



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of Social and
Political Science

PhD Students' Handbook 2021/22

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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WELCOME TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Hello – and a very warm of welcome to the University of Edinburgh and our community here in the Graduate School of Social and Political Science! We are looking forward to getting to know you. This handbook is a key guide for the main principles and procedures guiding your years ahead.

The Graduate School of Social and Political Science is an interdisciplinary hub providing advanced postgraduate education and training in the social sciences. It forms the postgraduate division of the School of Social and Political Science, which in turn is part of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. The Graduate School hosts students from each of the School's subject areas and centres (African Studies; Global Health Policy; International Development, Politics and International Relations; Science, Technology and Innovation Studies; Social Anthropology; Social Policy; Social Work; Sociology; and South Asian Studies), as well as visitors from universities in other countries. It also plays a lead role in the Scotland-wide [Scottish Graduate School of Social Science](#).

The School is mainly located in the Chrystal Macmillan Building (CMB) in George Square.

As professional social scientists, we are committed to teaching, to research and many other kinds of practical engagement with the world. We do each according to international standards of excellence, and want our students to do the same. Each year, we teach more than 600 students on over thirty MSc programmes, and supervise around 350 others working for research degrees. Our Graduate School is a global community with students and staff from Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania. Our different interests, skills, life histories and experiences come together in one community. We think this makes for a rich and rewarding experience.

The School provides Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) recognised research training for students from across the University. We are also developing innovative, flexible web-based research training in quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods that, in semester 1 at least, will be delivered online. A list of these 'Micro-Methods' workshops and more detail on delivery is available on the [Research Training Centre website](#) where you will also be able book places. In line with the emphasis on advanced training throughout postgraduate research careers, we offer a range of advanced training courses and work closely with the University's career and skills development programme for postgraduate researchers. Meanwhile, our [Student Development Office](#) brings in practitioners to support the broader professional development of our postgraduate students. Their innovative workshops are open to students on all programmes.

New study in a new place can be both exhilarating and overwhelming (often simultaneously)! This handbook will provide you with essential general academic and support information to help you and make that experience much more manageable and clear. It should be read in conjunction with your subject area programme-specific handbook which is noted in the guide below.

Welcome students of 2021/22– it is great to have you with us!

Dr Steve Kirkwood

*School Director of Postgraduate Research Programmes, Graduate School of Social and Political Science,
August 2021*

Management of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the University

The impact of Coronavirus is fluid and constantly changing situation. We are operating to [Scottish Government guidance for Universities](#) and the University has also put a number of measures in place to [protect staff and students](#). These will be reviewed over the coming weeks and months if and when the government and University advice is updated.

Some helpful webpages

- [Health, Safety and Travel](#) – Student and Staff advice
- [Good Citizen Guide](#) – student conduct guide
- [Covid-19 support service](#) - support for students who need to self-isolate

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1 About this Handbook and Key Sources of Information

This handbook provides an introduction to the Graduate School of Social and Political Science, and the administrative, regulatory and procedural information you will need while studying for a postgraduate research programme, including information specific to your PhD programme and Subject Area. It also directs you to different kinds of support and advice available on other matters such as welfare and study skills. It will help you make the most of your time while studying at the University of Edinburgh.

The handbook does not supersede the University Regulations, the formal requirements for each degree as set out in the University's [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#) or the Terms and Conditions of Admission set out in the Postgraduate Prospectus. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information given here was correct at the time of publishing, but this handbook does not form part of any contract between the University and student.

The policies and procedures described here may be subject to change. You will be notified of any changes made during the year via email and the [School website](#).

For academic issues, your principal source of information and advice is your Principal Supervisor. For administrative and procedural issues, please consult the [Postgraduate Research Support Team](#). The [School website](#) contains a considerable amount of information for our postgraduate students. Please familiarise yourself with the website content [for current students](#) as you will find this information a helpful resource throughout your studies.

Other useful University websites include:

- [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#)
- [Information for Students](#)

Your official University record – which includes courses taken, marks, credits gained, other achievements and your contact details – is stored on **EUCLID**, which you can access through [MyEd](#). If you experience difficulties logging on to MyEd, you should contact the IS.helpline@ed.ac.uk.

1.1 Organisation and Governance

The Graduate School is led by the Deputy Head of School and Director of Learning and Teaching (Richard Baxstrom), supported by the Head of Teaching and Student Services (Marie Craft). The Director of Postgraduate Research (Steve Kirkwood) is responsible for research degrees. Graduate School policy and practice is approved by its Postgraduate Committee, while changes to the content and assessment of courses and programmes must be agreed by its Board of Studies. The Director of Learning and Teaching is a member of the School's Management Committee and the College Postgraduate Studies Committee, as well as a number of other committees and working groups.

1.2 Student Representation

We take students' views very seriously, and have a number of formal and informal routes of consultation. We want to support **open, collaborative communication** among staff and students, and encourage students to raise and discuss problems, ideas and initiatives with course organisers, PhD supervisors and Postgraduate Advisors at any time. We also invite written feedback on each course as it concludes: student comments form the basis for annual reporting according to the University's **quality assurance procedures**.

Each Subject Area has an elected [research student representative](#), whose role is to promote communication between students and the [Postgraduate Advisor](#) and Graduate School through the year. Student reps attend a more general [Staff/Student Liaison Meeting](#) each semester, which provides an opportunity for Graduate School staff and students on all programmes to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. The EUSA Postgraduate student rep also attends meetings of the School Postgraduate Education Committee and the School Postgraduate Board of Studies.

Once this years' student reps have been appointed, their details can be found at:

<https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/postgraduate/current/community/student-representation>

1.3 Graduate School Digest

The Graduate School office issues a weekly digest to all SPS postgraduate students highlighting upcoming events and opportunities, including conferences, calls for papers and job postings. The newsletter is circulated via email on Friday afternoons. If you have an event you would like advertised in the weekly digest, email it to gradschool.sps@ed.ac.uk.

2 The PhD Programme

PhD students are registered for 3 years full time or 6 years part time.

The University of Edinburgh [Degree Regulations](#) states that by the end of the degree, the candidate will have demonstrated by the presentation of a thesis and by performance at an oral examination that they are “capable of pursuing original research making a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study, relating particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field, and presenting the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way”.

The **Maximum Period of Registration** for the PhD is four years for full time students and seven years for part time students. After this, extensions may be granted by the College Postgraduate Studies Committee. Extensions are only granted for exceptional circumstances affecting completion and are not guaranteed. Students may also apply for interruptions of study if they are temporarily unable to continue with their studies for a period of time. More information on extensions and interruptions can be found in sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5 of the [University Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#).

Information is also available on the School website [concessions page](#).

It is vital that you alert your supervisors immediately to any problem, personal or academic, that is affecting your ability to continue with your work. We can only make sympathetic adjustments and give you the right support if we know in good time.

2.1 The Programme of Work for PhD students

The first stage of a PhD is normally spent preparing for the main research project. Students follow a programme of training, reading and reflecting on relevant literature with the support of supervisors and postgraduate advisors.

The second stage is spent doing the main body of the research, usually empirical data collection and analysis, or selection and analysis of defined primary theoretical sources. The third stage is spent completing the analysis, writing and submitting the thesis. Details of your programme structure can be found in the Postgraduate Research section [here](#).

2.2 Supervision

Postgraduate researchers normally have two [supervisors](#), with whom they work closely throughout their degree. All new postgraduate researchers are allocated a principal supervisor when they are accepted for admission. Many are allocated a second supervisor at the same time, although a decision on the second supervisor may be delayed for a couple of months from the programme start date in order to identify an appropriate second supervisor. At least one supervisor will be from their main subject area. However, it is possible to arrange joint supervision with someone from another subject area or School whose expertise is especially relevant to the research topic. Decisions on supervision are made in consultation with the main supervisor and your Subject Area [Postgraduate Advisor](#) (see section 2.3 below).

Working with supervisors is central to the postgraduate researcher's career. The supervisors' role is to provide guidance on the structure and content of the thesis. This will usually include:

- Agreeing a suitable programme of study and appropriate training with the postgraduate researcher using our [Training Needs Assessment form](#)
- Giving comments and suggestions on written work;
- Ensuring that the end of first year review, and subsequent annual reviews, are held and reported properly;
- Recording of supervision meetings on the postgraduate researcher's record;
- Supporting the postgraduate researcher to plan and manage their research effectively, with the aim of submitting their thesis within the expected period;
- Being the first point of contact if there are any problems – whether intellectual, practical or emotional – which the postgraduate researcher wants to discuss;
- Applying for any interruptions or extensions of study that may be deemed necessary;
- Giving guidance on academic publishing and careers, and providing references for job applications.

The postgraduate researcher and supervisors are jointly responsible for staying in touch throughout the period of study. They should arrange to meet regularly, and exchange frequent correspondence if the postgraduate researcher is away on fieldwork. It is important that supervisors know how to reach the student at all times. It is also important that the supervisors keep the postgraduate researcher informed of any periods when they will be away from the University.

Supervision styles

Individual supervisors differ greatly in their [styles of supervision](#). Some prefer very frequent meetings and more structured tasks for the postgraduate researcher; others prefer more informal ways of working. Some are more directive, while others see their role more as encouraging and enabling. Second supervisors may assume very different roles. They may have a specific area of expertise relevant to the research or a more general commenting and supporting role. Sometimes both supervisors choose to meet the postgraduate researcher together for supervision; and sometimes the role entails a more limited input to the postgraduate researcher's work.

Whatever the pattern of supervision that develops, it is vital that it suits the specific needs of the particular postgraduate research student, and that both parties discuss and negotiate how best to work. What works well for one postgraduate researcher may not be appropriate for another. Moreover, what students need from their supervisors may well vary over different stages of the degree. The supervisory relationship is an evolving one. It is therefore crucial to a successful relationship that postgraduate researchers learn to say what they need from their supervisors, and that supervisors be flexible and open enough to respond constructively.

Whatever your working relationship you should always:

- Keep and circulate a written record of meetings with your supervisors;
- Keep a record of work you have completed throughout the year;
- Produce written work on a regular basis for your supervisors to comment on;
- Produce an agreed timetable for your degree and notify your supervisors of any change from it;
- Know when your supervisors are available at all times – and make sure they know the same about you.

All research students and supervisors should make themselves familiar with the sections on supervisors in the University [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#).

2.3 Postgraduate Advisor

The Subject Area [Postgraduate Advisor](#) (PGA) is responsible for administering the PhD programmes in each subject area in the School. The Advisor is responsible for the smooth running of admissions, progress reviews for ongoing research students, programme evaluation and curriculum development. In addition, the Postgraduate Advisor is available, as an alternative to your supervisor(s), as your first line of pastoral support and advice on any scholarly or personal issues that may arise. These may include advice with course or topic choices at crucial stages in the Programme, but may equally relate to less routine matters. Your PGA is also your first point of contact if you have concerns about your supervision. If issues cannot be resolved at subject area or Centre level, contact the [Director of Postgraduate Research](#).

It is your responsibility to inform your supervisors and/or the Postgraduate Advisor immediately of any problems which are impacting upon your coursework or progress through the programme.

3 Research Training and Development

Successful completion of a research degree involves a balance between the pursuit of your own research project, and training in the skills which enable you to become a more effective scholar, both now and in the future. Our provision of training in research methods include generic and discipline-specific courses, and the School also provides regular workshops and short courses in advanced research methods. All of those are open to students at any stage of their degree.

The modes of delivery of different research training courses have been designed around four key considerations:

- Methods and methodology should be understood in their theoretical or epistemological context;
- Training should emphasise hands-on competence;
- Wherever possible, training should focus on the area of the student's own research;
- Training should be as flexible as possible, within the constraints of the Programme.

3.1 Programme of Research Training

You should discuss your own particular research training requirements with your supervisor and/or Postgraduate Advisor at the start of your period of study. The [Training Needs Assessment form](#) – compulsory for all [ESRC-funded students](#) – is a very useful tool for structuring this discussion. If you have already undertaken research training courses (e.g. if you have already completed an MSc by Research degree in SPS) then you may need to take fewer research training courses. If you have not previously undertaken research training, then there will be a number of relevant 'core skills' courses that are recommended you undertake during your first year. Please remember courses remain available to you throughout your programme of study, and for some courses it may make more sense to take them in your

second or third year.

Full details of our Research Training Courses are available [here](#).

Please ensure you have signed up for courses using the [online course choice form](#) by Friday September 10th.

The Research Training Centre and the Student Development Office within the School of Social and Political Science (SPS) offers an exciting series of Advanced Methods Workshops open to students (and staff) from across the School. Check the [Research Training Centre website](#) to find out what is on offer in 2021/22.

Additional research training may be specified by Supervisors and your PG Advisor. This may include the requirement to take specified Graduate School courses, to attend transferable skills events provided by the [Institute for Academic Development](#) (IAD) within the University, or to complete additional English language or other language training.

The Scottish Graduate School of Social Science also provides a range of [training courses](#), which are open to all PhD students.

3.2 Subject Area/Centre specific doctoral programme

Each Subject Area or Centre will run its own bespoke programme of doctoral seminars or colloquia. These will run on a regular basis throughout both semesters and are a combination of student-led work-in-progress sessions and seminars by staff or guest speakers. These fulfil the dual key functions of community building by introducing you to your discipline-specific research cohort and subject area while also making you aware of current topical and methodological debates in your area of study. Please see Section 13 of this handbook for further details.

3.3 The Edinburgh Award

The Edinburgh Award is a series of events and activities designed to strengthen your CV and help you stand out in the job market. The Award recognises and rewards your involvement in activities undertaken alongside your degree programme and aims to enhance and improve your experience as a student. You can find detailed information [here](#).

3.4 Student Development

The [Student Development Office](#) (SDO) is a bespoke team within the School to support you to develop the necessary skills needed to thrive at University during your research while preparing you for whatever career path you may follow. We do this through a variety of different ways including workshops and events, the Researcher Development Award, skills development coaching and direct support to students planning activities of their own. You can read more on our [PhD Skills Hub](#).

All SDO activities are mapped against the **Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)**, an internationally recognised framework for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers in higher education. This helps you to keep track of your development during your PhD and ensure that your planned development is bespoke to your individual needs.

[Workshops and Training](#)

The SDO **workshops** bring together visiting practitioners and postgraduate researchers to discuss aspects of academic, professional and organisational practice. They serve to open new areas of research and reflective enquiry, as well as to develop **transferable skills**.

Our workshop listings are regularly updated, you can plan and sign up in advance. [Upcoming workshops](#).

Workshops are open to all staff and students in the School of Social and Political Science only. All workshops will be delivered online, live with a Q&A.

[Researcher Development Award \(RDA\)](#)

The **SPS Edinburgh Award for Researcher Development and Academic Practice** is a two-year skills development programme run by the SDO.

The Award is based on the RDF and it focuses on the individual's development as a researcher; promoting a range of skills including public engagement, impact, personal effectiveness and research organisation. Those participating in the RDA will receive six one-to-one coaching sessions with an accredited coach to support them in achieving their development goals. This Award ensures that you can focus on your individual needs and create a bespoke training plan to support your development requirements.

Contact us

The Student Development Office can be contacted at ssps.student-development@ed.ac.uk.

Other Key resources

[Institute for Academic Development](#)

The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides support for teaching, learning and academic development. The IAD works with staff and students across the University. There is an exhaustive number of resources to support your research, studies and development.

In addition, there are several courses on academic writing and working on offer by the IAD, e.g. 'Beating writers' block', 'Academic speed reading', 'Is my writing 'academic' enough?', 'Just write', 'Just present', 'Designing research posters', depending on individual needs.

[Research Training Centre \(RTC\)](#)

The Research Training Centre (RTC) is a cross-School initiative focussed on excellence in Social Science methods. We aim to build on a long tradition of contributions in the development and application of social science methods.

[Digital Skills and Training](#)

The Digital Skills and Training team help to develop the digital and information literacy, desktop and IT productivity skills of University staff and students to help them work, research and study more effectively and to support continuing professional development.

[University's Doctoral College](#)

The University's Doctoral College also provides opportunities for postgraduate research students for training and development both within the University and externally. Their [Sharepoint site](#) is a hub for news and information specific to PGR students and staff, and their [website](#) contains a wealth of information for all PGR staff and students.

3.5 Principles and Practice of Higher Education (PGSP12001)

As a PhD student, you are strongly encouraged to undertake our training course for academic teaching called *Principles and Practice of Higher Education (PPHE)*. By utilising the activities, core knowledge and professional values set out in the UK Professional Standards Framework (PSF), this course will provide postgraduate research students the skills and techniques required of all university educators. These skills are vital to support university academics in their development of their careers, in the designing and delivery of a high-quality learning environment, but also extremely useful for anyone planning to deliver presentations, facilitate small-group discussion or design training activities in any career. This course is a first step; its goal is to provide postgraduate research students with a solid foundation for developing themselves further as educators. It is designed for all first year SPS PhD students and will give opportunities for students from across the whole School to work together as a PhD community

3.6 Part-time teaching (tutoring)

Research students can make an invaluable contribution to the teaching team for taught courses, running tutorial groups and reading and commenting on students' work. The School of Social and Political Science provides initial training and some teaching materials for [Postgraduate Tutors](#) with further training also available through the [Institute for Academic Development](#).

Full details of tutoring opportunities including deadlines and how to apply, can be found on our [dedicated webpage](#).

Information on recommended part-time working hours during your studies is available [here](#).

The Institute for Academic Development (IAD) offers the following specialist support for tutors:

- Assessment and providing feedback
- Effective tutoring
- Enhancing tutorials
- Engaging students in an online environment
- Developing a teaching portfolio (SPS)

3.7 Part-time Employment

You may choose to take on part-time employment during your PhD programme. Guidance on the recommended part-time working hours during your studies is available [here](#) and [here](#).

4 Making and Monitoring Progress

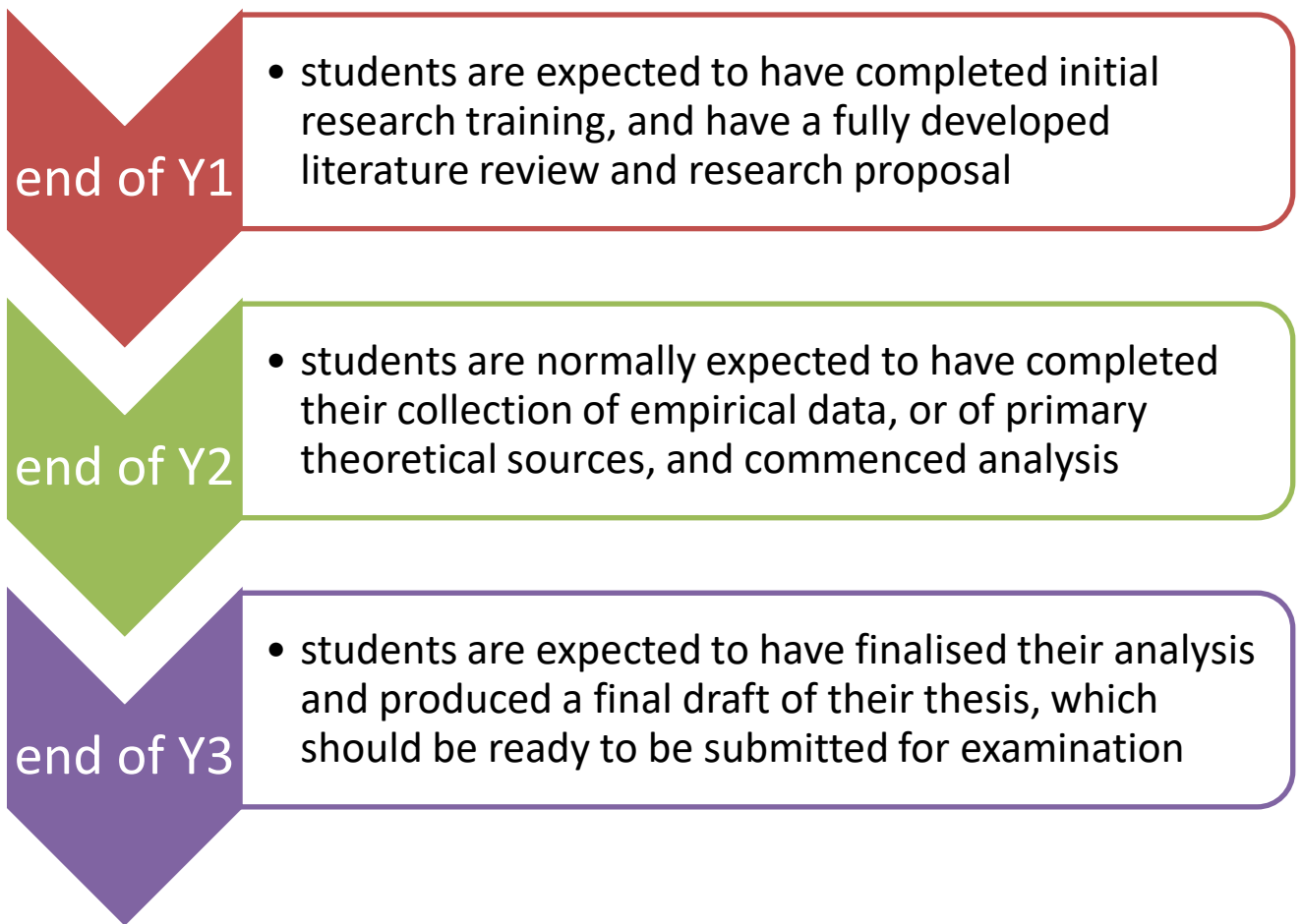
4.1 Milestones

It is vital for you and your supervisors to have a clear sense of where you should be at different stages of the PhD and how to get there. When you are planning you need to think about financial support, major life events, and your post-PhD plans.

For full time PhD students

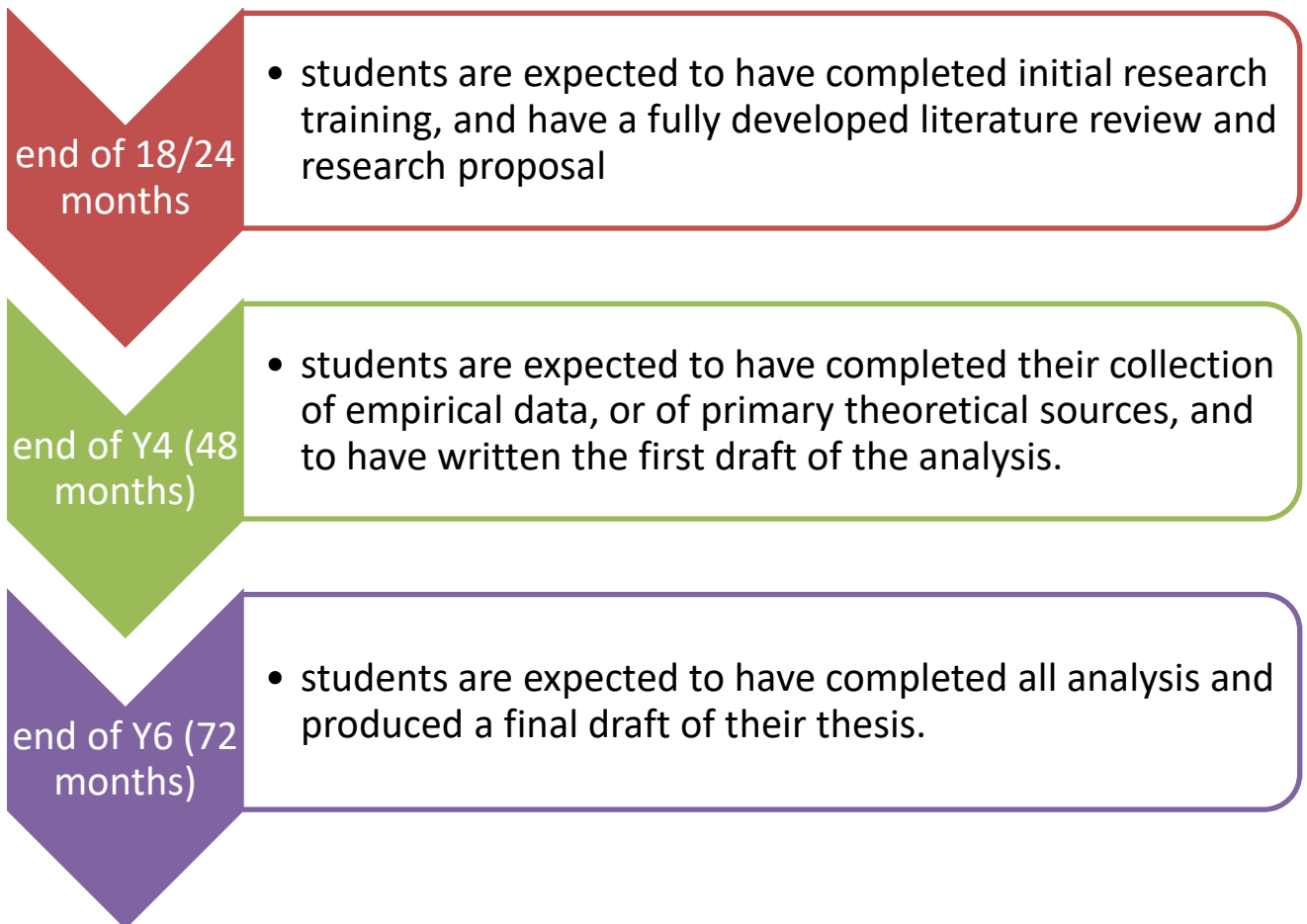
- Students should aim to submit their thesis within three years. The maximum period is 4 years but that should normally only be used for revision and final tweaking.
- If you require extra time for difficult language training or other training then discuss that with your

supervisor.



For part time PhD students

- For part time students the overall requirements remain the same although the timescale is different from the full time PhD
- Part time students are normally expected to complete and submit their thesis within a maximum six years, but are encouraged to complete sooner if their other commitments allow this.



4.2 Annual Reviews

End of First Year Review and Confirmation of PhD Registration

All PhD students undergo a formal 'end of first year' progress review (and confirmation of PhD registration) within 9 to 12 months of their enrolment. The same timescale is in place for part time students, however they will not have been expected to have made as much progress in this time and the decision on the confirmation of PhD registration can be delayed until the second annual review.

The End of First Stage Review is designed to assess:

- Whether the candidate is capable of undertaking a PhD, and
- Whether the work is sufficiently developed, and of the required standard, to justify confirmation of PhD registration.

The Review facilitates support and timely completion of the research by ensuring that students proceed only when they have acquired the necessary expertise. The Review is a genuine hurdle, but the preparation provided by the Research Training courses, coupled with guidance from supervisors and PG Advisor, provide the support needed. Full information on this important element of your degree progression can be found on the Graduate School's [Annual Progression Reviews webpages](#).

The Review Board

The Review is carried out by a Board, which usually has four academic members including supervisors. It may include someone who is not a member of the University.

The postgraduate researcher makes a written presentation to the Board in the form of a full research

proposal. The proposal specifies the research question, locates it in the appropriate academic literature and fully elaborates the research design, methodology and anticipated contribution to knowledge. It discusses ethical, political and practical issues and also includes a timetable and programme of work.

The proposal is submitted in advance of a meeting of the Board. Note that this will be checked in [Turnitin](#) for [plagiarism](#) and any arising issues may be addressed by the Board. The student may choose to make a short oral presentation. The meeting discusses the proposal – asking questions, giving constructive feedback and making suggestions. It may last for up to 2 hours, to allow enough time for a full assessment of the work, of the student, and of the supervisory team.

At the end of the review meeting, the principal supervisor drafts a written report, including the recommendation of the Board to the College Postgraduate Studies Committee, and feedback to the student. The report is agreed by all members of the Review Board, including the student. The supervisors are responsible for liaising between the Board and the student.

Following the [End of First Year Review](#), supervisors make one of the following recommendations to the College Postgraduate Studies Committee:

- a) Confirmation of registration, for example for PhD, MPhil;
- b) A repeat progression review must be undertaken within three months before confirmation of progression;
- c) For part-time students only for the first progression review: deferment of the confirmation decision to the second annual review;
- d) Registration for a different research degree such as MPhil or MSc by Research;
- e) Registration for a postgraduate taught degree (for example MSc) or diploma can be recommended if the student has undertaken the coursework for that qualification;
- f) Exclusion from study.

This is recorded on the online Annual Review Form and is signed off by student, supervisors and the Postgraduate Advisor or Postgraduate Director.

Where a serious problem is identified or exclusion is considered, the Review Board will normally write a report stating where the proposal is deficient and explaining what work needs to be done to bring the proposal up to the required standard. A second review will be arranged within three months, at which the student has to present a revised proposal. If the Review Panel still finds that the student has not met the required standard, then exclusion will be recommended.

Section 3.2 of the University [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#) outlines the procedures in full.

Second and subsequent annual reviews

Further [Annual Reviews](#) are completed towards the end of the second and every subsequent year of the PhD, for all students. These assess the progress since the previous annual review and have the same recommendations as listed above. The reviews should be carried out in a meeting between the student and both supervisors, along with other assessors if required, and the online annual review form completed and signed off by all involved.

The objectives of the Annual Review meeting are:

- To review the year's progress against the previous plan. If progress differed from that expected, the meeting reflects on how and why work did not proceed as anticipated;
- To assess progress on the student's skill portfolio and agree a programme of skills training for the coming year;
- To agree a sensible programme of work for the coming year including, where appropriate, a target thesis submission date;

- To review the supervisory relationship (e.g. was the support appropriate and adequate in the last year? Could anything improve the relationship? How might the student's supervisory needs evolve in the coming year?)

Both student and supervisors are invited to comment in confidence to the PG Advisor before or after the Review, to express and discuss any concerns they may have about progress, training, supervision or any other aspect of a student's academic welfare.

In third and subsequent years of the full time PhD, or fourth and subsequent years of the part time PhD, satisfactory progress may also be dependent on the student having presented a thesis chapter, or equivalent work in progress paper to the appropriate subject-based Postgraduate Seminar or Writing Workshop.

5 Research Ethics

Attention to the ethical and legal implications of research for researchers, research participants, sponsors and collaborators is an intrinsic part of good practice. The School attaches great importance to addressing the ethical implications of all research carried out by its members. We emphasis a collaborative approach to improving ethical awareness as part of professional research roles and training. Our procedures are designed to anticipate and offset problems through proper ethical review and accountability. All research carried out by members of the School, including postgraduate researchers, is subject to the same procedures. They are offered as tools to aid the achievement of the highest standards of ethical awareness in the conduct of research.

5.1 Ethical Review Process

Doctoral students should conduct an ethics self-assessment in conjunction with their supervisors, and the process should be integrated into their first annual Review Board.

Self-assessment is conducted via an [online ethics form](#).

Draft applications can be saved as a PDF to share with supervisors and to submit to the Review Board. The ethics self-assessment should be completed or in progress prior to the Review Board.

Once finalised, the ethics form is submitted online to the Graduate School Office and your supervisor, and the Director of Postgraduate Research (if necessary).

SSPS has adopted a three level approach to ethical approval:

- **Level 1**, in which the self-assessment process identifies no reasonably foreseeable ethical risks.
- **Level 2**, in which the self-assessment identifies particular risks and requires further scrutiny. This higher level of scrutiny will generally be required for research on sensitive topics or illegal practices, research involving vulnerable groups or children, research that could adversely affect participants or the researcher, or in cases where there are impediments to obtaining the informed consent of participants. In most cases, these types of risks can be dealt with through standard procedures, checks, and safeguards, which need to be elaborate via the online ethics form.
- **Level 3**, in which a proposed project creates more serious risks, usually because of physical or psychological harm to the researcher or participants. Level 3 applications are scrutinised by an ad-hoc Research Ethics Subcommittee.

Level 1 ethics forms can be approved by your supervisor, whereas levels 2 and 3 will be sent for further approval at School level.

Further information on Ethics processes can be found on the [Research Ethics webpage](#).

5.2 Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme

If, as part of your postgraduate studies (course, dissertation, thesis or placement), you are likely to have unsupervised contact with or be in sole charge of a child or protected adult, you may be required by University to join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme or have an update (if already in the scheme). This scheme is managed and delivered by Disclosure Scotland, and further information is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

You and your supervisor should discuss whether or not you need to join the scheme; School permission to undertake the activities it covers will be dependent on the results of the check. Different procedures may apply to international students.

If PVG membership is required, it must be applied for via the CAHSS College (hsspg@ed.ac.uk).

6 Fieldwork

Many of you will conduct fieldwork during the course of your PhD, this section contains practical considerations and requirements that you need to undertake in relation to your fieldwork.

Your Supervisor(s) are your emergency contacts so ensure you have emergency contact details for them. In the event of an emergency and you are unable to contact your supervisor(s) please contact Edinburgh Global on +44 131 650 2257.

6.1 Risk Assessment

At least two weeks prior to the date of your fieldwork or travel you are required to complete the online [Overseas Travel and Risk Assessment form](#). Please complete this form for both UK or Overseas fieldwork. **The risk assessment must be approved by the Director of Postgraduate Research prior to beginning your fieldwork or undertaking travel.**

Up to date travel advice is available from the [UK Government website](#).

6.2 Travel/Medical Insurance

If you are conducting fieldwork overseas you **must** obtain [travel/medical insurance](#) for the duration.

Anyone who requires University of Edinburgh travel insurance should complete the [online application form](#). All fields must be completed in order for the application to be confirmed, including an approved travel risk assessment. The system will generate an email confirming that the application is being processed and will be confirmed within two working days. It is therefore essential that travel insurance is arranged well before the departure date. The confirmation email will provide the emergency medical contact number, a link back to your application and links to various websites which will provide information on travel. No further documentation is sent out by the University.

7 Absence from Edinburgh

7.1 Leave of Absence

It is a University requirement that if you are away from Edinburgh for a month or more you must have a ['Leave of Absence'](#) recorded on your record. The request form must be submitted to the PGR Support team (pgresearch.sps@ed.ac.uk) by your supervisor prior to your departure. Please ensure that your supervisor

has completed and submitted the request form.

7.2 Vacation Leave

You may be absent from your studies for up to eight weeks of the year without applying for an interruption of study, you should notify your supervisor(s) of any [vacation leave](#).

8 Submission and Examination of Thesis

8.1 Submission and Examination

You should start planning to submit your thesis at least **three months** before you intend to do so. At this point you should discuss all aspects of the examination process with your supervisors, especially the appointment of examiners. You must submit your thesis by your 'estimated maximum end date of programme' as shown on [MyEd](#).

Guidance on how to prepare and submit your thesis is available on the SSPS Graduate School [Thesis Submission and Examination page](#). This covers: information on the necessary paperwork needed, how to format your thesis, an outline of the timescale, and information on the viva and potential outcomes.

All students should read this guidance carefully and familiarise yourself with the regulations at least 6 months before their planned completion date.

Your oral examination (viva) is led by the examiners, and usually conducted by a third academic colleague serving as a non-examining chair of the examining committee. If you wish, one of your supervisors may attend the viva as an observer. Your viva will normally be held within three months of submission and your internal examiner is responsible for arranging the date of the viva. You should familiarise yourself with the potential outcomes of the viva; the range of the recommendations your examiners can make is listed under regulation 28 of the [Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees](#).

Each examiner will have submitted a preliminary report on your thesis to the College Postgraduate Exams Committee before the viva takes place. Now, after the viva, the examiners will write a joint report, agreeing a recommendation to make to the Committee. They will normally discuss this with you at the end of the viva.

The Exams Committee will consider the reports and the recommendation made by your examiners. Please note, no decision is final until formally approved by the College Postgraduate Exams Committee. Following the Committee's decision, the College Postgraduate Office will send a letter to your home address and an email to your student email address, confirming the outcome of your examination.

Please note that the Exams Committee meets once a month so depending on the date the post viva report is submitted to the College Postgraduate Office, there may be a few weeks wait for the formal result letter. If you have corrections to undertake the number of months of corrections begins from the date of the letter, not from the date of your viva.

8.2 Corrections and Final Submission of Thesis

Any corrections required to your thesis should be completed and the final version submitted to the College Postgraduate Office within the agreed time. Should you have any questions about corrections or resubmission it is expected that your supervisor will help you. To maintain the academic impartiality of the examination process, students should never be in direct contact with the examiners at any other point than at the viva.

Students should send a PDF version of the corrected Thesis, along with a covering document detailing the

changes, directly to the Internal Examiner. Please also email cahss.pgexams@ed.ac.uk to advise these corrections have been submitted. Once they have been approved, the College Postgraduate Office will inform you that you are now ready to submit the final version of your thesis.

When you have completed all of your corrections and you have received notification that they have been accepted, the [College Postgraduate Office](#) will advise you of further requirements to complete the process.

8.3 Plagiarism

The University's academic degrees and awards are given in recognition of the candidate's personal achievement. [Plagiarism](#) (that is, the action of including or copying, without adequate acknowledgement, the work of another person in one's own work as if it were one's own) is academically fraudulent. Self-plagiarism, or the submission of the same work twice, including work which has been submitted as part of a degree at another institution, is also misconduct and is specifically prohibited in the University.

All forms of misconduct constitute an offence against the University discipline. Whether discovered before or after graduation, misconduct will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. The University's policy, and a statement of the steps which the University will take in plagiarism cases can be found on the [Academic Misconduct webpages](#).

Your work will be submitted to the software system called 'Turnitin' at various points throughout your degree where it will be electronically scanned for plagiarism.

9 Students on a Tier 4 or Student Route visa

As a Tier 4 or Student Route visa student, the University of Edinburgh is the sponsor of your UK visa. The University has a number of legal responsibilities, including monitoring your attendance on your programme and reporting to the Home Office where required. Full details and conditions of your Tier 4 or Student Route visa can be found on the [University webpages](#)

Please note that any email relating to your Student Route visa sponsorship will be sent to your University email address – you should therefore check this regularly.

If we know that you are away (because, for example, we have received a [Leave of Absence](#) form from your Programme Director) then we can work with Student Administration to avoid any adverse consequences for you. However, **if we do not know where you are, and you do not respond to Student Administration emails, then both your student registration and your UK visa may be withdrawn.**

Information or advice about your Student Route visa immigration status can be obtained by contacting the [Student Immigration Service](#).

10 Student Services and Support

We very much hope that your time as a student here will be enjoyable and rewarding, and that you will take advantage of all that the University has to offer, both academic and social. Please make use of the many social and intellectual events and projects that we have going on throughout the year. This section includes information on where to go for help and support, if you should need it; and also on some of the many University [student support services](#) to help you get the most out of your time here.

10.1 Pastoral Support

Apart from their more strictly academic duties, your supervisors are available as a first line of support and advice for any academic or personal issues which may arise whilst you are studying here. Students are encouraged to inform their supervisor immediately of any problems which are interfering with their studies.

If necessary, and in discussion and agreement with you, your supervisor and/or [Postgraduate Advisor](#) can arrange an Interruption of Studies for you ('time off' from your degree, during which you continue to be registered as a student at Edinburgh but are not expected to work on your degree), or an Extension of Studies (an extension to your period of study). It may also be possible for UK students to change from full to part time study.

International students must check the impact of any interruptions or extensions on their visa; [Student Immigration Service](#) can advise on this. **Please note: it is not possible for interruptions or extensions of study to be approved retrospectively, so you should ensure you report any problems or difficulties to your supervisor as soon as you can.**

Information on Extensions and Interruptions of Study (including what they are and how to apply for them) can be found on the School [concessions webpage](#).

Your [PGR support team](#) can advise on extensions, interruptions and other adjustments.

10.2 Problems and Complaints

The Graduate School is the ultimate authority concerning the teaching of all PhD programmes within the School of Social and Political Science. Where problems cannot be resolved at a lower level, you are invited to contact the Director of Postgraduate Research, Dr Steve Kirkwood (sps.dpgr@ed.ac.uk).

Information on the University's formal Student Complaint Procedure is at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/university-secretary-group/complaint-handling-procedure>

10.3 Student Services

The University provides a wide range of student services. Information about all of them is available at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/student-services>.

They include:

Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA)

<http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk>

The Advice Place

https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/support_and_advice/the_advice_place

A free advice and information centre for all students, run by EUSA, which offers advice on a variety of issues including academic and financial issues, harassment and legal advice.

Health & Wellbeing Centre

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/students/health-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing-centre>

The University has created a dedicated health and wellbeing hub for students. This houses some of the services listed below.

University Health Centre

<http://www.health-service.ed.ac.uk>

For all matters relating to physical and mental health, there is an on-campus, health centre operated by independent General Practitioners on behalf of the National Health Service. Students should consider registering with this, or another local general practice for the duration of their studies.

Student Counselling

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling>

This free and confidential service offers counselling to help students work through any difficulties, understanding themselves better and finding ways of managing their situation.

Student Disability Service

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service>

The University offers support if you have a disability, specific need or a specific learning difficulty. Students with disabilities should contact the Disability Service as soon as possible to discuss their requirements.

Accommodation Services

<https://www.accom.ed.ac.uk>

Advice and support is available to help you find somewhere to live and assist with any housing issues.

Careers and Employment

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/careers>

The University provides careers advice and resources to current students and to alumni for up to two years after graduation.

Chaplaincy Centre

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy>

Provides a meeting place for groups and individuals of any religious allegiance, or none. The Chaplain, and our team of multi-faith honorary chaplains, offer support and guidance to all students.

Edinburgh Global

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/global>

The Edinburgh Global office offers all non-UK applicants and students' assistance, advice and support. All questions concerning visas and immigration should be directed to the [Student Immigration Service](#) where staff are trained and up to date with the latest legislation and regulations.

Libraries

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery>

You will probably find a large part of the material you need is either online, through the University's digital collections, or in the Main Library on George Square. The University has a number of other libraries that provide specialist collections (e.g. Law, Divinity) and useful study space. The National Library of Scotland is nearby on George IV Bridge - <http://www.nls.uk>

Sport

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/sport-exercise>

Information on the University's sport and exercise facilities.

11 Safety and Security

11.1 Fire, Accidents and Emergencies

Fire Evacuation Procedure

*In the event of the fire alarm sounding, please leave the building via the **closest** emergency exit – even if this means ignoring the one-way systems. Make your way to the assembly point outside the building and await further instructions. Please maintain social distancing whilst at the assembly point.*

When our buildings reopen, there will be fewer people in the building and therefore fewer Fire Stewards. Please make sure that you know where your nearest fire exit is located.

If you have a disability or impairment that means you require assistance to evacuate in an emergency, you should contact the Student Disability Service who will put in place a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan.

First Aid

In the event of an illness or injury – call 2222 for University Security, and if it is serious, call an ambulance on 999 or 112.

As there will initially be fewer people working in our buildings, this means that there will also be fewer First Aiders. Please make sure you know where their nearest First Aid Kit is located.

First aid boxes are located in all kitchens of CMB and 27/28 George Square.

In case of emergency of any kind, call security on 2222 (internal) or 0131 650 2257 (external).

11.2 Harassment

Guidance on how to deal with harassment is contained in the University Dignity and Respect Policy, available on the University's [Respect at Edinburgh website](#). The Policy details the range of help available, from self-help to informal and formal measures.

A network of Contact Officers, Advisers and Conciliators is available, and reports to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Your Subject Area [Postgraduate Advisors](#) can also be consulted. Full information can be found on the University's [Equality, Diversion & Inclusion website](#).

11.3 Security and Personal Possessions

Please note that students' personal possessions are not covered by the University's insurance policy.

11.4 Guidance on Lone Working

When accessing any of the School's buildings outwith standard opening hours students should familiarise themselves with the University's [Lone Workers guidance](#).

12 Facilities

The facilities described here may be subject to change. You will be notified of any changes made during the year via email and the [School website](#).

All students undertaking PhD study in the School have access to a number of dedicated facilities in the School of Social and Political Science, as well as those provided by the University.

12.1 Wireless access

There is excellent wireless coverage across most campus buildings through the [eduroam](#) network.

12.2 Computing Facilities

Main University Library in George Square

As well as the standard library facilities, the Main Library includes a café, open-access computer labs, café PCs, and group study pods. Please note that not all normal facilities will be available due to social distancing measures put in place.

University computer labs

There are a number of open-access computer labs provided by the University, across the various campuses. Information on these can be found at:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/computing/desktop-personal/open-access/locations>

Logging On

Log on to the computers using your matriculation number (eg s1234567) and associated password issued during matriculation. Remember to log off when you are finished.

Computer Familiarisation

A list of IT training courses run by the University's Information Services branch can be found on the Web at: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/help-consultancy/is-skills>. These courses are free to postgraduates, if deemed necessary to your research by your supervisor.

Methods software

Support is also provided to download methods software:

<https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/hss/sps/itservices/SPSShareSpaceManagement/Moblabdoc>

Data Storage

It is recommended that you use your network space to save files. Your personal data storage area is prefixed with your UUN and shows under the Windows File explorer when using UoE machines. Also, your student account comes with a dedicated OneDrive storage space which can be used for storing all your work files. See [Office 365 | The University of Edinburgh](#). We advise you not to rely on memory sticks or hard disks as your sole medium of storage. Damage to either may lead to work being irretrievably lost, and we are not permitted by the University to make allowances for this.

E-mail

Access to e-mail is provided through [MyEd](#). You will have an e-mail address of the form: matriculation number@sms.ed.ac.uk. A 'friendly' alias also exists, normally: first initial.surname@sms.ed.ac.uk.

Please check your University e-mail frequently, because this is how we contact you. Set up any other e-mail accounts you may have so that messages are automatically directed to them from your University student address. When a message is sent to your University e-mail address, it will be assumed that you have received and will read it. If your student email address is not working, please contact

sps.support@ed.ac.uk as it is our primary method of contact with you.

IT Support

For IT Support, please contact IS Helpline in one of the following ways:

* Self-service form: <https://www.ishelpline.ed.ac.uk/forms/enquiry/>

* Email: is.helpline@ed.ac.uk

* **Telephone: 0131 651 5151**

Support is also available via [EdHelp](#).

Printing and Photocopying Credits

There are various printers and copiers located throughout the Chrystal Macmillan Building. All SSPS PhD students are given free printing in the Chrystal Macmillan Building. Please print responsibly – store important information electronically where possible and print only when absolutely necessary. As a School we are committed to reducing our burden on the environment and are increasingly moving towards a paperless environment. Users should wash their hands before and after touching the printer. Users should not use any kind of spray or wipes on the printer as this will damage them.

Laptop Loan Scheme

The School offers a laptop loan for PhD students for the duration of their programme of study. Laptops can be requested from the PGR Support Team by email: pgresearch.sps@ed.ac.uk The laptops need to be built and encrypted prior to being allocated and therefore may take up to a month from the date of request. Please note that due to the current situation with regards to Covid restrictions laptop will be made available as possible and will be sent out to the recipient by courier service. You will be contacted for a laptop setup session once you receive this. More detailed information on the scheme is available on the [SPS School website](#).

Research Student Profile

You can [request a profile](#) on the SPS website.

12.3 Study, Storage and Social Space

Lockers

It is hoped to make lockers available for student use from October 2021. More details will follow about this in due course. The Facilities team can arrange access for anyone with an existing locker who needs to retrieve items.

Mail

Please direct all mail to your home address as it will be difficult to retrieve this from the building.

Shared PhD Offices/Desk Allocation

SSPS PhD students in the later years of their studies (generally years 3 and 4 full-time equivalent), and students with a [Schedule of Adjustment](#) that includes access to a dedicated study space, are eligible for consideration for an allocated desk. Students who undertook an MScR at SSPS directly prior to starting their PhD will be eligible during their 2nd year of full time equivalent PhD study.

For the 2021/22 year, returning PhD students have been invited to complete a survey to indicate their individual need for a desk on campus. Desks allocations for the academic year will be advised by September 3rd. A waiting list survey will be available throughout the year for re-allocation where

possible.

If the available PhD space is oversubscribed, it may be the case that we will be unable to accommodate every request. The School provides hot desk facilities for our PhD students, and the University provides additional study spaces across the campus which can be accessed via the [SeatEd App](#).

More detailed information on PhD study space, the desk allocation waiting list, and Terms & Conditions is available on the SPS School website:

<https://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/students/postgraduate/current/phd/facilities-and-resources>

Out of Hours Access to School Buildings

Standard opening hours for the Chrystal Macmillan Building and 27/28 George Square are 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.

Out of standard opening hours, postgraduate students and staff must use their student card and PIN (found on MyEd) to gain access using the swipe card system.

As mentioned in [section 11.4](#), when accessing the building please familiarise yourself with the lone workers guidance.

General Building Safety Information

To keep everyone who uses our buildings safe, the following safety and security guidance should be followed at all times:

- Smoking is not permitted inside any of our buildings, including e-cigarettes.
- Please keep doors and stairs clear of clutter and obstructions
- Microwaves and toasters must not be left unattended whilst in use
- Do not move or tamper with any fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, door closers and fire blankets. Don't wedge open fire doors.
- Report any building faults or concerns to the sps.facilities@ed.ac.uk if you notice them
- Ensure that any external doors close properly behind you as you enter and leave
- Pets are not permitted on University property, with the exception of assistance dogs. Assistance dogs should be registered through the Student Disability Service.

13. SUBJECT AREA INFORMATION

13.1 Introduction to International Development

In 2014, the School of Social and Political Science (SPS) launched the [PhD programme in International Development](#). The management of the International Development teaching and PhD programmes is shared between Social Anthropology and the Centre of African Studies, both of which have a large contingent of staff working in the field of international development. These two subject areas provide the bulk of supervision, but as an interdisciplinary field of research, there are supervisors from other subject areas in the School, and indeed from other Schools in the wider university. We are committed to rigorous disciplinary traditions and to innovative multidisciplinary approaches to both our research and our teaching and supervision. This is an exciting time to be studying international development, and we hope that you will make the most of the expertise and experience at the School of Social and Political Science and the University of Edinburgh, one of the world's leading higher education institutions.

13.2 Key Contacts

Postgraduate Advisor on course: [Dr Gerhard Anders](#)

Postgraduate Advisor admissions: [Dr Laurie Denyer Willis](#)

13.3 International Development PhD Programme – aims and structure

The degree programme table can be found [here](#).

13.4 Subject-specific Research Training and Skills Development

SPS strongly supports the idea of research students developing professional skills and to this end supports students' efforts to engage with different audiences. We encourage students to involve themselves in the conception, organisation and management of events, to attend international conferences, and to establish links with non-academic institutions. Our research students are members of our academic community and it is expected that they fully participate in research seminars and other relevant events that are held at the School of Social and Political Science.

[Research training](#) is available flexibly to all PhD students throughout their time on the programme. We encourage you to make full use of the various forms of training and support available to you throughout your degree.

SPS methods courses

The Graduate School research training programme is designed to meet the generic requirements of the ESRC Postgraduate Research Training Guidelines, and to provide additional subject-specific, and more advanced, training for students working in the core social science disciplines represented in the School. The courses are chosen in discussion between the student and supervisor at the start of the first year when you complete your [Training Needs Assessment](#). For further details see the Graduate School website on [Choosing Courses](#).

Subject areas also offer research training courses with a specific disciplinary or regional emphasis. There are relevant course options in other Schools that, in discussion with your supervisors, you should explore. These will be searchable on the SPS website.

Skills courses

A wide range of courses in methods, skills, professional development etc are provided for PhD students through the [Institute for Academic Development](#) (IAD), the [Student Development Office](#) (SDO), the Graduate School in SPS and [the careers office](#). Please see their websites for further details and to sign up.

The Graduate School has produced a list of recommended courses and advice on when to take them. Please note:

These are recommended but not compulsory.

You can take them at any time of your PhD. This is a suggested pathway.

Details may change and it is important you use the IAD / SDO websites to sign up well in advance.

13.6 International Development Doctoral Seminars, 1st Year Showcase, Research Groups, and other cohort activities

IDEAS Seminar for ID PhD students:

The PhD in International Development runs a two hour long fortnightly seminar called 'International Development: Exchanges and Advanced Skills' (IDEAS). It is not a conventional course in that it is not credit bearing, **but attendance is a requirement**.

Annual Presentation day:

At a conference style event in April-May each year (date TBC), each PhD student is required to present a 15-20 minute paper on an aspect of their forthcoming (for pre-fieldwork students), or recent (for post-fieldwork students) field research to their peers on the ID PhD programme and staff. Presentation day is a great opportunity for staff to offer feedback to PhD students. It is also a chance for other PhD students to get a sense of the doctoral research that is being undertaken by their peers at different stages of study. It provides a friendly, supportive and constructive conference-like setting to improve your confidence and

abilities in presenting, which is an important academic skill. The PGA will be in touch later in the year with more information and advice on what to do with your presentation.

Peer group research meetings:

Feedback from previous years suggests that PhD students appreciate the opportunity to have their peers reflect on their work. Students are encouraged to organise their own advanced training and work-in-progress seminars, or writing and reading groups. Please contact your [Postgraduate Advisor \(PGA\)](#) if you require any assistance with these – funding is available.