
Update for our School community, 14 May

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Tue 14/05/2024 [REDACTED]

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[Read in web browser](#)**14 May 2024**

SchoolMessage

Dear all,

Today, 14 May, a group of students, staff and individuals external to LSE held a peaceful protest on campus, highlighting a broad range of matters relating to our School's position on investments and the ongoing conflict in Gaza, Israel and Palestine. Following this, some members of the group entered and occupied part of the ground floor of the Marshall Building to continue this demonstration. School Management Committee representatives are in discussion with the group regarding their concerns. We will engage in ongoing dialogue with student representatives on the issues raised.

Campus is open


LSE's campus is open, with buildings and services expected to run as normal. Nonetheless, our priority is to support all students and staff who may be affected. We are working hard to minimise disruption as much as possible whilst enabling members of the LSE community to lawfully protest – an important principle underpinned by our [Code of Practice on Free Speech](#). This does mean there may be additional ID card checks at entry of some buildings for safety purposes.

For students, we know you may have questions about how this could impact your studies, especially as you focus on doing your best in your exams and assessments. These will go ahead as planned, and you should continue to prepare for and complete your assessment(s), including your dissertation, in the normal way. [Information about minimising disruption to your studies](#) can be found below.

For staff, we anticipate that you will be able to work as normal in terms of campus and remote working, unless informed otherwise by line managers. If there are changes to this, we will let staff know. There may be reduced facilities in the Marshall Building during this time, though we do not expect this to be significant.

Community expectations

LSE is a place where we come together to discuss, effect change and challenge through education practices, academic research and rigorous debate. We have clear policies in place to protect individuals' rights to express themselves within the law as part of this, which includes peaceful protests.



Being part of our School also means that we aim to engage and work together with compassion, continuing to reflect on how we behave and the impact it has on others. Within any university disagreements are inevitable, but as a global community of people and ideas, we must work within a framework that tolerates differing viewpoints. We encourage all members of LSE – students, staff and visitors – to engage in respectful dialogue.

This remains the case now and we've shared guidance with protestors, emphasising their responsibilities around community behaviour, disruption to others, and ensuring continued access to campus buildings in line with health, safety and access risks. We are focused on engaging in constructive dialogue, but will take appropriate steps to protect and support the LSE community should we need to.

We expect everyone in our buildings to adhere to our community expectations, and respect the safety, access and purpose of these spaces.

Community support

As always, our priority continues to be the wellbeing and safety of the LSE community. We are absolutely committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all to study, learn, work and research, and we have a wide range of support available, which you can find outlined below.

We have clear codes of conduct as outlined in our [Ethics Code](#) that set out the values all of us have a duty to uphold. We also have robust measures in place through our anonymous [Report it. Stop it.](#) tool to deal promptly and fairly with concerns around bullying, harassment and discrimination – which are not tolerated at LSE. If anyone experiences or witnesses such behaviour, we urge you to report it so we can take appropriate action.

We also appreciate that there are a diverse range of strongly held views across LSE and we request that we all continue to act with consideration and kindness for one another, whether on campus or in halls of residence.

We will continue to keep you updated. In the meantime please do review information on sources of support and guidance below, including around exams and assessments.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

Minimising disruption to your studies, assessment and exams

LSE is putting measures in place to minimise any disruption to exams. However, if an exam is disrupted, staff will be notified and it will be recorded. Students who feel they were particularly affected should still submit individual [Exceptional Circumstances](#). If your preparation for an exam is disrupted and you feel unable to sit it, you can request to [defer](#), but you must do this at least 24 hours before the exam starts. Find out more about this on our [exams pages](#).

We will continue to ensure students can access spaces to carry out any coursework, in-person or take-home exams, project assignments and all other summative assessments.

Sources of support at LSE

- [LSE's Student Wellbeing team](#) are available to provide support, and any student can get external [mental health support](#) via phone, SMS / WhatsApp, or online chat, 24/7. Support is provided by clinically trained counsellors or psychotherapists, and you can talk about anything in confidence and for free.
- LSE has many [School contacts](#) such as the Deputy Head of Student Services (Advice and Policy) who can provide guidance to students on a range of academic and pastoral matters. If

you're not sure who to talk to, use the [Find Support tool](#) to find a variety of resources, information and key contacts on topics from housing and finances to health and wellbeing.

- If you have witnessed or experienced bullying or harassment of any kind, any member of our community can speak to [LSE Safe Contacts](#), trained members of staff that can offer confidential signposting, or you can report it anonymously online using [Report it. Stop it.](#)
- LSE offers a [Staff Counselling Service](#), as well as confidential telephone counselling through our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) – both of which provide free, dedicated support for colleagues.

This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.

Update for our School community, 21 May

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Tue 21/05/2024 [REDACTED]

Not displaying correctly?
[Read in web browser](#)

21 May 2024



SchoolMessage

Dear All,


We wanted to follow up on last week's [message to the LSE community](#) and update you on the ongoing occupation by student protesters of a portion of the ground floor of the Marshall Building. School Management Committee (SMC) representatives have been carefully reviewing the issues raised by the student protesters and continuing discussions with them. Engaging in constructive dialogue is always our preferred approach. The matters raised are many and complex, with significant implications for our School, its staff, students, and its future. We cannot, responsibly, answer them immediately, as the student protesters have demanded.

Freedom of expression is a core value at LSE, and it underpins everything we do. We will, accordingly, seek to enable all viewpoints to be expressed, so long as the expression is lawful and lawfully made, even though some may find what is said deeply offensive or hurtful. Consistent with this commitment and to support the right to peaceful protest, the students' unsanctioned encampment has remained in place while our conversations have continued.

But even free expression has limits, and it is subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions to protect the rights of others to go about their business. While engaging in constructive dialogue is our focus, we need also to ensure that regular School operations – teaching and studying, workshops, exams, research, events, and other LSE functions – are not unduly disrupted. Buildings must remain accessible, in line with health and safety regulations, with authorised individuals free to enter and exit. And, crucially, freedom of expression does not mean tolerating bullying, harassment, or discrimination of any kind. There are many ways for individuals to express themselves peacefully, without breaching these clear and unambiguous obligations.

Community expectations and guidelines

These well-established guidelines were clearly communicated to the protesters, both verbally and in writing. Unfortunately, this week some of the protesting students have taken actions that violate these requirements and detrimentally impact others in our community. On Monday, a loud protest was held during a known exam period, causing significant reported disturbance to students taking critical assessments. Teaching activities on Tuesday were also disrupted by a group that acted inappropriately toward staff and participants.



Meanwhile, we have not been able to reopen the sports facilities in the basement of the Marshall Building, used by many students and staff, because of safety and security concerns the protesters have to date declined to address, and the Beaver's Brew café remains closed because of the encampment. These individuals have created other health, safety, and fire risks by taping over security cameras and overusing electrical outlets - situations we are continually monitoring.

Such conduct is not acceptable, and we will not negotiate or continue conversations with student representatives while it continues. If it does, or it is repeated, we will have no choice but to take appropriate action in line with School policies concerning discipline and security.

Next steps

Many in our community have urged us to take such action already, as there are a wide range of views – from support to concern to growing frustration – about the encampment and LSE's response. SMC's position has been, and remains, to continue engaging with the protesters – including answering their demands in due course – so long as their protest remains peaceful, does not threaten others, or disrupt School activities. With that in mind, we have been accommodating of various requests from the encampment, within restrictions set by health, safety, and security concerns. However, there are limitations about what can be tolerated given our wider role as a place of work and study, and our commitments to the whole School community.

Our goal, in the end, is to preserve our community as one in which people can hold strong opinions, express them freely, and be listened to and heard, while recognising that others disagree and want, expect, and are entitled to the same opportunities. That isn't easy, but it's a unique responsibility of universities to strive to achieve it. It calls for forbearance and restraint on all sides, but it equally requires acting where boundaries are overstepped. With that in mind, we ask everyone to do their utmost to be respectful and considerate of your fellow students, peers, and colleagues. If you do experience or witness inappropriate behaviour, [report it](#) so we can investigate and take appropriate action, and please [access support](#) if or whenever you need it.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

Minimising disruption to studies, assessments and exams

LSE is putting measures in place to minimise any disruption to exams. However, if an exam is disrupted, staff will be notified and it will be recorded. Students who feel they were particularly affected should still submit individual [Exceptional Circumstances](#). If your preparation for an exam is disrupted and you feel unable to sit it, you can request to [defer](#), but you must do this at least 24 hours before the exam starts. Find out more about this on our [exams pages](#).

We will continue to ensure students can access spaces to carry out any coursework, in-person or take-home exams, project assignments and all other summative assessments.



This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.



Update for our School community, 30 May

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Thu 30/05/2024 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[Read in web browser](#)

30 May 2024



SchoolMessage

Dear all,

Since our [last update](#) we have continued to monitor the situation on campus, maintaining open lines of communication with student protestors while considering their demands and meeting with, hearing from, and listening to students and staff from across LSE. This has led to positive and constructive discussions between the student protest group and School Management Committee representatives across a range of areas we know are important to them, and the wider community. You can find a summary update on discussions below, including our commitment to discussing demands over a six-week period with regularly scheduled twice weekly meetings.

At the same time in the early hours of 27 May, the protestors unilaterally expanded their unauthorised encampment across the whole of the ground floor of the Marshall Building, which prompted an urgent fire risk assessment to be carried out by independent fire safety officials. This is required by UK law and the report has concluded that the continued occupation of the ground floor of the Marshall Building poses a significant fire hazard to the occupiers and everyone else in the building. You can find a copy of the [fire risk report at this link](#).

Given the seriousness of this report, we have taken the difficult decision to close floors 1 upwards of the building until further notice.

Our strong request to the protestors is that they end their encampment, which is the only sure way of keeping everyone, including themselves, safe – we are committed to continuing conversations on the same terms, and in the same way, without the encampment in place. We have therefore asked the occupiers to end their encampment or, at a minimum, create conditions by 4pm today (30 May) that allow us to commission a second fire risk report on a reconfigured encampment, so that we can assess whether, with the reconfiguration, the building could safely re-open. You can see the latest communication to the encampment zone in full below.

The protestors organised what could amount to a separate fire risk inspection yesterday (29 May) but, to date, their representatives have been unwilling to put their name to any findings in writing, as we have asked them to do, and submit these formally to LSE so that we can understand recommendations made. Until they do so, and their credentials can be verified, the existing fire risk report is what must determine our actions to keep everyone safe. After 4pm today, we will organise a second fire hazard assessment as indicated in our earlier communication to the encampment zone.

We know the building closure will impact the wider School community, and we will provide further updates as soon as possible. If your department or institute is based in the Marshall Building, please contact your local leadership team for further advice.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

Summary update on discussions with student protestors

We have been clear from the beginning that we would address protestors' demands, considering all elements thoroughly and consulting with various groups at LSE where needed on options available. As we have said before, engaging in dialogue is always our preferred approach, and once able to meet with protestors we had fruitful discussions which led to the following LSE actions, as confirmed to them directly.

Agreed LSE actions

- Invest £250,000 in our [Scholars at Risk programme](#), making clear to the Council for At-Risk Academics (CARA) who we partner with that we would particularly welcome applications from academics displaced by the conflict in Gaza. We are proud members of CARA, which is connected to LSE's history and mission as it was founded by William Beveridge when he was LSE Director.
- Maintain the scholarship and place for a prospective student accepted onto the International Relations PhD programme, a case raised by student protestors
- Support faculty who may wish to lead a programme focused on rebuilding Palestine, including helping secure external funding. This follows the example of the academic run [LSE Ukraine Programme](#) led by LSE IDEAS with funding from the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO).
- Seek to provide anti-bias training for all those charged with implementing the Prevent duty, which is a statutory requirement for all universities in England and Wales
- Commit to the timeline for a decision on divestment. Investment Sub-Committee began the process by discussing the report at its meeting on 28 May. Its recommendations will go to the Finance and Estates Committee (FEC), which is meeting on 11 June. Up to three representatives from the protest group are invited to present at that meeting. FEC's recommendations will then be considered at the 25 June Council meeting, with a full response to be delivered by early July, ideally the end of the first week.
- Twice weekly meetings for six weeks with student protestors to continue the conversations started week commencing 27 May. We believed, and still believe, there are matters to discuss with the protestors where we are interested to know how they think we should manage difficulties inherent in their requests.

Message in full to the LSE encampment, 29 May, 6.42pm

Dear all,

We are writing following our requests to meet with you this afternoon regarding the fire risk associated with your encampment. As we have emphasised, this is now an urgent matter. Whilst you have declined to meet with us today, we are not able to delay any longer given the report we received from the fire inspector today [29 May].

As you know, we commissioned a fire safety inspection yesterday [28 May] and received an initial assessment that the encampment poses a very significant fire hazard. We have now received the full risk report, which we shared with you earlier and reattach here.

We know you said you wish to seek your own health and safety advice before engaging with us on this matter. However, the School Management Committee has a statutory duty to ensure fire compliance in LSE buildings. The inspection report puts SMC on notice of significant risk to our community. We are legally and morally required to act on the risk assessment and recommendations given our duty of care to LSE students and staff. We cannot stress enough the seriousness of the implications of the fire safety report.

It remains our strong preference that you dismantle the encampment immediately and leave the building completely by the end of today [29 May]. This is the only sure way of keeping everyone, including yourselves, safe. We have already made commitments to you in good faith, including that we will continue to meet twice weekly for up to six weeks (starting this week) to discuss your demands. You will also be invited to present your case for divestment to the Finance and Estates Committee in June. We confirm here that these commitments will not change if you end the occupation.

If you do not dismantle the encampment, then, as a minimum requirement, we equally urgently ask you to create conditions that may nevertheless allow us to keep the building open, pending a further fire inspection report. Based on reading the report, we ask you, as a minimum, to do the following **by no later than 4pm tomorrow [30 May]**:

1. Move the encampment back to its original perimeter which will also ensure improved means of escape from the building.
2. Reduce the number of combustible items in your encampment.
3. Reduce the number of electrical appliances in your encampment and allow electrical safety testing of equipment to take place.

On our part, we will introduce a 24-hour fire watch surveillance system and we will have to take out some of the accumulated LSE furniture to reduce the fire hazards.

If you do this by 4pm tomorrow [30 May], then we will commission a second fire inspection based on the new encampment configuration that will assess whether the building can safely be open.

With best wishes,

Eric Neumayer, Emma McCoy, and Joanne Hay

[FIRE RISK REPORT](#)

This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.

Update for our School community, 4 June

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Tue 04/06/2024 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[Read in web browser](#)

4 June 2024



SchoolMessage

Dear all,

Since our last [School update](#), discussions with students, staff, and protestors about the encampment in the Marshall Building have continued. Correspondence we received from a range of groups at the end of last week asked for clarity and reassurance about the steps LSE is taking to address the situation as an institution.

All our efforts and actions are motivated by three considerations. First, we are focused on the safety of our community and its ability to carry out School activity. Second, we recognise and respect the right to peaceful protest and want to accommodate it. Third, we are engaging with the protestors' concerns and those of others in our community through dialogue.

One aspect of our safety concerns has been made clear. Advice from both the London Fire Brigade on Friday and an independent report we commissioned earlier established that the current encampment poses a significant fire risk to anyone on floors 1 and above, which required vacating the building.

The ongoing closure of the Marshall Building is having a profound and sustained impact on our LSE community and is unacceptable. Students and staff from multiple departments, institutes, and centres are unable to meet, including during key points in the dissertation period; there is full closure of sports, society facilities, and extracurricular classes; study and group workspaces are reduced, including student study spaces and departmental common and study rooms. There has been and will be significant disruption, and in some instances forced cancellation, of teaching, research, and community events, all during a key time for our students.

To give some sense of the magnitude, the Marshall Building is our biggest and most actively used structure. Its closure keeps 418 faculty and staff from their offices to work and meet with students and others; it affects more than 2,400 students in Accounting, Finance, and Management. It also has major effects on the other activities of these and other departments. Nearly 450 room bookings are scheduled for June, including meetings, events, student-led research conferences, education programmes and training, many with external invitees and attendees. The Marshall Building also plays a critical role in the LSE Festival, Summer School, and July graduations. This level of disruption will have serious consequences for most of our community.

On top of this, the need to maintain extra security and a 24-hour fire watch requires 10 additional Security staff working at any time. This has been managed by the heroic efforts and good will of our security officers, who have been working overtime, going above and beyond to keep everyone safe.

For full transparency, below we have set out [further information and planned actions](#) since our message of Thursday 30 May, which includes ongoing conversations with student protestors and recommendations from the London Fire Brigade, as well as steps to move us forward, towards resolution.

As we have previously explained, we are committed to progressing discussions with the students about their demands. If the encampment ends, our discussions will still continue. Our immediate focus remains the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our community – including student protestors themselves – and allowing other staff and students to study and do their work. Re-opening the Marshall Building without delay is essential and we are willing to work with the protestors to find a solution to achieve this.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

Further information

Jump to:

- [Overview](#)
- [Clarification from the London Fire Brigade](#)
 - [Correspondence with the London Fire Brigade](#)
- [Community impact and next steps](#)

Overview

Both sides have different views as to why it took time for productive, substantive discussions to begin, but they did so on 20 May. Since then, we have an agreed process to discuss demands, and we are committed to continuing this, which unlike other universities involve direct engagement between protestors and members of the School Management Committee. Our most recent meeting was on 3 June and discussions were constructive. The next is scheduled for 6 June.

Our immediate concern remains the condition of the encampment and the risks it poses to the protestors and others at LSE. The situation changed when the encampment was suddenly and unilaterally enlarged on the morning of 27 May to cover most of the ground floor of the Marshall Building, blocking or obscuring access to fire exits and piling up combustible furniture on top of an excess of electrical devices, already mixed in with other combustible materials such as tents, blankets, and other things. LSE security staff indicated that this extended encampment posed a much more significant risk of fire and was a danger both to the protestors and to individuals on the upper floors of the building.

The School Management Committee has a statutory duty to ensure fire safety compliance in LSE buildings. As this is an indoor occupation, we commissioned an urgent fire risk assessment from a well-established, independent surveyor, Socotech. We shared this with the whole School community on Thursday, and [include the report again here](#). The Socotech report was unequivocal in finding that the encampment in its extended form is an urgent fire risk to anyone in the building and especially to people on the upper floors. We could not responsibly ignore these conclusions and so made the difficult decision to close floors 1 and above until further notice.

On 29 May we urged protestors to leave the building voluntarily and requested at a minimum that they take steps to help mitigate the most serious fire safety risks by 4pm to help re-open the building for the wider community. This included moving the encampment back to its original perimeter which would allow more fire escape routes and reducing the amount of electrical equipment and combustible items, while allowing us to remove or take down the piled-up furniture. The protestors have not reduced the size of the encampment, though they have written to us to say they have taken some steps that look to reduce the fire risk by spacing the tents farther apart

as well as reducing the amount of electrical equipment, extension cords, and combustible materials.

Clarification from the London Fire Brigade

As we were unsure of the status of the persons who came at the request of protestors to inspect the building, and we have to date no written report of any findings, we followed up with the London Fire Brigade (LFB) on 31 May for urgent clarification. You can see this [message in full below](#). In summary, while closing the upper floors means no one there is at risk, the London Fire Brigade offered no opinion on the safety of the student occupiers because (they said) the students are there as trespassers to whom neither we nor they have any responsibility.

This leads us to take the following actions:

- We must keep floors 1 and above of the Marshall Building closed, as the responses from the London Fire Brigade and Socotech indicate
- No one at LSE believes we should ignore potential risks to the students because we have no technical legal responsibility. But we also do not think it responsible to make a judgment about their safety based on their, or our, decisions as to what is necessary. As LFB has declined to provide a fire hazard assessment of the risks, we have commissioned a second independent assessment from a separate licensed surveyor. Given the circumstances, we have asked the inspector to give us clear answers to two questions:
 1. Are the students safe in the encampment as currently configured, and, if not, what would it take to make them safe?
 2. What configuration of the encampment will make it safe for us to re-open floors 1 and above?

If this second assessment offers ways to reconfigure the encampment so that students are safe and other occupants of the Marshall Building can safely use it, we will work with the protestors to implement the changes. However, if a second assessment concludes that the encampment is a serious fire risk that puts the students in danger in a way that cannot be mitigated, or that there is no configuration that will enable us to reopen the building for other occupants, we will continue to ask the students to end their occupation of the Marshall Building. We are open to working with students to find means to peacefully protest in a way that will allow us to resume disrupted School activity and that does not involve putting themselves and others in harm's way or have a major impact on the work of faculty, staff, and students.

Community impact and next steps

Work and study are now either prevented entirely or made considerably more difficult for departments and institutes within the Marshall Building, as well as for wider staff and students who use its spaces and amenities. As indicated above, roughly 20% of the total student population are based in Marshall, and a far broader portion of the community use the 563 student study spaces, in addition to roughly 100 individuals accessing the sports facilities daily, at this time of year. The 418 staff who usually work in the building are having to work elsewhere, while 18 education and training programmes need to be moved or rescheduled, as well as the LSE Festival and our Summer School. We are contingency planning with the eight departments currently scheduled to have graduation receptions in Marshall, when wider School space is limited.

All of this has a significant cost to our community. We hope the protestors will do whatever it takes to allow us to reopen floors 1 and above of the Marshall building and continue their engagement with us on these important matters. If so, as we have said to them throughout this period, we will not pursue any disciplinary action for anything that has happened to date, other than one possible incident involving an alleged physical assault.

We have committed to ongoing discussions on issues raised and to facilitate a presentation on divestment by representatives of the protestors to the Finance and Estates Committee of LSE's Council. These commitments hold even if the occupation ends. We have no interest in shutting down the conversation with students and no interest in preventing them from protesting peacefully. We believe there are many ways to do so, that do not interfere with or prevent so many others from their work and study.

Correspondence with the London Fire Brigade

From: XXXXX<xxxxx.xxxxx@london-fire.gov.uk>
Sent: Friday, May 31, 2024 1:59 PM
To: Blair1,A <A.Blair1@lse.ac.uk>; >FSD-LAM-WAND-WEST <FSDLamWandWest@london-fire.gov.uk>; XXXXX<xxxxx.xxxxx@london-fire.gov.uk>
Subject: Marshall Building

Alan.

Further to our conversation.

The LFB Union reps attendance are not representing LFB, they are representing the union. So I have no observations to make regarding their attendance.

My colleague XXX did attend as a representative of LFB as a senior fire safety officer.

The fire safety order places a duty on the responsible person to take general fire precautions for the safety of relevant persons.

Article 2 defines a relevant person as:

“relevant persons” means—

- (a) any person (including the responsible person) who is or may be lawfully on the premises; and
- (b) any person in the immediate vicinity of the premises who is at risk from a fire on the premises.

As the people demonstrating and occupying the ground floor with tents are not lawfully on the premises. They are not relevant persons.

As such. There is nothing in the fire safety order that requires you to take any general fire precautions for their safety in the event of an emergency.

Nor can we enforce any requirements upon you to this effect.

You will still have to consider the impact of their occupation on other relevant persons lawfully on the premises. However, as I understand it, you have vacated the building whilst the occupation is ongoing. If this is not the case. You must ensure this is considered.

If I can assist any further please call me on my mobile as I will not be monitoring my emails till Monday as I am on leave. I am still happy to take your call.

This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.

Update for our School community, 8 June

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Sat 08/06/2024 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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8 June 2024



SchoolMessage

Dear all,

We want to update you on the situation regarding the student occupation of the ground floor of the Marshall Building. Late yesterday evening (7 June), we received two letters from a second independent fire assessor. The first letter confirms that the protesters themselves are currently exposed to a significant fire risk, even on the ground floor. The second letter confirms that so long as the unauthorised student encampment remains in place, in any form, we cannot reopen access to floors 1 and above in the Marshall Building. We shared both letters with student protestors last night and we urged them, for their own safety, to immediately implement all the required actions contained in the first letter – you can [view the letters](#) and find out more about this below.


Responsibility to our community

Under the circumstances, we have no choice but to act to address this. We have a moral as well as a statutory responsibility to the entire LSE community to ensure everyone's safety, including that of protestors, and to assure and support everyone's ability to do their work and study. The unilateral expansion of the encampment on 27 May alerted us to genuine fire risks, which have now been verified by two independent assessments. After the first assessment, we vacated and closed floors 1 and above, a decision that has now been verified by the second assessment. That closure, however, has had, and continues to have, a significant and sustained impact on thousands of members of the LSE community, [as we explained on 4 June](#).

For these reasons, we can no longer postpone taking steps to end the encampment and have prepared civil court proceedings for possession of the Marshall Building. We expect the proceedings to continue into the week ahead before there is a ruling. Although these are civil and judicial proceedings only, we do not take this step lightly. It is only as a last resort in what has become a dangerous situation and major disruption of School activities. The unsanctioned and unlawful occupation has put both the occupiers and others at increased risk, while interfering with the ability of a significant portion of our staff and students to do their work.

We have, accordingly, asked the protestors to leave the Marshall Building immediately. We remain hopeful that they will decide to end the encampment, whilst finding other ways to peacefully protest, and continue to meet with us to discuss their demands.

Continuing our commitment to dialogue



We know that students and staff across LSE are distressed and deeply concerned by the war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Israel and Palestine, including many who have been directly affected. We recognise and acknowledge this as the driving force behind the student protestors and their supporters. There are, likewise, many members of our community who care profoundly about the crisis - again, including many who are directly affected - but who also want the Marshall Building to re-open, so they can do their research, teach, work, and study. Across the LSE community, there are people with different kinds of experiences and many different views.

We mention this to help explain how we have approached our discussions with the protestors. We remain committed to engaging with the students, and we are taking their demands seriously, including on divestment. We have established a process that includes six weeks of twice-weekly meetings between School Management Committee (SMC) representatives and student protestors (this being week two). The discussions so far have led to a number of agreed-upon actions which we think everyone in our community can and will support, including £500,000 in funding for academic support and student scholarships. [A summary of these actions can be read here](#) and we will provide more information on these matters next week.

There are many ways to help shape, and where necessary challenge, LSE's actions and policies. While we support this where possible, we cannot allow actions that threaten anyone's safety or significantly disrupt the whole School. With that in mind, we can, and will, look to continue to work with the protestors, accommodate their right to peaceful protest, and engage with the concerns of the entire community.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

Second fire assessment

The second independent fire assessment was carried out in the Marshall Building by [Arup](#) on 4 June. Below you can find two letters received by LSE on 7 June, signed by Dr Barbara Lane, FEng FRSE CEng, who is the senior validating Director advising on risks relating to the occupation of the Marshall Building.

Dr Lane is a Fellow and fire safety expert of Arup who served as an expert witness for the [Grenfell Tower Inquiry](#).

- Letter 1: The Marshall Building – [Safety of the occupants in the temporary occupation condition in the Great Hall](#)
- Letter 2: The Marshall Building – [Re-occupation during the temporary occupation condition in the Great Hall](#).

We shared these letters with protestors so that they were aware of this update on 7 June, asking them to vacate the Marshall Building immediately. It is LSE, not the protestors, who have a statutory duty to ensure fire safety on campus. We have now received two separate independent assessments which confirm that the increased risk to health and safety caused by the unlawful occupation of the Marshall Building is both critical and intolerable.

We do not have any written report from the London Fire Brigade about the safety of the building. Instead, the [London Fire Brigade confirmed via email](#) that closing the upper floors means no one there is at risk, and that they will not offer an opinion on the safety of the student occupiers because they are there as trespassers.



This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.



Update for our School community, 14 June

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Fri 14/06/2024 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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14 June 2024



SchoolMessage

Dear all,

We said in [our 8 June communication](#) that we would keep you informed about the student occupation of the ground floor of the Marshall Building. Importantly, our dialogue with protesters has continued during this period, as have conversations with broader groups across LSE.

Despite this, protesters have declined to modify their camp in conformity with the emergency plan laid out by the second fire inspection. Security teams have been managing the ongoing risk by keeping a 24-hour fire watch and putting other emergency actions in place. In accordance with advice from the independent fire safety reports, the Marshall Building remains closed from floor 1 and above.

Update on civil proceedings

[As staff and students are aware](#), following careful consideration of our responsibility to act in the best interest of our School community, including the safety of the protesters themselves, we reluctantly issued civil legal proceedings which have been underway this week. This was not a decision we took lightly. We did so only after exhausting all other options, and in recognition that the continued forced closure of the Marshall Building must end for all those who work and use the space.

After being advised by the judge on 13 June of the necessary legal procedures required to present their case, protesters returned to the civil court with legal representation today to put forward their position. The judge granted LSE's request for an interim possession order (IPO), which we expect to receive from the court no later than Monday. The protesters will then be served a legally binding order to leave the building within 24 hours after service.

Before this happens, we urge the protesters a final time to end the encampment now. Failing that, we will serve on Monday, or as soon as the IPO arrives.

Working with the LSE community

We know there remains deep concern and distress across LSE regarding the war and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Israel, and Palestine. We know, too, that the impact is ongoing and will be long-lasting, both for individuals directly affected and those worried about family, friends,

peers, and others in the region. As well as supporting those directly affected, we understand it is because of this concern that the protesters and their supporters have acted. For these reasons, we have taken the matters raised seriously, sought to address them where we can, and are open to continuing to engage with the protesters if they end the occupation.

We also fully support the right of students and staff to peacefully protest, as well as challenge LSE's actions and policies. As we have said all along, however, these rights must likewise respect the rights and safety of the rest of the LSE community to do their work and study. Ending the encampment now, eliminating the risk of fire and enabling us to reopen the Marshall Building, means we can re-focus on the substantive issues that are the reason for the protest.

You can find further information below, which we share in depth to be transparent with the LSE community.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

Further information

As the School Management Committee (SMC), we understand there are many views across LSE regarding our efforts and actions. This is what being part of our School is all about. Our actions have been and continue to be guided by three considerations, which we reiterate here. First is the safety of our community and the ability of its members to carry out School activity. Second, we recognise and respect the right to peaceful protest and want to facilitate it, so long as it does not create unacceptable levels of risk or disruption to the whole School. Third, we are committed to engaging with the protesters' concerns and those of others across LSE through dialogue.

Information on student discussions and divestment

We have an established twice-weekly process for SMC representatives and student protesters to meet over a period of six weeks (this being week three). We are one of the only UK institutions to have direct meetings of this kind between protesters and university leadership. Agreed actions were shared on 8 June and you can [find this summary here](#). Further progress includes proactively considering an LSE Palestine research programme proposal and exploring opportunities to work collaboratively as part of [CIVICA](#) on university initiatives to help develop plans for rebuilding the Gazan education system.

Members of the School community have asked about steps we are taking in relation to divestment specifically. Council is the body responsible for such decisions at LSE, and it is working on an accelerated timeline to consider the students' report. As part of this, members of the Investment Subcommittee met with the students, followed by several meetings with relevant members of the Finance and Estates Committee (FEC), in advance of their 11 June presentation to the wider committee group. Members of the FEC committee are planning to invite the students to meet with them again, ahead of the 25 June meeting of the whole Council.

We expect Council to provide a full response in early July. It is too soon to say what Council will ultimately decide, but the discussions so far have focused on ensuring full transparency with regards to LSE's investments, a full review of the [Environmental, Social and Governance \(ESG\) Policy](#) (which guides School endowment investment practices), and a transparent and inclusive process for students and staff to feed into this review.

Although we know protesters and others would like answers to questions about divestment earlier, this is the swiftest timeframe in which Council can responsibly make an assessment.

Sustained fire risk

We wrote to protesters on 7 June to share the outcome of the second fire assessment, which underscored the ongoing existence of an immediate, critical and intolerable risk. The assessment called for urgent changes to the encampment by protesters, as well as various actions for LSE.

The recommendations to LSE have been met. To date, the encampment has not made the recommended changes.

We have also received questions about the London Fire Brigade. To be clear, the London Fire Brigade has not made any kind of formal or official assessment, or provided any written report, about the safety of the Marshall Building. All it has said, [in an email](#), is that closing the upper floors means no one there is at risk and that the student occupiers are trespassers and therefore they (the London Fire Brigade) offer no opinion as to their safety.

As a result, we are relying on formal, written fire assessment reports from two well-known external organisations. Both have provided independent expertise separately that have drawn the same conclusions. We cannot, and must not, ignore this fire risk that is genuine and serious.

Related resources

Fire assessment 1

Socotec, conducted 28 May


[Fire risk report](#)

Fire assessment 2

Arup, conducted 4 June


- Letter 1: [Safety of the occupants in the temporary occupation condition in the Great Hall](#)
- Letter 2: [Re-occupation during the temporary occupation condition in the Great Hall](#).

This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.

 Outlook

Update for our School community, 17 June

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Mon 17/06/2024 

[REDACTED]

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17 June 2024



SchoolMessage



Dear all,

As many of you know, on Friday 14 June the civil court granted LSE an interim possession order (IPO) to end the unauthorised occupation of the Marshall Building, which we applied for following careful consideration of our responsibilities to our whole School.

The judge granted the interim possession order at the end of the day on Friday, and we received the papers late at night on 14 June. The order required us to serve it on the protesters within 48 hours, no later than 4.15pm on Sunday 16 June, after which they would have 24 hours to vacate.

We served the IPO at 4pm on Sunday, waiting to provide as much time as possible for protesters to leave voluntarily before the start of Eid on Sunday evening. This also ensured that they could have the option to depart today (Monday), allowing the opportunity to observe the start of Eid yesterday evening. In accordance with the IPO, all protesters must have vacated the Atrium, Marshall Building by 4pm today and we hope to fully reopen the building to our School as soon as possible after that.

This was not a decision we took lightly. We did so only after exhausting all other options, and in recognition that the sustained, forced closure of the Marshall Building – based on two independent fire risk reports – must end for all those who work in and use the space.

We also continue to fully support the rights of students and staff to peacefully protest, as well as challenge LSE's decisions and policies. As we have said all along, however, any action must likewise respect the rights and safety of the rest of the LSE community to do their work and study. Ending the encampment now eliminates the risk of fire, enabling us to reopen the Marshall Building and importantly, means we can continue the discussions on the substantive issues that are the reason for the protest.

You can find an overview of our ongoing dialogue with the student protesters, shared in [Friday's message to the whole community](#), as well as information on the fire risk assessment which has led us to this point.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee



This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.



Update for our School community, 20 June

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Thu 20/06/2024 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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20 June 2024



SchoolMessage

Dear all,

Since our last message, there have been significant developments in respect to the occupation, ongoing discussions with the protesters, and the status of the Marshall Building, which has now reopened. We provide updates below, together with a comprehensive overview of LSE's response to the protesters' demands – both those on which agreement was reached and those that have remained outstanding.

Ending the occupation and the status of discussions with protesters

As we wrote in earlier updates, the fire risk created when the occupying students unilaterally expanded the encampment forced us to close floors 1 and above in the Marshall Building. Disruption on that scale then left us little choice but to reluctantly seek an interim possession order (IPO) so we could reopen the building.

The order was granted in the late afternoon on Friday 14 June. The court required us to serve it within 48 hours, after which the order gave the protesters 24 hours to vacate. Because the timeframes were inflexible and we wanted to minimise interference with the weekend's Eid celebrations, we waited to serve until late afternoon on Sunday 16 June, giving the protesters all day Monday 17 June to clear the occupied spaces.

Members of the encampment did vacate the building by the IPO's deadline, but not without incident. During an accompanying rally, five members of our Security staff were injured when a rush of protesters, both internal and external to LSE, entered the building through windows opened by people still inside the space.

The escalation did not end at the Marshall Building. Protesters then moved to the Sir Arthur Lewis Building, where planned negotiations were due to take place, and proceeded to harass and intimidate members of the School Management Committee (SMC) both before and after their meeting with student representatives.

Monday's incidents reflect tactics inconsistent with our willingness and efforts to discuss the protesters' demands to date. We were surprised and extremely disappointed by what took place and will not tolerate these actions. Accordingly, we informed the protesters on Tuesday that we would not schedule further negotiations with them. After registering our concerns with the

protesters, they replied with counter-allegations. We have advised them to [report any incidents](#), as we would ask all members of our community, so we can investigate thoroughly.

LSE's response to matters raised by protesters

Although ongoing negotiations with the protesters have ended, LSE will honour all commitments made to date. These include [agreement on a number of substantive matters](#) [PDF] and Council's commitment to consider the topic of divestment. Meetings arranged in connection with Council's deliberations will be held as planned.

While there has been agreement on some points and others, like divestment, are in progress, there are issues which remain outstanding. We therefore think it necessary and appropriate at this point to be fully clear and transparent, with both the protesters and the wider community, about LSE's positions and the reasons for them. To that end, we attach a detailed response that explains our conclusions respecting all the demands made.

We hope this overview brings some clarity to the issues and provides a basis for ongoing conversations within and across the LSE community.

[LSE's response to "Demands from the Student Voice"](#) [PDF] – as written by LSE President and Vice Chancellor Larry Kramer with full support of the School Management Committee.

We're at the end of what has been a challenging School year. We recognise the deep impact the ongoing war and humanitarian crisis in Israel, Gaza, and Palestine has had, and is having, on so many people in the region and in our own community. We recognise, too, that not everyone will agree with the decisions we have made. That is only to be expected in a community as diverse as ours. In fact, as our response explains, preserving that diversity has very much informed our approach to the demands. We thus offer these answers, shaped by the essence of what defines and constitutes a robust university community.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

Further information

[LSE's response to "Demands from the Student Voice"](#)

A detailed response explaining LSE's positions and the reasons for them, in respect to "Demands from the Student Voice."

[Agreed actions](#)

Final list of agreements between the SMC and the 'LSE Liberated Zone' (LLZ) in relation to "Demands from the Student Voice" document.

Restored access to the Marshall Building

The Marshall Building has now reopened on all floors. Staff and students can once again use the space for work and study, including the facilities in the basement. The Beaver's Brew café will open again on Monday 24 June, resuming summer hours from 9am-4pm, Monday-Friday.

This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.

Update for our School community, 9 July

From LSEmail [REDACTED]

Date Tue 09/07/2024 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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9 July 2024



SchoolMessage

Dear all,

In June, we committed to update you on the deliberations of LSE Council about divestment. As our School's governing body – comprised of independent external members, internal academic and professional services staff, and Students' Union representatives – Council's legal and fiduciary responsibilities include investment policy and endowment management.

Council met on 25 June, and we originally intended this message to focus entirely on their decisions, given the widespread interest about this matter across our whole community. However, we must also address an escalation by protesters that took place over the weekend. Their actions involved tactics that intimidated fellow members of the LSE community and left them shaken and upset, including both staff and Summer School students.

Community impact and disciplinary action

On Sunday, masked individuals disrupted and took over Summer School registration in the Student Services Centre, forcing it to be moved to a different building. What occurred is well outside anything that is acceptable in the name of legitimate, peaceful protest. Harassing and frightening students who have come to the UK, many for the first time, to study at LSE, and professional service staff who have volunteered their time and worked tirelessly to do their jobs, cannot be tolerated. It was only the quick action and professionalism of our Security and Summer School teams that prevented serious impact on the second session of the programme and we are grateful to all staff, who handled the situation well. LSE is providing wellbeing assistance to those who need it.

As we have said before, there are many ways for students and staff to protest and engage with LSE to advocate for institutional change. Actions that involve bullying, harassing, or threatening other members of the School community are not among them. Activity of this sort, and any similar escalation going forward, will be met with disciplinary proceedings – as is the case in this instance, if and as we identify participating individuals who are LSE students or staff. Whilst we support the right to peaceful protest, we have a duty to ensure everyone in the LSE community can work and study freely without fear. To that, no further concessions will be made.

Council decisions on divestment and next steps

Council had earlier agreed to address issues raised in the report on divestment submitted by the LSE Students' Union Palestine Society. It examined the report as promised, following established procedures on an accelerated basis given the significance to the community, while also providing student representatives an opportunity to make their case directly to Council's Finance and Estates Committee (FEC). Council discussed the report, as well as wider community input it had received both supporting and opposing the report's recommendations.

Decisions by Council were made before the recent escalation and on the timeline previously agreed. Its [decisions, together with explanations for them, are here](#) [PDF].

In summary, Council reached the following conclusions:

- LSE's investments and endowment holdings should be made as transparent as feasible. The Investment Subcommittee of the FEC will develop a process to support this commitment after appropriate consultation with external experts and members of our School and Students' Union societies. This will begin as soon as possible.
- There will, separately, be a full review of LSE's [Environmental, Social and Governance \(ESG\) Policy](#) [PDF], which guides the School's investment practices. Alongside other matters, the review will consider current policies related to investment in fossil fuels and arms manufacturing. This will include whether to change them, and if so, how. Such a review, which had been scheduled for 2026, will instead begin in Autumn Term 2024, concluding no later than the end of Spring Term 2025. It will provide meaningful opportunities for staff and student input.
- Council strongly endorses the principle, set out in [LSE's Code of Practice on Free Speech](#), that it should not take institutional positions on political or international disputes. Following this approach, Council concluded that LSE will not adopt an investment strategy of identifying and divesting from companies that do business in certain countries if the reason for and / or the primary effect of such action is to communicate a political position – as is the case with the request to divest from companies that do business in or with the state of Israel. This does not mean LSE will never change investment approaches for reasons other than financial returns; however, it will not do so to express an institutional position on political disputes.
- Given how financial institutions continuously shift their investment portfolios, Council determined that the request to divest from certain institutions that provide financial services is not feasible. Managing an investment portfolio that requires avoiding or divesting from a continually changing list of financial institutions cannot be done in a way that fulfils Council's fiduciary responsibilities or meets LSE's broader environmental, social or governance goals.

In addition, Council noted and [supported existing commitments](#) [PDF] made by the School Management Committee on a number of substantive matters, including scholarships, assistance for Scholars at Risk, and other actions for those in our community impacted by the ongoing crisis in Gaza, Israel and Palestine.

Both we, as the School Management Committee, and Council, look forward to the next stage of work in which we can focus our collective efforts on these commitments, made in the firm belief that they are right for our students, our staff, and our School. This includes the process of reviewing our Environmental, Social and Governance Policy, which we hope will be characterised by mutual respect and thoughtful engagement from across our whole School community. This is how we can ultimately shape a better policy and create a stronger LSE.

Thank you.

LSE School Management Committee

This message has been sent to LSE staff and students.