



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

Programme Handbook 2020-21

PhD in International Development

If you require this document or any of the internal University of Edinburgh online resources mentioned in the document in an alternative format please contact Graduate School (gradschool.sps@ed.ac.uk)

Note: The handbook does not supersede the University *Regulations*, nor the formal requirements for each degree as set out in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, nor the Terms and Conditions of Admission set out in the Postgraduate Prospectus. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this Handbook was correct at the time of going to press, but the Handbook does not form part of any contract between University and student.

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1. Key Contacts

1.1 Postgraduate Advisors (on course):

Andrew Bowman Andrew.bowman@ed.ac.uk

1.2 Administrative Support:

The Postgraduate Research Support Team is your first point of contact within the Graduate School of Social and Political Science. Contact details are below:

Graduate School Office

<http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool>

Please contact via email in the first instance as staff may be working away from their campus office: pgresearch.sps@ed.ac.uk

2. Introduction and further reading

Welcome to the University of Edinburgh!

This Handbook contains information for students studying for the PhD in International Development. It outlines the research training available to you, how you can participate in the School, and explains our arrangements for supervising and reviewing your progress.

This Handbook should be read during Welcome Week in conjunction with the other sources below. They are not exhilarating documents, but contain crucial information that you need to know!

- **[Graduate School PhD Students' Handbook:](#)**
This handbook, and the further information contained on this webpage, 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 PhD programme here. 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 at the University of Edinburgh.
- **[The University of Edinburgh Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:](#)**
Contains information on your roles and responsibilities as a research student, and those of your supervisors; assessment processes; [absences](#) and [concessions](#) (e.g. if you need to take a pause in your PhD); and sources of support available to you.
- **[Graduate School research Training Courses Website:](#)**
This website sets out the Graduate School programme of generic social research training and its workshops in advanced research skills. It also provides information on the wide range of training in generic and transferable skills available across the University.

3. What to do in Welcome Week

- Events that form part of the Graduate School Postgraduate Research Welcome Week are advertised [here](#) alongside other useful information. You will also find your dedicated Welcome Week information via your [Learn](#) pages – *SPS Postgraduate Research Welcome Hub*.
- Set up your first meeting with your supervisors and decide on which courses to register for. You must [choose your courses](#) (for both semesters) by Friday September 11th during your meeting with your supervisor. At this time you will also work on your [Training Needs Assessment form](#) with them.

Note, you can either audit courses or take them for credit. Ask your supervisors for advice on this. You will also find more information on courses for PhD students and how to register on our [Graduate School website](#).

4. Graduate students in International Development

In 2014, the School of Social and Political Science (SPS) launched a new [PhD in International Development](#). The programme builds on existing strengths in development-focused research and teaching within SPS, which has long had MSc programmes in this field. SPS hosts a thriving and cosmopolitan community with dozens of researchers working on global development challenges. 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 research on international development. These two subject areas provide the bulk of supervision, but as an interdisciplinary field of research, there are supervisors from across multiple other subject areas in the School, and indeed from other Schools in the wider university. This is an exciting time to be studying international development, and we hope that you will make the most of the considerable skills of our growing base of lecturers and internationally recognised researchers who help make International Development at Edinburgh what it is. We are committed to rigorous disciplinary traditions and to innovative multidisciplinary approaches to both our research and our teaching and supervision.

SPS hosts graduate students studying for the degrees of [PhD International Development](#), [MSc in International Development](#), and [MSc in Africa and International Development](#). The MSc programmes bring to our School over 80 students every year. Our first cohorts of doctoral students are making a significant contribution to a range of subject areas within SPS and beyond. You can get a sense of our on-course students' interests and projects by looking at their [web profiles](#). SPS strongly supports the idea of research students developing professional skills and to this end supports students' efforts to engage with the broadest possible community. 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. A good place to start is with membership of the [Development Studies Association](#), of which the University of Edinburgh's Global Development Academy is a premium member. Their monthly email bulletin is a good way to keep abreast of events in the field of international development, including details of their annual conferences held in September each year.

Students and staff meet regularly in the seminars held by subject areas within SPS. These include:

- [Social Anthropology](#).
- [Centre of African Studies](#).
- [Science, Technology and Innovation Studies](#).

After these workshops and seminars, there is usually an opportunity to meet the presenter in more informal surroundings (this may be slightly different this year given Covid-19). This post-seminar social is also traditionally one of the best opportunities for staff and students to meet outside the classroom. Attendance at these seminar series is strongly recommended. You will find further details on the websites for the subject areas mentioned above.

5. Progression and assessment

All research students, whatever degree they are registered for, follow the same pathway and assessment procedures, coordinated by the Graduate School. Detailed information on the PhD programme structure and requirements is available in the SPS Graduate School [PhD Students' Handbook](#).

The characteristic feature of the PhD is independent scholarship supported by personal supervision, culminating in the production of a thesis. PhD students are registered for 3 years full time or 6 years part time, with an optional year for writing up. It is desirable – and certainly feasible – for students to complete and submit their thesis within a three to four-year period (four to seven years for part-time students). This requires careful planning of the research and frequent communication with supervisors at every stage in the process.

Year 1

The first year of the PhD is probationary. The normal progression for a PhD is that the first year is spent preparing for the main research work – [training](#), taking useful methodology or language courses, reading and reflecting on relevant literature, and developing the full research proposal with the support of the supervisors. All full-time PhD students undergo a formal 'end of first year' progression review within 9-12 months of their enrolment. Both full-time and part-time students should expect to be formally reviewed between May and August of their first (full-time) academic year, and prepare accordingly. Not as much progress is expected to have been made for part-time students, and the examiners take account of this.

The [End of First Year Review Board](#), which usually has four academic members including supervisors. The postgraduate researcher makes a written presentation to the Board, usually in the form of a full research proposal of 15,000 – 20,000 words. Such a paper will specify the research question, locate it in the appropriate academic literature and fully elaborate the research design, methodology and anticipated contribution. It will discuss ethical, political and practical issues and also include a detailed timetable and programme of work. It involves a substantive piece of writing. Your supervisors will guide you throughout the year on how to draft this document and prepare for the exam, but there are additional workshops to support you. For further details on exam results and procedures, see the other handbooks linked in Section 1.

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring student progress and reporting annually to the Graduate School Office and the College Postgraduate Office. This progress is monitored via the [Annual Progression Review](#). There is not a requirement for a formal review board with external assessor(s) in subsequent years of study. The review consists of a dedicated meeting between the student and the supervision team, and progress to the next year of study must be confirmed. The student and supervisor(s) must also complete the annual review form. The annual review system for PhD students is an online form within your student record (accessible via [MyEd](#)).

Year 2

The second year is spent conducting the main body of the research (data collection and analysis for students doing empirical research). For International Development students, this typically involves extended periods of [field research](#), and may include relevant language training.

Year 3+

The third year is spent completing the analysis and writing and [submitting the thesis](#). During this period, students are normally expected also to build their academic curriculum vitae and gain experience as early career academics; for example, in teaching and attending appropriate academic conferences.

6. Supervision

Supervision requirements for all graduate students is described in the Graduate School [PhD Students Handbook](#). In International Development we also recognise that supervision needs to be tailored to the specific requirements of each student. What works well for one student may not work for another, and most students need different input from supervisors at different stages in the degree. Supervisors also differ in their styles of supervision, and in the particular skills, knowledge and experience they can offer a student. Some may prefer very frequent meetings and structured tasks (e.g. submitting a piece of writing), others may prefer more informal ways of working based around ongoing conversation; some are more directive, others see their role more as encouraging and enabling. Whatever the preferences and needs, we encourage students to talk about what they want from the supervision process during their first meetings with their supervisors. Equally, we expect supervisors to be flexible and open enough to respond appropriately, and to negotiate how best to make the supervision work. You are required to meet a minimum of twice per semester with your supervisors. The meetings can be done remotely by skype or email if you are on fieldwork. In the first year or more intensive periods of writing up, most students meet with supervisors on a monthly basis.

Each student has a minimum of two supervisors and a maximum of three. Two is typical. Given the inter-disciplinary nature of International Development, we support joint supervision as it allows students to draw on the widest range of supervisory expertise, be that disciplinary or geographic, available in the University. The division of supervision between them can vary depending on arrangements made between them. In some cases, supervision will be split evenly. In other cases, one supervisor may take a lead role with the other being less frequently involved. Second supervisors may become more important than the first supervisor at certain points in the project; supervisors may meet the student together or separately; the second supervisor's role may be more passive, perhaps mainly providing continuity in the first supervisor's absence, the second supervisor may provide an alternative point of view and different kinds of support and so on. Supervisors and students can agree a different division of labour if this is more suitable and mutually acceptable. In any case, one supervisor takes the role of 'Principal supervisor', responsible for the administration of the supervision, completing paperwork etc. Besides guiding your academic work, supervisors are your first point of contact for most queries or other personal or practical issues you encounter in the course of your studies. If you are experiencing any challenges or difficulties, it is important that you let them know (see also section below on [Postgraduate Advisors \(PGAs\)](#)).

7. Research training

[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.

7.1 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. In particular, the Centre of African

Studies offers an Africa-specific methods course, Research in Africa ([PGSP11340](#)), that PhD students whose research focuses on Africa are strongly encouraged to take.

7.2 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.

Year 1

Course	Approx. dates	Delivery
Managing your research project	Three times per year	IAD
Seven secrets of a highly successful research student	Once per year	IAD
Searching research literature and managing bibliographies	Several times per year	IAD
How to be an effective researcher	Several times per year	IAD
PhD career planning	October	Careers
Tech & Tools: Choosing from over 1000 options	November	SDO
Research ethics	January	SPS
Good practice in research data management	Several times per year	IAD
Writing a literature review (CAHSS)	Several times per year	IAD
Designing effective slides	Once per year	IAD
Presenting with ease	Online	IAD
How to prepare for your first year review board	April	SPS

Year 2

Course	Approx. dates	Delivery
Practical project management for researchers	Several times per year	IAD
Researcher reflexivity		SPS
Researching with service users		SPS
Pitch perfect: public speaking, networking & engaging	Several times per year	SDO
Writing skills to take you from A to Z: How to plan and write your thesis	Several times per year	SDO

Safe and responsible research –REDr travel safety	September	SPS/SDO
Managing your research project		IAD
Managing your work, yourself and your goals		IAD
Presenting at conferences	Semester 2	SPS
Using social media for research and impact		IAD

Year 3

Course	Approx. dates	Delivery
Post-fieldwork support network	Several times per year	SPS/SDO
Navigating peer review	January	SDO
Professional networking for researchers: strategy & engaging		SDO
Writing skills: How to plan and write your thesis	Several times per year	SDO
Writing skills: how to edit and critique your work	Several times per year	SDO
Effective conference posters	Online	IAD
Public engagement	Several times per year	SPS/SDO
Building impact		RO
An introduction to copyright and publishing	Several times per year	IAD
Publish or perish: academic publishing in a nutshell	October	SDO
Pursuing a career in academia	February	SPS
Finding funding for your research	Twice per year	IAD
Attracting your own research funding	February	SDO
Viva survivor	Several times per year	IAD
Demystifying the viva	Semester 2	SPS
Writing job applications and preparing for interviews	Semester 2	Careers/SPS

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. The IAD is also extending their online course offer.

7.3 The IDEAS Seminar

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.**

For Semester 1 2020, the seminars will be running online via MS Teams.

The seminar is run by Dr [Andrew Bowman](#), who will circulate timetables in advance. The seminar is a friendly, relaxed space to discuss your own work, the work of your fellow students on the programme, and broader issues within the discipline. The format is flexible, but emphasises giving

you a chance to present your work to each other and get feedback. What this means is up to you: it could be presenting a polished chapter for detailed discussion, or taking five minutes to air a methodological idea or a fieldwork dilemma. This will give you a chance to hone your skills in communicating your research, but will also let you engage with each other's work. PhD students can become quite wrapped up in their own projects, which can be a difficulty at the viva and job interviews. Knowing more about each other's work can be very helpful when it comes to this building this broader disciplinary knowledge.

7.4 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.

7.5 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.

8. Undergraduate tutoring

Research students may wish to take on limited amounts of teaching in related subject areas, for which you must attend the relevant training sessions. In these ways, postgraduate students often contribute significantly to the University research community. In addition, such activities are vital parts of the 'apprenticeship' aspect of the PhD; they help socialise you into academic scholarship and so provide invaluable experience when you come to look for a job. Typically, we would only recommend doing [tutoring](#) in year 2 and beyond, since year 1 should be focused on passing the end of first year progression board and receiving training.

Specialist support for tutors

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

Formal teaching accreditation can be achieved through the IAD course [Introduction into Academic Practice](#) (IntroAP) and the [Edinburgh Teaching Award](#) (EdTA).

9. The Postgraduate Advisor (PGA)

Two [Postgraduate Advisors](#) coordinate the PhD in International Development.

- Dr [Aaron Kappeler](#), admissions, and scholarships
- Dr [Andrew Bowman](#), on-course

With the Directors of the Graduate School and supervisors, they take responsibility for recruitment, admissions, assessment, monitoring progress, programme evaluation and curriculum development.

The PGA can also offer advice on scholarly or personal issues that arise while you are studying. You are responsible for informing them and your supervisor(s) of any problems which interfere with your coursework or progress, including any issues that might affect your participation in aspects of the Programme. The PGA is available to all research students on the programme as your first line of pastoral support, as an alternative to your supervisor(s). [The Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#) indicates that students are encouraged to bring any concerns, including those of a social or medical nature, to the attention of supervisors. However, if for any reason you feel you cannot discuss an issue with your supervisor(s), please do not hesitate to contact the PGA.

10. Other forms of support

Student representation

The PhD in International Development normally has two programme representatives, who will be appointed by the end of Welcome Week. If you have a particularly sensitive issue that you would prefer one of your peers raise, then you may wish to approach one of the [programme reps](#).

University support

The School and the University offer a [wide range of support](#) for students across all programmes. These include advice and career services, counselling, support for students with disabilities.

EUSA

The Edinburgh University Students Association ([EUSA](#)) provides a wide range of support and advice for students.

UCU

The University and College Union is the representative trade union for the UK university sector. Postgraduate students engaged in paid teaching or research can [join for free](#).

A final word: The PhD is probably your best chance to thoroughly research a topic for a significant period of time. Enjoy your time in Edinburgh, and make the most of the rich research environment...!