



University of Cambridge

PhD Handbook 2025-26

Welcome from the Head of Department

On behalf of everyone in the Department of Politics and International Studies (POLIS), I would like to offer you a very warm welcome to Cambridge. We hope you will have a rewarding time here both intellectually and personally. POLIS is a relatively new and fast-growing department (founded in its current form in 2009) within an old and very well-established university (815 years to be precise). Within POLIS there are a number of centres and institutes that make it the most intellectually diverse department in the University: African Studies, Development Studies, Latin American Studies, South Asian Studies, Gender Studies, Geo-politics, Governance and Human Rights, the Bennett Institute for Public Policy and the YouGov Centre for Public Opinion and Policy Research.

POLIS prides itself on being an intellectually open academic environment and on is strong tradition of interdisciplinary study. Academics and students embody a wide variety of different approaches, linked by a shared respect for intellectual curiosity. This is a fascinating and challenging time to be studying politics and we hope that you will benefit from what we offer as a department, and we welcome your contribution to the diversity of what we do together. You will notice the many public events, seminars and lectures taking place in the Alison Richard Building (ARB) throughout the year and we hope you will take advantage of these during your time here.

Arriving in a new academic environment can be a bewildering experience, but we will try to help you feel at home. The academics will ensure that you understand the nature of the work required and to this end please do set up a meeting with your Supervisor as soon as possible. Your Supervisor will help you to plan the best way forward with your research. Our administrative staff are dedicated to helping you to get to know how things work and to help you understand what is expected of you, including the important deadlines. POLIS runs a wide variety of courses (8 Masters' and 4 PhD programmes and 2 joint undergraduate Triposes), so please be understanding of the demands placed on our staff. Aside from the academics working as directors of the various degree programmes, there are student representatives who can also convey to us any concerns that you might have. You will all be members of a College and your Colleges will be able to help you adjust and adapt during your time in Cambridge.

It is important to us that you enjoy your time in POLIS and find it as fulfilling as possible academically. Best of luck with your research, and warmest wishes.

Professor Jude Browne
Head of Department

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IMPORTANT DATES

FIELDWORK

Applications for the approval of *fieldwork, leave to work away, risk assessment and ethical approval* need to be made well in advance of the beginning of the trip. You should discuss this early in your degree with your supervisor and plan accordingly, if you intend to do fieldwork. CLAS offers a yearly training workshop for students intending to do fieldwork in Latin America and the University offers additional training through the Social Sciences Research Methods Programme (CaRM), which are required depending on your research design. Especially for your first leg of fieldwork, plan to submit the necessary documentation a few months before its intended start date.

Please see current deadlines and forms to be returned to CLAS Coordinator here: [Ethics, Risk and Fieldwork \(ERF\) forms](#)

Please note that applications for leave to work away are made via CamSIS self-serve once approval for fieldwork has been granted.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS

PhD students undergo a formal assessment process at the end of each year. This normally takes place in June/July (for those beginning in Michaelmas Term), but in exceptional cases it may be delayed, as long as the interview is held by the end of September. Please see the relevant section for more details.

The PhD in Latin American Studies is structured as a three-year programme with an expectation that PhD students will submit a full draft of their thesis at the end of the third year or soon after. Students should submit their thesis for examination by viva during their fourth year if not before.

ABOUT THE CENTRE

The Centre of Latin American Studies (CLAS) was created in 1965 as a meeting place for those from across the University with scholarly interests in Latin America, with a mission to encourage the study of Latin America throughout the University and to facilitate relations with the countries of the region. It provides a hub for researchers working across a wide range of disciplines, organizing and hosting a full programme of seminars, guest lectures, workshops, conferences and other events throughout the year. It runs a multi-disciplinary MPhil programme and provides a home for doctoral students working on Latin America from a variety of different disciplinary (and interdisciplinary) perspectives. It also welcomes visiting scholars and students, provides a base for the annual visiting Simón Bolívar Professor and manages a specialist library. It is able to consider applications for funding from students and staff for fieldwork in Latin America, and to help with the costs of running academic events on Latin America in the University.

THE RESEARCH COMMUNITY AT THE CENTRE OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Welcome to the research community of the Centre of Latin American Studies. There are usually around 15 PhD students based at CLAS at any one point, and we also admit between 15 and 20 students for the MPhil in Latin American Studies every year. In addition, you will find that there are other research students from Latin America registered at other Faculties in the university, and many working on issues relating to Latin America. One of CLAS's key roles as a multidisciplinary postgraduate institute is to hold regular seminars and other events during term-time to bring together postgraduate students and staff members working on Latin America across the university. You are strongly encouraged to attend as many of these as you can, both to broaden your knowledge of Latin America in general and to become fully integrated into the research community at CLAS.

There are about 25 members of academic staff involved in teaching and research on Latin America in the university, across all disciplines. Three of these are core members of CLAS staff; others are based in different Faculties but also play a significant role in teaching postgraduate students at CLAS. One of our strengths as a relatively small Centre is that relationships between academic staff and graduate students are usually very informal. There are plenty of opportunities to share ideas and chat more generally. There are some occasions, however, at which CLAS staff (and of course your Supervisor) will take a more formal role in guiding you through the PhD and assessing your progress, and one of the purposes of this Handbook is to outline these procedures. It should be read in conjunction with the [University's Code of Practice for Postgraduate students.](#)

PhD students are encouraged to publish papers during their PhD. They should indicate in their acknowledgements any sections of the thesis which draw on published material. The only real complexity arises in cases where papers are co-authored – if any sections of the PhD thesis draw significantly on the work of collaborators, then that should be clearly flagged.

ACADEMIC STAFF BASED AT THE CENTRE OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

The Centre draws on the teaching expertise of academic staff across the university and its colleges. The core members of academic staff teaching at CLAS are Dr Pedro Mendes Loureiro and Prof Graham Denyer-Willis (CLAS and Development Studies).

Pedro Mendes Loureiro

Email: pml47@cam.ac.uk

Pedro Mendes Loureiro is an Associate Professor of Latin American Studies and based at the Centre of Latin American Studies. Primarily a political economist, at the heart of his work is a commitment to interdisciplinarity and pluralism, with interest ranging wide across the social sciences. His research encompasses different aspects of the political economy of Latin America, focusing on inequality, structural change and development strategies. In particular, his recent work has assessed how the strategies of the 'Pink Tide' governments – the left-of-centre parties that were in power in Latin America roughly during the 2000s – were capable or not of upgrading the structures of their economies, reducing multidimensional inequality, and launching an inclusive, sustainable process of development. He also works on inequality

measurement, complexity economics, heterodox frameworks in economics (Marxist, post-Keynesian, Institutionalist, the Capabilities approach), class analysis, financialisation, state theory, Brazilian economic history, interdisciplinary and pluralist approaches, and mixed methods in the social sciences.

Graham Denyer Willis

Email: gdw27@cam.ac.uk

Graham Denyer Willis is a Professor of Development and Latin American Studies in the Department of Politics and International Studies. His research and teaching is concerned with the practices and assumptions of power, as they work through cities and informality. He approaches these questions ethnographically from historical and contemporary Brazil, to question how direct and indirect forms of violence and killing matter in the production and maintenance of political authority. His first book, *The Killing Consensus: Police, Organised Crime and the Regulation of Life and Death in Urban Brazil* (California, 2015), examines how homicide detectives in São Paulo encounter and negotiate the violent practices of police, organised crime and death squads in this city. Related work has been published or is forthcoming in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, *World Development*, the *American Political Science Review*, and the *Latin American Research Review*, among others. He has also written for the *New York Times* and the *Boston Review*. He is joint Editor of the *Journal of Latin American Studies*. He is completing his second book manuscript, *Politics Gone Missing*, which examines how 'missing' people -22,000 per year in São Paulo, on average- now operate in the mundane production of power, leaving, in part, material vestiges in the form of 'uncertified' or clandestine cemeteries.

Other Latin Americanist staff members and CLAS associates

Please see the [staff section of the website](#) for the full list of Latin Americanists involved in teaching at the Centre. We hope that you will meet and get to know many of these during your time at Cambridge.

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AT CENTRE OF LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

CLAS Coordinator

Email: admin@latin-american.cam.ac.uk

Deals with the administration for the Centre as well as coordinating the MPhil and PhD courses.

Events and Communications Coordinator

Email: events@latin-american.cam.ac.uk

Involved in organizing CLAS seminars and events, as well as helping with Visiting Scholars.

CLAS LIBRARY

The Centre's collection of over 15,000 volumes is primarily a teaching collection, reflecting the range of courses that have been offered in Latin American Studies over the past forty years. It is housed in the Seeley Historical Library, ground floor of the History Faculty, Sidgwick Site (in the first six bookstacks on the right-hand side of the mezzanine). Please visit the library during your first week to introduce yourself and sign up for library induction. To borrow books from the library, you will need your University Card and to use the library computers, a PWF (personal workstation facility) password. The CLAS Librarian is happy to respond to requests for book purchases.

Opening hours: During Term Monday-Friday 9.00am-7.15pm, Saturday 9.00am-6.00pm, Sunday 1.00-6.00pm; During Vacations Monday-Friday 9.00-5.00pm.

Please consult the [Seeley Historical Library website](#) for further information regarding photocopying and printing, temporary changes to opening hours, etc.

CLAS AUDIOVISUAL COLLECTION

The Centre has a large collection of audiovisual material for students to borrow or to watch in the Centre's meeting room, which may be booked for this purpose if there are no meetings or seminars taking place. Please contact the Librarian if you wish to borrow material and the Coordinator if you wish to book the meeting room.

CONSORTIUM IN LATIN AMERICAN CULTURAL STUDIES

Doctoral students working on any topic within Latin American literary, visual or cultural studies automatically become members of the Latin American Cultural Studies Consortium when they start their doctoral research at Cambridge, regardless of whether they made their original application via the Section of Spanish and Portuguese, Faculty of Modern and Medieval Languages and Linguistics (MMLL) or the Centre of Latin American Studies. Under the Consortium arrangement, students are full members of both the Section and the Centre and have access on an equal basis to all the training, development, and funding opportunities specifically offered by each. These include teaching assignments, travel funds, research expenses, working space, library rights, and other events of an academic or social nature hosted by each department.

Consortium students are formally registered in the department in which their principal supervisor is based. However, in practice they will be members of both the Section of Spanish and Portuguese and the Centre of Latin American Studies. Accordingly, all students are able to apply on an equal basis to use PhD workspace in CLAS and in the MMLL Faculty; have full access to borrowing rights in the CLAS and MMLL libraries (and other libraries within their respective Schools); are offered equal opportunities to gain teaching experience; have full access to the training programmes run by each department and their respective Faculties and Schools, and are encouraged to participate in research-related and social activities organized by both the Department and the Centre. There are also monthly CLAS-MMLL PhD Workshops, and active participation from all Consortium students is expected

Students are also able to apply on an equal basis to funds available for travel and other expenses administered by the Centre of Latin American Studies (the Simón Bolívar Fund) and by the Section of Spanish and Portuguese. Any bursaries or fieldwork funds granted by the School of Arts and Humanities and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences are excluded from this arrangement: in these cases, students apply to the School in which they are formally registered. Students' profiles will appear on the PhD student webpages of both CLAS and the Section of Spanish and Portuguese.

In most cases, the formalities regarding registration, annual progress reviews, graduate training and thesis submission are identical for Consortium students across both the Section of Spanish and Portuguese and the Centre for Latin American Studies, but where the requirements do occasionally differ, students should follow the Handbook of the Section or Centre in which they are formally registered.

Registration, leave to work away, intermission, the appointment of examiners, the approval of examiners' thesis reports and all other business managed by the Postgraduate Education Committee or the Degree Committees will be conducted via the routes established for the Section or Centre in which the student is formally registered.

The PhD Director will have oversight with regard to issues arising from supervision, as well as the appointment of advisors and the conduct of annual progress reviews and will also deal with requests for intermission or leave to work away from Cambridge, passing such requests on to the relevant Postgraduate Education Committee or Degree Committee as appropriate.

SUPERVISION

Your relationship with your Supervisor is inevitably among the most important parts of academic life. Generally, the supervision system works well and is extremely supportive and beneficial for both parties.

Students can often be initially unsure of what to expect from their Supervisor, and the following guidelines may be helpful. They give some indications of good practice, but it is also vital not to over-regulate: the relationship between you and your Supervisor, and the structure of your meetings, must be kept flexible so that they may suit two specific individuals. If any difficulty ever arises you should not hesitate to seek advice (see the relevant section of this Handbook). The Director of the Centre as well as the PhD Director will be available to talk with you privately and confidentially.

You might reasonably expect to see your Supervisor 2-3 times each term, although meetings may take place more often at the beginning of your research and in the lead-up to submission. If either party needs to postpone a meeting, reasonable notice should be given; do not leave it until the last minute. Give at least 24 hours' notice if possible. Sometimes meetings will be focused on a piece of work submitted by the student; the Supervisor will endeavour to provide detailed feedback, constructive criticism and suggestions for further reading or development of ideas. However, there is no need for written work to be provided for every meeting: general discussion and planning is vital, too, particularly at the early stages of research. You should expect written feedback from your supervisor to be given within a reasonable timeframe. One to two weeks is a common turnaround time, but this might vary depending on the length of the written work and the time of the year. As with other aspect of supervision, discuss with your supervisor the arrangements that work for both of you and seek advice if you encounter difficulties. The length of a supervision can vary, depending on the stage you are at and on the nature of the written work, if any, to be discussed, but they will usually last between 30 and 60 minutes.

It is particularly important that you and your Supervisor meet up early in the first term of research to discuss expectations of how meetings should work and to agree on a plan for the first few weeks. Some Supervisors like to start by assigning a piece of work (for instance, a literature survey or overview essay) to help focus your interests. If a particular structure of meetings and discussion is not working for you, say so: it is likely that you will be able to establish a different routine that suits you both.

Both the student and the Supervisor have responsibilities. The onus is on the student to contact the Supervisor to arrange a meeting (for example, when a section of work is nearing completion), but the Supervisor should also keep in touch with the student to check on progress. Students should be aware that Supervisors are extremely busy at certain times of the year (for instance, around undergraduate examinations), and you may find that your Supervisor can give you more time outside of the undergraduate teaching term. It is important that you ascertain the extent of your Supervisor's availability outside of term-time, however: they are likely to be away for parts of each vacation in order to attend conferences or undertake research outside Cambridge. You will probably also find that your Supervisor takes sabbatical leave at least once during the course of your research. You may be able to keep in touch as normal during these times, but if your Supervisor expects to be absent from Cambridge for a term or more, they should arrange for a substitute Supervisor to be appointed during the period of leave.

You will be asked to provide a self-assessment of your progress through CamSIS (Cambridge's online system for handling student information, see the relevant section of the Handbook) on a termly basis, and your supervisor will provide their assessment of your work. These are vital instruments to document your progress, to comment on achievements, and to raise concerns. **Self-assessment reports are not confidential**, however. They are seen by relevant members of staff including the PhD Director, CLAS director, members of the Postgraduate Education Committee, and your College Tutor. This guarantees that any concerns and positive aspects raised in the report are seen by the relevant bodies. It should also be noted that there is also a delay between submitting a self-assessment report and it being reviewed by members of staff. **There might be instances in which you want to raise an issue in confidentiality, or for which you need a quicker response; in these cases, please contact the PhD Director, CLAS Director, your College Tutor, or your Supervisor directly, as appropriate.**

Additional support

All PhD students are assigned an Advisor in addition to a Supervisor. The main role of the Advisor is to provide an alternative source of advice. They will normally be the person who participates, with another assessor, in the registration interview at the end of the first year.

An Advisor should be appointed during your first term of doctoral work. They will often be the member of teaching staff whose research interests are closest to your own (after your Supervisor).

You may wish to contact the PhD Director with general queries about training, end-of-year assessments, any issues arising from supervision or anything else relevant to your progress.

ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS

PhD students undergo a formal assessment process at the end of each year, which takes a slightly different form each year. The first-year assessment determines whether a student may be formally registered for the PhD. Details are given below of this process, as well as the Sixth Term (end of second year) and Ninth Term (end of third year) assessments.

The assessment process is partly designed to meet funding bodies' requirements for the annual monitoring and assessment of doctoral students' individual training needs, but also to solicit feedback from students regarding supervision and institutional support in a more systematic way. You should find the assessment process to be a helpful and constructive one: a source of valuable feedback (including from academic staff other than your Supervisor) and the opportunity to 'take stock' of your current progress and future plans. While the annual interviews are part of a formal assessment exercise, they are conducted in an open and supportive atmosphere and students are encouraged to discuss any issues they wish relevant to their work. In the case of first- and second-year students, part of the interview will be devoted to discussing the individual training needs of the student.

FIRST YEAR: PHD REGISTRATION

Your initial registration status is set out in the letter from the Student Registry that gives final, unconditional, confirmation of your admission. You will probably have been admitted in the first instance for a probationary period during which you are not officially registered for any degree. The question of your continuation and registration as a candidate for the PhD will be formally considered towards the end of your first year. Satisfactory progress is a condition for being registered as a doctoral student and for remaining on the register. Failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress may result in a student not being registered or being removed from the register and not being able to continue on the course. Such an outcome is unusual (although not unprecedented), and we would normally expect problems with progress to be picked up at a much earlier stage in the year and be resolved together with the Supervisor. It is of course essential that you discuss with your Supervisor any circumstances that may interfere with your studies or any concerns you may have about your progress as soon as they occur.

The registration procedure should normally be undertaken in late June or early July (for students starting in Michaelmas Term), but in exceptional cases this may be delayed, as long as the interview is held by the end of September (i.e. 12 months following your admission as a postgraduate student).

Prior to the assessment you will need to submit:

a) A completed self-assessment form and log of training

This form (available from the CLAS coordinator) should be used to reflect on your progress, noting any problems or difficulties, and to comment on your supervision and on the training provision and support facilities provided by the Centre and by the School. You are also asked to record all the training that you have undertaken in the course of the year.

b) A summary of work completed to date

In about 1,000 words you should give a brief account of what has been investigated and achieved over the year. You should also identify the research that remains to be undertaken and provide a timetable for how you intend to do this.

c) A plan of the thesis

This should be no more than 1,000 words and outline the aims and objectives, give a list of chapters, a brief account of what each might cover, e.g. what kinds of material you will be consulting, the sorts of questions or issues that you intend to address and the research methods you will be adopting.

d) A piece of written work of around 10,000 words

This should have a central relationship to the proposed thesis. It could be, for example, a draft chapter, or a preparatory study of some aspect of the research topic, or more than one separate essays relating to the research project.

e) Ethical Approval and Risk Assessment draft forms (if fieldwork is planned in the upcoming twelve months)

These documents are available on the [Ethics, Risk and Fieldwork \(ERF\) Committee page](#) on the POLIS website. Drafts of these documents should be submitted if fieldwork is planned in the twelve months following the First-year Registration Assessment. Information about internal deadlines for submitting these forms will be circulated twice annually.

These documents should be sent directly to the teaching staff involved in your end-of-year assessment in good time before the interview. They should also be copied to the Centre Coordinator. Documents should be word-processed and conform to a recognized citation system. You will then be interviewed on the basis of those documents, usually by your Adviser and another assessor.

The interview, which is sometimes referred to as a viva, will last approximately one to two hours. You will have the opportunity to discuss your plans for future research with your assessors, and they will offer advice. The two assessors will then make a written recommendation concerning registration and this is passed to your Supervisor. Your Supervisor will incorporate the comments into a report, which after being submitted, will go via the Cambridge Postgraduate Student Reporting System (CPSRS) to the Head of Department, Degree Committee and College for approval. After this, the Student Registry will either approve you for registration to the PhD, defer registration until you have carried out further work of an appropriate standard, or, in rare cases, recommend you are registered for a lower degree or taken off the register of postgraduate students. You will be able to view your completed report via CamSIS once the process has been completed. Assuming successful registration, you will be registered retrospectively as a candidate for the PhD from the beginning of your first term.

SIXTH TERM ASSESSMENT

This takes the form of an interview conducted by your Supervisor and another Assessor. It should usually take place before the end of the sixth term of PhD study, but in the case of students with leave to work away from Cambridge it may be appropriate to hold the interview at a slightly earlier or later date.

You will be required to submit items a), b) and c) from the list above for the First-Year Assessment, along with a working abstract of the thesis of no more than one page. No other written work needs to be submitted. As with registration, documents should be sent to the two members of staff conducting the interview, and also to the [Centre Coordinator](#)

NINTH TERM ASSESSMENT

This interview should normally take place during or shortly after your ninth term of PhD study. You will be required to submit items a), b) and c) from the list above for the First-Year Assessment, along with a working abstract of the thesis of no more than one page. No other written work needs to be submitted. As with registration, documents should be sent to the two members of staff conducting the interview, and also to the [Centre Coordinator](#).

The interview will also be used to discuss potential examiners, procedures for seeking remission of University fees, or seeking an extension on the submission date should this be necessary.

PROCEDURES FOR FIELDWORK AND RESEARCH

Before undertaking fieldwork, students must follow these procedures:

- 1) Read all information on the [Ethics, Risk and Fieldwork](#) pages and return the following to the CLAS Coordinator:
 - Coversheet
 - Ethics form
 - Risk Assessment form
 - Leave to work away (LTWA) form

Once these forms have been approved by the ERF Committee you will also need to apply for LTWA for your period of fieldwork via your CamSIS self-serve.

- 2) Complete the [online safety training course](#)
- 3) Request from the Centre Coordinator a stamped letter of introduction in Spanish or Portuguese for use to gain access to libraries or archives. (This request should be made at least two weeks before the planned trip.)

Further guidance on risk assessment and safeguarding can be found on the [University's Safeguarding webpage](#). Please also see the [University Work Away advice](#) and [POLIS guidance](#)

For submission deadlines, please check the links above. Failure to submit the appropriate documentation and complete procedures by the deadline may result in approval being denied. The details provided in the forms above will be checked by the Postgraduate Education Committee and the Ethics, Research and Fieldwork Committee of the Department. If concerns are raised about any aspect of your proposed fieldwork, you and your supervisor will be contacted and asked to provide additional assurances, to put more robust systems in place to ensure your safety, or to adapt your plans. In light of this, plan to submit the required forms a few months in advance of your intended start date.

LEAVE TO WORK AWAY (LTWA) FROM CAMBRIDGE

Many students find that at some stage of their PhD they need to spend some time working in libraries or conducting fieldwork outside Cambridge. If the period that you intend to be absent from Cambridge is longer than 14 days you will need to apply formally to the Student Registry for leave to work away, after obtaining the agreement of your Supervisor. You will also probably need to inform your funding body. If you are likely to incur extra costs through working away your funding body may consider giving you extra financial help.

More details on applying for leave to work away from Cambridge are available on the [Work away from Cambridge webpage](#), and the **LTWA application form** is available via your [CamSIS](#) self-service page.

The deadlines for when you need to apply for Leave to Work Away are listed in the Important Dates section of this Handbook.

If you wish to extend your LTWA period then you will need to enter a new application in CamSIS. You should state the extension to the already approved trip and the same Risk Assessment can be used if still relevant. You will also need to inform the Travel Insurance team so they can extend your insurance.

LEAVE TO WORK AWAY CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

1. Students who are conducting fieldwork in locations with an Amber Foreign and Commonwealth Office warning are required to check in weekly with the Centre Coordinator. However, students who are nationals of the country they are conducting fieldwork in, and who have either family or friends in that country, will not be required to check in.
2. Students are expected to return to Cambridge if the Foreign and Commonwealth Office warning for a location changes to Red (advise against all travel).
3. Students who fail to check in will be contacted by the Coordinator, and if they still fail to respond, we will communicate with the first emergency contact.
4. If the emergency contact has had no contact with the student, the Coordinator will alert the student's supervisor, PhD Director, Department Administrator, the University's Insurance Section and the relevant embassies.
5. You are advised to sign up for [FCO updates](#)

LENGTH AND PRESENTATION

The [word limit](#) for PhD theses submitted by students registered at the Centre of Latin American Studies is set by the Degree Committee, and must adhere to the following regulations:

A PhD thesis must not exceed 80,000 words, including footnotes. The word limit includes appendices but excludes the bibliography. Discursive footnotes are generally discouraged, and under no circumstances should footnotes be used to include material that would normally be in the main text.

Only under exceptional circumstances, and after prior application, will the Degree Committee allow a student to exceed these limits. A candidate must submit, with the thesis, a statement signed by her or himself attesting to the length of the thesis. Any thesis that exceeds the limit will be referred back to candidate for revision before being forwarded to the examiners.

Should you wish to apply to exceed the word limit you must write to the Student Registry at least three months before submitting your thesis with a full supporting statement from your Supervisor.

You are not allowed to include the whole or the major part of your MPhil thesis within your PhD. However, you are entitled to include such parts that are connected with the argument of your PhD. You should state in a preface to your thesis which parts, if any, have been drawn from earlier MPhil work.

Theses should conform with the advice concerning abbreviations, quotations, footnotes, references etc published in one of the major academic style guides (you should agree which one with your Supervisor), and the conventions must be applied consistently. Different referencing styles may be considered more appropriate for certain disciplines, as the University does not adopt a single style but offers [guidance on the choice](#). The most common referencing system is the Harvard system, which can be consulted [online](#).

Another commonly used citation system is the **Style Book of the Modern Humanities Research Association (Notes for Authors and Editors)**.

You should note that one of the key requirements of a PhD thesis is that it is clearly written. Amongst other things, this means that it must be written in grammatically correct, idiomatic English. If you are not a native English speaker (and even if you are!) you should pay particular attention to this and perhaps ask a non-specialist friend or even a professional thesis editor/proof-reader to read through your thesis before submission. In some cases, it may be appropriate for non-native speakers of English to sign up for the additional support offered by the Language Centre, under their [Academic Development and Training for International Students](#) programme.

A thesis may contain previously published material as an integral part of the thesis. This material should be set in the context of an overall thesis (as part of a connected argument) with suitable introductory and concluding passages to link the published material to the rest of the work. The amount of previously published material to include is up to each candidate, however included publications must refer to research carried out as part of a candidate's degree and the thesis must keep within the word limits specified by the relevant Degree Committee. The most recent University guidance is available at <https://www.cambridgestudents.cam.ac.uk/grad-code-of-practice/requirements-research-degrees>

The thesis should be written in English. As a general rule, all quotations or transcribed interviews in other languages, including Spanish or Portuguese, should be translated into English. In case the precise mode of enunciation is important, primary material can be left in the original language. Your supervisor needs to approve this. In these instances, also discuss with your supervisor whether you should still place translations in footnotes (which will not be included in the total word count).

Your Supervisor will be concentrating on content and cannot be responsible for correcting all grammatical and stylistic mistakes, although s/he will tell you what kind of errors you are making. Your Supervisor will not allow you to submit until s/he is satisfied that you have done your best to eliminate such errors, since it

is unacceptable for your examiners to have to act as proof-readers. They are likely to take a dim view of work that has clearly not been proofread.

PREPARING TO SUBMIT

Within the appropriate deadlines for your degree, and at least 2-3 months before you intend to submit your thesis, you must complete an **Intention to Submit Form** (available from the Centre Coordinator), along with a copy of your thesis abstract. This usually happens at the beginning of your 4th year on the PhD. You are asked to provide this form 2-3 months before you intend to submit.

APPLYING FOR EXAMINERS

You should think about applying for examiners in plenty of time before submitting your thesis as the process can take some time, especially if you begin the process during a vacation. You should discuss possible examiners with your Supervisor who will make a formal application for examiners to be appointed via the Degree Committee. The Centre Coordinator will provide your Supervisor with the **Appointment of Examiners application form**. In most cases both the Internal and External Examiner will be contacted by your Supervisor to confirm their willingness to examine prior to the application form being submitted to the Degree Committee for approval. It should be noted that Supervisors do not appoint examiners, but only recommend them to the Degree Committee, which can refuse suggested names if they are found not to be appropriate.

You will need to give your Supervisor a copy of your thesis abstract to attach to the form, giving the exact title of the thesis and the date by which you propose to submit it. Please note that it is imperative that you give a realistic submission date. It causes examiners great inconvenience if you submit your thesis at a later date than anticipated and sometimes completely new examining arrangements have to be made in such circumstances, considerably delaying the whole process.

Once the form is complete, your Supervisor should pass it to the Centre Coordinator who will send it on to the Degree Committee. The formal appointment of examiners remains the responsibility of the Degree Committee and you should not seek to initiate contact yourself.

DISSEMINATION OF THE THESIS

The general expectation is that all theses will be shared/disseminated after examination, and that restriction to access will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Students wishing to consider restriction to access, or with concerns about the sensitivity of their data, should discuss this with their Supervisor as early as possible and **this should not be left until submission of the thesis**. Supervisors with concerns or queries should approach the Degree Committee for guidance.

SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS

You must submit an electronic copy of your thesis to the Centre Coordinator via Moodle for examination, and any required accompanying documents (detailed on the [Submitting your thesis webpage](#)). These will then be dispatched to the two Examiners appointed by the Degree Committee.

Full guidelines for submission are available from the [Student Registry](#).

EXTENDING YOUR END OF REGISTRATION DATE

It is expected that you will be able to complete your thesis within three full-time years of starting doctoral research, and this is the basis on which most studentships work. For the purposes of the Student Registry, the official final deadline for submission is four full-time years after having started the PhD. If you are unable to meet this deadline, you must [apply via your CamSIS Self-Service account](#) to extend your end of registration date, proposing a realistic new timetable. Your Supervisor will need to add a supporting statement. All applications to extend the end of registration date are considered by the Degree Committee.

A special case will need to be made for any extension that takes a student into their fifth year of PhD work and extensions beyond the fifth year will not normally be allowed. It is open to the Degree Committee to decline applications. In such cases the student's name may be removed from the Register of Postgraduate Students. Although this does not preclude the possibility of being reinstated at a later date when the thesis is ready for submission, it does mean that the student will be deprived of their student status (which may have visa implications) and they will not be entitled to use university facilities, such as the University emailing system and the University Card.

THE VIVA AND EXAMINATION PROCEDURE

The final part of the assessment process for the PhD is the *viva voce* examination, the oral defence of your thesis. Unlike the practice in many countries, this is an entirely private occasion, usually held in the office of the internal examiner, who will have contacted you to arrange the time and place of the viva. Before this takes place, both the examiners (normally one from Cambridge, the internal, and one from outside Cambridge, the external) will have read your thesis and written independent reports on it to be submitted to the Degree Committee. In exceptional circumstances where there is no suitable internal examiner available, the viva may be conducted by two external examiners. In this case, the Degree Committee appoints an internal Chair to ensure that everything is conducted in accordance with Cambridge regulations.

The viva itself provides the examiners and you with the opportunity to discuss your thesis in detail. The Internal Examiner will contact you to arrange a viva. The length may vary: it is seldom shorter than 90 minutes, but may be longer than this. The examiners may wish you to clarify any points that may have been unclear in the thesis, or to explore other points which you may not have had space to develop, but principally it is an opportunity for you to explain and defend the methodology, content, and conclusions of your research. It allows you to discuss your ideas with experts other than your Supervisor and Adviser, and to benefit from a fresh perspective on your work. The examiners are also at liberty to ask you more general questions relating to your research. In some cases, the examiners may offer advice on turning the thesis into a book and will often become referees for job applications or approaches to publishers.

Following the viva, the examiners may indicate an outcome of the examination process and may release corrections to you. However, you must be aware that the formal process for awarding a PhD is as follows:

1. Examiners agree on a joint recommendation on the outcome of the examination process and pass this to the Degree Committee;
2. The Degree Committee considers that recommendation and passes its decision to the Student Registry (in the majority of cases this is straightforward, and the Degree Committee ratifies the examiners' recommendation);
3. The Board of Graduate Students (part of the Student Registry) considers the Degree Committee's recommendation and makes a final decision;
4. Once the examination process is complete and the outcome is beyond dispute, you will be informed of the decision and copies of the examiners' reports will be sent to you.

As the Degree Committee and the Postgraduate Committee only meet once a month or so, and do not meet at all during the vacations, you should be prepared for some delay between the viva and receiving the final decision. If a viva is held late in the Easter term or during the summer, you need to be aware that if examiners' recommendations following the viva are not received in time for consideration by the Degree Committee at its early July meeting, they will be held over for consideration in late September.

Again, unlike many countries, there is a range of possible outcomes for the viva. The thesis may be approved without corrections (a very rare occurrence) or subject to minor, largely typographical corrections of which you will be given a list. Alternatively, the examiners may wish you to carry out more substantial corrections, which might entail rewriting or reorganising small sections of the thesis, but which

can normally be carried out in a matter of weeks. If they have more thorough-going reservations, they may suggest more substantial changes, which may take a number of months to complete. It is also open to them to recommend the thesis for a lower degree (the MLitt) or to recommend that it fail altogether, though both these outcomes are rare. However, it should be noted that the views expressed by the examiners, which they will write up in a joint report to the Degree Committee, only have the status of recommendations. It is then up to the Degree Committee to make a recommendation on the basis of these reports to the Postgraduate Committee, who will inform you officially of the outcome. However, the examiners may give you an idea at the viva what their recommendation is likely to be.

By way of preparation for the viva, it is a good idea to reread your thesis to familiarize yourself with your arguments, and to see your work from a slight distance. You may wish to think of possible objections to your methodology, arguments, and conclusions so that you can address them, if necessary, in a prepared manner during the viva. You might also wish to think about the bigger picture: what you hoped to achieve, why your work is significant, how you intend to move on. It is also a good idea to see your supervisor before the viva for a final briefing. And do not forget to take a copy of the thesis with you, as the examiners are likely to refer to specific pages of it.

PLAGIARISM

Good scholarship involves more than knowledge of a particular field. It also means observing proper standards of referencing. Proper referencing makes academic work stronger: it shows the sources of a particular study and it highlights which aspects of it derive from existing work and which are original. Proper referencing also contributes to keeping academic integrity and avoids plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined as submitting as one's own work that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity.

Clear guidance on plagiarism is available [here](#), and all students should consult the advice given here at the beginning of their doctoral work.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

POSTGRADUATE TRAINING PROVISION

The UK's research councils, such as the AHRC and ESRC, recommend that, as part of a postgraduate degree, students develop not only research skills but also broader professional skills. The aim of this recommendation is two-fold: to equip you to complete high-quality research during your degree and, in an increasingly competitive job market, to give you the wider professional skills that all employers value, which will help you to gain satisfying employment after you have completed a PhD, whether in an academic role or outside of academia. These broader professional skills include expertise in a variety of areas: project and time management; presentation and communication; writing and editing; mental and emotional resilience; and career management. So while these are often called 'transferable skills' because they enhance your professional profile and can be transferred to any area of work, they are also valuable now for your own research.

PhD students at CLAS should undertake 10 days of skills training in the first year of their PhD; in the second and third years, the requirement is 8 days per year (see below for the definition of a 'day'). This training can take a variety of forms, and students should plan their own training to develop skills identified as a priority for their own personal development. Researcher Development is not simply a matter of attending training sessions: your professional development skills are enhanced by a diverse range of forms of practice, such as learning a new language to assist your research, taking part in an academic conference, setting up your own website or writing for a blog, taking a role on a committee organizing a seminar programme or as part of a national organization for your subject, or organizing your own conference. These, and other different ways of enhancing your professional skills, can also be counted towards your yearly total.

You should identify with your supervisor at the beginning of your doctoral study, and at your annual progress reviews, any training needs that you might have. You will need to keep a detailed record of training sessions attended over the year so that you can submit a training log at your annual progress interview – you are advised to request a blank log at the beginning of the year from the Centre Coordinator and update it as necessary.

What counts as training may include the following:

- Participation in any postgraduate training session held by the Centre of Latin American Studies, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences or other departments within the School, or sessions provided under the university's [Personal and Professional Development](#) programme
- In the case of students who are members of the Latin American Cultural Studies Consortium, participation in any postgraduate training session held by the Section of Spanish and Portuguese, the Faculty MMLL or the School of Arts and Humanities
- Participation in modules offered by the [Social Sciences Research Methods Centre](#) - students should discuss with their supervisors which modules would be most relevant for them)
- Participation in workshops run by the AHRC or other funding bodies
- Participation in external events run by the Institute of Modern Languages Research in London or other similar institutions
- Attendance at [CLAS open seminars](#) (attendance throughout the year counts as 3 days for training purposes)
- Giving a paper and/or attending conferences or symposia
- Attendance at research seminars in other departments or at other universities
- Participation in training for the acquisition of specific skills, e.g. languages, writing web materials, learning to use bibliographic software

The required number of days should be made up in the following way:

1-2 hours = 1/4 day

2+ hours to 4 hours = 1/2 day

4+ hours = full day

The websites below should be of use in locating some of the training available to you:

[Skills for Postgraduate Students](#)

[Transferable Skills](#)

[Personal and Professional Development](#)

Your training programme will look quite different from someone else's, but the suggested pathway below may give you some useful ideas:

Year 1: Getting Started

- IT/electronic resources for research and information management
- Specific research skills you may need
- Fieldwork training, if relevant
- Language training if required
- Generic research skills, such as project management
- Core generic skills, such as presentation skills
- Research seminars
- Training in small group teaching

Key courses provided by the Researcher Development Programme are: 'Starting your PhD'; 'I Don't Have Enough Time: Managing Your Priorities'; 'Writing your First Year Report'; 'Supervising and Small Group Teaching'

Year 2: Consolidating

- Further IT courses as required
- Further specific skills identified in Year 1
- Teaching/Lecturing
- Writing papers and presenting research
- Research Seminars

Key courses: 'Presentation skills'; 'Cambridge GRADSchool'

Year 3: Finishing up and Moving On

- Publication
- Careers Advice
- Developing post-doctoral research projects
- Presenting at national and international conferences
- Research seminars
- Organizing a conference

SPECIFIC TRAINING FOR CLAS STUDENTS

The list below gives examples of the kind of training available most years, which is organised by CLAS with the specific needs of Latin Americanist researchers in mind.

- A seminar on conducting fieldwork in Latin America. You should attend this in your first year.
- The [Language Centre](#) offers a wide range of workshops, supervisions and online modules for those who need to work on their written English for essays and the thesis. Your college may be able to help with any course costs involved, but in any case these are often very reasonable.
- The [CaRM - Research methods in the heart of Cambridge](#) puts on a full programme of modules designed to equip students with vital methodological skills needed for work in the social sciences, including qualitative interviews, statistical analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographic practice. If

you think any of these may be relevant to you, you should attend the [compulsory induction session online](#).

- **Spanish teaching** is available via the **Language Centre**, which offers a range of modules to suit different levels of competence. Those who already have A'level or degree-level Spanish may be particularly interested in the '[Advanced Plus - through Film and Literature](#)' module. This module is usually free for CLAS students (if it is not oversubscribed) with the cost being covered by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. You should [register online](#) directly.
- **Brazilian Portuguese teaching** is also available via the Language Centre, at beginner and intermediate levels, usually free for CLAS students (if it is not oversubscribed), with the cost being covered by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. You should [register online](#) directly.
- **Supervision workshops** (three over the course of the year) are run for students wishing to start teaching undergraduate supervisions, with specific reference to relevant papers organized by the Section of Spanish and Portuguese, namely SP1, SP5, SP12 and SP13.
- CLAS also organises other training events, such as a **Lecturing Workshop**, a seminar on **How to Publish in Latin American Studies**, and a session on **Applying for Academic Posts in Hispanic and Latin American Studies**, either once a year or once every two years.

RESEARCH SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

All PhD students should attend research seminars that fall both directly in their research field and in related areas. This is an essential part of graduate training and also a valuable way of getting a broader sense of your research field and of meeting other graduates, postdocs, visiting scholars and lecturers with related research interests. The main CLAS research seminar programme may be found [online](#), and details of other events are also advertised during the year. CLAS PhD students may also wish to attend research seminars held in other departments and faculties, such as the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Social Anthropology, History, etc. It is also useful to subscribe to [talks.cam.ac.uk](#). Many interdisciplinary seminars are held at [CRASSH](#).

Students are expected to attend the CLAS-MMLL PhD workshop regularly, which is held approximately once a month during term time. Throughout the course of their degree, students are also expected to present in the workshop at least once, in their first year, and ideally in subsequent years as well. The workshop is an opportunity to receive and offer feedback in an informal and constructive environment, as well as an important in fostering a research community at the Centre.

PhD students are also strongly encouraged to attend relevant national and international conferences, and particularly the annual conference organized by Postgraduates in Latin American Studies ([PILAS](#)), which offers a good context in which to give your first conference paper, something that in many cases you should plan to do in your second year. Seminars and conferences can be an excellent way of testing your own ideas and of finding out what others are doing in your field. They can also be really enjoyable from a social point of view and provide an opportunity to build up your own professional network.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH EXPENSES

Cambridge library facilities and internet access mean that a lot of research can be carried out without leaving Cambridge. However, most students will need to undertake fieldwork or visits to archives in Latin America or elsewhere. PhD students at CLAS may apply to the following sources for funding towards travel to conferences or for fieldwork purposes (more details and deadlines available from the [Funding for](#)

[Current Students webpage](#)):

- [University Fieldwork Fund](#)
- [Simón Bolívar Fund](#)

Your college may also provide funding support for research expenses, and you should apply for any funds available before, or at the same time as, submitting an application for the above schemes. Those of you funded by research councils or similar bodies may also be able to apply for grants to cover fieldwork expenses.

FUNDS FOR THE ORGANISATION OF CONFERENCES AND OTHER EVENTS

In the past, CLAS PhD students have organized a range of very successful conferences, workshops, screenings and other academic/cultural events with the support of the Centre, and you are encouraged to consider organizing (or co-organizing) some kind of event during your time here. You may apply for assistance from the Simón Bolívar Fund to help cover speakers' travel and accommodation costs, or other expenses associated with the event. You may also apply for funds from the Society of Latin American Studies (see above) and the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) at Cambridge. Be aware that the application deadlines for some of these funds are 12-18 months in advance of the planned event.

SEEKING ADVICE IF PROBLEMS ARISE

If any problem arises with supervision, or with anything else affecting your work, you should contact one or more of the following as soon as possible:

- your PhD Supervisor
- your PhD Advisor
- the PhD Director at the Centre of Latin American Studies
- the Director of the Centre of Latin American Studies
- your College Graduate Tutor

Please note that the Director of the Centre, Dr Pedro Mendes Loureiro, as well the PhD Director, will be available to talk with you privately and confidentially.

Generally speaking, your College Tutor should be your first port of call about financial matters, accommodation, and of course College matters. Personal issues can be discussed, if you wish, with either your Tutor, or your Supervisor, or indeed both. If in doubt, ask, as sometimes the two roles overlap.

Requests to intermit your PhD studies or to defer submission must be supported by your Supervisor, your College Tutor and the Director of the Centre.

Details on the Student complaint procedure can be found [here](#).

INTERMISSION

If on account of illness or other sufficient cause you need to intermit your course for one or more terms, you should discuss this with your Supervisor who will liaise with the Director and the Degree Committee.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION

There is provision for one or two student representatives to sit on the Unreserved Management Committee of the Centre. This position is usually filled by one of the Centre's PhD students and one of the MPhil students, on behalf of the Centre's postgraduate community as a whole. Volunteers will be sought by email; if the seats are contested, an election may need to be organized.

STUDENT WELLBEING

Your College is the primary source of your pastoral care and it will have a dedicated Welfare Officer who will be able to refer you to a range of resources.

However, there may be circumstances in which you prefer to consult someone quite independent of your daily environment.

The [**Counselling Service**](#) is generally available during normal office hours, but special arrangements can be made:

2-3 Bene't Place, Lensfield Road
01223 (3)32865
counsellingreception@admin.cam.ac.uk

The [**Accessibility and disability services | University of Cambridge**](#) provides confidential advice and support for students, including assessment or screening services for any learning difficulties

The [**Students' Union Advice Service**](#) provides confidential, impartial and independent advice to all students at Cambridge, undergraduate and graduate from any College. The Advice Service can help students on a whole range of issues, from making friends to exams, from intermission to bullying, and from welfare concerns to finance. The advisers in the team are warm and welcoming, and you can discuss anything with them. Drop in, email or call Monday –Friday, 9am – 5pm, all year round: 01223 746999.
advice@studentadvice.cam.ac.uk

[**Niteline**](#) is a student-run organisation operating during term from 7pm to 8am, which offers confidential help and information: 01223 (7)44444.

SAFETY

FIRST AID

The Alison Richard Building first aider is Mr Jamie Brittain, contactable on (01223) (7)61000.

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The fire alarm will be tested weekly. In the event of a fire practice or a genuine fire, the fire alarm will ring continuously. You must leave the building immediately, without stopping to collect any of your belongings and go straight to the fire assembly point under the raised Faculty Building. On arrival, report to one of the Fire Wardens. Do not re-enter the building until permission has been given.

SEXUAL AND RACIAL HARASSMENT POLICY

The Centre, the University and the Colleges operate a very strict sexual and racial harassment policy. If you experience any difficulties of this kind, contact the [Sexual Harassment and Violence Advisor](#), your College Tutor and the Director of the Centre without delay.

USEFUL RESOURCES AND LINKS

- [Graduate Student Resources](#)

Information and application forms for Fieldwork Funding, Ethics, Risk Assessments.

- [Student Registry webpages](#)

Information about where to find the Student Registry, contact details, student information on examinations, fees and funding and university policies.

- [Code of Practice](#)

The Code of Practice sets out the University's guidelines for PhD students.

- [International Student Team](#)

IST provide specialist information and support to students who come from outside the UK to study at Cambridge and to Cambridge students who study overseas as part of their course.

- [Language Centre](#)

- [University Computing Service](#)

- [University Library](#)

- [University Centre](#)

- [Graduate Union](#)

- [University Map](#)

CAMSIS AND EXTENDED SELF SERVICE (ESS)

[CamSIS](#) is Cambridge's system for handling student information, records and transactions, from initial contact and application all the way through to graduation. It is a single shared system, with one record per student.

All transactions, processing and updates to the student's record are either carried out directly in CamSIS by University and College staff, the students themselves, or are downloaded into CamSIS by external organisations. This makes maintenance of the record simple and straightforward and ensures the accuracy and integrity of the information.

You will already be familiar with your self-service page, which is password-protected. There is also a link to Extended Self Service (ESS), which is for students who have completed their studies. The log-in gives access to a number of 'how to' videos to help you navigate the system.