the supervisory team, the doctoral programme director and the Research Degrees Unit Manager. At this point, you may want to check back on supervision records and any guidance you have given your student that explains why, in your opinion, their work is not yet ready for submission. In some situations, it may be worth putting your reservations to the student in writing.

Preparing your student for the viva

In thinking about supporting your students' viva preparation, it is worth thinking both long term and short term. In the long term, many of the activities that you may encourage your student to engage in can assist with this final hurdle and hone relevant skills. Key skills you can help your student develop (see Tinkler and Jackson, page 44) include being able to:

- think on their feet;
- perform/communicate to a high level of specificity and depth under pressure;
- explain, justify and defend their research position;
- situate their research in the wider disciplinary/social/political context;
- cope with challenges to their ideas from other experts in their field;
- (particularly in interdisciplinary research) explain to someone from outside their discipline how their work connects to other disciplines.

Teaching, giving conference presentations, submitting work for critical review, going through rigorous upgrade exercises including oral defence, participating in departmental seminars, attending training, being part of journal clubs/reading and writing circles can all assist in developing these skills.

Closer to the actual examination, and in the time post submission, it is worth reviewing the purposes of the examination and the institutional criteria that apply – see above.

Other preparation options may include

- talking the student through the viva process and discussing with them whether they want you to be present;
- organising a "mock viva" or directing the student to the School's academic and professional development events for PhD students on facing the viva (see inside back cover);
- encouraging them to think about what they can get from the process, for instance reading they might undertake between submission and viva to update themselves, situate their work, think about how they might extend their work in the future, or where and how to get elements of it published.

Finally it may be worth listening to any concerns the student may have and offering reassurance to counteract scare stories: most examiners are fair and keen to see the student succeed; if the student is prepared, they generally succeed; re-submission may seem a stressful outcome, but can be very helpful; and very few people fail outright.

Selecting examiners

At LSE, the primary supervisor has responsibility for identifying and nominating examiners. Often the timing of the viva is highly significant for the student and quite possibly for funders and LSE completion records. Finding the right person can take time, and may have technical glitches along the way. As such, please do discharge this part of your role expeditiously. If you have not done this before, do seek advice from your mentor, the doctoral programme director, other supervisors in your department and the Research Degrees Unit website. You may discuss ideas with the student, but they should not have control or the final say in selection. In seeking out examiners, you are looking for people with breadth of experience in the field as well as depth. And there are certain institutional requirements and restrictions, as follows:

- Normally there are two examiners, the "internal examiner" from within LSE/University of London (who may be recently retired), and the "external examiner" who is from outside the University of London. If the individual has worked at LSE previously, there should be a three year gap before returning as an external examiner. Visiting professors to LSE may be permissible as internal examiners (but please check).
- Examiners will not have been actively involved in the development of the thesis or in earlier assessments (eg on the student's upgrade panel).
- At least one of the examiners needs to have had prior experience of PhD examining in the UK.
- The examiners need to be available to conduct the viva in a timely manner.

Do give consideration as to how the examiners may be able to support the development of the candidate, through useful guidance during or post-viva. Do be aware of potential academic jealousies/disciplinary schisms that could impact on decisions. Remember that, as supervisor, you have a key role in setting up the viva, ensuring there is a suitable venue and that student and examiners have all necessary details.

The supervisor's role during the viva

In advance of the viva it is important to find out whether or not you can attend. Ideally this decision should be made in consultation with the student, and in some cases the student may ask that you do not attend. You must respect this request. There are reasons for and against the supervisor being present, for all parties concerned. If you do attend, then you are expected to remain silent unless specifically asked by the examiners to contribute. Also do avoid clear facial gestures as indicators to either the student or examiners. However, you can very usefully act as "scribe" for your student – noting down examiner questions, student responses and any thoughts/suggestions you might have should follow-up then be needed. Even if it is clear from the outset that the candidate will be successful, it may be helpful to listen out for suggestions on how to take the research forward, or possible avenues for publication.

Post-viva support

The outcome of the examiners' report will be conveyed directly to the student by the Research Degrees Unit, but, particularly if you attended the viva and the student was not successful, you can assist them in understanding the report. The report should indicate why the thesis failed to meet the criteria for an award; if relevant, some indication of what work needs doing; and (in the case of major revisions) whether the examiners do or do not require a second viva.

Where the viva outcome requires further work on the part of the student, you will continue to have responsibility for them, unless there has been a serious breakdown in communication between you. If this happens, it is vital that it is discussed with the doctoral programme director and the Research Degrees Unit as soon as possible, so that alternative support can be put in place for the student.

For many people, the final PhD examination is just one step in a long term working relationship between two colleagues at different stages in their career. Certainly as supervisor you may be asked for guidance on publishing and jobs and called on for references. You may also explore co-publishing work and/or developing new research ideas together. As your working relationship develops, it is worth keeping in mind the power relationship between you, and avoid making assumptions about the other party – see 5.3.1 (page 38) for more on this.

8.4 If things go wrong ...

The run-up to submission and the viva/examination process can be very stressful for both student and supervisor(s), especially if there is any dissent between the different parties about submission, or if there is an unexpected result arising from the viva.

Earlier, the complaints procedure concerning academic processes was outlined (see 7.4F, page 55). In addition, the student may lodge an appeal concerning the examination process itself, within four weeks of notification and on one or more of the grounds set out in the box below. If a student approaches you for advice about an appeal of this nature, you may want to refer them to the School's Appeals Regulations for Research Students, and alert others, particularly your doctoral programme director and the manager of the Research Degrees Unit, to the possible appeal.

> **17** Students may appeal on one or more of the following grounds:
>
> **17.1** That their performance at the oral examination was affected by circumstances such as illness of which the examiners were not aware when they took their decision, and that this produced an unfair result;
>
> **17.2** That there was prejudice, bias or inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners such that the result of the examination should not be allowed to stand;
>
> **17.3** That there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the examination which might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result of the examination would have been the same if they had not occurred.
>
> …
>
> **28** The Appeals Committee will take one of the following decisions:
>
> **28.1** To reject the appeal, in which case the result of the original examination will stand;
>
> **28.2** To ask the examiners to reconsider their decision. The examiners will normally be expected to hold another oral examination before reaching a decision as to whether the result should be changed;
>
> **28.3** To determine that the original examination be cancelled and a new examination held. The new examination will be conducted by examiners who did not take part in the original one and were not involved in the appeal. …
>
> Source: Appeals Regulations for Research Students, paragraphs 17 and 28

Section 9 Preparing for future careers: teaching and other employment during the doctorate

9.1 Introduction

Recent studies conducted by Vitae (What do researchers want to do? and What do researchers do?, both referenced in full in the Annotated bibliography) have shed light on the employment intentions of doctoral students. They have found that the primary motivations of UK students for embarking on doctoral study are interest in the subject and in research. However their data on long term career aspirations showed that only a third of respondents in their later years of doctoral study have a definite career in mind and that 20 per cent are still weighing up different career options at this stage. This indicates that many students have a need for careers support throughout their doctoral study. Data on post-PhD employment from a sample of LSE PhD students has indicated that three years after graduation 57 per cent were in academic positions and 37 per cent were employed in careers outside academia. This is supported by a recent Vitae study that gave similar proportions for social science PhD graduates across the UK. So, although the majority of doctoral students in these disciplines go on to a career in the academic sector, many do not. Career support for PhD students therefore needs to assist students in clarifying their career objectives and preparing students for careers in both the academic and non-academic sectors.

LSE offers a range of support facilities to PhD students to assist with employment both while they are working on their doctorates as well as for their future careers. Where a student is particularly interested in an academic career, their supervisor may be a, or the, most important source of guidance and will certainly be involved in reference writing and support with applications. Some departments (see for example Economics (lse.ac.uk/economics/PhDjobMarket/phDjobMarket.aspx) offer extensive guidance on getting into academia both in the UK and overseas (especially the US). If you have a student who may benefit from this advice, point them in the right direction. For both academic and non-academic employment, also point students to LSE Careers (lse.ac.uk/careers), which offers specialist support for doctoral students. It is recommended that PhD students engage with LSE Careers early in their period of study so that they can find out about and take advantage of career related opportunities available to them during their time at LSE. Early engagement can also help to minimise career-related anxiety later on during the final stages of their PhD.

It is important for the supervisor to be aware of:

- expectations of the School and (where appropriate) funders and the UK Border Agency concerning employment generally;
- departmental and School policy on employing PhD students as teachers;
- opportunities for employment and internships other than teaching;
- benefits for doctoral students from joining professional organisations as well as unions alongside doctoral studies.

9.2 General guidelines on employment alongside the PhD

There are some obvious pros and cons for doctoral students to consider when taking on employment alongside their research. On the positive side, such employment may provide not only useful funds, but also experience that contributes to skills development and future employment. For students who are unsure of their career direction it can help them to clarify their career plans. It can also provide social interaction with others and, particularly if the work involves teaching and/or research, can help the student situate their work in a broader context and provide useful experience in communicating ideas about the discipline to less experienced learners. On the other hand, employment can be a distraction, take up time that would be better spent on the thesis and provide opportunity for procrastination and avoidance of thesis work.

The School offers a general rule of thumb about how much time any student should invest in "employment" alongside full time study: a maximum of 20 hours per week. This is in line also with the UK Border Agency requirement for non-UK/EEA students, who cannot work more than 20 hours in any one week, may not take on full time employment and may not be self-employed or undertake consultancy, professional sporting or entertainment work. If you have overseas doctoral students keen to take on employment alongside their studies, point them to the School's International Student Immigration Service (lse.ac.uk/isis) which can provide detailed guidance on what they may and may not do to comply with their visa restrictions. Note: 20 working hours is a heavy workload, particularly taking into consideration expectations about what time should be invested in the thesis (see following paragraph); generally, 4-6 hours per week of direct student contact (classes/office hours) for parts of the year is much more manageable.

Funders may also stipulate what students can and cannot do. For example, fully funded ESRC students are expected to invest 1,800 hours in their research and related studies (37.5 hours per week for 48 weeks, which includes eight weeks of holiday). They do not include any teaching or other employment in this time allocation, and expect any teaching to be paid and include appropriate contracts and training. Other (full time) paid employment is not allowed, and any paid employment should be checked carefully.

9.3 Doctoral students as teachers

Gaining teaching experience alongside doctoral study can prove highly rewarding for doctoral students, be useful for future careers, and provide doctoral students with regular contact with others and a clear structure to their working days during the period when they are most likely to be engaged otherwise in quite solitary study. On the other hand, particularly for first time teachers, it can prove quite challenging and time consuming. Doctoral students are expected to seek supervisor permission to teach, and if you as supervisor are concerned about the time


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HOW MARKETS FAIL
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The Logic of Economic Calamities

teaching is taking up, you should raise this with your student. Many departments do not permit doctoral students to teach in their first year, and discourage it in their final year.

LSE does not guarantee the opportunity to teach to all doctoral students, and needs to balance carefully the quality of teaching delivery with the opportunity for such experience. That said, most LSE departments do offer teaching opportunities (though this is not usually possible in the postgraduate institutes). Most departments favour their own students first, though some will take students from other departments. If you have a student who is having difficulties finding openings, you may suggest they contact relevant departmental managers for information. Most teaching is at the undergraduate level. LSE100 can be a useful course to consider for those unable to get teaching elsewhere. The Teaching and Learning Centre and Centre for Learning Technology also sometimes have teaching/teaching-related work openings. Several LSE doctoral students also seek teaching employment outside LSE – there are plenty of options in London.

Do give careful thought to employing your own doctoral students to teach on your courses. There may be very obvious benefits in terms of discipline knowledge, but it is important that you maintain professional working relationships and have consideration for their research needs as well as your own teaching support needs.

LSE provides information on the employment and support of PhDs who teach, including a guidance document on good practice for the employment of Graduate Teaching Assistants, on the recruitment pages of the HR website. Included here is information on the training available. There are both compulsory training requirements and the opportunity to gain a formal qualification in teaching and learning, the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCertHE), administered through the School's Teaching and Learning Centre. Many LSE PhD students opt to take the PGCertHE, which is fast becoming a requirement for new full time faculty in UK HEIs to undertake in their probationary period, so by offering the programme to doctoral students LSE enhances their job seeking potential. For more information about the PGCertHE and GTA work generally, see the Teaching and Learning Centre's Teaching staff pages (lse.ac.uk/tlc/teaching).

Given the preparation required for first time teaching, you may want to advise doctoral students to limit their teaching to one course and only to two or three groups. Much more than this may create too heavy a workload.

Supervisors do not have a role to play in the quality control of their doctoral students who teach, but do need to be aware that this is an important part of the School's overall quality assurance provision and encourage their students to take teaching and any training seriously. Many supervisors are also teachers. In that context, the Teaching and Learning Centre provides briefings for new academic staff on managing their GTAs and monitoring the quality of their teaching: see the Teaching and Learning Centre's New academics page at lse.ac.uk/tlc/teaching

9.4 Other employment opportunities and internships

There are many opportunities open to LSE students for short term/part time employment and volunteering. A student's supervisor can often be a good source of information, for example opportunities to get involved in organising academic conferences, and several LSE websites, notably Careers and HR, carry details of jobs, volunteering and internship opportunities both within and outside of LSE. Employers that advertise with LSE Careers are also often interested in recruiting researchers for short-term consultancy projects and there are some internship programmes, for example the ESRC's and McKinsey's Insight, that are aimed specifically at PhD students. Many doctoral students take up these opportunities, though it is important to note that in some cases there may be restrictions, for example for ESRC funded students as mentioned above. Even employment that is not directly relevant to a particular career can help students to develop evidence of skills such as team working that may be important when applying for jobs later on. LSE Careers has a specialist adviser for PhD students who can help with applications and interviews and also with prioritising career related activities so that students can decide where to focus their time.

Section 10: Reviewing and evaluating doctoral provision

There is a wide range of measures in place for evaluating the quality of taught course provision at the individual student and teacher level, the course, programme and departmental levels, institutional and national levels. In recent years, a similar framework has started to develop for the review and evaluation of doctoral provision.

10.1 Evaluating personal performance in supervising and supporting doctoral students

At present LSE does not undertake any detailed monitoring of the performance of individual supervisors and, at both institutional and national levels, this is one of the least formally developed aspects of HE quality assurance. However that does not stop you from putting systems in place to gain feedback on your own supervisory skills. Consider inviting feedback from your doctoral students, discuss your approach with your mentor (where appropriate) or raise it in your academic career development meeting (HR's Academic Career Development Scheme information may be useful to read in this context). For your own insight, and for CV and promotions purposes, keep a clear note of some of the key indicators, such as:

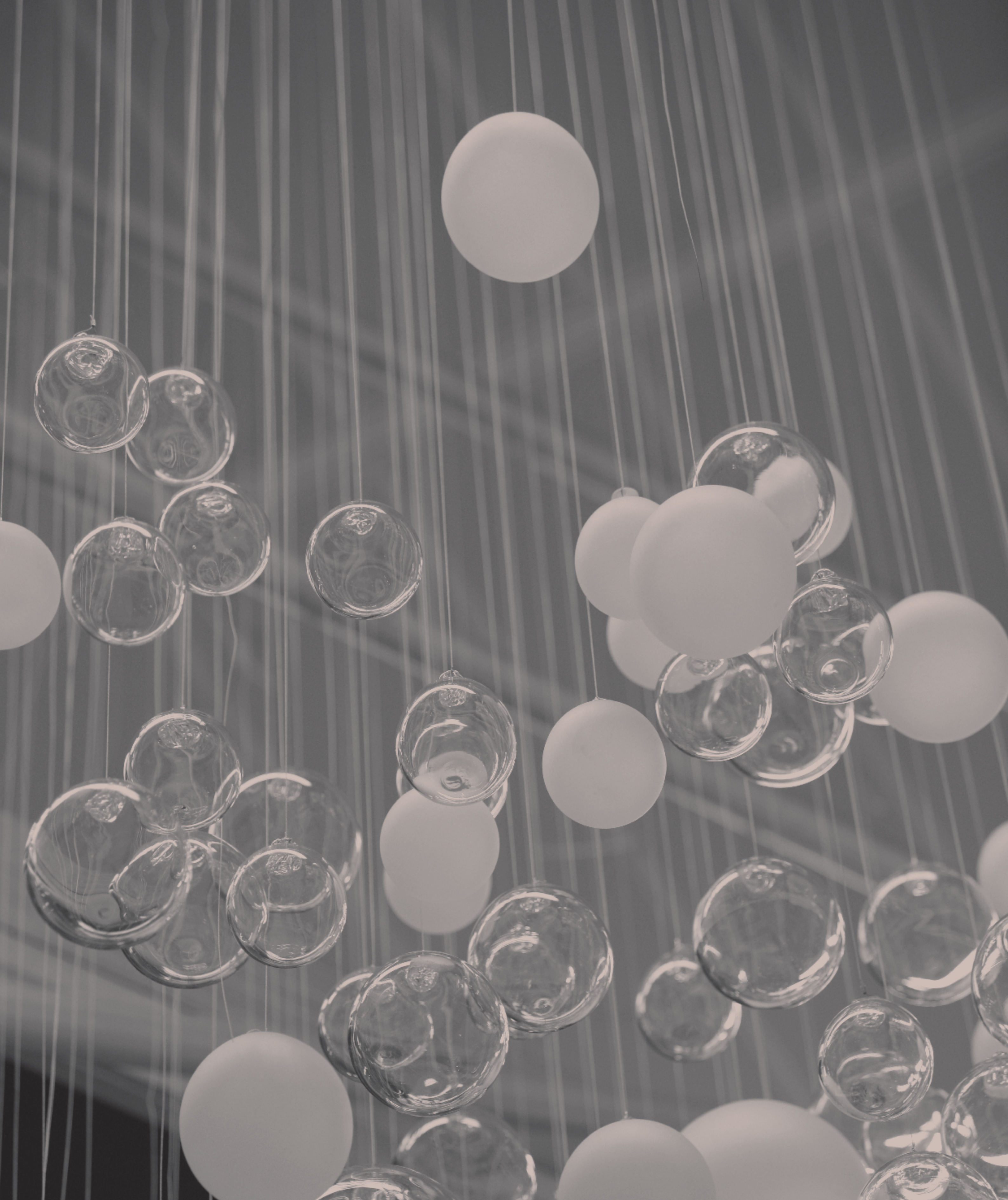
- numbers of prospective students contacting you with research ideas;
- volume of doctoral involvement, be this in terms of numbers of students for whom you are primary or other supervisor, your involvement in departmental and/or School level events and programmes aimed at doctoral students;
- time to completion for the students with whom you have some involvement;
- publication output from doctoral students working with you;
- career development/outcomes of doctoral students working/having worked with you.

10.2 Departmental measures of doctoral programme success

At the School level, the Research Degrees Subcommittee (RDSC) is the primary committee that oversees doctoral programme provision. It is a sub-committee of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee (TLAC), which in turn reports to Academic Board (AB). RDSC is the body that approves new doctoral programmes.

The RDSC is also responsible for reviewing, on an annual basis, key indicators of the "health" of doctoral programmes at departmental level and passes these for consideration through the other committees. The main indicators, presented by department, are student numbers in terms of:

- intake;
- withdrawal within the first year;



- withdrawal beyond the first year;
- submission within the normal four year registration period;
- “total” completion, which by definition can change gradually over several years.

It is worth noting here that whereas the vast majority of taught students complete their programmes in the normal registration period (be that three years for undergraduate or one/two years for masters’ students) the volume of withdrawals at the doctoral level can be significant, as can the numbers that require extension well beyond the normal registration. Many doctoral students also move from full time to part time registration (as mentioned earlier, the completion rate for part time doctoral students is significantly lower than that for full time students). Up to date submission data at both School and departmental levels are available either within the various committee papers or on request from the Research Degrees Unit.

In addition to looking at total completion rates, the School also pays special attention to the submission rates for students funded by the UK research councils. There is the possibility of financial penalties for the School should submission rates within four years fall below a given level.

As well as these “throughput” indicators, LSE participates in a national survey, the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), which can be analysed (student numbers permitting) down to the departmental level. The survey has been run at LSE in 2006, 2007 and 2009 and will be run again in 2013. It asks for extensive feedback from doctoral students on many aspects of their experience and can provide detailed insight into the extent to which departments are meeting, or are not meeting, student expectations. Overall, LSE achieves a reasonable response rate on the survey (38% in 2009) and 83% of our doctoral students indicated (also 2009) that their programme met or exceeded their expectations. This is in line with national averages and slightly above the average score for Russell Group institutions. The survey has also flagged School-wide concerns, particularly related to funding for doctoral studies – though we would expect this to change as the School moves to more fully funded students – and space, especially individual work space, for doctoral students. If you are interested in the feedback on your own department, your doctoral programme director should have a copy of your most recent departmental report.

10.3 School level review and evaluation of doctoral programmes

Clearly much of the data noted above can be analysed at School level, and comparisons made between LSE and other doctoral programme providers nationally. The PRES survey in particular allows us to benchmark ourselves with other similar institutions, though it is not easy to do this down to departmental level. As noted above, LSE submission data is considered and reported nationally.

In addition to detailed analysis of data on doctoral completion, every academic department is subject to a regular review of all of its educational provision through the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee review process. This includes a section on doctoral education. Full details of the review process can be found on the Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office website (Internal Quality Assurance section).

The other main mechanism for considering the quality of LSE provision comes through the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). In the past the QAA conducted specialist reviews of doctoral provision. In the future, this will be covered as part of the overall institutional review – see the QAA’s Institutional Review page for details – which takes into consideration the overall academic infrastructure for assuring standards and quality in the UK. Quite how this new system will operate in practice will become clear over the coming few years!

Annotated bibliography

This handbook provides basic guidance for supervisors and doctoral programme directors. Particularly those new to supervision may find it useful to explore other resources. This bibliography points to some useful references that are available either through the LSE library (LSE class marks are provided) or via the internet.

1. Practical guides for supervisors/examiners

Delamont, Sara, Atkinson, Paul and Parry, Odette (2004), **Supervising the PhD: A Guide to Success**, Buckingham: Open University Press (LB2386 D33): a practical handbook for both the novice and the experienced supervisor

Tinkler, Penny and Jackson, Carolyn (2004), **The Doctoral Examination Process: A Handbook for Students, Examiners and Supervisors**, Buckingham: Open University Press (LB2371.6.G7 T58): covers, among other things,

- What is the viva and how can students prepare for it?
- What should supervisors consider when selecting PhD examiners?
- How should examiners assess a doctoral thesis and conduct the viva?

2. Key websites

Vitae (www.vitae.ac.uk/): a national organisation championing the personal, professional and career development of doctoral researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes. Resources include “What do researchers want to do? The career intentions of doctoral graduates” (2012) (PDF at www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/511801/What-do-researchers-want-to-do-The-career-intentions-of-doctoral-graduates.html)

ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) postgraduates site (www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/postgraduates/index.aspx)

AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) postgraduates site (www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/summaryinformationforprospectivepostgraduatestudents.aspx)

EPSRC (Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council) postgraduates site (www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/students/Pages/default.aspx)

RCUK (Research Councils UK) (www.rcuk.ac.uk/): oversight body for research councils and formerly drove the “skills” agenda; the period of “ring-fenced funding” as requited by RCUK has now come to an end

QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in HE: Postgraduate Research Programmes page (www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/Code-of-practice-section-1.aspx)

NPC (National Postgraduate Committee) (www.npc.org.uk/): charity providing a voice for postgraduate students

HM Treasury (www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/) holds the Roberts Review final report, SET for success, April 2002 (PDF available at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/robertsreview_introch1.pdf)

3. Guides and practical advice for doctoral students

Booth, C.W., Colomb, G.G and Williams, J.M. (2008), **The Craft of Research** (3rd edition), Chicago (Q180.55.M4 B72): covers, among other things,

- turning a topic or question into a research problem
- organising a draft
- a reader's perspective

Caro, Sarah (2009), **How to Publish your PhD: A Practical Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences**, Sage (Z286. S37 C29)

Dunleavy, Patrick (2003), **Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation**. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan (LB2369 D92): a comprehensive treatment of authoring a PhD, from the earliest conceptualising stages through to completion and publication

Matthiesen, Jane Kirsten (2009), **How to Survive Your Doctorate: What Others Don't Tell You** (LB2386 M44)

Murray, Rowena (2002), **How to Write a Thesis**, Buckingham: Open University Press (LB2369 M98): guides PhD students through planning, structure, the writing process, dealing with deadlines and revising

Murray, Rowena (2003), **How to Survive Your Viva**, Buckingham: Open University Press (LB2395 M98): case studies, planning tools, examples of questions and strategies for answering them

Phillips, Estelle and Pugh, Derek S. (2000), **How To Get A PhD: A Handbook for Students and their Supervisors**, Buckingham: Open University Press (LB2391.G7 P55): conveys an understanding of the process of doing a doctorate, with material on researching, technology, publishing, teaching, supervision, time management and communicating with supervisors.

4. Recent research into the PhD experience at national level in different countries

UK: Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (www.heacademy.ac.uk/pres): website includes most recent national level report from cross-institutional survey of PhD experience; LSE last participated in 2009 and will do so again in 2013; there was a 2011 survey

Zhao, C-M, Golde, C.M. and McCormick, A. (2005), USA: "More than a Signature: How Advisor Choice and Advisor Behavior Affect Doctoral Student Satisfaction" (www.phd-survey.org)

Australia: "The Pedagogy of 'Good' PhD Supervision: A National Cross-Disciplinary Investigation of PhD Supervision" (2004) (www.dest.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/07C6492B-F1BE-45C6-A283-6098B6952D29/2536/phd_supervision.pdf)

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Appendix 1 Changes to PhD provision at LSE since 2004

Within LSE, since 2004, significant effort has gone into addressing concerns over PhD submission and completion rates, and into taking on board both internal and external expectations of the development of PhD programmes. The following table indicates key policy decisions brought to the School's Academic Board.

Date	Area of development
June 2004	PhD working group established
March 2005	PhD completion: Maximum period of registration: should move from 6 to 4 years Admissions: departments encouraged to hold interviews; admissions decisions should always be taken by at least two members of staff; primary supervisor to be identified at point of offer; students should be accepted on basis of research proposal and motivation and not simply on past academic performance; decisions to be taken on basis of confidence in student's chances of completion; and review of application form and guidance Upgrade to PhD: no uniform practice but upgrade should "normally" take place at the end of Year 1, absolute limit at end of Year 2, reason for refusal should be documented; full progress review to be undertaken by the ninth month Supervisory support: departments should consider mentoring; there should be allowance in teaching loads; incentives for departments for good performance in supervision Fee structure: to make fees uniform across all years of study
May 2005	Supervisor training: compulsory training for new supervisors; encouragement for co-supervision for all doctoral students
March 2006	Patriation from University of London to LSE: discussion of patriation arrangements for PhD examinations and appeals

Date	Area of development
June 2006	Patriation of PhD examinations and appeals: establishment of Research Degrees Subcommittee (reporting to TLAC) Regulations for Research Degrees: regulations for the interim period when the School had patriated research degree assessment and appeals but would not be exercising degree awarding powers; establishment of working group to revise regulations Code of Good Practice for Research Students and their Supervisors: recommendation for co- or team supervision
October 2006	Amendments to Regulations for Research Degrees: clarification on examiner appointments; co- and team supervision
January 2007	Training of supervisors: increased training support from Teaching and Learning Centre; proposal for handbook for supervisors Requirement for co-supervision where staff nearing retirement: additional supervision to be allocated (by doctoral programme director) when staff member comes within four years of retirement Compulsory co- or team supervision: joint supervision; second supervision; or advisor
May 2007	Final Regulations for Research Degrees: introduced 2007/08; established maximum word length for thesis; permitted submission of thesis as a series of papers
June 2007	Various areas of development: Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Special Audit of Research Degree Programmes 2005/06: endorsement by QAA of School's RDP management Dedicated administration for research students: establishment of Research Degrees Unit Professional development: central provision (Teaching and Learning Centre) of professional development training for doctoral students underwritten (previously short-term funding from research councils) Enhanced career support: dedicated careers support for doctoral students (as above)

Date	Area of development
	Student satisfaction survey: participation in Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Improved financial support: LSE PhD scholarships; increased funding for conference travel; increased funding for in-course support
February 2011	Focus on improving submission: Admissions: increased English Language proficiency requirements (to IELTS 7, LSE Language test 70 and TOEFL of 627); required an interview; required submission example of written work Supervisee maximum: restricted the number of students who could be supervised by one individual to maximum of 8 Maximum period extensions: tightened rules on granting of extensions beyond 4-year registration; review of arrangements for part time study
June 2011	Revised Regulations for Research Degrees: applied to all registered students from 2011/12, and included changes to: registration status; Code of Good Practice; appeals
November 2011	Fully funded PhDs: Proposal to include: smaller, higher-quality PhD cohort who will be fully funded - by ESRC and other research councils, scholarships, School scholarships; candidates would be ranked by departments but approved by a School committee, i.e. more central control over admissions; there will be a new sub-committee of the research committee with responsibility for doctoral students; a small number of self-funded students will remain but they will be the exception; restrictions will also be placed on part time registration
January 2012	Editorial assistance: guidance on legitimate editorial assistance for PhD theses; use of text-matching software for PhD theses (prior to submission) and training (throughout programme of study)
Michaelmas 2012	Publication of Handbook for PhD supervisors: to include several elements of Code of Practice requirements; reference to guidance on editorial assistance/use of text-matching software

Appendix 2 Sample PhD applicant selection form, from LSE's Department of Statistics

Application Selector Form **MPhil/PhD Statistics 2012/13**	Applicant ID number

Student Name	
Qualifications	

Nationality		Status	
Funding			
Gender		Full/Part	
Date received from GAO		Additional notes	

Comments from PhD Programme Director:

Does this application fit the UK PhD Centre in Financial Computing Scheme? (Yes/No)	

Could this applicant be eligible for ESRC or EPSRC funding? (Yes/No)	

General comments of assessors:

First assessor: Date to: Date forwarded:

Second assessor: Date to: Date forwarded:

Third assessor: Date to: Date forwarded:

Fourth assessor: Date to: Date forwarded:

Interview of applicant (if appropriate)			
Conducted by (name)		Date	
Method (In person/telephone/Skype, etc.)			
Comments:			

Decision and acceptance conditions	

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Appendix 3 Informal guidelines and sample questions for a PhD applicant interview, from LSE's Department of Media and Communications

Motivation

- Please tell me something about you, what you have been doing/studying/working on in the past year? (warm-up)
- What led to your making a PhD application at this particular time, and why to this department? (pursue if they seem not to know much about us or if they misunderstand what we do)
- Where do you hope a PhD will lead, in terms of your career development? (if not an academic, pursue why a PhD is needed, to check their commitment)
- To which particular field of study do you wish to make a contribution? (check that it is media and communications, however broadly defined, and check their understanding of what that means, as there's much national variation).

The project

- Please tell me how you arrived at your proposed research project, and why this fascinates you.
- Discuss in terms of theory and concepts.
- Discuss in terms of relevant research literature they build on, and to which they contribute.
- Check out major/minor themes or interests if the project is complex or includes too much.
- Suggest readings they haven't mentioned to check out their openness to new ideas or thinking on their feet.
- Focus on the proposed method – design, rationale, feasibility, likely value.
- Pursue whether they have the skills to pursue the project and what would they need to develop through courses here.

Practicalities

- Is their English expression sufficiently fluent? Can they understand when you present concepts or ideas at a fair pace?
- Funding – have they funding, what funding do they expect from us, if they don't get funding what will happen, clarify their expectations of us and definitely don't promise more than we can deliver.
- Teaching experience – clarify that as a graduate-only department we offer limited teaching opportunities.
- Courses – explain the courses they would take, in brief, and invite questions. Especially make clear that this is not the US system of two years of courses then two years of research.
- Expectations of supervision, research groups, research assistance, etc – just be alert for misconceptions of what we can offer and be clear in correcting these.

Questions they wish to ask?

Allow time for this.

Don't give an answer in the interview but promise to let them know the decision as soon as is feasible.

Appendix 4 Sample pro-forma for recording a PhD applicant interview, from LSE's Department of Mathematics

Record of interview: MPhil/PhD applicant	
DETAILS:	
Applicant's name:	
Applicant's ID number:	
Date of interview:	
Format of interview:	In person/Skype/telephone/video conference
Interviewer 1:	
Interviewer 2:	
COMMENTS:	
Motivation for doctoral study: Comment on applicant's motivation for the programme/subject/research proposal	
Readiness for doctoral study/feasibility of project proposal: Comment on the applicant's readiness for doctoral study eg, suitability of academic background/qualifications, whether the research project is feasible/can be completed within the timeframe	
Understanding of doctoral study requirements/practicalities: Comment on how well the applicant has understood the requirements of the programme and the demands of doctoral study	
OUTCOME:	
Decision agreed:	Offer/no offer
Date:	

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Appendix 5 Checklist for orientation with new doctoral students

- Organise first meetings – consider both individual and group meeting (new/new as well as new/existing students).
- Ensure student properly registered and in receipt of LSE card for library access, etc.
- Working space: explain departmental facilities (email, noticeboards, common rooms or shared space, computer/fax/phone and other options for work space (eg libraries – LSE and further afield); organise tour of department/School/area?
- Storage space: physical (lockers? office? desk?) and electronic (H space? other?)
- Ensure student aware of various inductions: School, Teaching and Learning Centre, departmental (if late arrival, advise on how to find out information normally covered in these events and encourage early one-to-one meetings with Research Degrees Unit and Teaching and Learning Centre Professional and Academic Development Adviser to PhD students)
- Ensure student has copy of departmental doctoral programme handbook.
- Explore motivation for doing the PhD/prior experiences in HE/research – basics of background to the research.
- Discuss expectations (yours and theirs) concerning your working supervisory relationship (eg frequency/duration of meetings, who will call meetings and how, lead time for providing written work (see Suggested PhD work submission pro-forma, page 46), turnaround time on written work (Code of Practice indicates "usually" maximum 1 month), responsibility for action notes arising from meetings, views on seeking advice from others in department/external academics, informing each other about time away).
- Agree on how/where records of meeting will be kept (ideally on LSE for You PhD log).
- Discuss training needs – departmental expectations/requirements (courses, required seminars, research council/funder requirements, language support, IT/data analysis/information skills, Teaching and Learning Centre provision, Methodology Institute programmes. Alert to local/national resources.
- Alert to departmental "culture"/research context – teams, seminars, communications/key websites, disciplinary networks, etc.
- Check on disability/learning difference/long term medical conditions (student may not choose to disclose, but important to provide opportunity). Alert to Disability and Well-being Service provision if necessary/useful.
- Explore other things that may prove problematic/challenging (eg finance, accommodation, family, being away from familiar surroundings).
- Outline timelines/key dates and tasks (eg review/upgrade, anticipated time to completion, likely absences for fieldwork).
- Flag procedures (risk assessment, ethical clearance, etc.).

Appendix 6 Sample pro-forma to record a formal supervisory meeting

SUPERVISORY MEETING RECORD SHEET
Date
Supervisor(s)
Student
Time (start)
Time (end)
Summary of activities since last meeting
Agenda items for discussion (eg decisions that need to be made, agreement of research plans, points where feedback is sought etc) • • •
Comments (supervisor)
Comments (student)
Agreed plans (actions and decisions) (eg who does what by when?) • • • • •
Signed (supervisor)
Signed (student)
Date of next meeting

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Appendix 7 Equality Act 2010: definition of disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. It replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (2005).

For the purposes of the Act:

- substantial means neither minor nor trivial;
- long term means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months (there are special rules covering recurring or fluctuating conditions);
- normal day-to-day activities are things people do on a regular or daily basis, such as eating, washing, walking, going shopping, reading, writing or having a conversation.

The Act makes it unlawful for higher education institutions to discriminate against, harass or victimise a disabled person in relation to:

- admissions;
- the provision of education;
- access to benefits, facilities or services;
- the conferment of qualifications.

Disability discrimination can occur when a disabled person is treated less favourably than their non-disabled peers or when there has been a failure to make a "reasonable adjustment".

The Act continues the existing duty upon institutions to make reasonable adjustments in relation to students, staff and services and it extends that duty by requiring institutions to take positive steps to ensure that disabled students can participate fully in all aspects of the educational environment, by relating it:

- provision, criteria or practice;
- physical features;
- auxiliary aids.

This goes beyond simply avoiding discrimination. It requires education providers to anticipate the needs of potential disabled students for reasonable adjustments.

notes

Academic and professional development for PhD students, 2012/13

Developed in line with Vitae's national Researcher Development Framework, this series of interdisciplinary workshops is designed to support all stages of the PhD cycle and help students to strengthen the impact of their research, both within and beyond academia. The workshops are free to all students but need to be booked – at **lse.ac.uk/tlc/training** – as availability is limited.

For future years' programmes, see **lse.ac.uk/tlc/PhD**

Stage 1:	Stage 2:	Stage 3:
first year MPhil/PhD students	second and third year PhD students	students within a year of completing their doctorate

Title	Date	Start time	End time	Stage
Using online resources for literature reviews	Thursday 25 October 2 2012	13.00	16.00	1
Using your time as a PhD student effectively for your career*	Tuesday 13 November 2012	10.00	12.00	1
Writing coaching group 1	Wednesday 14 November 2012	12.00	13.00	2, 3
Working with and managing your relationship with your supervisor	Thursday 15 November 2012	11.30	13.30	1
Managing your thesis anxieties	Tuesday 20 November 2012	12.00	13.00	1, 2, 3
Interdisiplinary PhD network	Thursday 22 November 2012	14.00	17.00	1, 2, 3
Your PhD and the research process	Thursday 6 December 2012	12.00	13.30	1
Writing coaching group 2	Wednesday 12 December 2012	12.00	13.00	2, 3
Writing coaching group 3	Wednesday 16 January 2013	12.00	13.00	2, 3
Blogging, press, web presence and social media	Thursday 24 January 2013	11.00	13.30	1, 2, 3
Research project management	Wednesday 6 February 2013	09.30	17.00	2, 3
Writing compelling abstracts	Thursday 7 February 2013	10.00	13.00	2
Writing coaching group 4	Wednesday 13 February 13, 2013	12.00	13.00	2, 3
Developing resilience in academic contexts	Tuesday 12 February 2013	12.00	13.00	1, 2, 3
Preparing for and handling your viva	Thursday 28 February 2013	14.00	16.00	3
Managing your work life balance	Thursday 7 March 2013	11.30	13.30	1
Writing coaching group 5	Wednesday 13 March 2013	12.00	13.00	2, 3
Academic job interviews: coping with difficult questions	Wednesday 20 March 2013	12.00	13.30	2, 3
Perfecting your one page pitch, focusing on print and radio	Thursday 21 March 2013	10.00	13.00	1, 2, 3
Getting published 1: Developing a publishing strategy	Thursday 16 May 2013	13.00	16.30	1, 2, 3
Getting published 2: Getting a journal article published	Thursday 23 May 2013	13.00	16.30	1, 2, 3
Developing as an academic writer	Thursday 20 June 2013	14.00	16.00	2
Getting published 3: Book publishing panel proposal reviews	Thursday 27 June 2013	13.00	16.30	1, 2, 3
Writing journal articles	Wednesday 3 July 2013	10.00	17.00	2, 3
Meditation classes	TBA			1, 2, 3
Thinking creatively and mind mapping your orginal research	TBA			1
The macro-structure of the thesis	TBA			1

The *Handbook for PhD supervisors* – here in its first edition – brings together a wealth of information designed to help you make the most of your role and responsibilities. As well as gathering together all regulatory and policy information pertinent to doctoral programmes at LSE, it covers topics such as

- the supervisory relationship;
- annual reviews, upgrades and monitoring;
- evaluating doctoral provision.

We trust you will find it useful. As always, feedback is welcome at any time: contact us at **tlc@lse.ac.uk**

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This information can be made available in other formats, on request. Please contact: **tlc@lse.ac.uk**

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