

Welcome to the LSE. It's not for the faint-hearted.

The Department of International Development extends a very warm welcome to our incoming students. We're delighted that you've joined us.



Whether you've arrived fresh from your first degree or as a mid-career professional, you've been offered a highly coveted place here because you have demonstrated the capabilities that will allow you to thrive and to benefit from our rigorous MSc programmes.

But whatever your background, you're going to find it tough.

Full-time students face two intense teaching terms, both of which include an introduction to research methods. At the beginning of the Lent and summer terms, you're required to submit coursework for any optional courses you have taken during the previous term. Following the Easter vacation, you will face a short revision schedule before a period of exams. Finally, you will spend the summer writing a 10,000 word dissertation to submit in September.

It's not for the faint hearted. Our 12-month programmes are designed to stretch you to your limits. In turn, they will prepare you for any number of promising career paths.

The Pursuit of Independence

It's important to remember from the outset that postgraduate education is designed to encourage independence. Our academics and teaching staff are here to deliver their best, and they will require the same from you.

This means that we regard teaching as an explorative and evaluative process. It's not a dictatorship or (if you'll forgive the pun) just a matter of course.





We pay attention to pedagogy and the process of student development – see [Jean-Paul Faguet's popular missive](#) on how you should regard the year in front of you. Some of us even openly reflect on our lectures – see [Duncan Green's thoughts on sustaining energy levels late on a Friday afternoon](#).

And, yes, we care about how mobile technology affects concentration. You'll note in the Student Handbook that we impose strict rules about mobile phones to avoid distractions in lectures and classrooms. See [Kate Meagher's thoughts on mobile phone use here](#).

But we're not unilaterally opposed to the fusion of technology and education. Earlier this year, several members of the department assisted with the launch of a massive open online course (MOOC) entitled 'Engaging Citizens'. We marked the occasion by [hosting a debate](#) to discuss the shared interests between education and engagement.

We also provide electronic reading lists that will direct you to scanned chapters, online sources and journal articles. Indeed, with this high-paced digital environment, we do hope you'll remember to visit the library once in a while.

But the emphasis is on **you** to expand your horizons, to go one step beyond what you're told to do, and to stay abreast of the latest issues in development theory and practice (for which this blog will hopefully become a useful bookmark).

All Work and No Play?

Does this mean that we encourage you to furrow yourself into exhaustion in solitary confinement? Not at all! There are diverse and interesting ways to balance your studies and to keep yourself motivated and engaged.

Trips

We're fortunate to have the picturesque Cumberland Lodge in Windsor to host two study retreats in November and January, where students are able to combine workshops with recreation in a relaxed environment. [You can read a recent review of the Cumberland Lodge experience here](#).





Students on the International Development & Humanitarian Emergencies programme also take a trip to Geneva to visit some of the key organisations in global humanitarianism. [You can read a review of the Geneva trip here.](#)

Societies

The DESTIN society is run by students from the department, and hosts a number of small social events to keep students connected. It also runs an annual industry dinner, [which is very well received by its members.](#)

Events

More broadly, LSE boasts a terrific programme of free events throughout the academic year, which students are warmly encouraged to attend.

This department's contribution for the coming year includes [an unrivalled trio of African speakers](#) in the Michaelmas term: Winnie Byanyima (October 12), Attahiru Jega (November 10) and Alcinda Honwana (November 17). In early December, Professor Jean-Paul Faguet will discuss his new book on Decentralization. And in February, we are hoping to be joined by Professor Kevin Anderson from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of Manchester.

During Lent Term, the school hosts a Literary Festival for those with interests in the humanities. We also help to organise the annual Amartya Sen lecture, which has been delivered in recent years by Professor Kaushik Basu of the World Bank and Christine Lagarde of the IMF.

Careers

Spontaneous events do sometimes arise throughout the year – often related to careers. Last year, former MSc graduate Mario Ferro, now CEO of Wedu, held a workshop to discuss social entrepreneurship and impact investing. Afterwards, [we interviewed Mario](#) to discuss the [value of fieldwork and consultancy projects.](#)

The LSE Careers Service is available to students throughout the year. It provides assistance with internships, career planning, applications and interview practice. As an LSE student, you're currently able to use the service for a full five years after you graduate.

Debates

We also try to broaden the bigger debates that relate to development studies (and beyond). **Should we support an end to all-male panels**, for example? **Is it right to criticise 'best efforts'** of aid programmes in developing countries if it could lead funders to withdraw their support? **Is birth control the answer** to problems of sustainability? Feel free to engage and to have your say.

Gearty Grilling: Tim Allen on disruptive anthropology



More than Just a Degree

So, while you're here to learn, first and foremost, you're likely to enjoy the year much more by exploring the full range of opportunities that the school and department offers.

And we would like to be a part of that. We're always keen to improve student experience and to hear about what's going on.

We're also keen to publicise your successes. We've published reports from students who **travelled to the Balkans** for a conference, and from students who **presented their consultancy project at the House of Commons in Westminster** (pictured, right).

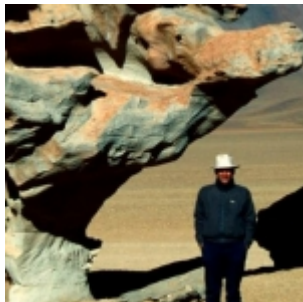
We also get occasional updates from former students, who describe the career paths they've gone on to take and how their degree has helped them to pursue their goals.

We hope you will go on to pursue your goals, and this is where that journey begins. To quote from Prof. Faguet:



It's going to be intense and frustrating at first. And then it's going to be exhilarating. We're delighted that you came.

Related Posts



- **Welcome to the LSE. Do I care what you think?**
- **Student Experience: Cumberland Lodge, More Than An Academic Getaway (Nov 2014)**
- **Student Experience: An IDHE trip to Geneva (June 2014)**
- **Consultancy Project Presentation at the Houses of Parliament (June 2014)**

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