

# The Loughborough Doctoral Experience

An introduction to postgraduate research  
at Loughborough University



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To find out more about Loughborough University's research opportunities, the benefits of doctoral study and what you can expect as a student at Loughborough, please visit: [lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/pg](https://lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/pg) or pick up our prospectus.

For a list of our current research opportunities, please see: [lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/opportunities](https://lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/opportunities)

# Welcome from Loughborough Doctoral College

*Loughborough University's research contributes to new knowledge and understanding at the very highest levels. We help businesses and industry to compete more effectively, shape public policy and ultimately, help to improve the quality of people's lives.*

All doctoral researchers at Loughborough University are welcomed into Loughborough Doctoral College, where the vitality, visibility and value of our students is at the heart of our doctoral experience. You will benefit from our extensive doctoral training programme, alongside our suite of activities designed to provide practical and pastoral support at every stage of the research process. We also link with other specialist support services across the University, such as our Careers Network, to enable students to access help and advice in order to realise their ambitions.



This booklet has been designed to tell you more about Loughborough Doctoral College and how we aim to support your doctoral experience.

**Professor Elizabeth Peel**  
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
(Doctoral College)

# What is a research degree?

*Our research degrees give you the flexibility and freedom to carry out original quality research, whilst supporting you to solve real world problems.*

Degree	Duration	Key fact
PhD	3 years full-time (6 years part-time)	The highest academic qualification you can attain. Your research must make a significant original contribution to, and show a critical appreciation of, existing knowledge in the subject.
EngD	4 years full-time	Available in some areas of engineering or applied science. An EngD involves collaboration with industry and combines formally assessed taught modules with innovative research related to real industrial problems.
PhD by Practice	3 years full-time* (6 years part-time)	Available in some areas, a PhD by Practice accommodates the communication of knowledge that may not be best represented and communicated in written form, allowing innovative practices of research and representation.
PhD in Creative Writing	3 years full-time (6 years part-time)	The PhD in Creative Writing addresses an overarching research question through academic research and a creative component. This could be a cycle of poems, novel, section of a novel, novella, play script or collection of short stories.
MPhil	2 years full-time (4 years part-time)	Students investigate and evaluate an area which contributes to, and demonstrates appreciation of, existing knowledge in the subject. They must also demonstrate an understanding of research methods appropriate to that area.
MRes	1 year full-time	The MRes contains some taught elements, similar to a master's degree but mainly focuses on research skills. Students may choose an MRes as a pathway to a PhD.

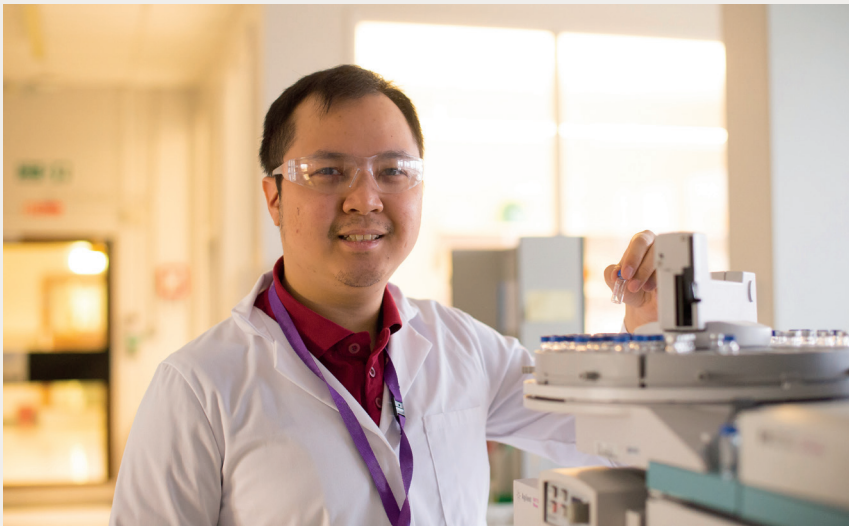
\*Not available in all areas

## Is a doctorate right for me?

*At Loughborough, we are looking for doctoral researchers who have active, enquiring minds and who are really enthusiastic about their research and the impact it could have on society and the world. You need to be flexible, resilient, tenacious and hard-working.*

In return, you will develop expert knowledge in your chosen area and will gain a wide range of highly sought-after skills, including project management and effective

communication. You will also enhance your interpersonal skills, such as networking and relationship-building – invaluable in your future career.



—  
*“The Doctoral College has provided me with excellent training throughout my PhD. I have learned new skills and techniques for my research, have developed a positive mindset and am able to communicate effectively with other doctoral researchers.”*

—  
Yusma  
PhD student

# Why Loughborough?

*Our world-class research and passion for student experience have enabled us to create something truly special.*

Whether you decide to study at our Loughborough or London campus, you will join a doctoral researcher community from around 100 different countries. This ambitious community of students and staff are committed to helping each other reach their full potential academically, professionally and socially.

We offer:

- opportunities to work alongside leading academics

- dedicated training programmes to hone your research skills
- a real community spirit amongst our doctoral researchers, supported by Loughborough Doctoral College
- opportunities for collaboration with other universities and industries to maximise the impact of our research
- careers advice specially designed to support the specific skills and experience of research graduates, whatever your career aspirations
- state-of-the-art facilities for research and sport.



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH  
EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2019

IN THE TOP 25% OF UK  
INSTITUTIONS FOR RESOURCES FOR  
DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS



POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH  
EXPERIENCE SURVEY 2019

IN THE TOP 25% OF UK  
INSTITUTIONS FOR THE  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
OF DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS

# Our research and impact

*As one of England's top 10 research-led universities (REF 2014), Loughborough is renowned for its academic work and the benefits it brings to both society and our students' learning.*

We are proud of our pioneering position amongst research-led universities, not only because of the impact that has on our academic reputation but also because of the contribution we are making to society and the rest of the world. Whilst our main focus is on the welfare and experiences of our own students, we recognise the responsibility to actively partake in the improvement of lives worldwide. Find out more about our research: [lboro.ac.uk/research](http://lboro.ac.uk/research)

## Queen's Anniversary Prizes

In acknowledgement of our huge contribution towards research with impact, Loughborough has received seven Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education.

This is an esteemed biennial award that recognises outstanding educational achievement in areas of service and benefit to the nation. Only Oxford has achieved more.

[lboro.ac.uk/qap](http://lboro.ac.uk/qap)



## Opportunities for students

The vibrant research culture that is prevalent at Loughborough provides our students with a supportive learning experience and excellent standards of academic supervision.

As well as being able to derive specialist skills and knowledge from top-quality research practice, our long-standing collaborative relationships with industry, public and private sector organisations invite excellent career opportunities.



**AWARDED SEVEN  
QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY  
PRIZES**

# The Doctoral College

*Loughborough Doctoral College reflects the University's commitment to providing an outstanding experience for our research students.*

The Doctoral College is responsible for all research students at the University. It brings together administrative research and development activities from across our two campuses, supports the management of doctoral degrees and ensures their quality, oversees the recruitment of students, and provides specialist training to enable our doctoral researchers to develop a range of research and transferable skills.

## The doctoral experience

We aim to provide a community-based experience for all of our doctoral researchers through a range of seminars, conferences, networking opportunities and social events, in addition to our formal training programme.

Our annual research conference attracts over 150 researchers from across the University and won Academic Event of the Year at the Students' Union awards in 2016 and 2017.

## Training and development

Our comprehensive training programme is mapped directly onto the Researcher Development Framework developed by Vitae, the UK's national organisation for researcher development. The programme

encourages researchers to identify their current skills and future goals, and offers targeted training and development activities across all disciplines.

The annual programme includes training and support in the following areas:

- knowledge and intellectual abilities
- personal effectiveness
- research governance and organisation
- engagement, influence and impact.

## Graduate House

The Doctoral College training programme is mainly delivered at Graduate House, a dedicated postgraduate facility at the centre of the Loughborough campus. In addition to the training facilities, Graduate House includes the Graduate Hub, a flexible study and social space with a communal kitchen, which is open at evenings and weekends.

## PhD Support Network

Run by existing doctoral researchers at Loughborough, the PhD Support Network is an informal weekly drop-in session. Doctoral researchers can build friendships with students from other disciplines and share experiences.

*"The Doctoral College supports researchers through every step of their research journey, through extensive training, collaboration and partnership."*

—  
Professor Elizabeth Peel  
Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
(Doctoral College)



INTERNATIONAL QS STARS  
SCHEME 2017  
**AWARDED 5\***  
**FOR RESEARCH**





# How to apply

## WHAT'S AVAILABLE?

Take a look at [lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/pg](http://lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/pg) to learn more about the research activity and expertise at Loughborough. We also offer a number of part or fully funded scholarships and bursaries, which you can search for by subject area. Don't forget to check the entry requirements for each project.

## CONTACT A SUPERVISOR

For self-funded projects or those funded by third party sponsors, it is vital to discuss your ideas with a supervisor to ensure that we can support your project. For predefined projects, you will find the supervisor's contact details in the advert.

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The research proposal is a short document that summarises the research you want to undertake.

You will need to include this as part of your application if you are not applying for a predefined research project. It should outline the question you intend to address, the subject background, your proposed research methods and how your research will contribute to the current understanding of the subject.

If you wish to apply for an advertised project, you will only need to develop a research proposal if this is explicitly mentioned as a required part of the application process. For all advertised opportunities, please include the quoted reference number in your application.

## APPLY ONLINE

Our online application portal is an easy way to manage your application. Once you have registered, you will be able to save, review and track your application's progress. To apply, you will need to upload your degree certificate(s) and transcripts. If you are awaiting results, you should upload the documents you currently have and add any outstanding ones when they are available. You will also need to provide details of two referees, one of whom should be from your most recent academic qualification. If you are applying for a studentship, you will need to quote the advertised reference number. Please be aware that it usually takes approximately four weeks to assess your application.

Apply now: [lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/apply](http://lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/apply)

# The PhD process

*A research degree programme can take on a variety of forms but a typical PhD might look like this:*

1

## DEVELOP RESEARCH QUESTION

Your research question guides your research and keeps you on track. Ensure it is in a subject that you are really interested in and are enthusiastic about.

When you have an idea, do some preliminary research to see what information is already available; this may generate some more questions in your mind, which you can develop into your research question. The question should have clarity and be neither too broad nor too narrow.

It is key to contact potential supervisors with your idea, so that you can establish early on whether it has potential to form the basis of your research project.

2

## REVIEW EXISTING RESEARCH

Undertaking a review of existing research and literature in your field is a key step in the PhD process.

In critiquing existing knowledge, you will develop a deeper understanding of the topic and identify how your research will contribute to the subject.

# 4

## WRITE UP

A PhD thesis is a document you will write, in the region of 80,000 words (or the equivalent). Your thesis presents your analysis of the research you have undertaken and how this answers your original research question.

# 5

## THE VIVA

The viva voce, is an oral examination which requires you to discuss your research with your examiners, who will have reviewed your thesis. The examiners will ask a series of questions and develop a discussion to test your knowledge and ability to defend your research.

# 3

## CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH

Different research projects will require different research activities. You will use primary and secondary sources and may undertake fieldwork, interviews, surveys, observations etc.

You will need to establish what information you want to collect, how you will collect it, how you will analyse the data and ultimately, how you will present the data in your thesis.

# 6

## GRADUATE!

Once you have passed your viva and submitted a final, corrected version of your thesis, you can graduate as a Doctor of Philosophy. Not only does this allow you to put the title "Dr" at the start of your name, it also opens up a world of opportunities in research, academia, industry and many other sectors.





Juliet  
PhD student

# Our Doctoral Researchers

## PhD title: Mathematical modelling of gas plasma interactions with liquids

*Studying for a PhD gives you an opportunity to become an expert in a specific area and develop new things too.*

*Unlike undergraduate and master's degrees, a PhD gives you a consistent creative ability and independence. I love it.*

Immediately after my first degree in mathematics, I was employed as an assistant lecturer in a federal institution of learning in Nigeria. I initially came to Loughborough University for my MSc Industrial Mathematical Modelling and was afterwards given a PhD scholarship. My funding is something I am really grateful for.

I attended an education fair back in Nigeria where I had the opportunity to speak to representatives from different UK universities, including Loughborough. From that moment I knew Loughborough was the home outside Nigeria that I was looking for. It had everything I imagined: real academic content, laboratory exercises, sports (I play tennis), culture and leisure (I dance salsa).

I love the fact that my 'complete' life is within the University. I can play tennis for two hours and return to the computer laboratory to continue my simulations without having to travel into town; I can go for my salsa classes at the Students' Union and still return to the office to carry on with my studies.

The multicultural nature of the University makes me happy and has given me the great privilege of making friends from different parts of the world. The Nigerian community is so large, with a vibrant Nigerian Society.

## PhD title: Mobility as a service for elderly users and inclusive service framework innovation

*During my master's at Loughborough, I found the University to have a positive atmosphere for both studying and living. I've met lots of interesting people who are doing exciting things.*

I found doing a master's to be a step up from undergraduate study – there were more practical opportunities and independent projects for me to undertake. This helped to raise my skills to a higher level and build my ideas and understanding of the field.

I decided to then undertake a research degree because of curiosity. Studying for a PhD is a self-exploring process. No one tells you what to do and the topic you focus on may be new to your supervisor as well. There is

no reference book and you need to repeatedly verify your hypotheses until you contribute new knowledge to the field.

The most important thing for me when choosing where to do my PhD was the research strength of the Design School – it ultimately led to me continuing to study here. My supervisors are knowledgeable and supportive – they help me overcome any difficulties I encounter with my research.



Yuanjun  
PhD student



Jack  
PhD student



## PhD title: Discrimination as interactional practice: a membership category analysis of workplace interactions

*My research is on communication in the workplace, particularly the types of talk important to staff collegiality and morale, like mundane casual conversation and banter. I'm interested in the small talk people do to build relationships in these more formal settings.*

I decided to undertake a PhD so that I could satisfy a desire of deeper understanding of how people do things. My first undergraduate assignment was to answer the question 'How do we understand each other?' and since then I've constantly asked that question: why is that happening now?

The thrill of expanding our understanding of talk-in-interaction is hugely rewarding and I love that my 'job' is to be on the cutting-edge of knowledge and I that I get to find new things out every day. Studying a PhD isn't just me doing research for three to four years; it's a great investment in myself, giving me special abilities and unique skills for any future career.

I am on a fully-funded scholarship from the School of Social Sciences. The application was straightforward and the interview was relaxed and friendly.

I like the supportive and relaxed atmosphere at Loughborough. The thing that I enjoy most about studying a PhD here is the community; there's always something happening to bring postgraduate researchers from across the University together. There's never any feeling of isolation here. Loughborough has a very strong sense of community and an abundance of opportunities to get involved with. It's a high quality, friendly university and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

# Fees and funding

## Fees for 2019/2020 entry (full-time) UK/EU International

	UK/EU	International
Band RA	£4,327	£16,900
Band RB	£4,327	£21,100

## Fees for 2020/21 entry (full-time) UK/EU International

	UK/EU	International
Band RA	To be confirmed	£17,200
Band RB	To be confirmed	£22,350

### Start dates

There are four available start dates for postgraduate research courses during the academic year: 1 January, 1 April, 1 July, 1 October.

### University studentships

Our studentships typically cover the full cost of fees and may also include a tax-free stipend for living costs. In some cases, additional funding will be provided for research support expenses.

### Loughborough Alumni Bursary

Loughborough University is proud to offer 20% towards the full cost of tuition fees for self-funding postgraduate research students who obtained their previous degree from Loughborough University or Loughborough University London. Students must not be in receipt of any other award.

### Other sources of funding

A large number of independent organisations, charities and trusts support postgraduate research in a variety of areas. UK Research Councils offer a number of studentships and grants for doctoral study, which often include the cost of fees and a generous stipend. These studentships are advertised on our website.

### International funding

International students may be eligible for funding from grant awarding bodies in their own country, such as the Ministry or Department of Education. The British Council also manage a small number of international grants that may be available to you.

### UK Government doctoral loans

The UK Government has introduced new doctoral loans of up to £25,700 for PhDs and equivalent postgraduate research programmes. The loan is suitable for full and part-time postgraduate research students undertaking programmes lasting up to eight years. For eligibility information, please see our website.

Find out more:

[lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/funding](http://lboro.ac.uk/dc2020/funding)





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