

School of Social and Political Science

PhD Student Desk Allocation: Terms & Conditions (updated May 2026)

Eligibility

SSPS PhD students are eligible for consideration for an allocated desk in the following years of PhD study¹:

- Full time PhD students are eligible during their 3rd and 4th years of PhD study
- Part time PhD students are eligible from their 5th year of PhD study
- Students who undertook an MScR at SSPS directly prior to starting their PhD will be eligible during their 2nd year of full time PhD study
- Students with a [Schedule of Adjustment](#) that includes access to a dedicated study space are eligible regardless of their year of PhD study

Provision

Depending on current availability, desks in shared offices will be provided for those students who need and are eligible for one, *until 4 weeks after their viva*. While there is a need to balance availability for all eligible students, those with corrections may request their desk allocation is extended until receiving the request from College to upload their thesis to PURE. At that point the student will have *up to 4 weeks* to vacate their desk. *However, students should prepare for the University to deactivate their student card at any time during this period. Students must confirm to the PGR Support Team when they have vacated their desk.

Priority for office space will be given to students with a formal Schedule of Adjustment, and students within their maximum period of study. Where availability allows, students in their 2nd year (FTE) of PhD study may be provided with allocated desk space, if not otherwise eligible, but must vacate if requested.

Desk allocation and changes

In accordance with changes agreed with the PGR community in 2021/22, desk allocations are done via a student survey. We maintain a rolling waiting list based on the survey response and allocations are done when space is available

*Due to the limited number of desks available, students will not normally be able to request a change to their desk location.

Usage

1. Students who find they are not making use of the desk space² will inform the PGR Support team by email (pgresearch.sps@ed.ac.uk) and agree to vacate the office so that another student or students can be given access. Students who use their office rarely are advised that <https://seated.iot.ed.ac.uk/> there are a number of [hot desk study spaces](#) available across the School and University
2. Where there is reason to believe that a student is not using their space in an office, they will be contacted by email (student email account) and given a notice period of 4 weeks to respond. If they do not respond, this is taken as agreement for SPS staff to move their belongings into temporary storage where necessary and reallocate the desk.

¹ year of study is the length of time a student has been studying and does not include any interruptions of study.

² students are allocated a desk for either sole use or shared use. Students should use their desk regularly and in accordance with their expected usage as outlined in their application for a desk. Students who fail to do so may forfeit access to the desk.

3. The University generally prohibits animals inside University buildings. However, Assistance Dogs will require access to the University's estate and relevant buildings. If an SPS student has a [Schedule of Adjustment](#) that requires an Assistance Dog on campus, please ensure you let the SPS Facilities team know (SPS.Facilities@ed.ac.uk). Please see the Policy on Assistance Animals (Dogs) for further information: <https://www.accom.ed.ac.uk/media/4r1nw5ww/assistance-animals-guidance-final-120917.pdf>
4. PhD desk spaces are allocated for PhD study.
 - PhD students undertaking tutoring work should [book a meeting room](#) through the SPS intranet if they need to meet students for tutoring purposes out with scheduled tutorial sessions.
 - PhD students can also make use of the SPS [hotdesking facilities, or university spaces](#) for other tutoring work.
5. Sleeping is not allowed in the offices or anywhere else in SSPS buildings.
6. Students must not exchange or gift desks to other students. All changes or requests must be managed via the PGR Support team. Pedestal drawer keys must be left in the pedestal unlocked when vacating your desk.
7. Students must show considerate behaviour to other users of the office and building at all times. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal of eligibility for an office, and potentially (in extreme cases) to all shared SSPS postgraduate facilities. Please review the [PhD Office Behaviour Policy](#).
8. The University and School cannot be held responsible for lost, stolen or damaged property. The University has strict policies on GDPR and the security of research data and expects all staff and students to comply with keeping data and information safe and secure:
 - a. [Information Security – tips for students](#)
 - b. [Information Security – policies and guidance](#)
 - c. [Security – Advice for Students and Staff](#)

Leave

Students on more than 3 months' Leave of Absence or Interruption of Study will be required to vacate their desk by removing any items from the office before going on leave. If this is not possible for reasons beyond the student's control, they agree to their belongings being moved into storage and the desk will be allocated to another student.

If eligible, students will be reallocated a desk upon return where one is available. Students are requested to keep the PGR Support team informed of their return dates. Please note that returning students may have to wait for space to become available.

Finishing Study

Students are advised that once they have completed their studies, de-activation of their student card (over which the School has no control as it is actioned automatically by Student Administration) happens quickly and they should be prepared in advance for being unable to access areas of the building.

Checklist for vacating your desk:

- Remove all items from your desk and pedestal
- Leave the pedestal unlocked with the key in the drawer
- Leave the desk clean and tidy for the next user
- (Return your loaned laptop, if applicable)
- Be prepared for [student card deactivation](#) if finishing your study
- Be aware of the University's [Account Expiry](#) information if finishing your study

Disclaimer: The School will adhere to these Terms and Conditions as far as possible. However, as with any space usage matter – for students or staff – some variation may be required

I understand and agree to these terms which set out to improve use of our facilities and ensure that they continue to be an asset to the School of Social and Political Science in the future.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

UUN: _____

Office/Desk: _____