

Note for those interested in the MRes/PhD Economics program at the LSE, research assistance or postdoctoral opportunities

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I often receive emails from students interested in pursuing an MRes/PhD in Economics or expressing interest in research assistantships with me. Since my response to such emails is invariably always the same, I am posting this note online to preclude the need for such emails and avoid disappointment. Given this note and the frequency of the emails, I will no longer reply individually to these emails in the future.

In economics, applications to master's and doctoral degrees are standardised and handled in a centralized fashion by a committee in each department. Other professors in the department are typically not welcome to interfere with the selection process beyond writing letters of recommendation for those candidates whose research potential they know well.

The letters of recommendation are only one component of the application package (including transcripts from previous relevant degrees, GRE and TOEFL scores, a writing sample, etc.). This website page provides additional details on the application process at the LSE: www.lse.ac.uk/study-at-lse/Graduate/degree-programmes-2023/MResPhD-Economics.

Unfortunately, the individual emails I receive will not improve one's likelihood of acceptance into the MRes/PhD program at the LSE. I only write MRes/PhD letters of recommendation for my research assistants with whom I've had at least a one-year-long working collaboration so that I can write a well-informed letter in support of their application. I will not consider writing a letter of recommendation for a student who is not a long-term research assistant for me - such a letter would be uninformative about the student's academic potential and unhelpful for their application.

If you are interested in working as a research assistant (pre-doc) under my supervision, please check my website in February each year. This is when I, as part of the public economics group at LSE, begin our hiring process for research assistants for the next academic year. Longlisted applicants will be required to complete a coding exercise before we shortlist for interviews. If you want to prepare well for a research assistant position with me or other professors, I advise you to improve your coding skills (coding tests are increasingly used as a screening tool for pre-doc positions).

I do not currently hire short-term research assistants nor postdoctoral researchers.

Thank you very much for your interest in working with me, and good luck!

¹This note is a slight adaptation of the helpful note from Eric Verhoogen.