

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

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 Psychology sits within the School of Life Sciences and the Environment, which covers the following disciplines: Biological Sciences, Earth Sciences, Geography, Health Studies and Psychology.

Welcome to your School

As Director of PGR Education, I am delighted to welcome you to the School of Life Sciences and the Environment. The School is one of the largest and most diverse in the University; our vibrant research culture spans the arts and humanities and social and natural sciences. The School – which brings together Biological Sciences, Earth Sciences, Geography, Health Studies and Psychology – is designed to encourage world-leading research that spans disciplinary boundaries and addresses some of the most significant planetary challenges we face.

Postgraduate research students are central to the vitality of the School's research culture and I hope that you will find here a stimulating and supportive environment in which to pursue your studies. In the coming days you will meet the supervisory team who will offer you day-to-day guidance during your research project. You will also be introduced to the subject-specialist research groups and centres that exist at departmental level to support the wider community of researchers working in particular fields or disciplinary areas.

You will find support in your studies not only from your immediate supervisory team but also from the PGR Lead in your home department – Dr Laurence Bindschedler (Biological Sciences), Dr Rebecca Fisher (Earth Sciences), Dr Sasha Engelmann (Geography), Dr Anne Majumdar (Health Studies) and Dr Shiri Lev-Ari and Dr Robert Lachlan (Psychology) – and from the Doctoral School. We are here to help, so please do not hesitate to ask questions or to seek advice, particularly as you settle into your studies.

Dr Rebecca Fisher, Director of PGR Education for the School of Life Sciences and the Environment.

Welcome to your department

Within the University, the Department of Psychology offers a unique environment for PhD students. We are ranked joint 3rd out of 93 UK departments in the latest Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise and offering a thriving research culture and a particularly vibrant postgraduate community, with 95% of research classified as 4* (world leading) or

3* (internationally excellent) in terms of originality, significance and rigour. As a student studying toward a research degree, our PGRs have the opportunity to learn from internationally renowned academics and researchers. Your successful progress will depend primarily on your own efforts, supported by your supervisory teams, but also by the research environment in the department and the quality of the research training they receive.

The Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) Programme is led by Dr Robert Lachlan (Robert.Lachlan@rhul.ac.uk) and Dr Shiri Lev-Ari (Shiri.Lev-Ari@rhul.ac.uk), the Department PGR co-Leads. They are supported by Dr Hiro Imada (Hiroataka.Imada@rhul.ac.uk) whose main focus is on training, Dr Steven Hammett (S.Hammett@rhul.ac.uk), whose main focus is on finance, Professor Amina Memon (Amina.Memon@rhul.ac.uk), whose main focus is on supporting PGR community, and Prof Anat Bardi (Anat.Bardi@rhul.ac.uk). The team also oversees the progress reviews of our PhD candidates (i.e., annual reviews and upgrades). Day to day administration of the Postgraduate Research is carried out primarily by the Doctoral School.

Many academic staff are located in the main part in the Wolfson building (rooms with the prefix 1 are located on Level 1 [Ground Floor], prefix 2 on Level 2 [1st Floor] and so on) or in the John Bowyer Building. Staff have drop-in hours that are posted online (updated weekly) where you check to be sure that they are in and available if you have a quick question. If you think you may need more time, or cannot make it to a drop-in hour, it is often helpful to book a time with the member of staff to ensure that they are available. Staff drop-in hours can be found on the [Psychology Student Information Moodle page](#).

Key contacts

Role	Name	Email	Phone	Room
Executive Dean	Professor Klaus Dodds	K.Dodds@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443580	QB122
Head of Department	Professor Hanna Zagefka	Hanna.Zagefka@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443715	JBB 011
School Director of PGR Education	Dr Rebecca Fisher	R.E.Fisher@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443628	QB244
Department PGR co-Lead	Dr Shiri Lev-Ari	Shiri.Lev-Ari@rhul.ac.uk	01784 4436547	Wolfson 342/1
Department PGR co-Lead	Dr Robert Lachlan	Robert.Lachlan@rhul.ac.uk	01784 443710	Wolfson 237
School helpdesk*		LSE-School@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276884	Wolfson 118

* For the majority of your non-academic related issues, please contact the [Doctoral School](#). However, for queries about teaching contracts and expenses (in most cases), please contact the School of Life Sciences and the Environment helpdesk. For space within your department, please contact your departmental staff.

Staff

[List of staff within the Department of Psychology](#)

Research environment

The department's academic staff are world-leading researchers in areas across the whole discipline of psychology, with particular expertise in sensory systems, language, memory and attention, social and affective cognition, and health and wellbeing. Its research engages a wide range of populations including clinical and developmental groups, uses a wide range of methodological techniques and has considerable social and political impact.

Research within the department is structured around four main groupings:

- [Social and Affective Processes](#)
- [Language, Memory and Attention](#)
- [Perception, Action and Decision Making](#)
- [Health and Well-being](#)

These groups provide a lively and interactive environment for postgraduates and academic staff. Each group meets frequently and arranges regular seminars and talks with internal and external speakers. These groups also serve as a useful forum for discussing current research activities, formulating ideas, sharing resources, discussing journal articles and problem solving. PGRs should expect to become active members of their relevant research group and are also expected to participate in wider departmental events such as seminars and colloquia.

In addition to our research groups, our department fully supports open science initiatives with expectations that staff and PGRs preregister study aims, hypotheses, design and analyses plan wherever possible, submit preregistered reports, and to adhere to open data practices. You can find out more about our Open Science guidance [here](#).

Staff-Student Action Meeting and providing feedback

The anonymous feedback from PGRs, methods outlined below, provides valuable insights and information to maximise their research and learning experience. There have been numerous occasions on which student views have led to changes in how teaching, learning and progress evaluations are conducted in the department. The department and University take PGRs' views seriously and would like them to be involved in the process of shaping departmental policy. The feedback from PGRs across the University is monitored and discussed at the level of the Doctoral School, to guide future changes of the programme.

One of the highest priorities within the Psychology Department is to help their PGRs realise their academic potential while at Royal Holloway. For this reason, the department monitors the success both of its teaching/supervision and its PGRs' learning. It also monitors the success of its administration, to make sure that it has helpful and efficient mechanisms in place to facilitate progress throughout each student's research degree.

PGRs' opinions and concerns are of crucial importance as part of this monitoring process. The department relies on PGRs to let us know where they think improvements could be made.

Within the constraints of time, money and resources, the department makes strenuous efforts to accommodate the balance of student views. If a student has criticisms to make, the department hopes that they will be as constructive as possible in the way that they articulate them. For example, it is always especially helpful if a student can suggest a solution to a problem in addition to highlighting it in the first place.

Feedback channels

PGRs have several ways of making their views known as individuals or through their elected representative (see below):

- by talking to members of their supervisory team and by following up their discussion with a letter or email, so that their comments can be forwarded as appropriate;
- by talking to their PhD Advisor who is able to provide guidance, advice, and advocate on their behalf;
- by forming focus groups – these are confidential meetings where groups of PGRs air their views and any concerns about the department;
- by contacting the Department Postgraduate co-Leads, the Director of Research or the Head of Department to arrange a meeting or contact them in writing;
- by contacting the Director of Postgraduate Research (PGR) Education;
- through the School's Postgraduate Research Staff-Student Action Meeting;
- via the University online feedback questionnaire for research degrees. This internal survey is conducted annually and is available to complete online from early April until mid-May. It is important that each student takes the time to complete this questionnaire as it is often a requirement for their annual review or upgrade. Each alternate year, the University also takes part in the national Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES); or
- by contacting the Students' Union, if their concerns or ideas relate to the University rather than to the department.

Staff-Student Action Meeting

The School of Life Sciences and the Environment is keen to hear the views of its postgraduate research students through its School-level Staff-Student Action Meeting. Meetings are held termly, beginning in the autumn.

Postgraduate representatives from the School's four departments will be appointed and the Students' Union will also provide those representatives with appropriate training and support in order to allow them to undertake their roles effectively.

The Meeting is an important forum in which issues that concern postgraduate students particularly can be aired and in which solutions can be discussed and identified.

Psychology Society

The Psychology Society is a Student Union Society that is organised and run entirely by students.

The Society has an important social function within the department, since it organises a number of parties and social gatherings. These include weekly social events during term in which students may go down to Crosslands or Medicine for a couple of drinks. It also arranges one-off events such as festive meals, a trip into London, or a night out at the Union. This gives all psychology students a chance to get to know other students within the department.

The Society also invites guest speakers to address the Society on topics of interest in Psychology, giving students an opportunity to broaden their interest in psychology. In these optional seminars, guest speakers are invited to discuss a particular topic and students are given an opportunity to actively discuss these relevant issues and topics in psychology with others.

Information about the Society's activities is available on the department's notice boards. Students are encouraged to email the Psychology Society president, secretary, or treasurer to ask what's going on. Contact information is available via the Psychology Student Information Pages on Moodle and the [Psychology Society Student Union Page](#).

Research skills training

The Department of Psychology offers a series of training sessions known as Research Training Seminars (RTS). These are aimed at developing its postgraduate research students' research skills and career from PhD onwards. The seminars will run on advertised Wednesdays throughout terms 1 and 2 in room W128, from 11pm – 1pm unless otherwise specified. A full list of seminar sessions can be found on the [Research Training Seminar Moodle page](#). Any slides used during a seminar will be posted on this page.

One of the aims of the seminars is to contribute to the PGR training requirements and so research students in particular, should take note of which sessions are compulsory/recommended for their year group and put these in their diary early.

Each 2-hour Research Training Seminar attended by a student counts as half a day towards their skills training objectives.

PGRs will be advised of the seminar dates for each academic year, early in term one of that year and will be sent a reminder approximately 1 week before each of the sessions are due to be held. PGRs must indicate their intention to attend each seminar session no later than the day before. Slides from these sessions must not be distributed outside of Royal Holloway.

If sufficient numbers of PGRs require training in specialist research methods (e.g., SEM, EEG, fMRI or eye-tracking), it may be possible to organise training as needed. Please get in touch with Dr Hiro Imada (Hiroataka.Imada@rhul.ac.uk).

In addition to the training sessions shown above departmental experts are happy to be consulted by students with regard to particular skills areas. All supervisors have access to a full list of experts in a wide range of skills in the department. Should students need to consult an expert (e.g., programming support, NHS ethics, statistics and research techniques, power analysis), they can discuss this with their supervisor who will point them to the relevant member of staff.

Teaching and teacher training

The department prides itself on its excellent ratings for teaching as well as in research. Traditionally teaching is done by the academic staff, but that there may be paid opportunities for PGRs to support teaching*. When opportunities come available, PGRs will be contacted, but you may also want to (after discussion with their supervisor) confirm with the Psychology Director of Teaching and Learning (DoTL) if you are interested in specific opportunities. Teaching is an important aspect of being an academic, and even if you are not planning an academic career, through teaching you

can develop core skills to have for any job. Thus, teaching is a valuable part of your skills development.

In addition to the University teaching training (inSTIL), the department offers training sessions to support teaching within Psychology. If departmental training overlaps with specific inSTIL modules or classes, PGRs can email the Educational Development Team (Fiona.Prendergast@rhul.ac.uk) and ask for an exemption from those specific inSTIL classes. This has been introduced to address feedback of duplication across sessions. Usually the departmental training will be more specific/compulsory and so should therefore be prioritised.

** PGR teaching opportunities typically encompass delivering and/or supporting lab classes, workshops, seminar teaching, and marking. Materials will be prepared by academic members of staff, although there will often be opportunities to feed into this and get some course development experience if you are interested!*

Additional training

PGRs in the first instance should seek training in the department (Research Training Seminars), from the University level ([Researcher Development Programme](#)) or in our ESRC SeNSS DTP partner institutions (UEA, Essex, Goldsmiths, Kent, Reading and Sussex). If the required training is not available, they may seek training from external institutions. Where possible, postgraduate research students should pay for training from their research and travel budgets, with supervisors making up any shortfall. You may also be eligible to apply for funding for the Elaine Funnell Award (information in the "Funding Support" section below) and Doctoral School Research Awards. If sufficient funds are not available, please contact Dr. Robert Lachlan.

Financial support

Individual research expense budgets

All PGRs have a Research Budget; this may come from their funding source (e.g., PhD studentships associated with grants, SeNNS studentships) or from the department (e.g., PGRs on a Departmental scholarship, Leverhulme Scholarships). Where a student's funding offer has a research budget of less than £2,000, the Department of Psychology will top up the research budget to this amount. Where full funding comes from the Department of Psychology, PGRs are allocated a Research Budget of £2,000 to support their PGR studies. It is anticipated that approximately £1,000 of this budget will support research costs (this would include, for instance, participant payment, travel funds to collect data, MRI first aid training, etc.), with the remaining budget supporting training, conference attendance, and travel. Budgets are set at the beginning of students' PGR studies (often at the application stage with the financial plan). The full budget allocation for the 3 years full-time (6 years part-time) is typically allocated into a Research Training Student Grant (RTSG) account (exceptions are where the budget is within part of a grant budgets), with accounts being viewable on Agresso by your primary research supervisor who holds overall responsibility for student spending.

Note that any equipment or hardware purchased with a student's research budget needs to be well-justified, and the student must be aware that the ownership of such items reverts to University on completion of the student's degree. Society subscriptions may only be paid out of a student's travel budget if the cost is part of conference registration.

Unless otherwise advised, PGRs on other scholarships are allocated funds, to be used for research costs and travel, by their funder. These vary in amount and are subject to the terms set out by their funder but are administered by the Department. Please contact your primary supervisor or psychologyordering@rhul.ac.uk who can provide you with full details including the cost code to use when making a claim, upon request.

PGRs with a University payroll number must claim back any research and travel costs via Agresso. Details on how to submit a claim via Agresso can be found by clicking on the Psychology [Student Information page](#) (PhD tab) within Moodle. PGRs who do not have a payroll number should complete a paper expenses claim form which they will find on the Psychology [Student Information page](#). It is important to submit your expenses as they occur, rather than save them until the end of the year.

In general, the department encourages PGRs to apply for internal and external travel awards (such as PsyPag funding, etc.) before using their research budget to support training, travel, conference attendance, etc., as obtaining such awards are an important part of career development and research funds will typically be needed for research expenses. If a student has a conference presentation accepted (including poster) but is short of funds they can approach Dr Steve Hammett (S.Hammett@rhul.ac.uk) once during their PhD to request additional support*. When making this request they will need to show that they have applied for any internal/external funds that they are eligible for, have used up all their conference budget, and are not able to obtain funding from their supervisor.

If a student has a peer-reviewed paper from their PGR work accepted for publication during their PhD, they are eligible to receive an additional £100 towards their research budget (can be awarded up to a maximum of 4 occasions). The publication can be in any format (e.g., chapter, journal article). This can be used for either research or travel expenses and can be carried forward to following years (including into your writing up year). PGRs should e-mail Dr Steve Hammett (S.Hammett@rhul.ac.uk) if they believe they are eligible to receive this.

*Note that additional financial support is not guaranteed and is dependent on funds being available, and will be assessed on a needs basis and prioritised for those who have not attended a conference before.

PGR Contingency Fund

The Department of Psychology has established a contingency fund that PGRs may apply for when exceptional and unforeseen circumstances and/or opportunities arise. This is competitive and not assured. We expect that this will be used very occasionally and by a minority of PGRs whose circumstances have arisen unexpectedly. If you feel you may need to apply to the fund please get in touch with Dr Robert Lachlan or Dr Shiri Lev-Ari for further information.

Thesis printing costs

If PGRs have funds remaining in their research/travel budget they can use these for thesis printing in the writing up year. If a student has no funds remaining, their first recourse should be to their supervisor. If a supervisor has a discretionary budget, this should be used. If not, or if this budget is earmarked for other purposes, they can check with Dr Robert Lachlan or Dr Shiri Lev-Ari to see if an exceptional contribution from the PGR budget can be made. Please note, if the Department agrees to cover the costs, it will be on the basis that only the most basic printing options will be paid for and that express printing, special binding options, and the printing a post-viva thesis version will not be eligible. PGRs wishing to take up this option should send a request and a quote to Dr Robert Lachlan or Dr Shiri Lev-Ari, and should refrain from purchasing services until authorised to do so.

Elaine Funnell Prize

The Elaine Funnell Prize is an annual award of between £500 to £1000 (until 2026) made possible by a generous gift from the Funnell family. The aim of this Prize is to support activities which further the training and scientific development of PhD students beyond those that are necessary for completing their PhD work. Eligible applicants are postgraduate research students working in Cognitive Psychology, Cognitive Neuroscience, Cognitive Neuropsychology, or Developmental Cognitive Psychology. We generally make two awards per year, with an emphasis on funding study visits abroad for PGRs in their second or third year of study (pro-rata for part time PGRs) and advanced training opportunities. The call for applications is typically made in January. Further information will be found on the [Psychology Student Information Moodle page](#) when open, under the PhD section.

The Department encourages PGRs to apply for these funds if eligible to do so, as the award of prizes is beneficial to research students' CVs. If a student intends to apply for funds from these schemes then they should firstly contact their supervisor with their request. Note that additional travel funds and prizes that PGRs may be eligible for will be advertised throughout the year and listed on the [Psychology Student Information Moodle page](#) when open, under the PhD section.

Communication in the department

Email

The Psychology Department will only use the address in the University Global Address List and does not use private or commercial email addresses, such as Hotmail or Gmail. PGRs who prefer to use commercial email services are responsible for making sure that their University email is diverted to the appropriate commercial address (detailed instructions on [how to forward mail](#) by visiting and searching for 'forwarding'). This process is very easy, but PGRs do have to maintain their University account. When a forwarded message is deleted from, say, hotmail, it will not be deleted from the student's Royal Holloway account. It is a student's responsibility to log on to their University account occasionally and conduct some account maintenance or their account may become full and therefore will not forward messages.

If a student sends an email to a member of staff in the Department during term time from their University email address they should normally receive a reply within 3-4 working days of its receipt. Please remember that there are times when members of staff are away from University at conferences or undertaking research, but most often you will receive an out of office response should there be an expected delay in a staff member replying to your email.

Internal mail

All post addressed to you in your department will be delivered to student pigeonholes (grouped alphabetically by surname) in the 1st floor corridor, near office W239, unless marked confidential or too big for the pigeonhole when it will be kept in the post room next to the Admin Office. 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 University will often send correspondence by internal post and your supervisor(s) may also return work to you via the pigeonholes.

Noticeboard

The official postgraduate noticeboard is the [Psychology Student Information Moodle page](#).

There are physical noticeboards around Wolfson. They are used, for example, by the Psychology Society to display notices relating to events. Any information relating to changes in research talks, etc., will be emailed and displayed on the department website or course Moodle page.

Facilities and resources

Our excellent research facilities in the department include a range of purpose-built laboratories including a functional imaging (fMRI) center for brain imaging, Vision Labs, Developmental Labs, Eye movement Labs, Virtual Reality Labs, Psychophysics Labs, Neuropsychology Labs, Sleep Lab, and Cognition and Action Labs.

All new postgraduate research students are provided with office space, which includes a desk, workstation, drawer in a filing cabinet, and a networked computer for the duration of their study period. Thereafter (during their writing up period) they may be asked to move to a different location within the department or asked to hotdesk, depending on their needs. PGRs have access to high-speed multifunction photocopiers (copies, prints, scans), the use of Microsoft Teams phone system, access to our networked PC cluster, Qualtrics (online survey platform) and Gorilla (online experiment platform), plus free and full access to excellent library facilities on campus. PGRs may also book to borrow a laptop if required for a period of time (contact the [IT Service Desk](#) to request).

The department is part of the ESRC South East Doctoral Training Arc (SEDarc) Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP), which is a postgraduate research consortium with several research-intensive universities across South East England. More information about SEDarc can be found [here](#). PGRs awarded ESRC 1+3.5 funding undertake a year of research training at MSc level before undertaking their PhD research (for a total of 4.5 years of study), including a 3-months internship. SEDarc often puts on training that is open to all PGRs who are studying at institutions within the SEDarc network, including our department, as well as training specifically for research students awarded a SEDarc studentship.

In 2019, the department alongside Biological Sciences and Computer Sciences joined the BBSRC London Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programme (LIDo), which is a postgraduate research consortium with several research-intensive universities around London. More information about the LIDo Network can be found [here](#).

Health and Safety

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 Health and Safety Coordinator by emailing Natalie.starkey@rhul.ac.uk or the University Health and Safety Office. It is likely that most activities will take place on University premises. However, the principles also apply to PGRs undertaking duties off campus.
- Lone working is defined as working during either normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace or when working outside of normal hours. The department and the type of work conducted by PGRs is classified as a low risk activity and as such the following advice is relevant:

- Lone working is permitted, but it is good practice to ensure that a second person is aware of the first person's location and that they have access to means of communication;
 - It is recommended that the second person could be a relative/friend who knows where the first person is located and approximate time of return. Relevant details should be exchanged (e.g. campus number and security telephone number);
 - Any out of hours or weekend working needs to be reported to University Security Office (01784 443063) stating name, location and duration of stay;
 - No lone working is to be undertaken in any Laboratory Lab space before all appropriate training is provided by the member of Academic staff responsible for the Lab Space, which will be determined by their specialist knowledge of the equipment contained in the Lab and the risk assessment provided for that specific Lab. The risk assessment in the Lab must be read, understood and the controls in place adhered to. If you have any concerns or do not understand anything on the risk assessment, please contact the supervising member of staff.
- You can find more details on RHUL Health and Safety [here](#).

Specialist equipment

Research students may only use test material and equipment with the permission of a member of the academic staff and for a purpose connected with the student's research. The member of staff who gives permission is responsible for seeing that the tests are used properly and that use of equipment is not undertaken until appropriate training has been completed.

Should equipment develop a fault, switch it off and notify the staff member who gave permission and Health and Safety Coordinator, Natalie.starkey@rhul.ac.uk. No attempt should be made to dismantle or repair faulty equipment.

Fire Safety

Posters or notices should not be stuck over the glass panels on smoke/fire doors in corridors. Fire doors should not be wedged open under any circumstances. Fire extinguishers should not be removed from their mounting except in the event of a fire or obstructions placed in front of them to inhibit accessibility. Fire extinguishers should not be used to prop open doors. In the event of discovering a fire, the nearest red call point should be activated. PGRs should never attempt to tackle the fire themselves.

The department has weekly fire alarm tests which are carried out at 9.45am every Thursday and lasts for a few seconds. If the fire alarms sound at any other time except during a test, PGRs must vacate the building immediately and assemble at the meeting point between the Queens Building (Geography) and the John Bowyer building. PGRs must not re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the Fire Marshals.

Accidents

All accidents and incidents must be reported to the LSE School Office Team – room W118, email: LSE-school@rhul.ac.uk. They will then complete the accident report form.

[Read the official University policy](#)

First Aiders & Fire Marshalls

The First Aiders and Fire Marshalls are listed on the <https://moodle.royalholloway.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=4099>.

If a student is unable to contact one of the first aiders they should contact security on 01784 443063 or emergency 444 (internal).

PGRs are strongly advised to enter all these numbers into their mobile phone.

Departmental Smoking Policy

In line with British Law, there is no smoking allowed in any of the University buildings. Smoking is only allowed in designated areas which are a minimum of 5 metres away from the building. It is the responsibility of the smoker to ensure that smoke does not enter any building.

Read the University's information on smoking [here](#).

Children and young persons on campus

Children and young persons are only allowed on the campus if accompanied by a responsible adult and must remain with the adult at all times during their stay on the premises.

New and expectant mothers

New and expectant mothers are advised to consult the Health & Safety Coordinator at the earliest opportunity. Once written notification has been received, a pregnancy risk assessment will be performed. Advice on health and safety can be obtained from the [Wellbeing team](#).

Read the [Code of Practice for Research Degree](#) Students and Supervisors for further details.

Manual handling

Only persons who have been trained may perform a manual handling task for heavy items. If a student requires any manual handling to be performed, they should request the University porters.

Further information

Staff and PGRs must take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions, and must co-operate in implementing the department's safety practice. Good safety practice is the responsibility of all.

Security

If a student needs to contact Security at any time, the main office can be found in the Founders Building, opposite the main reception.

- Security can be contacted on 01784 443063.
- In case of an emergency Security can be contacted on 01784 443888.

PGRs are strongly advised to enter these numbers into their mobile phone

Ethics guidelines and the Departmental Ethics Committee

Ethical approval is required for all research carried out by staff. Research by PGRs also needs approval, as long as the purpose of the activity is research and not teaching (research activities with a teaching aim often have been pre-approved, and do not necessarily have to go through University Ethics Review). The project supervisor can advise whether or not student research projects need to be submitted for review. If the project is put forward for review, this should happen in close collaboration between student and supervisor. All research students should familiarise themselves with the BPS Ethical Code of Conduct, regardless of whether or not their work needs to be

submitted to the University Research Ethics Committee (REC). Please note, for some projects in addition to review by the University Research Ethics Committee, a review by an external ethics committee (e.g., NHS) might also be necessary.

Postgraduate research students will be provided with training in ethics procedures early in term 1 of their first year.

[Find out more about the Ethical Approval process](#)

Athena Swan and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equality is a core value in our department, and we work hard to ensure that this is central to all that we do, for both staff and PGRs. The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) is a national organisation that promotes equality in higher educational institutions. One of their initiatives, the Athena SWAN scheme, recognise successes in developing good practice that promotes equality of opportunity in Higher Education. We are proud that our department has been the recipient of an Athena SWAN [Silver Award](#) in October 2016, one of only 14 UK Psychology Departments to hold the award at that time. The award acknowledges the ways in which our department promotes equality of opportunity for PGRs. It also recognises the impact of our work on the career development of young researchers through outstanding early career training opportunities, the creation of an inclusive environment in which a high proportion of women progress to senior leadership levels, and the closing of the gender pay gap at the professorial level. We also operate activities that challenge inequalities more widely in academia, beyond Royal Holloway.

[Find out more about Athena SWAN](#)

Apart from the work that has been done with gender equality through Athena SWAN, the University has also engaged with the ECU around issues related to race equality. Royal Holloway is proud to be awarded a prestigious Race Equality Chartermark - one of only a few higher education institutions across the UK to have received this award.

[Find out more about the Race Equality Charter](#)

If you would like to know more about the ways in which the department supports equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) or would like to get more involved, you should contact your PGR EDI representative (see [Psychology Student Moodle page](#)), or you can contact Dr Nura Sidarus, who is the Department of Psychology Chair of Athena Swan Self-Assessment Team and Chair of the Department of Psychology Equalities Group.

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 Psychology](#)

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 Psychology](#)

Writing up year

Our Annual Review processes are in place to review work to date and create a schedule of work that will support PGRs in completing their doctoral work within 3 years FTE. The department anticipates that PGRs should have a plan that allows them to submit within 3-3.5 years (FTE); this is the typical amount of time that is funded through studentships. PGRs who go beyond this will face additional costs, such as maintenance and University writing up fees for year 4, hence the importance of submitting the thesis within the funded period. For various reasons some PGRs may need to enter a 4th writing up year. This would only be the case if PGRs have completed all of their data collection and just have writing left to do; no data that contributes to the thesis should be collected during the writing up year. The potential need for a writing up year should be discussed at the second year annual review, and steps, where possible should be put in place to mitigate this from happening. The University fees associated with this can be found [here](#).*

** The Department PGR Lead overseeing finance can approve written requests for writing up fees to be paid by the Psychology Department in the fourth year if there is evidence of delays to the progress of the PhD that were outside the control of the student, such as the unexpected and prolonged failure or access to specialist equipment or prolonged absence of a supervisor.*

Preparing for your Viva

In preparation for your viva, many PGRs find it useful to have a 'mock' viva to gain experience in the types of questions that will be asked, practice responding to those questions, and to boost confidence. If, after you have submitted your theses, you feel that you would benefit from a mock viva, please discuss the possibility with your supervision team. If your supervision team needs help to organise a mock viva please contact the Department PGR Lead or Deputy Lead overseeing your progress.