

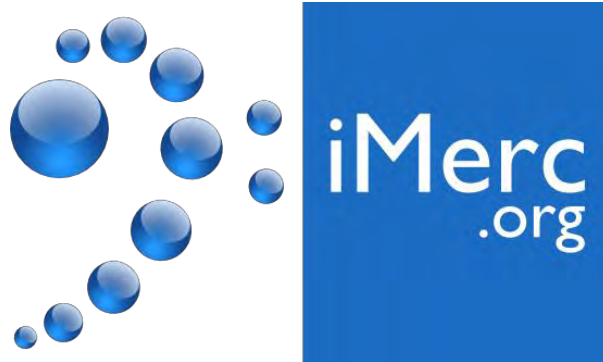
# UCL iMerc Newsletter — Vol. 5, February 2024

## About us

Since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, we have been meeting regularly to share new research and insights related to diverse topics in music education, broadly conceived. We are a group of researchers at doctoral and post-doctoral levels, as well as senior researchers, with a shared curiosity and interest in advancing basic and applied research. Our monthly seminars are also designed to foster a sense of community amongst colleagues who are based in the UK, mainland Europe (Portugal, Germany, Greece), Asia (China, including Hong Kong) and Australia. Opportunity is taken each month to update current research projects and also to listen to the latest research from our invited speakers. If you would like to know more or to join us, please contact us.

Our upcoming research seminar is on Wednesday, 21st February 2024, 11.00-13.00 UK Time. This will be held on Zoom only. We are very happy to have Professor David-Emil Wickström, Pak Hang Wan, and YiYing Pei speak to us. Please join us by clicking the Zoom link [HERE](#). Everyone is welcome!

## In This Issue



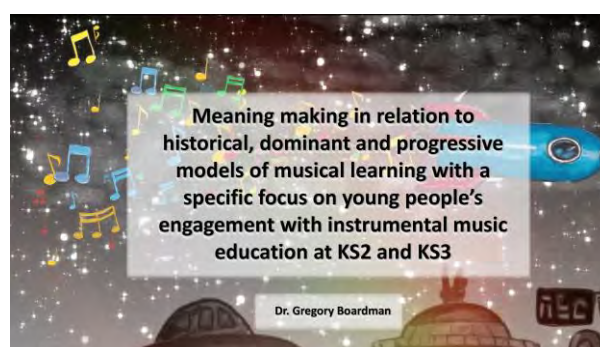
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- *Previous iMerc Research Seminar, January 2024*
  - *Event: 'The Bruce' Opera Premiere in Scotland*
  - *Presentation: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Musical Behaviour – the Significance of Context and Implications for Pedagogy*
  - *Tech Column: Embracing Music Tech in Early Years*
  - *Newly published: The Impact of Three Key Paradigm Shifts on Disability, Inclusion, and Autism in Higher Education in England: An Integrative Review*
  - *iMerc Research Seminar, February 2024*
  - *In Conversation with Dr Can Lu, January 2024*
  - *Upcoming Research Seminar, March 2024*
  - *Contact us*
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## Previous iMerc Research Seminar, January 2024



1 - Presentation cover slide presented by Alice Bowmer

Alice Bowmer ([abowm001@gold.ac.uk](mailto:abowm001@gold.ac.uk)) updated us about her PhD project at Goldsmiths College, London. Her presentation was titled *Supporting hard-to-reach parents through intervention: Does parental singing facilitate infant language behaviours?* In this presentation, Alice shared the challenges and research findings to date. The study is seeking to test empirically whether singing classes supported infant language skills more than similarly designed physical/cognitive classes. Further evidence was collected on parents' use of singing in the home.



2 - Presentation cover slide presented by Dr. Gregory Boardman

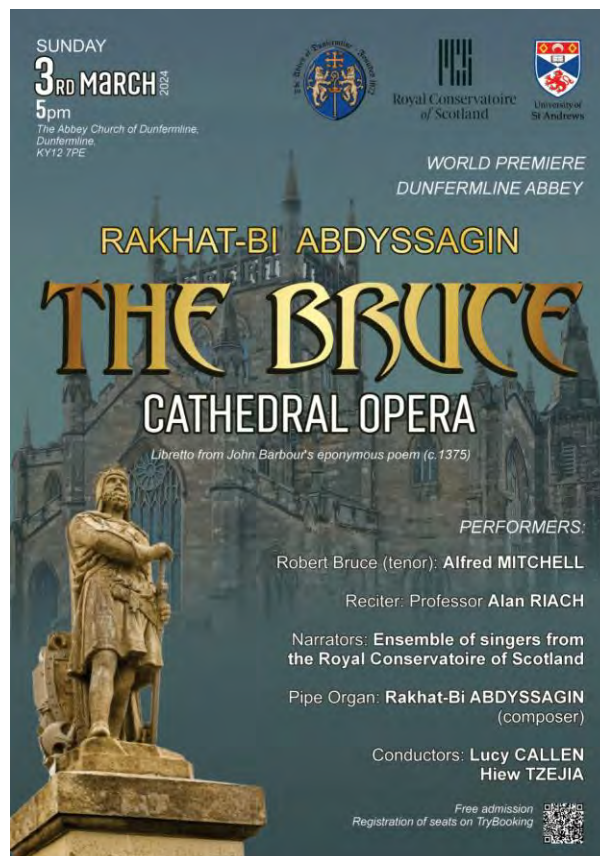
Dr Gregory Boardman ([gregory.boardman.15@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:gregory.boardman.15@ucl.ac.uk)) shared his ongoing UCL doctoral study update with a presentation titled *musical meaning-making in the later stages of Primary education*. In this presentation, Greg shared [videos](#) of his projects working with students in Primary schools. Greg also guided us in exploring participation in instrumental music-making, barriers to access and meaning-making in relation to historical, dominant, and progressive models of musical learning. Greg also shared his reflections on the implications of multimodality on classroom practitioners—if words alone fail to capture what might be observed.



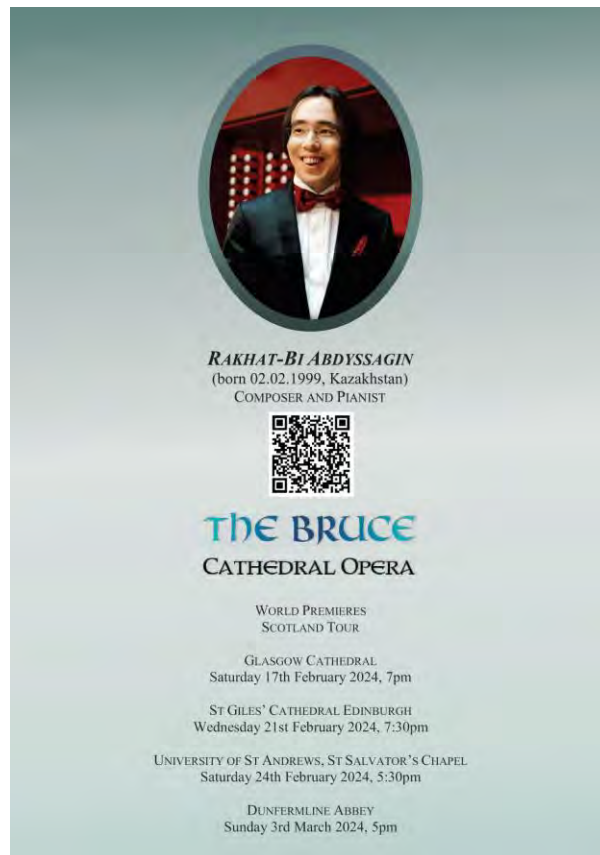
3 - Presentation cover slide presented by Dr Jeehye Hwang

Dr Jeehye Hwang ([jeehye.hwang.18@alumni.ucl.ac.uk](mailto:jeehye.hwang.18@alumni.ucl.ac.uk)) talked about her recent UCL PhD study. The presentation titled *How do older adults perceive and engage in active music-making in the digital age? - Exploring lived experiences of instrumental learning and playing after retirement in South Korea*. The presentation highlighted the importance of meaningful music participation in the lives of retired older adults, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of ageing and challenging societal perceptions. Key findings suggested that motivations for musical engagement intersected with life transitions associated with retiring from full-time work, demonstrating a desire for social and emotional benefits during this period.

## Event: 'The Bruce' Opera Premiere in Scotland



4 - Rakihat-Bi Abdyssagin's new opera premiere poster front



5 - Rakhat-Bi Abdyssagin's new opera premiere poster back

### **'The Bruce', Rakhat-Bi Abdyssagin's New Opera World Premieres Scotland Tour**

Rakhat-Bi is an Affiliate Academic at UCL and a member of the International Music Education Research Centre.

Trailer to the premieres: <https://vimeo.com/910581005>

Glasgow Cathedral, Saturday, 17th February 2024, 7 pm

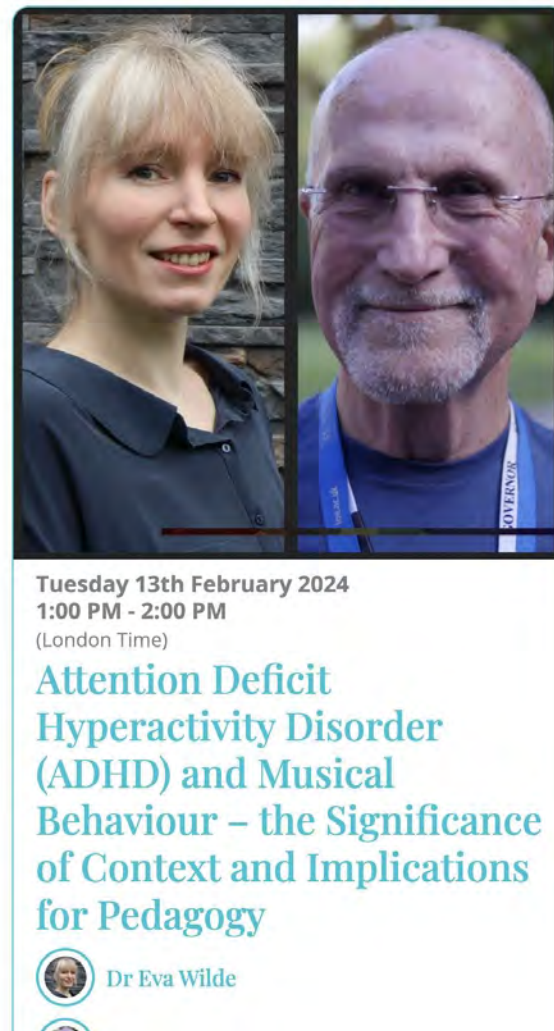
St Giles' Cathedral Edinburgh, Wednesday, 21st February 2024, 7.30 pm

University of St Andrews, St Salvator's Chapel, Saturday, 24th February 2024, 5.30 pm

Dunfermline Abbey, Sunday, 3rd March 2024, 5 pm

Contact: Rakhat-Bi Abdyssagin ([rahatbiabd@mail.ru](mailto:rahatbiabd@mail.ru))

## Presentation: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Musical Behaviour— the Significance of Context and Implications for Pedagogy



**Speakers: Dr Eva Wilde and Professor Graham Welch**

The presentation reported evidence of recent research into ADHD and music education, highlighting the potential benefits of structured personalised music education (Wilde & Welch, 2022) and also music therapy (Martin-Maratinos et al, 2023). The research findings suggest that, notwithstanding ADHD-related symptoms, individuals can engage successfully in music and acquire musical skills. Moreover, ADHD is not a static condition in music, but variable according to pedagogical and musical context. For details, please read [HERE](#) from the Voice Study Centre.

Contact: Dr Eva Wilde ([evawilde63@gmail.com](mailto:evawilde63@gmail.com))



## Tech Column from Music Teacher Magazine: Embracing Music Tech in Early Years

### Tech column: embracing music tech in Early Years

Bradley Smith  
Thursday, February 1, 2024

Embedding technology into Early Years practice can seem like a daunting task for many practitioners, even though it is becoming more commonplace. Christie Haddad, an educator pursuing a PhD on the use of music tech in Early Years, chats to Bradley Smith about the barriers and shares practical resources.

**BS:** Can you give a snapshot of the current landscape of music technology in Early Years? What are the barriers for educators in offering music tech experiences at this level?

**CH:** Over the last few years, during my PhD research, I've noticed an increase in the integration of music tech in Early Years. Despite challenges, like teacher shortages and funding issues, there is growing interest. However, the practicalities and logistics of fitting training into teachers' schedules remain a significant hurdle.

The main barriers include financial constraints, busy schedules, and a belief that music tech doesn't belong in Early Years. There's also a lack of confidence among practitioners. Dr. Julie Digby's PhD, which explored teachers' confidence when facilitating musical learning in Reception Years, highlighted the notable lack of confidence experienced by EYFS practitioners when it comes to teaching music.



### Featuring: Christie Haddad

This is an interview from Music Teacher Magazine in which Christie Haddad chats with Bradley Smith about her UCL PhD research. Christie discussed the barriers to embedding technology into early years practice and shared some top music tech recommendations for Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) educators. For details, please read [HERE](#) from *Music Teacher Magazine*.

Contact: Christie Haddad ([christie.haddad.18@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:christie.haddad.18@ucl.ac.uk))

## Newly published: The Impact of Three Key Paradigm Shifts on Disability, Inclusion, and Autism in Higher Education in England: An Integrative Review



trends in higher  
education

an Open Access Journal by MDPI



### The Impact of Three Key Paradigm Shifts on Disability, Inclusion, and Autism in Higher Education in England: An Integrative Review

Eunice S. Y. Tang; Austin Griffiths; Graham F. Welch

*Trends High. Educ.* 2024, Volume 3, Issue 1, 122-141

**Authors: Eunice Tang, Dr Austin Griffiths, Professor Graham Welch**

**Abstract:**

In the past two decades, students have been more willing to disclose their disability status when entering higher education (HE) in the United Kingdom (UK). Concurrently, higher education institutions (HEIs) have adopted disability policies and service teams for enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion in the UK. The purpose of this integrative review is to understand the basis of these trends. The article suggests that there have been three major key paradigm shifts that underpin this cultural change: (1) There was a paradigm shift in terms of changing the dominant models for conceptualising disability from a medical model of disability to a social model of disability and to an affirmative model of disability, together with a debate and policy development demonstrating a concern for greater social inclusion and exclusion; (2) with a massive increase in students entering HE and the rising importance of league tables and ranking systems, universities experienced a paradigm shift from teacher-centred learning (TCL) to inclusive student-centred learning and teaching (SCLT); and (3) the increase in autism disclosure in HE signifies a shift in a conceptualisation of autism from a disorder to a disability and an example of neurodiversity.

Reference: Tang, E. S. Y., Griffiths, A., Welch, G. F. (2024). The Impact of Three Key Paradigm Shifts on Disability, Inclusion, and Autism in Higher Education in England: An Integrative Review. *Trends High. Educ.* 3(1), 122-141. <https://doi.org/10.3390/higheredu3010007>

Contact: Euncie Tang ([eunice.tang@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:eunice.tang@ucl.ac.uk))

## iMerc Research Seminar, February 2024



6 - Guest Speaker: Professor David-Emil Wickström

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***Guest Speaker: Professor David-Emil Wickström***

***Topic: From Exclusion to Inclusion - The Roles of Music in Inclusion***

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**Professor David-Emil Wickström** ([david-emil.wickstroem@popakademie.de](mailto:david-emil.wickstroem@popakademie.de))

David-Emil Wickström studied Scandinavian studies, musicology and ethnomusicology at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, University of Bergen and University of Copenhagen. His areas of research include the revival of Norwegian traditional vocal music, post-Soviet popular music (especially in Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Germany) as well as higher music education. Currently employed as a Professor of popular music history at the Popakademie Baden-Württemberg he is also the program director for the artistic Bachelor degree programs "Pop Music Design" and "World Music". He is a member of the research group "Russian Space? Concepts, Practices, Representations (RSCPR)" at UiT Noregs arktiske universitet. In addition, he chairs the editorial board of the AEC project "Power relations in Higher Music Education".

**David-Emil's Abstract:**

Children in kindergartens and schools in central Europe reflect the cultural complexity of a population that today is definitely not homogeneous. But do the musical contents taught reflect this complexity? Music can play several roles in an (early) musical education, such as training coordination skills or promoting teamwork through communal singing. Another important point would be to establish musical acquaintance with other cultures and thus an understanding of difference and diversity in the population among children. In other words, promoting respect and tolerance. In order to create a sense of belonging, music can only act as a communication bridge if it does not come (exclusively) from a Christian-European hegemonic perspective. The musics and religions of the actual children in a class or group must be taken into account. Music is - similar to a language - a semiotic system that has to be learned. This is not only about understanding other musical traditions. It also includes learning the languages of the musics that are based on Central European art music or Anglo-American popular music. Thus, in addition to the question of inclusion and as a sign of respect, listening to other musical systems is essential in order to understand and comprehend them.



*7 - Speaker: Pak Hang Wan*

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**Speaker: Pak Hang Wan**

*Topic: An Ethnographic Study of Music Engagement Programmes in London and Their Social Impact*

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**Pak Hang Wan** ([pak.wan.20@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:pak.wan.20@ucl.ac.uk))

As an educator who has also worked in classical music marketing, administration, and academic publishing, I would like to make a contribution towards educational programmes offered by government and nonprofit organisations in music. My aim is to investigate the differences in programme design, implementation and most notably, the social impact for future development between organisations with varying levels of resources. I hope my empirical research will result in cross-fertilisation of good practices.

**Pak's Abstract:**

Young people have been exposed to music from school lessons and extracurricular activities since it was introduced to mainstream compulsory education. As demographic structure changes after WWII, many educators influenced by sociological theories have been attempting to democratise music education, making it more inclusive for all. With more professional and nonprofit organisations joining the field of music engagement, the division between formal and informal learning is becoming fuzzier in recent years. By exploring the inner-workings of music engagement programme providers in some of the most socially diverse areas in London, this ethnographic study is an exploratory journey to discover practitioners' authentic attitude and how they navigate in an ecology of social change and government policies.



*8 - Speaker: Yiying Pei*

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*Speaker: Yiyi Pei*

*Topic: Culture, Taste, and Identity: Young People's Family Music Cultivation and Instrument Learning Experience*

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**Yiyi Pei** ([peiyi1223@163.com](mailto:peiyi1223@163.com))

Yiyi Pei is a PhD student from East China Normal University majoring in the Sociology and Cultural Studies of Education. She holds a Master of Education from the same university. She explored the instrument learning experience of young people during her master's study. The findings indicate a connection between family music cultivation and cultural reproduction and how music activities in school and daily life influence young people's musical identity. Her research interests focus on music education, sociology of education, youth culture studies, and media studies.

**Yiyi's Abstract:**

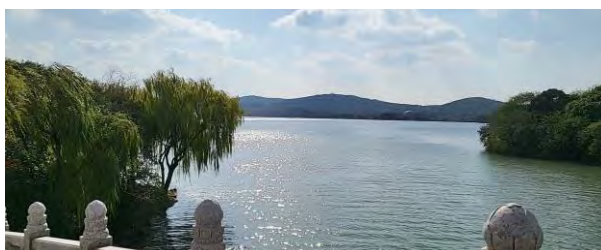
Instrument learning as a family parenting practice is beneficial to children's development. More and more children begin to learn an instrument when they are young. The long-lasting instrument learning experience is interwoven with their family and school life, forming part of their lived experience and has an impact on their everyday life and development. The research intends to discover young people's instrument learning experience through semi-structured interview under the instruction of the methodology of narrative inquiry.

It is found that instrument learning is a strategy of cultural reproduction which helps pass on cultural capital through the family in a hidden or conscious way. Parents' participation, expectation, and decision on children's education affect the way of reproduction. The musical instrument grading exam defines the standard of musical ability. Through the training of the body, young people not only grasp music skills but also obtain a sense of music, which influences their music taste and judgement. Instrument learning is embedded in young people's education and is reflected in their musical practices. It has an impact on their school education and daily life. In the process of socialization, the value of instrument learning is constructed, which turns out to be paradoxical. Some gain help from music learning, while others suspend music learning because of academic pressure and find it hard to obtain a musical identity in school. The experience of instrument learning cultivates young people's aesthetics and disposition, brings them opportunities as they grow up, helps them obtain emotional healing in their daily lives, and constructs their musical identity.

## In Conversation with Dr Can Lu, February 2024



9 - First picture of Dr Can Lu's son



10 - The beautiful lake view from Jiangsu, China

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*Dr Can Lu passed her doctoral viva on 11 January 2024 with minor corrections. We were fortunate to interview her before she welcomed a new member into her family— her son was born on 3 February 2024 at 10.39 am in Jiangsu, China. Can is currently in good hands under the care of her family. Here is an interview about her doctoral experience. Warmest congratulations to Can for her double happiness!*

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### 1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

Hello. My name is Can Lu ([can.lu.16@alumni.ucl.ac.uk](mailto:can.lu.16@alumni.ucl.ac.uk)). When I was a child, my mother always thought that I have a musical talent, and my teacher thought the same way, so I've always been provided a lot of opportunity of music training or performances. I went to high school, where I studied folk music, and later went to a music college for a bachelor's degree. Then I went to University of York to study community music and music education. After that, I started working with

Professor Welsh for my PhD. I thought maybe I should start with something basic. I guess singing is a good topic to start. So there's a very nice programme called Sing Up, which is a national programme in the UK. I started thinking, maybe I can do something similar in China. I then started to do this research with my supervisors. But I didn't realise it was a huge programme then. It's a national programme. And it's just only me in my study. I didn't realise the programme was a huge one. So it took so many years to finish. And now, finally, I finished it.

## **2. Congratulations! Can you share your doctoral experience with us?**

I didn't know a lot of things about research at the beginning. When I started my PhD, I knew nothing about research. So I took a lot of courses, but I didn't really know why I should take them, and I didn't know how to choose. So, I spent a lot of time taking some courses that were unnecessary. But anyway, it's a journey.

In the first two years, I didn't know what to do. I had no clear plan, so the progress was very slow. After the upgrade, I then started to collect data. And that data was huge compared with other doctoral colleagues: I had over 1,000 participants across six schools. I enjoyed the progress of data collection. It was nice to talk to children and their teachers. And then I came back to the UK to analyse my data. It was a huge amount of data set, and how we measured it was quite subjective. In order to ensure the reliability of my study, I measured all the data 3 times until I thought the analyses were reliable. When I measured each data, it would take around one and a half or two months. It's a very time-consuming process. Finally, when I finished the data measurement, I had no idea how to analyse them in a more efficient way. It was because I had limited knowledge about statistical analysis. I started reading books and texts and taking some courses, but still, it was quite difficult because I wasn't sure whether it was a good way or the right way to analyse them.

After discussing it with my supervisor, I thought we could analyse the data differently. So, we started exploring a new tool. Because the tool was not really available at the time. Eventually, we found the tool, and it was also time-consuming to use the tool. Don't get me wrong. It's a very good one. I couldn't remember how many times I spent using this tool to analyse my data. The data was very rich. It's just time-consuming and takes lots of patience. It's quite easy to give up at that stage. And yeah, finally, I believe that I finished it. In the first three years, I thought I should do this national project. One day, I realised, Oh, my God, it's too huge! I couldn't do this in one PhD. I couldn't manage this on time. So, I decided to focus on one section, which was the first section on children's singing performance for this PhD. I was more focused by then. And the workload was much reduced. I just focused on that part and did the analysis. I started to write my analyses in my fourth year. My English was very limited, so that was another challenge. I was very pleased that I didn't give up, although it's a huge amount of effort and time for each step of my PhD journey. It's just time-consuming. I spent eight years finishing my PhD. I didn't know what other people had done. Anyway, this is what I have done and what I experienced.

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*"Never give up— just keep going. You will get there one day. For international students, it's important to be independent, practise your English, work on yourself, and understand your topic well."*

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## **3. Were you doing the PhD full-time or part-time?**

I was doing it full-time.



#### **4. I see. Do you have any advice for those who just started their PhDs?**

First of all, the project shouldn't be too big. If you have a big sample and just focus on one thing, then it will be good. Having foundation knowledge for research would be beneficial before starting a doctoral journey. Life would be much easier.

#### **5. Any tips about preparing viva?**

I was asked: What is your contribution to knowledge? What is your favourite finding in your study? These are the common ones. Based on my experience, the examiner picked up something I didn't explain clearly, or they may have different opinions or thoughts. You really need to know the process, especially for the methodology section. You need to know what you have done, what, and why.

#### **6. What do you like most about the IOE?**

I would like to take this chance to thank my supervisors, Professor Graham Welch and Dr Jo Saunders, for their professional support and kindness. I felt well-supported and confident in exploring things that I was interested in. I could ask any questions, sometimes they might be silly ones! Also, I really enjoyed the library. It is a very powerful one. I can find anything from there, anything I want — it made me feel I was supported. There were a lot of courses at the IOE, and most of them were free [which were included in the fees], except statistical analysis. And yeah, the library, I think, is by far my favourite. Also, my classmates were excellent and talented, with many ideas. Overall, it's been great.

#### **7. Do you have any advice for our doctoral colleagues?**

Never give up— just keep going. You will get there one day. For international students, it's important to be independent, practise your English, work on yourself, and understand your topic well.

#### **8. How did you cope with the Covid period during your doctoral journey?**

I was staying with my landlady in London. Sometimes, I felt lonely, but I could manage it most of the time. I was very calm at that time and focused on what I needed to do, so the quality of my writing actually improved. My landlady and her friends helped me a lot in terms of coping with cultural differences. They helped me correct my English for free, which was brilliant. I was grateful for their support.

#### **9. How's everything with you in Jiangsu, China?**

I'm living with my parents-in-law, where there is a nice lake and a beautiful view. The biggest challenge is the food because I'm from Hunan Province. We love spicy food. But people here [in Jiangsu] like sweet food. So, I struggled at the beginning. And now I feel much better. Hopefully, the baby will be born in a healthy condition. I'll then start looking for a job in a few months.

### **Upcoming Research Seminar**

Please pencil in our next research seminar on Zoom, which will be held on Wednesday, 20th March 2024, from 11-1 pm. More details soon!

### **Contact Us**

Visit us on the website at <http://www.imerc.org>

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Ms Eunice Tang: [eunice.tang@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:eunice.tang@ucl.ac.uk)