

PhD Debrief

Foreword

Dear fellow PhD/Research Student,

My term as your elected SU Postgraduate Research Students' Officer (aka PhD Officer) is coming to an end. There are a lot of people working for you to have the best PhD experience possible and I hope to show you that any obstacles can be overcome!

I would like to mention Louisa Green, Professor Linda Mulcahy, and the PhD Academy team for all their amazing support as well as the Students' Union staff - they never shied away from approaching big challenges by my side.

People at LSE, especially the Students' Union, always listened to the concerns I brought forward for you and actively worked with me to resolve problems. Please allow me to inspire you to become an active member in our PhD community and never to shy away from seeking help.

I wish you all the best for your studies and pure success on your PhD path.

Tayfun Terzi

Students' Union PhD Officer

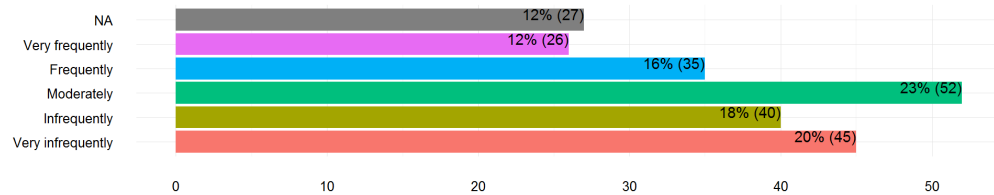
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Study space

Issue: A lack of study space in the LSE library

“How often do you have difficulties finding appropriate study space in the library?”



31% of those who responded indicated that they **very frequently or frequently** have difficulties finding appropriate study space in the library.

Solution: Representatives at LSE library have agreed that a lot of change will be happening over the next few years on library premises. They are aware of previous concerns and are taking them into consideration when reviewing future plans.

Email accounts

Issue: What happens to your LSE account post-viva?

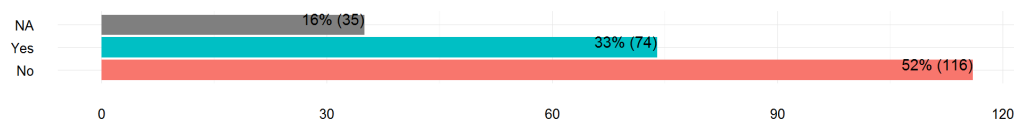


Solution: Louisa Green from the PhD Academy has promised that a guideline on IT processes will be available online. LSE's IMT will send a representative to the next Research Students' Consultative Forum in order to further negotiate the technicalities of this process.

Mental health

Issue: Is there adequate support in place for PhD students with poor mental health?

“Do you feel LSE has appropriate services in place for mental health care of PhD students?”



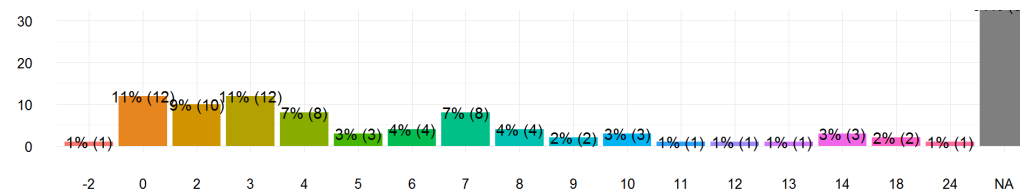
The majority, consisting of 61% of participants who responded, **disagree** with the statement that LSE has appropriate services in place for mental health care of PhD students.

Solution: Representatives at LSE library have agreed that a lot of change will be happening over the next few years on library premises. They are aware of previous concerns and are taking them into consideration when reviewing future plans.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

General discrepancy of hours paid vs. hours worked
Issue: Not receiving adequate payment for hours worked

“What is the difference between your hours worked and your hours paid?”



Under the limitation of missing data, it can be summarised that some departments have unacceptably large discrepancies between GTA hours worked and paid. The reader shall be reminded that the difference is measured as average per week.

Solution: I organised the first ever GTA conference to take place at the beginning of the new academic term 2016/17. Together with GTA representatives we are now taking the first step to bring this issue back from departmental to school level.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Representative

Issue: Not having a current GTA representative

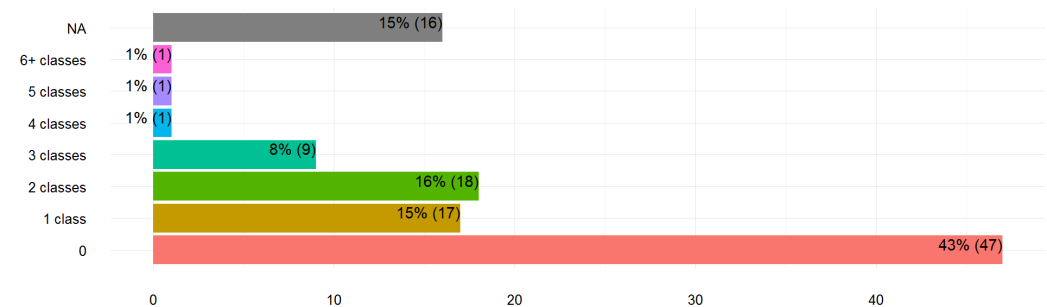


Solution: A GTA Representative will be elected for the first time at the start of the new academic term. Moving forward, the school has agreed that the position should be held within the school rather than as a student representative within the SU.

Classes exceeding LSE's 15 students limit

Issue: Classes which GTAs are teaching regularly exceed the 15 students limit

“How many classes that you teach exceed LSE's 15 students maximum limit?”



32% of those who responded indicate that they have **two or more** classes exceeding LSE's 15 students limit.

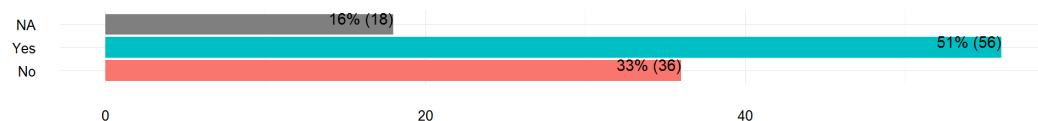
Solution: The newly elected GTA representative will request information from LSE timetables to gauge official numbers in the new academic year. Through this we will identify problem departments.

Awaiting solutions

Late payments/contract

Issue: Receiving delayed contracts and payments

“Did you receive your GTA contract/payment from HR in time (Michaelmas and/or Lent Term 2015/16)?”



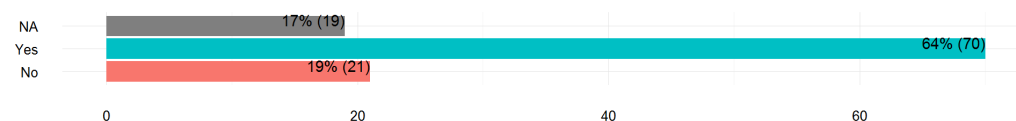
Where the majority of GTAs received payment and contracts in time, 39% of those participants who responded state that LSE's HR **did not** adhere to its legal obligations.

Proposal: The PhD Academy and HR are to meet and tackle this long lasting issue and find a solution.

Breakdown of hours

Issue: Breakdown of hours not adequately reflecting tasks or time worked

“Does your GTA contract provide a breakdown of hours by task you are required to perform each week (e.g., teaching, preparation time, marking)?”



Where the majority of GTAs receive a breakdown of hours by task that they are required to perform each week, 23% of those participants who responded indicate that this **is not** a standard in their departments yet.

Proposal: HR should send out a standardised form to all GTA's to compare paid hours per task to actual hours worked. If the discrepancy is too large, the course leader should receive a recommendation to correct the estimated work required.

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 lseu.tumblr.com

LSE Students' Union, Saw Swee Hock Student Centre
1 Sheffield Street
London WC2A 2AP

Phone: +44 (0) 20 7955 7158

Email: su.info@lse.ac.uk