

School of Social and Political Science:

Postgraduate Research Office behaviour principles

Building Etiquette

In any research environment, it is essential to follow some basic principles in order to establish and maintain a productive, friendly, safe, and healthy workspace.

These principles establish a baseline of expectations for SPS PGR students using our office spaces.

Kitchen etiquette

You may want to bring your own mugs, plates, cutlery, tea, coffee, milk, etc as these are not supplied.

Please ensure you do not leave dirty dishes in the sink or on the surrounding areas and clean up after yourself. Do not leave food, tea leaves, or coffee grinds in the sink as this causes blockages. Tidy away clean dishware and silverware by placing them in a kitchen cupboard to ensure counter space is kept clear.

If you leave perishables in the fridge, ensure they are in airtight boxes and remove them when they are out of date. Any food/drinks that appear to be out of date may be disposed of without your consent.

If you are toasting or cooking in the kitchens, close the doors; not closing the doors can cause nearby smoke sensors to trigger. No cooking of any kind should be done outside of the enclosed kitchen areas. Ensure that any cooking equipment, e.g., toaster, microwave, are cleaned after use as necessary.

Toilet/Rest Room etiquette

Leave the toilets in a clean and tidy state and throw personal hygiene products towels away in the correct receptacle (not down the toilet – this causes blockages).

Maintain good levels of hygiene. Be mindful of what should be put in bins and use the appropriate receptacle. Be aware of and follow recycling rules. There are dedicated spaces for battery/ electronics disposal, as well as compost, glass and other recyclable materials in both buildings. Clean up spillages on furniture and carpets.

Showers

Should you require to use the shower facilities in the building, remember to not leave items behind as they may be disposed of without your consent. Be mindful of other users. Should you need a locker to put your things away, please contact Facilities to reserve one.

Carers / children room

Be aware that there is a carer/children room in the Main Library where carers can work alongside their children if they need to.

General

Be mindful of your neighbours and do not slam doors. This can be disturbing for colleagues and disruptive to meetings.

Respect the designated quiet rooms of the PGR offices and refrain from having any conversations in these spaces. If you need to take a call or join a meeting, you can [book a meeting room](#) or use a dedicated meeting booth.

PhD desk application, allocation, usage, and changes

Please review the [SPS PhD Allocated Desk webpage](#) and Terms and Conditions for guidance on submission of requests via the waiting list, provision and allocation, expected usage, and the end of your desk usage.

Expectation	Best Practice
Follow the rules	<p>Co-working spaces will be most successful and enjoyable if people familiarise themselves with the expected office etiquette behaviours.</p> <p>This includes following the rules with respect to Health and Safety (including wearing footwear in the office).</p>
Be professional and considerate in your behaviours, and friendly and polite to your co-workers	<p>Being professional and considerate to others is paramount for maintaining good office relationships.</p> <p>Respect people's need for quiet, uninterrupted work time. Take private and personal, or long technical conversations, out of the office.</p>
Respect the need for privacy and peace and quiet	<p>Make an effort to network and interact with others but remember that the shared office environment needs to be conducive to productive work/study.</p> <p>Think about and notice your own volume and don't make unnecessarily loud noise. Keep your phone on silent and leave the office to take any calls. Use headphones when appropriate and keep the volume at a level that cannot be heard by others.</p>

Make appropriate use of the meeting areas

If you have something to discuss with a co-worker, move either to a meeting room or communal space where there aren't a lot of other people around and where your conversations won't disturb other people's concentration.

Stay at home if feeling at all unwell

It is a common-sense principle that you should stay home if you feel unwell. If you happen to become unwell at work, you should go home immediately.

Clean up after yourself and keep the office tidy

A clear workspace minimises distractions and supports collective productivity. Keep your desk orderly to maintain a pleasant atmosphere for colleagues working nearby.

Use the storage facilities for personal belongings; don't leave them to clutter up shared spaces. Take bags, luggage, sport equipment etc. home with you at the end of the day.

Dispose of your rubbish throughout and at the end of each working day, so that it is clean and tidy for the next person.

Keep it fresh

Maintain high standards of personal hygiene.

Ideally, take lunch/food breaks in the appropriate communal areas of the building - not only does it help keep offices free of foodie smells and debris, taking a proper break from the office/computer is good for health and wellbeing. Good food hygiene and practices will help avoid the presence of rodents and insects.

Avoid eating certain "trigger foods" within a work environment such as eggs, fragrant fish, or any other food item that will overwhelm the office and linger on.

Take your gym/exercise kit home to avoid offices being impacted by any unpleasant smell.

What to do if you have concerns

Successful co-working requires everyone to respect and observe work place etiquette. It can be difficult to tackle unwelcome behaviours, but if principles are not being upheld, contact your SPS PGR Rep (Joao.Magalhaes@ed.ac.uk) or your Subject-Area PGR Rep. If the situation needs to be escalated, your PGR Rep will contact the PGR Support Team.

Approved in February 2026 by:

SPS PGR Rep

SPS Director of PGR Programmes

SPS PGR Support Team

SPS Buildings and Facilities Manager