



DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA, THEATRE AND DANCE

APPENDIX TO THE MPhil/PHD DEGREE STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024/25

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the [core MPhil/PhD student handbook](#)

The Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance sits within the School of Performing and Digital Arts, which covers the following disciplines: Drama, Theatre and Dance, Media Arts, and Music.

Welcome to your department

We are one of the leading Drama, Theatre and Dance departments in the country. Our academic members of staff offer an unrivalled breadth of historical, global, and practice-based approaches to the field. The department has a vibrant undergraduate body and hosts one of the largest postgraduate communities in the country.

Research students at Royal Holloway are valued members of the lively academic community and occupy an important place in the University's teaching and research activities. For day-to-day concerns and subject-specific research training, your first port of call is your supervisor or Dr Aneta Mancewicz (aneta.mancewicz@rhul.ac.uk), who is the Department PGR Lead, or Professor Tina K. Ramnarine (tina.k.ramnarine@rhul.ac.uk), who is based in the Music department.

Postgraduate research students pursue independent research in academic departments, leading to the award of the degree of Masters by Research, MPhil or PhD. Successful progress depends primarily on your own efforts, supported by those of your supervisors, but also on the research environment in the department and School, and on the quality of your research training.

The Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance is in the [Katharine Worth Building](#).

Key contacts

Role	Name	Email	Phone	Room
Executive Dean	Professor Roberta Mock	Roberta.Mock@rhul.ac.uk	TBC	TBC
Head of Department	Professor Jen Parker-Starbuck	Jen.Parker-Starbuck@rhul.ac.uk	01784 414106	KWB102
School Director of PGR Education	Professor Tina K. Ramnarine, FBA	Tina.K.Ramnarine@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443947	WT204
Department PGR Lead	Dr Aneta Mancewicz	aneta.mancewicz@rhul.ac.uk	01784 414336	SHLodge2
School helpdesk*		PDA-School@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276885	KWB01/02

* For the majority of your non-academic related issues, please contact the Doctoral School. However, for queries about teaching contracts, expenses and study space within the school, please contact the School of PDA helpdesk.

Staff

[List of academic staff in the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance](#)

Production Manager: Sean Brennan (S.Brennan@royalholloway.ac.uk)

If you have an enquiry about the use of performance spaces for production work, you should contact the Production Manager.

Production Technician: Liz Blanchard (Liz.Blanchard@royalholloway.ac.uk)

Booking of rehearsal space can be made by emailing the Production Technician by 16:00 on the preceding Thursday evening outlining location and requested times.

Research areas

Research students are encouraged to involve themselves in research-related activities and events – ranging from seminars and platform discussions to symposia – organised by the three departments in the School of Performing and Digital Arts, and by the Humanities and Arts Research Institute (HARI). These provide valuable opportunities for engagement with other students and academics, and for gaining a breadth of academic experience.

[Find out more about HARI](#)

The department's research places a strong emphasis on how drama, theatre and dance articulate questions of diversity, equality and social justice, engagement with the public sphere, understanding the present through critical engagement with the past, international perspectives on performance, and new forms of creative practice. Our research informs our teaching and learning at all levels and aims to connect people within and across varied intellectual disciplines, publics, cultures and communities. The department is committed to theoretically informed enquiry throughout the research areas that define our work. PGR students are warmly encouraged to participate in all research seminars and the activities of the department and School.

[Find out more about research within the department](#)

The department also runs an occasional series of research afternoons during the academic year. This is an ideal opportunity for all postgraduates to receive feedback and to participate in the academic life of the department. The University runs an annual PGR Conference which you will be invited to attend, and the School also runs occasional conferences which are often organized in collaboration with PGR students.

PLATFORM - Postgraduate e-Journal of Theatre & Performing Arts

[Platform](#) is a peer-reviewed international journal devoted to postgraduates, postdoctoral researchers, and entry-level academics in the fields of theatre, dance and performing arts. *Platform*, as its name suggests, works to provide a space for postgraduate researchers and entry-level academics to have their work disseminated through online and print publication. *Platform* is run by PhD students and recently celebrated its tenth birthday: many former members of the editorial team are now in senior academic posts nationally and internationally, and the journal is a significant part of our research environment. The journal operates a peer review system: this ensures that contributors not only have the opportunity to publish their research, but also receive valuable feedback. Please consider getting involved: working as part of the *Platform* team is a great way to make connections and develop your professional skills. If you would like to get involved in *Platform*, please contact the co-editor of the journal Jon Berry (Jon.Berry.2021@live.rhul.ac.uk)

Student committees

The School of Performing and Digital Arts' PGR Staff-Student Action Meeting meets once a term. Please get in touch with the School Director of PGR Education, Professor Tina K. Ramnarine (Tina.K.Ramnarine@rhul.ac.uk) if you would like to join. If you would like to raise an issue to be discussed there, please contact the Doctoral School.

Ways of Working

The School of Performing and Digital Arts also provides a series of training workshops called 'Ways of Working'. This programme complements the University's Researcher Development Programme but is focused on Arts and Humanities disciplines: the aim is to encourage a sense of collegiality and interdisciplinary enquiry amongst research students in the School. You will be sent (via your Royal Holloway email address) details of the "Ways of Working" programme at the start of the academic year: please note there is no need to book in advance for these sessions and students in their first year are expected to attend the majority of programme if possible.

Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance: Code of Practice

General use of performance spaces

Students who work in the Caryl Churchill Theatre (CCT) and the Boilerhouse must recognise that they are designated as **no eating, no drinking and no smoking areas**. The Boilerhouse theatre is comprised of a sprung wooden dance floor which is protected by a layer of oil tempered hardboard. Shoes and items of furniture are not permitted on the exposed dance floor.

Rehearsal Studio One also has a sprung dance floor. Shoes, bags and items of furniture are not

permitted in this room. Shelving is available in the corridor for the safe storage of shoes and bags.

Room booking

Room booking for 'out of class time' rehearsal space is organized on Friday lunch times between 13:00 and 14:00 by the Production Technician in room 007 (term time only). Postgraduate students do not need to attend this session. Instead advanced booking of rehearsal space can be made by emailing the Production Technician by 16:00 on the preceding Thursday evening outlining location and requested times for the following Monday to Sunday inclusive.

Priority is given to postgraduate students during the booking process and the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance will ensure that spaces are divided equally. A number of rehearsal spaces are reserved for exclusive use by Postgraduates. Students are reminded that during the final weeks of term there is large demand for additional space, and we ask that students are considerate of colleagues when submitting requests.

Vacation arrangements

The department makes every effort to accommodate booking requests during July and August. Any such requests are agreed at the discretion of the Technical team and depend on a number of factors including staff availability.

Students wishing to book a room within the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance must follow the guidelines laid out below. Failure to follow these guidelines can result in rehearsal room booking privileges being lost.

- The person who books a room or space for out of hours rehearsal is made responsible for that room or space and must be present for the entire period of the rehearsal.
- Key note procedure: the key note is to be taken to the Security Department in Founders by the responsible person and exchanged for the building key or swipe card. The responsible person will leave their session card with the Security Department as a deposit which will be returned once the key has been given back to the security office at the end of the rehearsal session.
- In exceptional circumstances a key note maybe issued for use at the School Administration office in the Katharine Worth Building. As with Security Department procedure the student's session card will be left as a deposit in the Administration Office. KEYS MUST BE RETURNED TO THE OFFICE FROM WHICH THEY WERE COLLECTED AND UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES ARE KEYS TO BE HANDED OVER TO THIRD PARTIES. Students are reminded that session cards will not be returned to students without the key being first returned to the issuing office in Founders or the Katharine Worth Building.
- The student who has been issued a key or swipe card is responsible for ensuring at the end of the rehearsal session all relevant doors and windows are locked; all lights turned off; curtains closed and where relevant alarms set.
- During weekends, users of the Department's spaces have a collective responsibility to ensure that rooms and buildings are secure throughout the period they are in use. Guidelines covering lock up and security responsibilities are posted on the notice board next to the room booking timetables.
- All Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance doors are locked at 18.00 on weekday evenings and must remain locked for all evening and weekend rehearsals.

Evening and weekend rehearsal responsibilities

Students are reminded that the out of hour's rehearsal facilities are only available to members of the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance.

Students using the out of hour's rehearsal facility in the department are expected to be in department buildings by 18.00 on weekday evenings when exterior doors are locked. After this time students must either knock on the door or use a mobile phone to contact rehearsal colleagues.

Doors to the Katharine Worth Building and the Boilerhouse should never be left open either on the latch or wedged with furniture.

Financial support

[Read the School of Performing and Digital Arts' PGR Research Expenses Policy](#)

Society for Theatre Research (STR):

Offers small research grants ranging from £100 to £2,000 per year (grants of £200 – 500 are more frequent). The application deadline for grants is usually 1st February with results announced in May. Check the website for grant and application details.

DramaHE Glynne Wickham Scholarship:

DramaHE (formerly the Standing Conference of University Drama Departments - SCUDD) offers £200 per application to fund research students intending to give papers at conferences. Applications must be made no later than two months before the conference date – so plan ahead. Several students in the department have been successful in applying for awards. Details and application forms can be found on the DramaHE website.

Books and learning resources

Please note that the department's Library Information Specialist is Rachel White (Rachel.White@royalholloway.ac.uk). You will be introduced to Library and Information Services, and the University's Archival provision, as part of your formal induction at the start of your studies. Please feel free to contact Rachel if you have any questions about Library provision, if you would like to request that the Library purchases a new book, or if you wish to organise an inter-library loan.

Drama Online

Drama Online is an online resource set up by the publishers Faber & Faber and Bloomsbury Methuen Drama. The University has paid a subscription to enable you to access plays in this database free of charge. The Drama Online platform includes plays by more than 150 playwrights, and audiovisual recordings of key contemporary productions at the RSC, National Theatre, and Globe (amongst others). Please check out this excellent resource.

To access Drama Online, log into the site, using your Royal Holloway username and password, and then search for the relevant play via the 'plays', 'playwrights and practitioners' or 'periods' menus on the homepage. The plays can be read easily and comfortably online (the formatting and pagination are clear and user-friendly).

If you are on campus (or connecting from home via CampusAnywhere), you can [access Drama Online here](#)

Bookshops

We can recommend some very good bookshops in London, including the following:

Theatre bookshops:

- [National Theatre Bookshop](#) - South Bank, London SE1 9PX
- [The Calder Bookshop & Theatre](#) – 51 The Cut, London SE1 8LF (they also host theatre productions, film screenings, and other events at the back of the bookshop)

Second-hand bookshops:

- [Quinto](#) - 72 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 70BB
- [Skoob](#) - 10 Brunswick Centre, London WC1N 1AE
- [Any Amount of Books](#) - 56 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0QA
- [Judd Two Books](#) - 82 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AG
- [Henry Pordes Books](#) - 58-60 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0BB

It's worth looking closely at online sources: for example, [Abebooks](#) is an excellent resource for second-hand books.

Fellow students occasionally offer their own used textbooks for sale at reduced prices, so check the notice boards in the department.

Theatre performances

You are advised to make the best use of the close proximity of London; your supervisor may specify visits to specific events. In addition, the department has a number of performances taking place throughout the year at all levels of student activity: these include the Finalist Festival and the MA Season in the summer term. You are encouraged to attend these and Student Workshop productions. If you wish to be involved with Student Workshop productions (and they would welcome your involvement!), check on the notice board, or follow their Instagram account (@thestudentworkshop) for more details of their planned activities, events, performances and socials.

Support

This is your research. Your supervisory team, the School Director of Postgraduate Research Education, and the academic, administrative and technical staff of the department and School are here to advise and help in any way they can. It is important that you take responsibility for the progress of your research and alert your supervisor to any problems that you might be encountering at an early stage.

The mutual responsibilities of student, supervisor, the department and the University are laid out clearly in the University Code of Practice for research degree students and supervisors. Please ensure you download this and read it carefully.

Celebrate your successes

Throughout your studies, please let us know of your achievements and successes. If you are invited to speak at a major conference, if you publish an article or deliver a public lecture, if you win a prize or award connected to your research, or if you are involved in a production or performance in whatever capacity – please do let us know. We are pleased to publish news stories on the departmental website about the activities of our research students, and this helps raise the profile of their research (for some examples of news stories, [check the website here](#)); we also regularly tweet about the activities of our students (@RHULDrama).

Please contact Dr Aneta Mancewicz (aneta.mancewicz@rhul.ac.uk) with your news.

Practice-based research

[Find out more about practice-based research in the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance](#)

Annual reviews 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, regardless of whether you are studying full or part time.

- [Core annual review details](#)
- [Annual reviews in the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance](#)

All MPhil / PhD students start their programme on the MPhil and have to pass the upgrade review meeting in order to be eligible to submit for the PhD.

- [Core upgrade details](#)
 - [Upgrades in the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance](#)
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Preparation for your viva

In advance of your oral examination, you are entitled to a 'mock' viva to help you prepare for the viva. You might also look out for viva training courses run by the University's Researcher Development Programme.

During the viva process, the examiners have a checklist of criteria and will need to be satisfied that your thesis meets these criteria before recommending you for the award of the degree. These criteria are, that the thesis:

- is genuinely the work of the candidate
- forms a distinct contribution to knowledge of the subject
- affords evidence of originality by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power
- is an integrated whole and presents a coherent argument
- gives a critical assessment of the relevant literature
- describes the method of research and its findings
- includes discussion of those findings and how they advance the study of the subject
- demonstrates a deep and comprehensive understanding of the field of study and the capacity for objective judgement in complex situations
- is satisfactory as regards literary presentation
- includes a full bibliography and references
- demonstrates research skills relevant to the thesis
- is of a standard to merit publication in whole, in part or in a revised form
- is of an appropriate length for the discipline/ subject.