Equipment Needs for Flexible Learning Academic Year 2020-21

About half your teaching during the coming academic year will be online; the other half will be face to face on campus, or online as well if you are unable to attend in person. We want the online teaching to be as interesting and engaging as possible. Some lecture materials will be delivered as videos. These will need to be watched on a full-sized screen, not a mobile device. Other activities will be delivered through an online tool called ExplainEverything (see explaineverything.com), which is a shared digital whiteboard that you will need to be able to interact with. A computer mouse or touchpad will not be sufficient to achieve this.

As such, you will need the following:

1. **Reliable access to a computer at scheduled times.** This should ideally be a laptop. If you only have a desktop, you will need a tablet computer as well unless you will be studying online only (see below). You will need to be able to run, at least, the software MS Teams, ExplainEverything (through a web browser or app), and Moodle simultaneously on your laptop or desktop computer.

2. **Equipment to make conference calls on this device.** This may be, for example, the internal webcam, microphone and speaker, or an external headset.

3. **Headphones.** This is for making conference calls and watching video lectures while on campus.

4. **A digital input device to input hand-written text** into ExplainEverything. For example, this could be a graphics tablet (such as "One by Wacom") connected to your computer, or a laptop with a touch-sensitive screen and stylus, or a tablet computer with a stylus (e.g., a recent iPad with an apple pencil). If studying on campus, this needs to be brought to class (if relying on a graphics tablet, you will need to bring a laptop as well).

We are unable to recommend specific hardware, but the above needs can be met in many different ways. For example, if you already have a laptop and headphones, it may be that you just need to buy a graphics tablet (there are Wacom devices for under £40). If you have a touchscreen laptop and headphones, you may not need additional hardware, or just a stylus. If you have a computer and an ipad, you may only need to buy a stylus for the ipad.

If you haven't got access to some of these items and find it difficult to purchase them because you experience financial hardship, please contact the Head of Department, Professor Ruediger Schack (r.schack@rhul.ac.uk) and the department will do its best to help you.

If you intend to buy a new computer (this should normally not be necessary), you are likely to get the best experience if you select a modern 2-in-1 laptop with touch screen and 'active' pen, permitting palm rejection, along with a headset, i.e. a set of headphones with built-in microphone.