



DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

**RESEARCH DEGREE
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2018/19

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Disclaimer

This document was published in September 2018 and was correct at that time. The department* reserves the right to modify any statement if necessary, make variations to the content or methods of delivery of programmes of study, to discontinue programmes, or merge or combine programmes if such actions are reasonably considered to be necessary by the College. Every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum, and to give as much notice as possible.

* Please note, the term 'department' may be used to refer to a 'department', 'centre' or 'school'.

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1. Introduction to the College and your department

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to Royal Holloway. Royal Holloway, University of London (hereafter 'the College') is one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities, with nineteen academic departments spanning the arts and humanities, social sciences and sciences.

Sitting within the top 25 per cent of universities in the UK for research rated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014, the College combines world-class research with a truly global perspective while at the same time offering a campus and community with an intimate human scale. As a student studying toward a research degree with the College, you will have the opportunity to learn from internationally renowned academics and researchers.

During the course of your time with the College, you will pursue independent research in your academic department. The College offers a number of research degree programmes: Master of Arts by Research, Master of Science by Research, Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy), Doctorate in Professional Studies (DPS) and Doctorate of Medicine (Research) (MD (Research)). Your successful progress will depend primarily on your own efforts, supported by your supervisors, but also on the research environment in your department and the quality of the research training you receive.

1.2 Doctoral School

The Royal Holloway Doctoral School, established in September 2014, brings together key aspects of research student life, aiming to ensure that research students are fully integrated as members of the College's research community and to provide you with opportunities to meet and share ideas and experiences across our three Faculties. The Doctoral School will support you throughout your progress, ensuring availability of relevant contemporary research skills and employment training alongside the highest standards of administrative and pastoral support.

The Doctoral School organizes a number of events throughout the year for postgraduate research students culminating in the annual Doctoral School Interdisciplinary Conference in June.

The Doctoral School microsite will keep you informed of news and events which may be of interest to you as a research degree student. It is also a key repository of information and advice on subjects such as funding, changes to your registration status and the examination process. It provides you with easy access to a variety of documentation and guides that you may need during your studies.

[Doctoral School microsite](#)

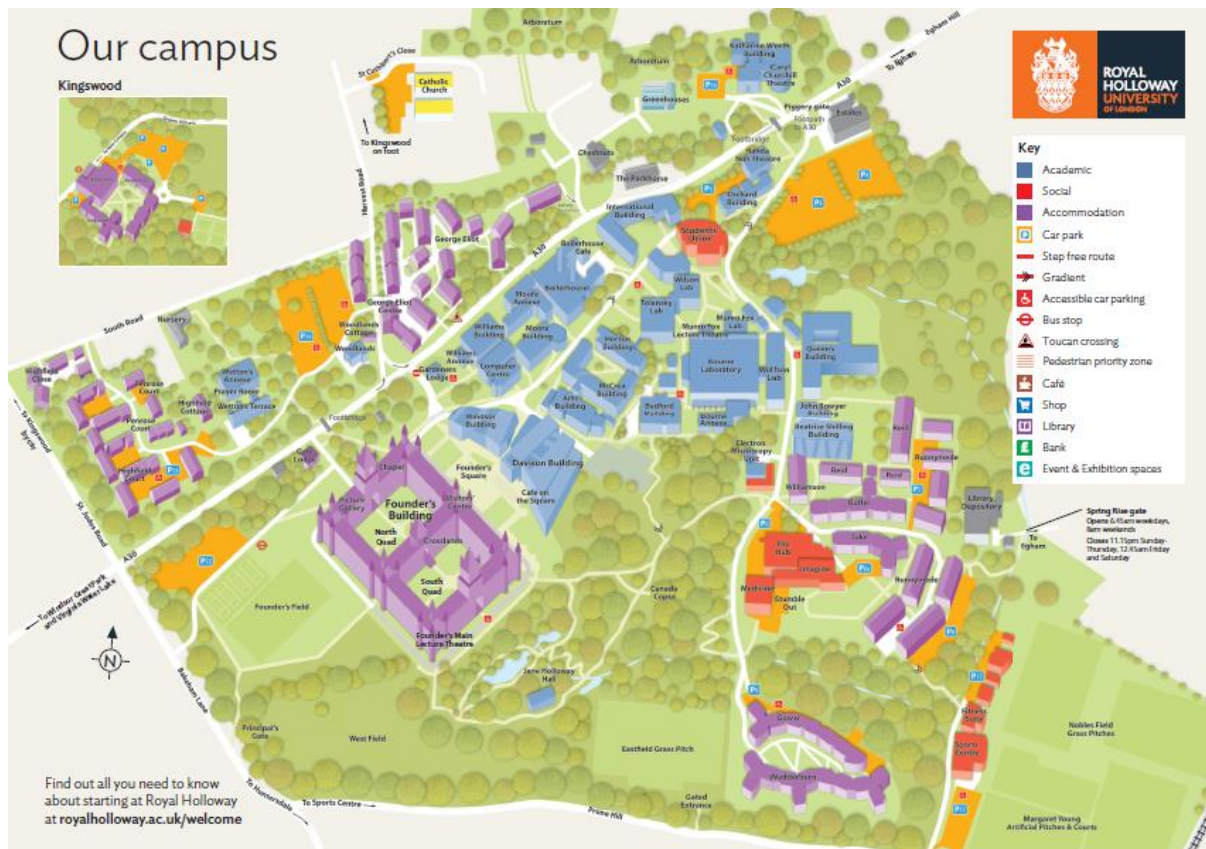
[Doctoral School mission statement](#)

1.3 How to find your department

The Department of Computer Science is located in the McCrea Building, on the Lower Ground Floor, with some offices on the first floor. The office is located in Room 119.

1.4 Map of the Egham campus

Please note that student parking is very limited and a parking permit is required, which can be obtained via Security. You will need proof of insurance and a suitable form of photographic ID before a permit will be issued.



1.5 How to contact us

Title/Name	Email address	Telephone	Room
Head of Department			
Prof José Fiadeiro	jose.fiadeiro@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443430	104a
Director of Graduate Studies			
Prof Chris Watkins	C.J.Watkins@cs.rhul.ac.uk	01784443419	252
Academic Staff			
Mr Nuno Barreiro	nuno.barreiro@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276636	247

Dr Sara Bernardini	Sara.bernardini@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276792	126a
Miss Claudia Chirita	Claudia.chirita.2014@live.rhul.ac.uk	01784 443912	112
Prof Gregory Chockler	gregory.chockler@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443673	107
Prof Dave Cohen	d.cohen@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443692	114
Prof Alex Gammerman	alex.gammerman@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443434	121
Prof Gregory Gutin	g.gutin@cs.rhul.ac.uk	01784 414229	127
Dr Matthew Hague	Matthew.hague@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443673	116
Prof Adrian Johnstone	A.johnstone@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443425	110
Dr Yuri Kalnishkan	Yuri.kalnishkan@rhul.ac.uk	01784 414256	248
Prof Johannes Kinder	Johannes.kinder@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276549	104
Prof Zhaohui Luo	Zhaohui.luo@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443431	126
Prof Zhiyuan Luo	Zhiyuan.luo@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443697	249
Dr Carlos Matos	carlos.matos@rhul.ac.uk	01784 414161	124
Dr Daniel O'Keeffe	Daniel.okeeffe@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276034	244
Prof Alberto Paccanaro	alberto.paccanaro@rhul.ac.uk	01784 414239	120
Dr Nicola Paoletti		01784 276034	244
Prof Elizabeth Scott	E.scott@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443427	117
Dr Hugh Shanahan	Hugh.shanahan@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443433	246
Prof Kostas Stathis	Kostas.stathis@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443698	108
Dr Ionut Tutu	Ionut.tutu.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk		112
Dr Iddo Tzameret	Iddo.tzameret@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443694	105
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Prof Volodya Vovk	V.vovk@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443426	111
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Prof Chris Watkins	c.j.watkins@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443419	252
Support Staff			
Systems Team			
Mr Narinderpal Sehra	Narinderpal.Sehra@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443111	355B

Mr Adrian Thomas	a.thomas@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443428	355a
Mr Francesco Fildani	francesco.fildani@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443315	357
Administrative team			
Ms Jo Hible Department Manager	Jo.hible@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443230	120a
Ms Jenny Lee PGR Administrator	Jenny.Lee@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443091	119

1.6 Department of Computer Science

Welcome to the Department of Computer Science. This Handbook is designed to welcome you to the Department, which we hope you will find to be a friendly, informal and active environment of mutual co-operation. We operate an open door policy in which students are encouraged to see their Supervisors and advisers as and when they wish. In this handbook you will find some practical information and some guidelines as to what is expected of you as a research student in the Department. Further information is available on the Department website at

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/computerscience/informationforcurrentstudents/home.aspx>

You can also obtain information from the Director of Graduate Studies, Chris Watkins, who has overall responsibility for the PhD and MSc by Research programmes, and you should contact him if you have any queries.

1.7 Research areas within your department

Research interests in the Department of Computer Science cover a number of areas, with particular emphasis on technical aspects of achieving high quality computer systems.

1.8 Master by Research

The Programme comprises:

1. Mandatory taught course worth 20 credits. Teaching lectures/labs over 11-week terms (either Autumn or Spring). Assessed by coursework and examination in May. In accordance with Section 4 Appendix 1 of the Research Degree Regulations, you must pass this course in order to qualify for the award of the award of MSc by Research.
2. Optional taught course(s) may be attended as extra-curricular including examination and credits or in audit mode (attend informally, no assessment or credits).
3. Individual dissertation submitted within 52 weeks of start date.

Taught Courses: Students' attention is drawn to Sections 9, 10, 11 and 13 of the College's [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#), which govern the registration on the mandatory course unit, the attendance and submission of work, and the method and conduct of assessment and possible outcomes for the course unit.

2 Support and advice

2.1 Research Degree regulations and Code of Practice

The [Research Degree regulations](#) set out the various standards that shape the regulatory framework of your research degree with the College. This contains a variety of essential information, ranging from admissions to academic progression and examination.

The [Code of Practice for Research Degree students and supervisors](#) sets out good practice alongside additional information on the policies and procedures that support the standards and expectations of the College.

2.2 Support within the Department

Your supervisor or a member of your supervisory team should always be the first point of contact for any questions or concerns you may have about your programme of study or your research. In addition, the Director of Graduate Studies (DoGS) exercises overall responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of the research students within your department.

2.2.1 Supervisors

On entry to the Department, each research student is allocated one or two Supervisors who are academic members of the Department. The Supervisors direct the research project and look after the student on a regular basis. They bear the major responsibility for advising the student on the conduct and progress of his or her work, for overseeing progress, and for providing support throughout the PhD/MSc. The responsibilities of the Supervisors are given in detail in the Code of Practice for the Academic Welfare of Postgraduate Research Students. A record of supervisor/student meetings is kept, including date of meeting and issues raised. In the case of Overseas students, this information may be reported to the UK Borders Agency.

2.2.2 Advisor

Each PhD and MSc student is also allocated an Advisor, an academic member of the Department working in an area more distant from the research project, who may be consulted on general matters if and when the need arises. The Advisor takes a more pastoral role and is not normally involved in supervising the PhD/MSc. The Advisor participates in the student's annual review and other progression meetings.

The Advisor is appointed early in the student's research programme (Advisors are nominated at the first meeting of the Postgraduate Management Committee, normally in October).

2.3 Student Services Centre

The Student Services Centre is located in the Davison Building and provides a single point of contact for all non-academic related queries including accommodation, fees, enrolment and graduation.

Phone: 01784 27 6641

Email: studentservices@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about the Student Services Centre](#)

2.4 Research Degrees team

The Research Degrees team within Student Administration maintains research degree students' central records, manages the administration for all research degree examinations within the College and is the first point of contact for scholarship queries. If you have a research degree query but are unsure whom to ask, contact Research Degrees and they will point you in the right direction.

Email: researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Visit the Doctoral School microsite for more details](#)

2.5 Support Advisory & Wellbeing

The College offers a high level of student wellbeing support which includes triage and support through Student Wellbeing, a BACP accredited Counselling Service, dedicated disability & dyslexia support, financial and budgeting advice and support for international students. There is also access to an NHS-run Health Centre on campus.

Phone: 01784 44 3394

Email: wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about Support Advisory & Wellbeing](#)

2.5.1 Student Wellbeing

Student Wellbeing provides advice and guidance to all students on personal and emotional wellbeing, to assist them in maintaining a healthy balanced lifestyle and to support them from transition to university and then in the continuation of their studies towards graduation. The Student Wellbeing team actively encourages all members of the campus community to alert them to concerns or signs of vulnerability to enable proactive engagement with intervention.

Phone 01784 44 3395 / 44 3132 / 27 6757

Email: wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about Student Wellbeing](#)

2.5.2 Disability & Dyslexia Services (DDS)

If you have a disability, long standing medical condition or specific learning difficulty, it is important that you bring it to the College's attention as soon as possible.

The College Disability & Dyslexia Services support dyslexic and disabled students and those with mental health or chronic medical conditions to demonstrate their academic abilities by arranging support packages, dyslexia assessments and study skills sessions.

Phone: 01784 27 6473

Email: disability-dyslexia@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about Disability & Dyslexia Services](#)

Your first point of contact for advice and guidance is your Disability & Dyslexia Services Network Member in your department:

Name: Senior Postgraduate Administrator
Phone: 01784 276769
Email: Alexander.Hale@rhul.ac.uk

2.5.3 *International Student Support Office (ISSO)*

The International Student Support Office offers advice to international students on visa queries, working in the UK, opening a bank account, processing federal loans and police registration.

Phone: 01784 27 6168
Email: internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about the International Student Support Office](#)

2.6 **Students' Union Royal Holloway University of London (SURHUL) Advice and Support Centre**

The Students' Union Royal Holloway University of London (SURHUL) is a registered charity and actively represents the students of Royal Holloway University of London. SURHUL promotes your needs and interests by offering employment, participation, entertainment, support and advice, your clubs and societies, catering, transport, volunteering, campaigning and advocacy.

Phone: 01784 24 6700
Email: helpdesk@su.rhul.ac.uk

[Find out more about the Students' Union](#)

2.7 **IT Service Desk**

The College IT Service Desk offers a range of support covering all aspects of IT services, such as email access, connecting to the College's wireless network, connecting devices such as iPads and making use of College printing facilities. The IT Service Desk will also be able to provide expert advice and guidance on a range of more specific IT issues, should you experience any problems. They offer a range of free software, including Microsoft Office 365, Sofos Antivirus, NVivo and SPSS.

Phone: 01784 41 4321
Email: itservicedesk@royalholloway.ac.uk
In person: Visit the IT support office in the Davison Library (ground floor)

[Find out more about IT services](#)

3 **Communication**

3.1 **Your College email account**

The College provides an email address for you free of charge and stores the address in a College email directory. Your account is easily accessible, both on and off campus, via [CampusNet](#) or direct via [Outlook.com](#). It is essential to note that this email account will be used for all routine

correspondence and news from the College. Your College email will very likely also be used for urgent communication, including correspondence from your supervisors so **it is vital that you check your emails regularly**.

In the event that you would prefer to use a commercial email service, you are able to connect your College email account so that it automatically forwards any messages you receive.

[Instructions how to forward mail](#)

3.2 Internal post

All post addressed to you in your department will be delivered to student pigeonholes (alphabetical by surname) in the post room (McCrea 122). At the end of each term student pigeonholes are cleared of accumulated mail so please try to ensure you check it at regular intervals. Please also note that Professional Services within the College will often send correspondence by internal post and your supervisor(s) may also return work to you via the pigeonholes.

3.3 Your contact information

It is imperative that the College has the most up-to-date contact details for you. As such, please ensure that you update the following via the [Campus Connect student portal](#) as quickly as possible once they are changed: your telephone number (mobile and landline), postal address (term-time and forwarding), email address and emergency contact details.

You can find out about how the College processes your personal data by reading the [Student Data Collection notice](#).

3.4 Dates for the Diary

The Research Degrees team will send a Doctoral School 'Dates for the Diary' email to your Royal Holloway email address at the end of each month, which provides details of events and opportunities for postgraduate research students which are coming up in the following month.

4 Facilities and resources

4.1 Facilities and resources within Computer Science

4.1.1 Office facilities

The Department provides a number of shared research laboratories (rooms 106, 109, 112) for research students. You are allocated an individual desk in one of these offices with a computer connected to the Computer Science server, together with filing cabinet and bookshelf space. You have 24 hour access to your lab via your College card. These rooms are fitted with a security alarm - please remember the security arrangements. The Journals Room (115) and kitchen are available as a common room.

You also have access to general office facilities, including printing, phone, fax, photocopying, post and stationery. These resources are provided for your postgraduate study. If you wish to use any of

these for private purposes, please discuss your requirements with the Department Manager, Ms Jo Hible.

One of the noticeboards in the Department is devoted to general interest information for postgraduates, such as academic conferences, details of College and EPSRC Postgraduate Training Workshops, Summer Schools, and so on.

At the end of your studies, you will be expected to vacate your desk, normally within four weeks of submitting your thesis. Your computer account and the use of a terminal will be made available to you whenever you need it up to the time of your viva, and afterwards if you have corrections to make to your thesis.

4.2 Computers

There are ten open access PC Labs available on campus which you can use, including three in the Computer Centre. For security reasons access to these PC Labs is restricted at night and at weekends by a door entry system operated via your College card.

How to find an available PC

The Department's main computer systems are Linux based servers. These can be accessed remotely from any computer lab on campus, or indeed from any computer in the world with an internet connection.

4.2.1 *The Departmental Computer Policy*

Priority in the use of terminals will always be given to those wishing to do academic work, rather than those using them for recreational purposes. Attempts at unauthorised access to any part of the departmental computer system, or the use of that system to attempt unauthorised access to College or external computer systems, will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter. Offenders may be reported to the police under the Computer Misuse Act 1990; the maximum penalty under this Act is six months imprisonment and an unlimited fine. Disciplinary action will be taken against any student storing or transmitting offensive material on the departmental computer system, including sexist, racist or pornographic text or pictures. The Technical Support Staff may deny access to any person suspected of misusing the system in any way. Students must not reveal their password to anyone. Use of the departmental System by students from outside the Computer Science Department must be authorised by the Head of Department. The Technical Support Staff regularly monitor the use of the departmental System, and records of a student's usage may be used in assessing their academic progress.

4.2.2 *Departmental website*

Research students are expected to create their own home pages on the departmental web site and to add their details, list their publications etc on their individual web page in *Pure*, which is the College's research database website, at

<http://pure.rhul.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/search.html?current=true>

4.3 Library

The College library, housed in the Davison Building, is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It provides more than 450,000 books and 36,000 journals in both print and digital format and a

dedicated postgraduate room on the 2nd floor. The library contains a large number of PCs and provides laptops to borrow.

Phone: 01784 44 3823

Email: library@royalholloway.ac.uk

The Information Consultant for your Department is Deborah Phillips who can be contacted at Deborah.Phillips@rhul.ac.uk, phone 01784 414065. The Department's Library Liaison representative is Professor Chris Watkins.

[Find out more about the library](#)

4.3.1 **Research Support**

The **Research Support team** in the library provides support on research information including copyright, Open Access publishing and developing your research information. The team can also provide advice for meeting research funders' requirements regarding Open Access. The team works with the Information Consultants to provide support throughout the research information cycle, from researching bids through to searching and accessing information for articles, books and other outputs through to submission of the PhD thesis and future career plans.

For training sessions and subject specific support, contact your Information Consultant who will be able to help you. Their details will be on the relevant **Subject Guide**, where you can also find details of resources available to you at Royal Holloway.

4.3.2 **Access to other libraries**

If you cannot find the specific items that you require in the College library, you also have access to the following:

- **Senate House Library**

This is the central library of the University of London, where you can borrow up to twelve books with a library ticket which you can obtain using your Royal Holloway College ID card

Address: Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU

Phone: 020 7862 8461

[Senate House Library website](#)

- **The British Library**

The British Library is the national collection and holds copies of all books published in the UK and Ireland, alongside an extensive collection from other countries. A Reader Pass will be issued subject to your need to see specific items in the collections. Royal Holloway theses are available via **Ethos**, the British Library's electronic theses service which contains approximately 400 000 records of UK theses including 160,000 available for immediate download of the full text.

Address: 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

Phone: 020 7412 7000

[British Library website](#)

- **SCONUL access scheme**

Royal Holloway participates in this national university access scheme which allows student to use other university libraries in the UK.

[SCONUL website](#)

4.4 Postgraduate research spaces

The College offers a number of areas specifically for postgraduate students outside of your department.

- **Research Postgraduate room in the library** (Davison Building)
The second floor of the new library building contains a **dedicated study area** for postgraduate students.
- **Doctoral Hub** (International Building INo30)
The **Doctoral Hub** provides study and social space specifically for postgraduate research students.
- **Arts Building - room AS17** (2nd floor)
The room contains fifteen PCs. It is open to all students (PG and UG) during normal office hours and to postgraduates and staff between 7pm and 7am (code obtainable from the Computer Centre).
- **Highfield Common Room**
The room is for those living in postgraduate accommodation on the Highfield site. It can be booked through the reception at Highfield. The room offers easy chairs, TV and video, and food- and drink-vending machines. The room must be vacated by 11pm.

4.5 Careers & Employability Service

The College's Careers & Employability Service, based in the Davison Building, runs a number of industry themed weeks and a range of standalone events during the academic year including a careers fair in October.

One to one appointments are available all through the year, where you can talk over your career ideas or get your CV, cover letter or application checked. You can also book a practice, in person or video interview.

The Careers & Employability Service holds six workshops over the academic year as part of the **Researcher Development Programme**. The workshops deal with finding academic and non-academic roles and making relevant applications and interview skills.

Phone: 01784 44 3073

Email: careers@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about the Careers & Employability Service](#)

5 Research skills and teaching

You should discuss your research skills training needs with your supervisor and adviser soon after you start your research degree and fill out the Research Student Training Log with details of courses that you should attend during the year.

5.1 Researcher Development Programme

The College's Researcher Development Programme is a series of transferable skills courses designed for research students to help you to develop your skills alongside your research. Some of these courses are specifically designed to help students complete their research degree, while others help develop more general skills and enhance your employability.

Email: pgrtraining@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about the Researcher Development Programme](#)

5.2 Teaching experience and training

The department may be in a position to offer you opportunities to undertake teaching and/or demonstrating opportunities. In the event that you are employed in a lead teaching role, you are required to register for the College's inSTIL programme (Programme in Skills of Teaching to Inspire Learning). If you are teaching as part of a team, you may choose to do this programme but are not required to do so. You must be engaged in teaching at the same time as participating in inSTIL, as teaching observations are an intrinsic element of the programme. The inSTIL programme is worth 15 M level credits and counts as seven days towards your skills training objectives.

Phone: 01784 41 6337

Email: edc@royalholloway.ac.uk

[Find out more about the inSTIL programme](#)

Opportunities for demonstrating work, to help support undergraduate teaching in laboratory sessions, will be offered, via Hourly Paid Teaching Staff contracts, to all PhD students at the beginning of each academic year. Teaching tasks include giving small group tutorials, demonstrating in lab sessions, coursework marking etc. The amount of teaching that can be offered depends on the teaching requirements in the Department but varies between £500 and £1,000 per annum. The tasks to be undertaken will be agreed at the beginning of each academic year following discussion between the student, the Director of Graduate Studies and the lecturer concerned. Occasionally research or administrative tasks in the Department may also be offered.

5.3 Training Plan

Although further discussions on your training may take place during the year during your supervisory meetings, at least once a year normally at the time of the annual review you, together with your supervisor(s) and adviser, should review the training completed in the previous year and draw up a plan for the following year. The training plan is likely to include both generic research skills courses and training which is specific to the research project. You should be fully engaged with the design of your training programme, as this is an important part of your personal development planning, and should be considering what will be of benefit to you in both the short and long term. Completion of the required training is a prerequisite for the upgrade from MPhil to PhD so will also be checked at the time of your upgrade.

5.4 Departmental Training

Most topics are now covered by the Researcher Development Programme. Additional postgraduate training seminars may be provided by the Department if required, in which case they will be advertised on the Department's postgraduate web pages. Students are invited to submit requests and suggestions for topics they would like covered.

5.4.1 *Study Skills Library*

The Department maintains a small library of books on various aspects of study skills, including techniques for writing reports and the PhD thesis. This library is run by the Director of Graduate Studies, and books may be borrowed by research students on request..

5.4.2 *Department Research Seminars*

These are given by visiting academics and members of staff of the Department. They are normally held on Tuesdays but may be scheduled at any time, especially out of term time. **All research students are expected to attend all Department Research Seminars.**

5.4.3 *Cakes talks*

Postgraduate students organise their own 'cakes' talks series to provide an informal environment for describing their research and practising presentation skills. Students in their second and third years, and MSc by Research students, are expected to give at least one such talk as part of their postgraduate training. The student's supervisor will normally attend.

Cakes talks take place usually on scheduled Wednesdays at 4pm in the Journals room (115). The student giving the cakes talk is responsible for providing cakes for the audience. The departmental charge card should be obtained from the office and cakes bought from the College Shop (up to the value of £10.00). The student should also e-mail the Director of Graduate Studies and the Postgraduate Administrator with the abstract of his/her talk some time in advance, so that the talk can be publicised to other students and academic staff.

5.4.4 *Postgraduate Research Colloquium*

Every year in May/June the Department runs a Postgraduate Research Colloquium. All research students give a short presentation on their research.

5.5 **Conferences and workshops**

Our aim is that PhD students should present a paper at some national and/or international conferences or workshops during their period of study. These enable you to meet workers in your research field from other institutions worldwide and are a very important source of inspiration and information. You can apply to the RTSG fund (see below) for support to attend conferences and workshops.

5.6 **EPSRC Graduate School Programme**

EPSRC funded PhD students must attend a total of 30 days training in transferable skills during their PhD study, including a training course during the second or third year, usually a UK Grad Programme course or equivalent. The UK Grad Programme (organised by Vitae) provides courses in transferable skills including networking and team working, communication and career management skills etc. Courses are generally three to four days long and can be residential or non-residential and are free for EPSRC funded students.

<https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/vitae-researcher-development-programmes/gradschools/gradschools?searchterm=GRADschools>

5.7 Research Training Support Grant (RTSG fund)

The Department has a fund, the RTSG (Research Training Support Grant), to support research students attending conferences, workshops, and training courses. Applications may also exceptionally be made to fund other research-related activity.

Application forms and procedures are available from the departmental office and from the postgraduate area of the Department's website. Applications are considered by the Department's Research Management Committee. The Department requires a short written report on the conference, workshop, or training course afterwards. This is a condition of receiving funding.

6 Your registration status

Further details regarding the areas outlined in this section can be found in the [Research Degree Regulations](#).

6.1 Study timelines

In order to retain your registration status as a postgraduate research student at Royal Holloway, you should be aware of the following timelines (if you are studying part-time, double the period). Please note that all PhD students start on the MPhil and must successfully complete their upgrade review in order to be eligible to submit for the PhD:

Level of programme	Deadline for upgrade to PhD	Deadline for submission of thesis
Masters by Research		1 year (FT)
MPhil		3 years (FT)
PhD	1 st attempt within 20 months (FT) 2 nd attempt (if required) within 24 months (FT)	4 years (FT)

As these deadlines are based on the start date on your student record, it is very important that this start date is recorded correctly. If your start date has been postponed, make sure you submit a [Change of start date](#) form within the first 6 months of your study. If you are sponsored on a Tier 4 (General) student visa, you are not permitted to change your start date in our records once you have used your CAS in a visa application.

These deadlines will be affected if you interrupt or change mode of attendance during your studies e.g. if you formally interrupt for 6 months, your submission deadline will extend by 6 months.

If you would like confirmation of your official start date or any of your deadlines, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk. If there are extenuating circumstances which make it unlikely that you will be able to meet these deadlines, it is essential that you raise this with your supervisor / supervisory team as soon as possible.

6.2 Interrupting your studies

The [Research Degree Regulations](#) permit you to interrupt your studies for up to twenty-four months (whether consecutively or otherwise) on financial, medical or personal grounds on the recommendation of your supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies. Any period of interruption will only normally be permitted on exceptional grounds and must be approved by the Vice Principal

on behalf of the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee (CBEEC). Students are also entitled to request an interruption of studies for reasons of [maternity, paternity or adoption leave](#).

[Find out more on how to interrupt your studies](#)

It is essential that you contact your supervisor or department at the very earliest possibility, should you find that you require a period of interruption to your studies. Please note, a back-dated (or retrospective) interruption will only be considered on the most exceptional grounds and in cases where the interruption sought is for a very limited period.

It is also essential that adequate supporting evidence is submitted with the request. See appendix B of the College's [Extenuating Circumstances guidance notes](#) for advice on this. If you are still uncertain what evidence is suitable, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk. Where applications are submitted that lack adequate supporting evidence, it is very likely that they will be denied or subject to significant delays.

During the course of your interruption of studies, you remain a registered student with the College and are subject to College Regulations. Unless you are interrupting your studies on the grounds of maternity, paternity or adoption, or in exceptional circumstances relating to mental health conditions, you do not have the right to use College facilities or receive supervision during the period of interruption, other than occasional access to your supervisor by arrangement.

6.2.1 *Interrupting if you are sponsored by the College on a Tier 4 (General) student visa*

If you interrupt your studies and you are in receipt of a Tier 4 (General) student visa sponsored by Royal Holloway, the College will withdraw its sponsorship for the duration of your interruption and you are obliged by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to leave the UK for this period.

[Find out more on how to renew your visa](#)

In exceptional circumstances, you may be permitted an authorised absence for a period less than sixty days. Under this type of authorised absence you are permitted to remain in the UK for the duration but this will impact the amount of leave remaining on your visa to complete your studies. Authorised absence must be approved in the same way as an interruption. To discuss the authorised absence process please contact student-administration@royalholloway.ac.uk.

6.2.2 *Interrupting if you are funded by a Research Council or College scholarship*

It is essential that, prior to requesting the interruption, you check with your funding body whether the conditions of your scholarship permit you to interrupt your studies. For advice about this, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk.

If you are funded by a Research Council, please be aware of the following:

- Although the thesis submission deadline set by the College may be extended due to the interruption, it may not be extended by your Research Council. In such cases, the earlier Research Council deadline takes precedence. If you have queries regarding this, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk.
- If you have requested up to 13 weeks sick leave, your thesis submission deadline will not normally be affected by this period of leave.

[Find out more about interrupting when you are funded](#)

6.3 Changing your mode of attendance

The [Research Degree Regulations](#) permit you to change your mode of study from full-time to part-

time within the first 2 years of your study and from part-time to full-time at any point.

If you are sponsored on a Tier 4 visa, you will not be permitted to change to part-time, under the restrictions of our sponsorship.

[Find out more about changing your mode of attendance](#)

6.4 Engagement with studies

According to the [Research Degree Regulations](#), if your attendance, academic performance or productivity is unsatisfactory, the termination of registration may be requested following a formal warning process. It is therefore essential that you alert your supervisor / supervisory team as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulties with engaging with your studies so that the appropriate support and advice can be provided.

6.4.1 *Withdrawal of Tier 4 (General) student visa for non-engagement with studies*

If you are in receipt of a Tier 4 (General) student visa sponsored by Royal Holloway, it is a requirement of your visa that you attend classes and supervisory sessions, and complete assessments (see section 5 of the [Code of Practice for Research Degree students](#) for more details).

The College has a legal responsibility to report any student admitted to the College on a student visa who does not appear to be meeting the attendance requirements to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). Therefore, if you fail to meet UKVI visa requirements and/or fail to respond to informal and formal warnings from the College in this regard, you could have your sponsorship withdrawn, your visa cancelled and your registration with the College terminated. The termination of registration due to a breach in visa requirements is conducted independently of the College's formal warning process and the decision is not open to appeal.

[Find out more about visas and immigration](#)

6.4.2 *Holiday*

You are entitled to up to eight weeks holiday within a 12 month period of registration. You should notify your supervisor in writing of any holidays taken.

7 Calendar for MPhil/PhD and MSc by Research students

This calendar gives an outline of the expected commitments full-time students will have over the year. The dates below are based on the usual starting date, which is the end of September. If your start date is at a different time of year you need to work out the number of months and amend the dates accordingly.

Part-time students are not expected to meet all these commitments every year, and should discuss with their Supervisor the participation appropriate to their part-time attendance.

These activities are in addition to the research that you are pursuing for your PhD/MSc by Research. An overall awareness of all your commitments will enable you to plan your time effectively.

PhD Students

Weekly	Tuesday 3pm: Department Research Seminar Teaching commitments (October–March) Training activities (all year) Meetings with Supervisors (frequency to be agreed with your Supervisor)
Annually Year 1	January: First Term report and informal review May: First Annual Review (report required) May/June: Postgraduate Colloquium Day
Year 2	May: Second Annual Review (report required) and assessment for Upgrade Between October and May: Give a Departmental Seminar and/or Cakes Talk May/June: Postgraduate Colloquium Day September: Deadline for successful Upgrade to PhD
Year 3	May: Third Annual Review (report required) Between October and May: Give a Departmental Seminar and/or Cakes Talk May/June: Postgraduate Colloquium Day
Year 4	By May: submit examination entry form end of September: Deadline for submission of PhD thesis
Other	Researcher Development Plan College Teaching Programme (InSTIL) External training courses EPSRC Graduate School Programme (3-4 day courses) Attend conferences/workshops

MSc by Research Students

Term 1	Mandatory taught course and optional taught course(s) By the end of Term 1 – research proposal finalised
13 weeks after start date	Research project commences
Weekly	Tuesday 3pm: Department Research Seminar Training activities (all year) Meetings with Supervisors (frequency to be agreed with your Supervisor)
Monthly	Monthly Review Meeting Report on progress
Other	May/June: Presentation at Postgraduate Colloquium Day (compulsory) Jan/May: Examination(s) for mandatory and optional (extra-curricular) taught courses. Submit examination entry form 2 months before dissertation submission deadline. 52 weeks after start date: deadline for submission of MSc dissertation.

8 Annual review and upgrade

Although you will meet with your supervisor regularly during the academic year, your academic progress is formally reviewed at least once every twelve months, unless you have interrupted your studies, in which case the review will take place not more than two months after you have formally resumed your studies.

Annual reviews, and upgrades for students registered for an MPhil/ PhD, are conducted in a face-to-face meeting between you and a panel. As a minimum the panel must consist of:

Annual review panel: At least one member of your supervisory team plus one member of staff completely independent of your supervisory team

Upgrade to PhD panel: Three members, with at least one member of your supervisory team and one member of staff who is completely independent of your supervisory team

It is important to remember that the upgrade from MPhil to PhD is not an automatic right. In the majority of cases, a panel will indicate that they are satisfied with a student's progress. In some cases, however, the panel may feel that the work presented does not meet the required standard for doctoral research. In such cases, your panel may permit you to have a second and final attempt.

See [section 6.1](#) for the deadlines by which the 1st and 2nd attempts at upgrade must take place.

At the end of your annual review/ upgrade meeting, your panel will fill in a form detailing the outcome of your review/upgrade, which provides you with an opportunity to add your own comments.

[Find out more about the annual review and upgrade process](#)

8.1 Departmental annual review and upgrade process

The review process in the Department is as follows:

Three-month report: In the first year the student writes a report on his/her first three months (usually October - December) describing the training received to date and plans for the remainder of the academic year. The report is short: (one or two pages of A4): and is signed by the Supervisor and the Advisor. These reports are received by the Postgraduate Management Committee in January, and discussed.

Research Colloquium: Every year from the first year the student will give a talk at the Annual Postgraduate Research Colloquium in the Department. This takes place in May or June each year.

First Annual Review/Viva: This should normally take place within the first eight months of study. The student writes a report (normally of approximately 3000–5000 words) describing the work carried out so far and assessing how far the objectives set after three months have been met. It also contains the plan for the second year. The student's training log must also be submitted.

Second Annual Review/Viva: This must take place within twenty months of starting study i.e. normally by May in the second year of study for full-time students (within 40 months for part-time students). The student is required to write a more substantial technical report with bibliography, which will form the basis of a case for upgrade from MPhil to PhD status. By this stage students are

expected to have done a substantial amount of research towards their PhD, and to have a draft table of contents of the PhD with a clear idea of what remains to be done. The student should also have completed a substantial part of the agreed research and skills training programme and given a technical talk within the Department.

Upgrade from MPhil to PhD status: Students are normally considered for upgrade from MPhil to PhD status at the Second Annual Review and Report, according to the timescale above. The student is recommended either to be upgraded from MPhil to PhD or to remain registered for the MPhil. In the event that your first attempt to upgrade from MPhil to PhD is unsuccessful, your panel may permit you to have a second and final attempt which must take place within twenty-four months of full-time study or forty-eight months of part-time study. These periods are defined in line with the College's *Research Degree Regulations* available online via <http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicssupport/regulations/home.aspx>.

Third-year (and later) students: By the end of May in the third year, the student submits a two-page summary of work done in the past year, a statement of what remains to be completed and the time required for each unfinished activity. This Annual Review and viva are held in June and the Supervisor again completes a report on the student's progress. If the student has not submitted a thesis by the end of the third year then he/she should have produced a substantial draft.

Writing Up (Continuation) year. The Regulations require students to submit their final thesis by the end of the fourth (i.e. Writing Up) year of study (for part-time students, by the end of the seventh year of study). One year only is allowed for Writing Up, for both full-time and part-time students, who pay the same fee for the Writing Up year.

Part-time students: The timescale for progression for part-time students is pro-rata with respect to the full-time equivalent. Their initial report is to be completed within twelve months. The student still submits a 3000-5000 word report every year, and has a Review and viva every year.

8.2 Special arrangements

If you have a disability, specific learning difficulty or impairment and wish to ask for reasonable adjustments to be made to the conduct of the viva, please discuss these with your supervisor ahead of the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

8.3 Extenuating circumstances

If you want the annual review or upgrade panel to be made aware of extenuating circumstances that have affected your study, you should submit your statement and supporting evidence to the panel Chair within the deadline set by the department for the submission of material for the upgrade or review.

In the case of circumstances relating only to your performance at the upgrade or review meeting, you should inform the panel members and submit the statement and supporting evidence within seven days of the meeting to your department.

9 Research degree exam process

[Overview of Masters by Research exam process](#)

[Overview of MPhil / PhD exam process](#)

9.1 Submission of thesis

At least two months prior to submitting your thesis (or dissertation for Masters by Research candidates), you should submit an [exam entry form](#) to researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk, so that your examiners can be approved and be invited in good time before you submit. If there is a delay in submitting the entry form, this does not affect your submission deadline but does mean that there may be a delay in the exam process once you have submitted the thesis.

The Research Degree Regulations stipulate that you must submit two bound copies of your thesis (via the Student Services Centre or by post) to the Research Degrees team and one electronic copy of your thesis to researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk by your thesis submission deadline.

See [section 6.1](#) for thesis submission deadline information.

Please refer to the [Research Degree Regulations](#) and the [Instructions and notes on submission](#) for the requirements of the thesis.

[Find out more about the research degree submission process](#)

9.1.1 *Royal Holloway proofreading scheme*

CeDAS oversees the [Royal Holloway proofreading scheme](#), which enables students to pay for an approved third-party proofreader to identify surface error in final drafts. Please note, the College does not permit the use of paid third-party proofreaders who are not part of this scheme.

9.1.2 *Random submission of thesis to Turnitin*

To help deter plagiarism, it is College policy to select a random sample of final research degree theses for submission to the plagiarism detection software, Turnitin, before the examination process is initiated. Exemptions are in place for theses covered by commercial confidentiality agreements. Turnitin reports are reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies in your department. Should concerns be raised, you will be notified by the department.

9.1.3 *Plagiarism*

The College takes the issue of plagiarism and other academic misconduct extremely seriously. Please refer to the College's [Regulations on Academic Misconduct](#) for what constitutes academic misconduct, as well as the procedures to be followed for the investigation of alleged academic misconduct and possible outcomes

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9.2 Viva

If you are submitting for a Masters by Research, the default is that you will be assessed on the dissertation alone and will not be required to have an oral examination (viva) on your dissertation.. Please note however that the examiners do have the discretion to request a viva once they have

read the dissertation.

If you are submitting for an MPhil or PhD, however, you will be required to participate in a viva to defend your thesis. The viva should be organised by your supervisor.

9.2.1 *Viva training*

The College offers viva training for research student's final oral examination via the [Researcher Development Programme](#).

9.2.2 *Special arrangements*

If you have a disability, specific learning difficulty or impairment and wish to ask for reasonable adjustments to be made to the conduct of the viva, please indicate this on your exam entry form.

For further details, see section 16 of the [Research Degree Regulations](#)

9.2.3 *Extenuating circumstances*

In the case of extenuating circumstances relating to your performance at your viva, you should inform ResearchDegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk prior to the viva, so that they can advise the examiners as appropriate and a decision can be made whether the viva should go ahead. If the viva does go ahead, you must submit an official request for the extenuating circumstances to be taken into account. This should be in writing and accompanied by supporting evidence and sent to ResearchDegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk within seven days of the viva.

9.2.4 *Audio recording of viva*

It is College policy that an audio recording will be made of all vivas.

- The recording will only be made during the viva between you and the examiners. No recording will be made of any discussion held before or after the viva when you are not present
- The recording will only be listened to in the event of an appeal made against the viva outcome and then only by a small number of staff who are involved in the investigation into the appeal
- The recording will be kept securely for 6 months after you have been informed of the outcome, after which time it will be destroyed

9.2.5 *Viva outcomes*

Please refer to the [Research Degree Regulations](#) for the range of outcomes available to your examiners.

9.3 Award process

9.3.1 *Approval process*

Once your examiners have confirmed to the Research Degrees team that you have satisfied the criteria to be awarded your Masters by Research, MPhil or PhD, the outcome and examiners' reports will be sent to your Director of Graduate Studies for initial approval and then the Faculty

Dean to approve on behalf of the CBEEC (College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee). The date of your award will be the 1st of the month following the Dean's approval.

If you have been awarded a Masters by Research, there are no further requirements before your award can be processed.

9.3.2 ***Electronic submission of the final MPhil or PhD thesis***

If you have been awarded an MPhil or PhD, you need to upload an electronic version of the finalised thesis on to the College's research information system, Pure, before the award can be processed. The College strongly recommends that you check the details of these requirements well in advance of submission as they contain important information on copyright and Open Access.

[Find out more about Pure](#)

9.3.3 ***Documentation***

Once your award has been processed by the Research Degrees team, you will be sent an award letter on College headed paper which includes the date of your award and your thesis title. Your degree certificate will be sent to you by the Diploma Production Office in central London within 3 – 6 months of the award letter.

9.3.4 ***Graduation***

As a postgraduate research student, you can attend either the Summer or the Winter Graduation ceremony.

To be eligible to attend the summer ceremony:

- Your award date must be no later than 1 June of that year
- You must have submitted your finalized thesis to Pure by 30 June at the very latest

To be eligible to attend the winter ceremony:

- Your award date must be no later than 1 November of that year
- You must have submitted your finalized thesis to Pure by 30 November at the very latest

[Find out more about the Graduation ceremonies](#)

10 Appeals and Complaints

10.1 Appeals

By submitting an academic appeal, you are making a request for a decision made by the College relating to your academic studies or academic progress to be reconsidered. This must be done within 15 working days of the date on which you were formally informed about the decision.

Sections 21 and 22 of the [Research Degree Regulations](#) set out the grounds on which you can appeal and the process to be followed.

If you have also submitted a complaint and your grounds for an academic appeal are effectively dependent on the outcome of the complaint, the College may determine that the complaint should be investigated first under the Complaints Procedure. The complaint investigation will be carried out by the College Secretary's Office and your appeal investigation will be delayed until the

complaint investigation is complete. The College will endeavour to complete these processes as quickly as possible. However, a thorough investigation takes time, so the College strongly advises that you continue to make plans on the basis of the decision as it currently stands.

[Find out more about academic appeals](#)

10.2 Complaints

A complaint is where, as a result of your experience at the College, you feel dissatisfied about the provision of services or facilities and would like your concerns to be investigated. Your concerns may be investigated under the [Complaints procedure](#) but normally only within three months of the incident or action being complained about.

If you have a complaint relating to any aspect of the department, or its staff, or to any academic or College matter, it is recommended that you first discuss it informally with your supervisor(s), advisor, Director of Graduate Studies or another member of staff in the department as soon as possible. In the majority of cases complaints can be resolved through such an informal route.

In those cases where the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, you may want to submit a formal complaint.

[Find out more about complaints](#)

11 Student charter

The College aims to bring all students into a close, harmonious relationship with each other and with the wider community. The [Student charter](#) outlines how you can support the College in achieving these goals and also seeks to encourage you to act as an effective ambassador for the College, during your time as a student and later as part of the College's alumni

This charter is not intended to constitute a binding agreement but is offered as a framework of aspirations, designed to be of benefit primarily to you as a student and to underpin the College's aim of ensuring that you have a highly enjoyable and rewarding experience during the course of your research degree.

12 Feedback

It is vital that the Department should know of any concerns you have about the progress of your work or of any suggestions for improving the research environment.

You have several ways of making your views known:

- by talking to your Supervisor(s), and perhaps by following up your discussion with a letter or e-mail, so that your comments can be forwarded if appropriate.
- by contacting the Director of Graduate Studies or the Head of Department, either to arrange a meeting or again by putting your ideas in writing.
- through the Department Postgraduate Student-Staff Committee (see below)

- in the on-line survey (see below) that you will be asked to complete as part of the Annual Review process (see also the Section on Annual Review and upgrade).
- through the Students' Union if your concerns or ideas relate to the College rather than to the Department.

12.1 Departmental PGR student-staff committee

This provides the formal mechanism for communication, feedback, and discussion between research students and staff in the Department. The Committee meets three times a year. It includes four PhD representatives (first year, second year, third-year-and-beyond and international), one MSc by Research representative, the Director of Graduate Studies, and one other member of academic staff. The student representatives are elected near the beginning of each academic year and their names will be listed on the postgraduate section of the departmental website. The student representatives can raise any problems or concerns affecting research students as a whole. The Committee reports to the Postgraduate Management Committee which reports to the Departmental Board.

12.2 Surveys

As a research degree student, you will be asked to complete an online survey to feedback on your experience each year. This anonymous survey is really important and helps us make improvements around the College and tells us how well we're doing. It's a chance for us to gain valuable data to inform enhancements to the experience of postgraduate research students.

13 Paid work

According to the [Code of Practice for Research Degree students](#), any paid work you undertake to support your studies should not exceed 20 hours per week if you are registered as a full-time student. If you are a part-time student, there is no limit.

If you are an international student, you must also ensure that any working restrictions, as stated on your visa, are also adhered to.

14 Research abroad

If you are undertaking research abroad, please ensure that you agree this with your supervisor and ensure that details of the location and dates have been approved prior to undertaking the research.

If you are sponsored by the College for a Tier 4 (General) student visa, please ensure that you receive approval from your supervisor prior to undertaking the research so that the College can update details of your study location with the UKVI, as required by the UKVI. If you do not do this you will be risking the continuation of your Tier 4 sponsorship with the College.

15 Health and Safety Information

General health and safety policies

Any health and safety concerns should be brought to the attention of the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator, Adrian Thomas, McCrea Building, Room 355A, telephone number 01784 443428, e-mail address Adrian.Thomas@rhul.ac.uk or the College Health and Safety Office.

The Department is committed to ensuring the safety, health, and welfare of all staff, students, and visitors. You are expected to adhere to the following whenever you are in the Department.

The Computer Science Department is a low risk environment, but you should still take precautions by storing the emergency number for Campus Security in your mobile phone (01784 44 3888). There are phones in all the PG working labs which can be used for this purpose; use 444 from these phones.

15.1 Code of practice on harassment for students

The College is committed to upholding the dignity of the individual and recognises that harassment can be a source of great stress to an individual. Personal harassment can seriously harm working, learning and social conditions and will be regarded and treated seriously. This could include grounds for disciplinary action, and possibly the termination of registration as a student.

The College's [Code of Practice on personal harassment for students](#) should be read in conjunction with the [Student Disciplinary regulations](#) and the [Complaints procedure](#).

15.2 Lone working policy and procedures

The principles and guidance around lone working are often highly applicable to the nature of postgraduate research and the variety of activities this might involve. As such, awareness and planning around any lone working you may be required to undertake are essential.

Any health and safety concerns should be brought to the attention of the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator, Mr Adrian Thomas, McCrea Building, Room 355A, telephone number 01784 443428, e-mail address Adrian.Thomas@rhul.ac.uk or the College Health and Safety Office. It is likely that most activities will take place on College premises. However, the principles also apply to students undertaking duties off campus.

[Find out more about the College's Lone working policy and procedure](#)

16 Equal opportunities statement and College Codes of Practice

16.1 Equal opportunities statement

The College values diversity and promotes equality of opportunity for all, both in its employment practices and admissions decisions, and in its teaching, learning and research activities.

[Royal Holloway's equal opportunities statement](#)