



# **School of Law**

## **Information for Doctoral Researchers**

**2019/20**

Welcome to SOAS! This handout provides information for your first year and information relevant throughout your time at SOAS. You should therefore keep this handout for reference even after you have upgraded.

## CONTENTS

I. WELCOME SESSION & RECEPTION	2
II. GENERAL INFORMATION	3
III. SUBSTANTIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIRST YEAR	5
IV. FIRST- YEAR POSTGRADUATE SEMINARS ON RESEARCH METHODS IN LAW	8
V. ADDITIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES	9
VI. WORK SCHEDULE AFTER THE FIRST YEAR	10
VII. PHD COLLOQUIUM	12
VIII. LAW SCHOOL RESEARCH FORUM	12
IX. YOUR WEB PROFILE	12

### I. WELCOME SESSION & RECEPTION

The first meeting of the year will take place on **Thursday 26 September from 9:30 am – 10:30 am in Room B101 on the first floor of Brunei Gallery**. This will include a formal introduction to your programme of study for the first year by staff members involved in the delivery of the PhD programme.

This will be followed by a photograph for all **first year PhD students**. **The Location of the photograph will be directed to you on the day**. There is a reception for all new and existing PhD students at **14:00** in the **Cloisters**. This will provide you an opportunity to meet each other, students from other cohorts and your supervisors for those of you who will not have met them yet!

The Doctoral School Orientation Day takes place on **Friday 27 September from 9.30am in the Khalili Lecture Theatre (KLT)**.

## **II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Most information you may need is available on the SOAS website at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/research/> and <http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/pgresearch/>. These should be your first point of reference.

### **A. PHD REGULATIONS**

Students should refer to two key documents concerning the formal requirements of the PhD degree at SOAS.

The first is the Code of Practice for Research Degrees (18-19 version available at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/file134986.pdf>), which sets down the basic requirements and expectations of the PhD programme at SOAS. Note in particular pages 5 to 8 where the programme requirements are set out. It is available at: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations>.

The second is the Regulations for Research Degrees (MPhil/PhD), available at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations>.

### **B. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS**

#### **1. Doctoral School**

You should generally address your enquiries to [doctoralschool@soas.ac.uk](mailto:doctoralschool@soas.ac.uk).

For a list of people working in the Doctoral School, see <http://www.soas.ac.uk/doctoralschool/staff/>.

The Doctoral School Section, Registry is in room GS305, on the third floor of 53 Gordon Square.

#### **2. Law Postgraduate Tutor (Research)**

Professor Fareda Banda: room S229; email [fb9@soas.ac.uk](mailto:fb9@soas.ac.uk); phone 020 7898 4664. Office hours: Friday 11-1 (open door). I can meet PhD researchers on Tuesday 1.15-2pm by appointment. Please email if the matter is urgent. I can arrange a meeting or speak on the phone.

#### **3. Postgraduate Research Training Seminar Convenor**

Dr Vanja Hamzić: room S336, email: [vh1@soas.ac.uk](mailto:vh1@soas.ac.uk); phone 020 7898 4501, office hours: Mondays, 3.30–5.30pm

#### **4. School of Law Office**

Room S221: The contact person for postgraduate students is Raksha Bhanderi [lawstudentsupport@soas.ac.uk](mailto:lawstudentsupport@soas.ac.uk), phone: 020 7898 4397.

## C. RESEARCH FACILITIES

- The Doctoral School at 53 Gordon Square is a space entirely devoted to PhD students at SOAS. Please visit <http://www.soas.ac.uk/doctorschool/> for more information. A map is available at: <http://www.soas.ac.uk/doctorschool/file81936.pdf>.
- In addition, R301 on the third floor of the 'research block' (main campus) is available for postgraduate research students with computers, printing facilities, desk space and lockers. Your ID will be automatically activated for this room.

## D. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

This section only includes a sample of existing opportunities that may exist and is not meant to be exhaustive.

### 1. SOAS Awards for Fieldwork

Fieldwork awards are available to provide financial support for SOAS postgraduate research students undertaking approved PhD fieldwork abroad. Fieldwork awards are not renewable.

Competition for these awards is very intense and candidates and referees are encouraged to be as precise as possible in making their case for support.

The awards do not cover conference attendance.

For more information, refer to <https://www.soas.ac.uk/doctorschool/doctorschool-grants/>

Note, however, that you can only go on fieldwork after you have been upgraded from MPhil to PhD.

### 2. Modern Law Review Scholarships

The Modern Law Review makes available in principle every year scholarships that may provide some support for your research. The deadline for submission for 2020 is not yet announced (usually in early May). Please refer to <http://www.modernlawreview.co.uk/about-mlr-scholarships/> for further information.

Note that if you intend to apply, you **must** send your application to the Research Tutor no later than **TWO** weeks before the deadline since your application needs to be vetted and forwarded by the Head of Department.

### 3. Conference Funding

The Doctoral School has limited funding for researchers wishing to attend a conference. First years cannot apply. Some conference organisers are willing to offer registration fee waivers to PhD researchers-check. Funding is also available from some of the larger funding bodies such as the British Academy, but these require a long lead in period.

### III. SUBSTANTIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FIRST YEAR

#### A. COMPULSORY POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH TRAINING SEMINAR

During the course of your first year, you are **required to attend all sessions** of the School of Law's Postgraduate Research Training Seminar (see below Section III). A **minimum of 70% attendance in Term 1 and 70% attendance in Term 2 is required as a precondition for proceeding towards the upgrade.**

These sessions will assist you in getting started: specifically, they will assist you in the tasks you have to accomplish in your first year:

- Term One: Make a presentation on your methodology and present it at the Postgraduate Research Training Seminar;
- Term Two: Make a presentation on your literature review/conceptual framework and present it at the Postgraduate Research Training Seminar;
- Submit a **research paper** to your supervisory team detailing methodology and literature review/conceptual framework no later than **Monday 17 February 2020**.
- Hand in a **full research plan** to PhD supervisors no later than **Monday 4 May 2020**.
- Term 3: Go through a formal upgrading presentation
- Depending on the outcome of your upgrading presentation, rework your research plan

#### B. RESEARCH PAPER

All first-year postgraduate research students must hand in a research paper approximately 5,000 words long outlining the principal methodological, theoretical and substantive issues to be addressed in her or his thesis. Addressing issues of method and methodology should include the following:

- A survey and analysis of the types of source material the research student expects to use in her or his dissertation work, and an explanation of the manner in which the use of such materials will permit the exploration of the questions and themes to be addressed in his or her research;
- A characterisation and exploration of the principal methodological issues likely to arise in relation to the research student's thesis topic.

This paper should also include a critical examination of the secondary literature (literature review) and the development of legal (and, any relevant related) scholarship that has the closest connection to your topic of dissertation research. Detailed comments on the paper are provided by the student's supervisor.

The written paper is to be produced in triplicate, with one copy for your supervisor, one for the second supervisor and one for the third supervisor (soft copies may be sufficient with the agreement of the supervisors).

**Deadline: Monday 17 February 2020**

### **C. RESEARCH PLAN (UPGRADE PAPER)**

All first-year postgraduate research students must submit to his/her Supervisory Committee (via their supervisor, the Faculty Student Support Team or the Postgraduate Tutor (Research)), **three copies** of her/his full research plan, one for each member of her or his Supervisory Committee. The final research plan should be spiral bound unless supervisors specifically request only soft copies. In addition, you must upload your research plan on PhD Manager, which is the official submission point.

The research plan should be in the form of a single integrated document including:

- An extended methodology and theory paper.
- A draft table of contents and a chapter by chapter outline of the intended dissertation;
- A draft dissertation abstract;
- A preliminary bibliography; and
- Where applicable a clear statement of the fieldwork and writing schedule according to which the student intends to complete her or his research.

**Deadline for submission of draft research plan: Monday, 4 May 2020**

The submission of the draft Research Plan to your Supervisory Committee ensures that they can effectively comment on it during your upgrading presentation.

Students may be asked to revise their draft research plans at the upgrading presentation. No student will be formally upgraded unless she or he has had her or his full research plan approved by his/her Supervisory Committee.

**Note:** The upgrade paper word limit is 10,000 Words

### **D. PRESENTATIONS ON PAPERS AND UPGRADING PRESENTATION**

#### **1. Presentation on methodology and research papers**

During the second part of the first term, you **must make** a presentation on your abstract and thesis outline and the methodology paper and during the second part of the second term **must make** a presentation on your on-going work for the theory paper.

#### **2. Upgrading presentation**

Your **compulsory upgrading presentation** will take place in the third term. This takes place in the presence of your full Supervisory Committee, which will normally consist of your supervisor, the second supervisor and the third supervisor.

The upgrading presentation provides you with an opportunity to present your draft Research Plan to your Supervisory Committee.

You then have an opportunity to take into account the comments that may have been made during your upgrading presentation before you submit your final Research Plan.

With regard to the upgrading presentation, here are a few **general guidance points** to help you prepare:

- The upgrading viva is not a public meeting and the only people in the room are your supervisory committee members and yourself.
- The presentation element of the viva must not be longer than 10-15 minutes because the upgrading 'presentation' is in fact mostly a discussion with your supervisory committee and the whole upgrading must be completed within one hour.
- You need not waste time on basics because you must assume that your audience will have read your upgrading document. In other words, make sure to spend most of your time on key substantive points.
- As for the 'format' itself, you are free to do what you like. You may use PowerPoint but it is really not necessary because upgrading presentations take place in a small room and your audience is only your supervisory committee. If you need to use the equivalent of a PowerPoint presentation, I would probably suggest that you prepare a printed handout that you can distribute to your audience at the beginning. You may also discuss this with your respective supervisors in case they have specific requirements.

Finally, and most importantly, there is a 'presentation' element but the most important part is the discussion around your upgrading paper for which there is no preparation. Remember that this is not like a normal 'presentation'. In this case your audience has read your written work and will be ready to ask questions and discuss your work.

And on the whole, while the upgrading presentation is a formal requirement towards your upgrading, this is largely an opportunity for you to get feedback on your work and you should take it in this way.

## **E. UPGRADING PROCESS**

The process of upgrading – that is, upgrading your registration from MPhil to PhD – takes place at the end of the first year of study (or part time equivalent) and involves all members of the student's Supervisory Committee in the assessment of the student's work to date – specifically, the potential of the work to be developed into a PhD thesis of SOAS University of London standard.

It is based on your full Research Plan as explained above, and your presentation of that plan in the presence of your full Supervisory Committee. The upgrade presentations generally take place in May or June. There is an opportunity for a student to resubmit their plan before September. Students who are not upgraded in accordance with this process will not be eligible to proceed to submission of a PhD thesis, although they may proceed to submit for an MPhil at the end of two years of full-time registration or part-time equivalent.

### Note for part-time students

For part-time students, the deadlines for submission of the methodology and theory papers and the research plan are in the part-time equivalent: that is, the full research plan must be submitted in the second year of part time registration.

You are encouraged to attend the Research Training Seminar in your first year.

## IV. FIRST-YEAR POSTGRADUATE SEMINARS ON RESEARCH METHODS IN LAW

The First-Year Postgraduate Seminars on Research Methods in Law will be held **weekly on Thursdays, 5.00–7.00pm at IALS L101**, in accordance with a schedule to be finalised shortly after the start of term.

The first meeting of the term will take place on **Thursday 3 October 2019 at 5:00pm**.

**Please bring with you two copies of the research proposal you submitted with your application;** one of these will be left with the seminar convenor.

The seminars will cover a wide range of practical and theoretical issues relative to the students' ability to successfully conduct research in law and various related disciplines at a PhD level. Their main purpose is to provide new doctoral students with a critical introduction to the methodological and structural requirements of a PhD project at SOAS, as well as to offer a unique space for interaction and learning particularly geared towards developing students' key analytical and writing skills.

Students will be actively encouraged to discuss the structure, methods and theoretical implications of their own research. In addition, they will be introduced to numerous methodological approaches to studying law in/and society—especially those that feature prominently in PhD projects at SOAS. They include, but are by no means limited to issues in legal, religious and linguistic pluralism; legal history; legal anthropology; legal philosophy/jurisprudence; feminist and queer legal studies; comparative studies of constitutional and criminal law and legal systems more generally; critical studies of international law; as well as the methods specific to such movements as Critical Race Studies, Third World Approaches to International Law, Critical Legal Studies or the Marxist tradition of critical social theory. Whilst doctrinal approaches to researching law will certainly be covered, our seminars will place a particular emphasis on the methodologies more closely associated with socio-legal studies. This means that we will consider in some detail, both in practical and theoretical terms, what it means to conduct qualitative field research (i.e. fieldwork)—including issues of research ethics and the use of interviews, surveys, participant observation and life-histories. Related to this will be our collective exploration of what constitutes an archive of law, which will critically address the question of 'evidence'—whether textual, oral, visual or otherwise.

Finally, our Library and Digital Services experts will offer a range of practical tips and suggestions, which should help students in their day-to-day doctoral journey at SOAS, including library research in law, history and anthropology; Research Data Management; Open Access; Understanding Publishing Agreements; and Online Research Profiles.

In sum, the First-Year Postgraduate Seminars on Research Methods in Law will provide a comprehensive introduction to critical legal methodologies and the law's theoretical and practical interrelations with the wider social sciences and the humanities. They are aimed to equip students with a range of research skills, techniques and theoretical approaches essential for a successful completion of their PhD project as well as to foster their interaction with and integration into the larger SOAS research community.

All first-year full-time postgraduate research students are **required** to attend **all seminars**. Part-time postgraduate research students are strongly encouraged to **attend all seminars** in their first year or, if this is not possible, in their second year.

Reference Material: A full reading list for the course will be given out at or immediately before the first meeting.

## V. ADDITIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

### A. AUDITING COURSES

#### 1. LLM/MA courses

Postgraduate research students are strongly encouraged to consider auditing one (possibly more) LLM/MA courses – or indeed, subject to the agreement of the particular tutor, Masters' courses in other Departments – over the course of their study. This applies particularly but not only to first-year postgraduate research students who should consult with their supervisors as to whether it is felt that this would benefit their work, and if so as to choice of course. Those who have completed their first year should continue to bear in mind the advantages of auditing a course, including expanding the breadth of your legal/social science knowledge.

#### 2. Courses at Other Institutions including the IALS

While the Doctoral School runs many courses which researchers are eligible to take (subject to space), there are other course providers. Close to SOAS is the School of Advanced Legal Studies at the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies, Charles Clore House, 17 Russell Square, WC1B 5DR. These courses charge a fee which may be met by the SOAS Law School.

Please approach Research Tutor, Fareda, first. Reminder email: fb9@soas.ac.uk

### B. PHD READING GROUP

This is something that Doctoral Researchers should feel free to organise. Rooms can be booked by contacting Raksha Bhanderi ([rb47@soas.ac.uk](mailto:rb47@soas.ac.uk)). The purpose of a reading group is to provide an opportunity for researchers to read and discuss challenging texts together, in a supportive and open environment. Students determine, at the start of each term, the reading agenda, and come together to discuss the text for a couple of hours. Usually one member of the group introduces the main themes of the text, followed by discussion. Remember that people have different interests so do not always feel like you have to read "heavy" academic

type literature-variety is good. You can also include other genres (fiction and poetry) and other media, such as film, as objects of study. Consider having something like a film or documentary every third round could be a good way of breaking it up, however ensuring that there's momentum through the year. Finally, keep the reading length manageable-i.e not too long-people have lots of other commitments.

### C. ADDITIONAL HELP FROM THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

The Academic Development Directorate provides learning support in order to ensure that students reach their full potential, preparing them for work, personal development and having an impact on the world. Some of the courses they offer include:

- Research Skills Courses and 1-to-1 Research Writing Support: the information is not currently available and you should check the doctoral school website later in the year.
- Understanding Research Methods: course offered in a on-demand format and accessible around the year here: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/research-methods>
- Also refer to this course offered by Australian National University on 'How to Survive your PhD': <https://www.edx.org/course/how-survive-phd-anux-rsit-01x>

#### Ethics

Please ensure that you have done the **compulsory** Research Ethics and Integrity Course (online). You will not be allowed to upgrade without proof that you have successfully completed this course. It can be done at any time before your upgrade. A copy of the certificate of completion must be attached to your PhD upgrade paperwork. The online course is available at: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/researchoffice/ethics/research-integrity-online-programme/>

Additionally, those undertaking fieldwork, must complete the Fieldwork and Ethics approval form which is available on the Doctoral School website.

Those researchers who may wish to interview vulnerable people and/or consider the matters of consent and data management, should pay particular attention and ensure that the necessary paperwork has been completed.

#### PhD Manager

PhD Manager is now used to complete all upgrades, annual progression reports and record supervisory meeting sessions. The login is <https://doctoralschool.soas.ac.uk/do/soas-auth/login>.

## VI. WORK SCHEDULE AFTER THE FIRST YEAR

Under the new regulations, neither your supervisors nor the School can allow you to lose track of the need to complete your dissertation in three years. Therefore, the following expectations need to be met:

### **Summer Vacation after Year One**

Once students have gained approval of their Full Research Plan at the end of Term 3 of the First Year, they should immediately proceed with writing up Chapter One (the Introductory Chapter) and one other Chapter of their dissertation so that these may be submitted to their Supervisory Committee by the beginning of the first day of their Second Year (that is, at the end of the Summer Vacation of their first year of study) at the very latest.

### **In Year Two**

Ordinarily, a student would then adhere to the following writing up schedule in Year Two and complete by the end of: Term 4: a third chapter; Term 5: a fourth chapter; Term 6: a fifth chapter.

Only in exceptional circumstances will the Department agree to allow a student who fails to complete five full chapters (or their equivalent -- that is, thesis text of approximately 50,000 words) by the end of Term 6 to proceed to their Third Year.

By the end of the summer vacation of the Second Year, a sixth Chapter should be written.

### **In Year Three**

In Term 7, a seventh Chapter and then in Term 8 a final Chapter should be completed.

Term 9 is then used for reviewing the first draft, do any rewriting that is necessary, and submission of dissertation.

Students are encouraged to complete work ahead of these deadlines if at all possible -- in other words, the timings indicated are final deadlines.

### **Fieldwork**

Students who undertake a substantial period of fieldwork can do so only with the express permission of their Supervisor and subject to a satisfactory ethics review by the Faculty Research Committee where required. Please refer back to the Ethics section for paperwork needed.

Students undertaking approved fieldwork may follow a modified schedule, but (1) their modified schedule must be agreed in advance with their Supervisor AND the Research Tutor and (2) they should still aim to have a first draft completed by the beginning of their ninth term of registration.

Please notify the Doctoral School of your travel plans. This is important.

The researcher will still be required to maintain records of their contact and supervisions with the supervisor (including by skype, FaceTime or other method).

### **Extension of Writing-up: Continuation Status**

Subject to satisfactory progress and completion of a draft thesis by the end of Year Three (or part-time equivalent) students may enrol for a maximum of three terms on Extension of

Writing-up (Continuation) status. Extension of Writing-up enrolment is at a significantly reduced fee from full-time or part-time enrolment and is available on the understanding that:

- a) The student is at an advanced stage of writing up and requires only reduced supervision;
- b) The student will complete writing up and submit the thesis for examination within three terms or by their thesis submission deadline (whichever is sooner).

## VII. PHD COLLOQUIUM

Each year in the Summer Term, a PhD Colloquium takes place over the course of one day. Each student is expected to give a 15-minute presentation of their work, at least once, during years one, two or three of their PhD. The Colloquium is attended by other Doctoral Researchers and Law School members of staff, who comment on the papers, providing crucial feedback and opening up discussion on topics of research that can prove very beneficial for students. The Colloquium provides researchers with an opportunity to present a paper in the same manner as one would at an academic conference, providing a chance to hone one's presentation skills in a supportive and friendly environment.

The Colloquium is organised by PhD candidates. An organising committee will be set up during Term 1.

You can find more details on the colloquium organised in June 2019 here: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/law/events/06jun2019-more-laws-less-justice.html>.

## VIII. LAW SCHOOL RESEARCH FORUM

Doctoral Researchers, Research Associates, visitors and members of staff are invited to participate in the Law School Research forum, held Wednesdays from 1-2pm. A full programme for the autumn term will be circulated at the beginning of each term to all Doctoral Researchers, who are encouraged to attend these seminars. They are a mixture of informal conversations on particular themes and paper presentations by staff members of works-in-progress. To participate contact the organisers: **Dr Vanja Hamzić** at [vh1@soas.ac.uk](mailto:vh1@soas.ac.uk) and **Dr Catherine Jenkins** at [cj3@soas.ac.uk](mailto:cj3@soas.ac.uk).

## IX. YOUR WEB PROFILE

All PhD candidates in the School of Law have an online profile at <https://www.soas.ac.uk/law/phdstudents/>.

To create your profile, use this form: <https://docs.google.com/a/soas.ac.uk/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd6MvQCNHj7SpAvm2KW N1Gg7kofCV1NKKSX-IMi36bPriLlqw/viewform>

Once you are done with this, email [webcontent@soas.ac.uk](mailto:webcontent@soas.ac.uk) with a photo of yourself to upload.