

INFORMATION FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMME OFFER HOLDERS

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MPhil/PhD

If your offer of admission is for a research degree programme, successful completion of your period of study at the School with submission of an acceptable thesis can lead to the qualification of either MPhil or PhD.

SOAS does not offer a standalone MPhil degree programme. In SOAS, University of London, all students admitted to a PhD programme are registered initially for the degree of MPhil. In their third full-time term, or sixth part-time term, students are considered for upgrade to PhD. If their work is of an appropriate standard, and upgrade is recommended by their supervisory committee, the date of registration for the PhD is then backdated to the beginning of the research registration. The MPhil/PhD is a PhD programme.

The initial registration as MPhil refers to the period of completion of coursework leading up to the viva for defending the research proposal. It should be clarified this is the standard process across all UK HEI, and that no direct admissions are offered to the PhD without this year of research training.

An MPhil degree is only possible if your Supervisory Committee believe your work to be at MPhil standard during the upgrade process or the Examiners believe you should be awarded a MPhil degree during the final examination process.

The PhD programme (with the exception of the Anthropology and Sociology +4 pathway) is three years full-time, with submission of your thesis required within four years. Part-time this equates to six years, with submission of your thesis required within seven years.

SOAS does not offer distance learning for MPhil/PhD programmes. Research degrees are continuous and the taught course term breaks do not apply to research students. Research students are expected to be based in London

throughout the duration of their studies with the exception of periods of approved overseas fieldwork or approved absences, regardless of mode of study. All absences must be approved by the Doctoral School Section.

Further information is available in the SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/>

Visiting Research Students (VRS)

If your offer of admission is for a VRS placement, you will have been offered one, two, or three terms' enrolment. VRS students can expect up to approximately five hours of supervision per term. Students whose enrolment period includes the summer term have the added benefit of continuing enrolment through to the beginning of the next academic year with no additional charge, although there may be only limited access to their supervisor during the summer vacation period.

Since Visiting Research Students are not registered for a degree programme they are not formally assessed on their work and cannot be awarded a qualification. A certificate of attendance can be provided on request at the end of the enrolment period.

Evidence of Offer

The Doctoral School office does not post out hardcopy versions of your offer letter. If you require a hardcopy of your offer letter, you can:

1. Log into your application account in the online system
2. View your offer letter
3. Print a hardcopy of your offer letter.

Please note, you will only be able to print out a hardcopy of your offer letter whilst the online system is open to applications for the entry point you have applied to. You will not be able to access your offer letter through the online application system after this time.

For most purposes, your electronic offer should be sufficient evidence of your formal offer of admission to a research degree programme at SOAS. Please be aware, the Doctoral School office is unable to issue offer holders with any confirmation of enrolment letters until all enrolment formalities have been completed.

Any time your offer is updated, you will be able to view the changes by logging into your application account to view your updated offer.

Conditional Offers

If your offer is conditional (i.e. if there are **any** pre-enrolment conditions stated in the offer letter) you must ensure that you have met all conditions of your offer by the deadline specified in your offer letter. Failure to do so means that your offer will be no longer valid and will be withdrawn.

Academic Conditions

To meet the academic conditions of your offer, you can choose **one** of the following formats to provide this hard copy evidence in:

1. Certified copies of your degree certificate and transcript with an original stamp which have been certified by the administrative authorities at the awarding institution.
2. Statement of Qualification Form which has been completed by the administrative authorities at the awarding institution.
 - A link to this form can be found in your offer letter or on the Doctoral School Admissions pages of the SOAS website: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/research/forms-for-offer-holders/>

We may be able to accept online verification links sent directly to us by the awarding institution as long as these meet our requirements.

A certified copy is where the administrative authorities of the awarding institution take a photocopy of the original document and certify the photocopy as a true copy of the original. If the administrative authorities sign the certified copy, they must include their name and job title alongside their signature. An original institutional stamp must also be included on the certified copy. Certification must be obtained from the Registrar, Examinations Officer or appropriate officer in the central administration of the awarding body for your institution.

Please **do not** send original certificates – these are normally irreplaceable.

If your documents are not in English you are required to provide the Doctoral School Section with a certified copy of the documents and a translated copy that has been certified by a recognised translator. Please do not translate official documents yourself – any self-made translations will not be acceptable. The School reserves the right to verify qualifications at a later date.

Please note, the Doctoral School office confidentially destroys all documentation once this has been processed unless the applicant includes a request to either collect the documentation the week after enrolment or have it returned to them (please note, when posting items, we return by standard mail).

English Language Conditions

If your offer includes an English language condition, it is recommended that you aim for your test result to reach the SOAS Doctoral School Section in advance of the deadline, to enable you to fulfil any further English language conditions that might be required before you can enrol. These may include, but are not be limited to, attending a pre-sessional English language course, or retaking an English test and receiving higher results if necessary.

Please email a scanned copy of your test results to dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk.

Please be aware, if you require a Tier-4 visa to study in the UK you must take an Academic UKVI IELTS test.

Applicants to SOAS programmes who have been educated outside one of the [Home Office list of native speaking countries](#) (or educated for less than three years at degree level within one of the countries within the two years prior to the programme start date), will be asked to sit a test. If your current test does not meet School entry requirements, or your test scores are out of date (more than two years prior to the programme start date), you will be asked to sit a new test. For further information please refer to:

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/international/englishrequirements/doctoral-admissions-english-language-requirements.html>

If you are required to attend a pre-sessional English language programme, your offer will remain conditional until you have completed the pre-sessional. We will assess your progress immediately prior to enrolment onto the main postgraduate research programme and, if the pre-sessional course has been successfully completed, your offer will be updated to reflect this condition has been met. We will only be able to send you enrolment information once your offer is Unconditional, ie. after successful completion of the pre-sessional course.

Pre-sessional courses are managed by the International Foundation Courses and English Language Studies (IFCELS) team. Please refer to the relevant pages of the SOAS website or contact our colleagues directly on presessional@soas.ac.uk

If you have any questions about the requirements laid out in your offer letter, please contact us at dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk

Only students who have accepted an unconditional offer can enrol, so please make sure that you have met any conditions stipulated in your offer letter before the deadline given.

Unconditional Offers with Progression requirements

A progression requirement is a post-enrolment condition. There are five types of progression requirements:

1. Academic
2. In-sessional English Support
3. Audit a Master's course
4. Take and Pass a Master's course
5. Language training

Academic Progression Requirement

In the event that you are made an offer and it is clear that you will not be awarded the Master's degree before the enrolment date, the offer is likely to include a progression requirement of achieving the degree at a specified grade before the end of your first term at SOAS.

In the event that you do not achieve the degree, or level of degree stipulated, you may be required to withdraw from the programme and lose any fees paid for the first term.

For offer holders commencing in:

- September – you are required to meet the progression requirement by December.
- January – you are required to meet the progression requirement by March.
- April – you are required to meet the progression requirement by August.

Academic progression requirements are monitored by the Doctoral School office.

In-sessional English Support Progression Requirement

If the results of your English language test meets our Unconditional entry requirements with in-sessional support then you have a progression requirement of successfully completing one of the in-sessional support courses before the end of your first year.

In the event that you do not successfully complete the in-sessional course prior to successfully upgrading, you may be required to withdraw from the programme and lose any fees paid.

In-sessional courses are run by the IFCELS team. The Doctoral School office will liaise with the IFCELS team to confirm successful completion of the course. More information regarding IFCELS can be found here:
<https://www.soas.ac.uk/ifcels/>

Audit a Master's course Progression Requirement

When assessing your application the Academic Selectors may have identified a Master's course for you to audit that they believe relevant and beneficial for your proposed research.

If you are required to audit a course you:

- must attend classes, but
- will not be registered for the course, and
- will not be examined.

Audit a Master's course progression requirements are monitored at a Departmental level.

Take and Pass a Master's course Progression Requirement

When assessing your application the Academic Selectors may have identified a Master's course for you to take and pass that they believe relevant and beneficial for your proposed research.

If you are required to take and pass a course you must:

- attend classes, and
- be registered for the course, and
- pass the formal examination.

Take and Pass a Master's course progression requirements are monitored at a Departmental level.

Language training Progression Requirement

When assessing your application the Academic Selectors may have identified a language for you to undertake additional training in that they believe relevant and beneficial for your proposed research.

If you are required to attend language training you must:

- attend the specified language training, unless this requirement is no longer deemed necessary by your proposed supervisor after enrolment.

Your place on the relevant language training course will be arranged by the Doctoral School office, but your progression will be monitored at a Departmental level.

Further training needs

After completing enrolment, further training needs may be identified during the first meeting with your supervisor. These needs may include auditing a Masters course, taking and passing a Masters and/or language training as detailed above.

Please note, course availability is managed at a Departmental level. Places on Masters courses are prioritised for postgraduate taught students, so please be advised not all requests can be accommodated.

Acceptance of an Offer

Please be advised, that all formal responses to your offer must be submitted through the online application system. Initial responses submitted via email cannot be actioned.

To submit your response to your offer, please:

1. Log into your application account in the online system
2. View your offer letter
3. Click on the 'Submit Your Reply' link located under the heading 'Offer Response'
4. Enter your response.

Please ensure you submit your reply to the offer as soon as possible (and not beyond the deadline stated in the letter). If you are awaiting the results of a scholarship application you may accept the offer to secure it. If you later find that you are unable to take up your place on the offered programme, please write to us at dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk.

There is no deposit to pay for accepting your place on a PhD programme at SOAS.

Please note, the online system does not send out automatic notifications of your acceptance of your offer.

Tier 4 Visa

If you require a Tier-4 visa to study at SOAS, before you can apply for a Confirmation of Acceptance for Study (CAS) number, **you will need to:**

1. meet the conditions of your offer (this does not include progression requirements)
2. submit your formal acceptance of your offer through the online system.

To apply for a CAS number please:

1. Complete the CAS application form
2. Return the completed form to dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk together with scanned copies of:
 - the photo page of your passport, and
 - any current/previous UK visas, and
 - a highly likely to complete letter from your current institution (if applicable).

Please do not submit a CAS request form if you are going to have your passport renewed. Wait until your new passport has been issued before submitting your request.

Highly Likely to Complete Letter Definition

If you are currently completing a programme of study that has not been awarded by the time you apply for your CAS, you will need to provide a letter from your current institution that confirms you are highly likely to complete your current programme. Please be advised, this letter is not required if you are currently studying at SOAS.

CAS validity:

- A CAS number is valid for 6 months from the date of issue.
- You can **only apply up to three months before** the start date of the programme.
- You can only use the CAS number once. If your visa application is refused and you want to apply again you will need a new CAS. The School reserves the rights to issue a second CAS. If a new CAS is issued, there may be an administration charge.

The CAS application form can be found on the Doctoral School Admissions pages of the SOAS website: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/research/forms-for-offer-holders/>.

If you require a Tier-4 visa to study in the UK, please ensure you have also read through the Guidance of Overseas Offer Holders.

Enrolment

Enrolment information will only be sent out to Unconditional offer holders who have accepted their offers.

The three stages of enrolment are:

1. Online Enrolment
2. Paying tuition fees
3. Completing the in-person enrolment and ID check

Details about the enrolment procedures, and the exact date and time you are required to attend for enrolment, will normally be sent to you at least a month prior to your enrolment date. You will normally be expected to complete in-person enrolment formalities on the programme start date (as stipulated in your offer letter).

Welcome Week takes place in the **week of your programme start date** (please refer to your offer letter for this date). All new students are expected to complete all enrolment formalities during Welcome Week and attend the PGR Orientation Day.

If, due to extenuating circumstances, you are unable to enrol during Welcome Week, you will need to apply for permission to enrol during Late Enrolment (held during the two weeks after Welcome Week). All cases are considered on a case by case basis and only those with written permission from the Doctoral School will be permitted to enrol during Late Enrolment. The Late Enrolment guidance can be found on the SOAS website: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/re-enrolment/research/#Lateenrolment>

Failure to complete the enrolment formalities within the enrolment period will result in your offer being terminated. The only exception to this is where an applicant has requested a deferral.

Fees

Please note, tuition fees are managed by the Fees team and not the Doctoral School.

Tuition fees must be paid either prior to or at the enrolment session. No student will be permitted to enrol, attend classes or receive supervision until the tuition fees for the academic year have been paid in full, or by using the School's agreed instalment plan, or the School has received a letter of guarantee of payment from a sponsoring agency acceptable to the School.

Fee Status

Your fee status is notified on your offer letter.

This has been assessed in accordance with the Education (Fees and Awards) Regulations.

The following link gives access to the UKCISA web-site which gives a detailed explanation of the regulations and explains the criteria which need to be met in order for an applicant to be considered as a Home student for the purpose of fee payment: [UKCISA](#)

The basic criteria that is required to allow a student to be eligible for Home fee status is that of having settled status in the UK/EU, and to have been ordinarily resident in the UK/EU for three years by 1 September of the year of the commencement of the course of study (if your programme commences in September). For these purposes the term 'settled in the United Kingdom' means that the person concerned is ordinarily resident in the UK/EU and free from any restriction on the period for which he or she may remain. Therefore, those with a limited period of leave to remain in the United Kingdom cannot be considered as settled and will be classified as overseas students. In addition no part of this three year period should be wholly or mainly for the purpose of receiving full-time education.

If you believe that the decision is incorrect you should write to Doctoral School Admissions at dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk detailing the reasons why you believe this to be incorrect along with a Fee Status Questionnaire which is available here: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/pg/research/forms-for-offer-holders/>.

Funding

An offer of a place does not imply that any funding is available or automatically allocated and you must, therefore, arrange your own funding. The Scholarships and Bursaries section of the School website (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/scholarships/>) gives details of funding for which students may apply.

If you wish to be considered for a scholarship or bursary, you must consult the website and follow the relevant application instructions for that particular award – this is a **separate** application process from your application for a place at the School. You should note also that many of the scholarships and bursaries have early deadlines. Scholarship applications received after the deadline will be automatically disqualified.

SOAS scholarships are managed by the Scholarships team. If you have a query related to a SOAS scholarship that is not answered on the Scholarships pages of the SOAS website, please contact our colleagues directly on scholarships@soas.ac.uk

Competition for awards is extremely fierce. Therefore you should make alternative arrangements for funding yourself in case your applications for scholarships and bursaries prove unsuccessful.

Part-Time Study

Students from overseas who have restrictions upon their right of stay in the UK should confirm with the Home Office that they would be permitted to study in the UK on a part-time basis.

If you require a Tier 4 Visa to study in the UK you could consider part-time study, as this is now permitted under the Tier 4 rules. There are some important restrictions to be aware of when considering part-time Tier 4 study:

- You cannot switch study mode, extend your visa or switch into a different visa category without leaving the UK and applying for a new visa from your home country.
- You are not permitted to have any dependents join you in the UK.
- You are prohibited from undertaking any work or employment of any kind in the UK (including working for an overseas company whilst you are in the UK).
- If you complete your PhD whilst you hold part-time Tier 4 leave, you will not be eligible to apply for the Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES).

Unfortunately, students studying on a part-time basis are not eligible for council tax and other benefits exclusive to full-time students.

Term Dates

Key term dates can be found here: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/about/keydates/>

Please be advised, taught course term dates do not apply to SOAS research students. SOAS research degrees are year-long programmes with the enrolment running from the first day of the academic session until the day preceding the first day of the next academic session. The School's convention is to use academic terms and calendar years for enrolment periods. For research students terms begin in September, January and April and end the day before the beginning of the next term. The summer vacation period counts as an extension of the summer term and does not in itself count as a separate enrolment period.

Students from Overseas

- An excellent command of English is required for a research degree programme. If there are any English language conditions in your offer you **must** ensure that you deal with these in advance of the deadline so that you are in a position to meet any additional English language requirements which may be required, eg. attend any pre-session classes at SOAS or take a new English language test.
- It is essential to ensure that you have sufficient funds to cover your living costs (maintenance) **in addition** to your tuition fees. Maintenance funds can be substantial so please consult the Home Office for advice on minimum requirements as this can impact upon any visa application you may submit. Additional information about living in the UK can be found here: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/international/ukliving/living-in-the-uk-living-expenses.html>
- The demands of full-time postgraduate study are such that you are unlikely to be able to afford the time to augment your funds by working whilst undertaking your degree. Furthermore, Government regulations restrict the number of hours per week which non-EU students (and in some cases, their spouses) are permitted to spend in employment in the UK.
- Do not underestimate the amount of time needed to obtain permission for the necessary exchange of currency. Many students have missed travel arrangements because of delays in completing formalities with their own governments. If necessary, you should also allow time for the issue of an exit permit or visa. All enquiries about visa requirements should be directed to the British Embassy or Consulate in your home country.

If you require a Tier-4 visa to study in the UK, please ensure you have also read through the Guidance for Overseas Offer Holders.

Deferrals

Your offer is valid only for the start date and the mode of study specified. Offers are not automatically transferable to a subsequent session or to a later start date.

If you wish to be considered for a deferral of your offer to the following academic year, please email dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk. When requesting a deferral, please state the reasons why you wish to defer your entry.

Deferrals are not guaranteed and are subject to academic approval and availability. An offer can only be deferred once. Upon receipt of a deferral request the Doctoral School Admissions team will determine whether you are eligible to request a deferral and, if so, forward the deferral request to the Department for consideration.

You should note, however, that a deferral, if agreed, will be granted for the following academic year only.

Please be advised, a deferral must be requested prior to the start date of the programme you have been offered. The Doctoral School office reserve the discretion to automatically decline any deferrals requested after that time.

If you have any other queries, please email the Doctoral School Section, Registry at: dsadmissions@soas.ac.uk or you can write to us at the address below.