

# School of Engineering, Maths and Physical Sciences (EPMS)

# POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024/2025



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#### Disclaimer

This document was published in September 2024 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 courses of study, to discontinue courses, or merge or combine courses if such actions are reasonably considered to be necessary by the University. Every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum, and to give as much notice as possible.

\* Please note, the term 'department' is used to refer to 'departments', 'Centres and Schools'. Students on joint or combined degree courses should check both departmental handbooks

#### 1 Welcome to our School

Across our five departments of Computer Science, Electronic Engineering, Mathematics, Physics, and the Information Security Group, the EPMS school provides a coordinating framework for our world-class research and teaching. In research, EPMS focusses particularly on areas of strength that profit from interdisciplinary larger groups in addition to supporting smaller groups and individuals in our departments. In teaching the School provides the structure and processes to support flexible teaching and exams.

The School is led by the School's Executive Dean, Professor Chris Frost; you can find a complete list of Who is Who on this page. The School is supported by a single joint administration team, which acts as a contact point for its Departments, professional services, and the senior management team.

#### How to find and contact us: the EPMS office

The EPMS School Administrative Offices are located in rooms 1-29 of the Bedford Building, listed as building 2 on the Royal Holloway map (paper copies of the Egham campus are also available at the EPMS helpdesk). The office is open 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday-Friday and can be reached by phone at 01784 276 881 or email: EPMS-School@rhul.ac.uk. Please use the below links to view the maps of the London campus. London Campus Map

Please note, student parking is very limited and is not available if you live in Halls or within 1.5 miles of campus. If you do live more than 1.5 miles away or have a particular reason why you need to come to campus by car, you must apply for a parking permit. If you have a motorbike or scooter, you must also register the vehicle with University. Find more information about the Parking Permit here. **Note, this is only for the Egham campus.** 

#### How to find and contact us: the Departments

Below, we list the location, Head of Department (HoD), and a link which will take you to your relevant Departmental Moodle page (see Sec. 3.2). You can find specific information relevant to each Department on the Moodle page. You should regularly check the page for important updates and information. We strongly encourage you to bookmark these links.

Department	Location	(HoD)	HoD Email	Moodle
Computer	Bedford	Prof	carlos.matos@rhul.ac.uk	LINK
Science	Building	Carlos		
		Matos		
Electronic	Shilling	Prof	steve.alty@rhul.ac.uk	LINK
Engineering	Building	Steve		
		Alty		
Information	Bedford	Prof	Lizzie.coles-	LINK
Security	Building	Lizzie	kemp@rhul.ac.uk	

	Coles-	
	Kemp	

# 2 Support and advice

#### 2.1 Support within your School

The School Helpdesk is there to help you with any questions or concerns you might have about your studies. It is situated in room 1-29 in Bedford building. Opening hours are 10:00am to 4:00pm, Monday-Friday (during term-time). Times may vary outside of term time.

The Helpdesk is staffed throughout these opening hours. You can call in person during opening hours, ring o1784 276 881 or email <a href="mailto:EPMS-school@rhul.ac.uk">EPMS-school@rhul.ac.uk</a>.

Helpdesk staff will try to answer your questions then and there or put you in touch with a colleague who can help find the answer and get back to you. If you wish, you may ask them to talk to you privately, and they will make sure you receive the support you require. If you have a disability, long-standing medical condition or specific learning difficulty, it is important that you bring it to the University's attention (the Disability and Neurodiversity Team (DNN)) as soon as possible.

#### **Personal Tutors**

Your Personal Tutor is a member of the Academic teaching staff who will monitor your progress throughout your degree, maximise your potential as a student of RHUL, and provides pastoral care. It is, therefore, important to maintain regular contact with your Personal Tutor to discuss your progress and consider how to enhance your skills and employability. Your Personal Tutor is also often responsible for writing reference letters (e.g., for job or postgraduate study applications). It is, therefore, essential to remain engaged with your tutor so they can personalise their letters about you and your skills. Your Personal Tutor may change between years, but you should always know who they are. Your Personal Tutor can also refer you to other agencies that might be able to offer support and advice, such as the Wellbeing Service. While following University regulations, personal and other information that you provide to your Personal Tutor will be treated in strictest confidence unless you give explicit permission to divulge information to specified sources outside of the University. It is at the discretion of the Personal Tutor whether, due to the nature of the information provided, it may be shared internally. Your confidence will only be broken in cases where the Personal Tutor has good reason to believe that you are likely to cause harm to yourself or others.

Your Personal Tutor will be introduced to you during your first few weeks at RHUL, during which you and your Personal Tutor will have an initial meeting. They are responsible for your welfare and academic development during your degree course. You can make an appointment with your Personal Tutor in person, by phone, or by e-mail.

A list of Personal Tutors and their Tutees is prepared before the beginning of the academic year and displayed on the Departmental Moodle page. Some Departments might also email students individually with their Personal Tutor's name.

In addition to your Personal Tutor, you will also have a Senior Tutor listed on the Departmental Moodle page who can assist you should your Personal Tutor be unable to.

## **EPMS Ombudsperson**

The School of EPMS also has an ombudsperson, Dr Gregory Ashton (Gregory.ashton@rhul.ac.uk) who is charged with advocating for students and to investigate and help resolve complaints. Please feel free to contact Greg directly by email if you would like to chat informally to him.

#### 3 Communication

#### **Email communications**

The university provides an official student email address, which will be the primary means of communication. You should always use this when contacting academic or administrative staff (communications from private email addresses can often be filtered). School Administration will always respond using your RHUL email address.

You must regularly check your email for important communications, which could include important course announcements, changes to timetabling, or exam information. We recommend that you delete emails you don't need and store those with important information you want to retain in folders.

# The Moodle Learning Platform

Moodle is the university's Learning Platform, and you can find it here: www.moodle.royalholloway.ac.uk. Each Module you enrol in will have its own Moodle page: this is the central location where you can find important course information. In addition, there are Departmental Moodle pages (you can find the links above). If you are not enrolled on a Moodle page but think you should be, please get in touch with the module leader or EPMS helpdesk as soon as possible. Whenever you have a query, you are advised to look on Moodle first to see if the information is available there. Some courses also use Moodle to send communications to you, e.g. using the Announcements forum. By default, these are configured to send you email updates, but this can be changed under the Moodle Preferences (top-right drop-down).

## **Telephone and Post**

There may be occasions when your Department or the School needs to contact you urgently by telephone or send you a letter by post. It is your responsibility to ensure that your telephone number (mobile and landline) and postal address (term-time and forwarding) are kept up to date. Further information about maintaining your contact information is available here. You can learn how the University processes your personal data by reading the Student Data Collection notice. The University will not disclose students' addresses and telephone numbers to anybody else (including relatives and fellow students) without the student's permission to do so. Administrative staff will alert you by email of any internal mail received by the Department/School addressed to you.

#### Questionnaires

Course questionnaires, issued at the end of the teaching for each module, are used to assess student views. These form an essential part of our procedures to monitor the quality of our provision, and they are invaluable in module planning and improvement. For the

system to work, we must have a high percentage of returns, and the questionnaires have been filled in thoughtfully. For each taught module, the completed anonymous questionnaires are scanned by an outside contractor, and the summaries are presented to the Student-Staff Committee and all staff. The comments on the back of the questionnaires are passed to the appropriate lecturers, your Head of Department, and your Department's Education Lead.

# 4 Teaching

#### Study weeks

EPMS teaching occurs across all teaching weeks (except for specific Modules that the Module leader will announce). You can find information about term dates here and an academic calendar for 2024-25 here.

## Your teaching timetable

You can find information about your course timetable here. You are responsible for checking the times and venues of all class meetings and any requirements (e.g., assessment deadlines) relating to your courses. If the timetable contains sessions you don't recognise or does not contain sessions you think you should be enrolled in, please contact the Module leader, your personal tutor, or the EPMS helpdesk.

#### Lectures, Labs and other teaching events

The method of instruction will vary for each of the modules. For each of them, there will typically be a time-tabled session that you will be expected to attend face-to-face. Additional learning materials may be provided online through pre-recorded videos, activities, etc. Students are also expected to read and engage with the additional materials to complement the material delivered during formal lectures.

You will be taught in various ways, including lectures, laboratory sessions, workshops and tutorials. Your success at degree level is also about the work you do outside of the formal teaching programme.

If you are experiencing difficulties, *e.g.* personal health or other commitments, you should contact your Personal Tutor or Director of Undergraduate Studies, who may advise you to defer or interrupt until the next academic year.

#### Tutorials, Workgroups, and Office Hours

Students are strongly encouraged to form informal workgroups that promote cross-fertilisation between our diverse student body, some of whom already have a wealth of experience. Research has demonstrated that such workgroups positively affect students' understanding and exam results. Nonetheless, it is important to note that working as part of a team for a summative assessment can be an assessment offence.

If you have questions about a Module, you should contact the Module lead (this will be advertised on the Moodle page). Many modules will offer office hours where you can discuss the course content or understand the marks you received on formative assessments. Some modules will instead offer a responsive meeting. To arrange this, please contact the Module leader directly (either by email or at their office).

Additional academic support is also available through the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills, CeDAS. They offer drop-in sessions and additional tutorials to help support you with key skills.

#### Textbooks and the Web

Although your lecture notes and worksheets form the crucial part of a module, you will need to consult other sources. At the start of each module, the lecturer will tell you which books are most helpful and possibly suggest other less important texts. Lecturers will also point students toward relevant web pages and other content throughout each module. Please be cautious when using web resources since they may contain incorrect or misleading information. We welcome comments about books in the library. If you think more copies of an important textbook are needed in the library or find a book that you think should be there, tell the lecturer concerned. Remember, though, that it may take a little while for a book to be bought and appear on the shelves.

# 5 Degree structure

Full details about your course, including, the aims and learning outcomes to be achieved on completion, modules which make up the course and any course-specific regulations are set out in the course specification available through the <u>Degree Course Library</u>.

The below links will also take you to your degree structure:

Taught MSc courses in Information Security:

**Information Security** 

Information security with a Year in industry

**Applied Data Science and Cyber Security** 

#### Taught MSc courses in Computer Science:

Machine Learning

Machine Learning with a year in industry

Computational Finance

Computational Finance with a year in industry

**Data Science and Analytics** 

Data Science and Analytics with a year in industry

Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence with a year in industry

**Applied Data Science** 

**Applied Data Science and Cyber Security** 

## Taught MSc courses in Electronic Engineering:

**Engineering Management** 

Software Project Management

Cyber Security Project Management

**Project Management** 

Advanced Electronic and Electrical Engineering

Biomedical Engineering

**Smart Power Systems** 

Microwave and Optical Fibre Communications

#### Course Schedule

Part-time students normally attend one day per week during term time. Students can take the optional modules either in their first year or their second year or in both years. Students will normally do the independent project during their second year.

ISG and Computer Science CPD (Continuing Professional Development) part-time students will spread their studies over a period of between three and five years.

## Academic integrity module

To help you make good progress in your studies at RHUL, we have a simple online module, SS1001 in 'Academic Integrity,' which will guide you through preparing your assignments using the best academic standards. You must successfully complete this short module in your first year. You can make as many attempts as you like before the deadline to pass it.

#### Assessments and Exams

There are many formative and summative assessments across your degree programme. You will find information about these on Moodle in the modules for which you are registered. We suggest you create an assessment timetable so that you can plan your work throughout the year.

There are two assessment periods in the 2024-25 calendar: in the first weeks of January and during May. However, most of your exams will take place during May. You should ensure you are available to sit assessments during the entire duration of both assessment periods. Exam timetables will be communicated to you in a timely manner before the assessment periods.

If you fail an assessment or exam, or if you had extenuating circumstances accepted, you may be offered a resit in the summer vacation assessment period. See Summer Resits section in this document.

#### **Module Registrations**

You can only register for 180 credits' worth of modules in each academic year (this excludes modules which are being re-sat). You will have the option of changing modules up to the end of the second week after the start of teaching in each term (excluding Welcome week).

Note that new normal part-time students can register for a certain number of options exams in their first year (up to a maximum of two). In their second year, part-time students can register for further options exams. However, the total number of options exams that can be sat (over two years) is restricted to two. A similar situation is true for ISG and computer science CPD part-time students (the only difference is that the two-year period is replaced with a period of up to five years).

While you have the option of changing module unit registrations within the first two weeks after the start of teaching (excluding Welcome Week) subject to agreement from the

department, once you have submitted assessment for the module, you may not replace it with another either in that term or in a subsequent term (e.g., Spring term).

## Changes to your studies

Students are permitted to change their undergraduate studies during the academic year, and this may include requests for the following:

- Change your degree course.
- Change your mode of attendance.
- Interrupt your studies.
- Withdraw from your studies.

Further details can be found on the Student Intranet on the following page: <u>Update my postgraduate study details - Royal Holloway Student Intranet.</u> Please note there are deadlines for changing your mode of attendance and interrupting your studies; these are listed on the page above.

#### 6 Facilities

## Facilities and resources within your School

Students in the Computer Science and Maths Departments have access to Bedford building PC Labs – 0-04 and 0-06. Access to these labs is restricted to when no timetabled labs are taking place. Access to these labs out-of-hours is by student ID card only. All students must follow the corresponding health and safety guidelines when using these labs.

Electronic Engineering students have access to various spaces in the Shilling building. The Creative Thinking Room is available anytime between 8 am and 8 pm unless a class or an EE society is scheduled in there. This room can be used for both quiet study and for group work. Two teaching labs are accessible to students via their university card during class. The Fab Lab (fabrication) will be available to students during project work and will be opened as required. This room has 3D printers, PCB engravers, a laser cutter, a pillar drill, a robotics table and general fabricating equipment.

Ten open-access PC labs are also available on campus, including three in the Computer Centre. For security reasons, access to these PC Labs is restricted at night and weekends by a door entry system operated via your University card.

#### The Library

The library is housed in the Emily Wilding Davison Building. The Teaching and Engagement Librarian for EPMS is Eva Garcia Grau, who can be reached at Eva.garciagrau@rhul.ac.uk.

#### Photocopying and printing

The Departmental printers and photocopier are reserved for staff use only. Copier printers (MFDs) for students are in the Library, the Computer Centre, and many PC labs, allowing you to make copies in black and white or colour.

#### Calculators

All students will be provided with a School-approved calculator for examinations. Your calculator should have the relevant school sticker on it. Calculators are issued from the EPMS Helpdesk. You are responsible for ensuring you have a properly labelled calculator for the exam.

## 7 Assessment information

## Anonymous marking and cover sheets

All assessments are marked anonymously. Except for Group work, quizzes or if specified prior to sitting the assessment.

#### Submission of work

Details for submitting summative assignments will be circulated to students by module leaders. Assignments will be submitted via Moodle.

## Penalties for over-length work

Work which is longer than the stipulated length in the assessment brief will be penalised in line with Section 13, paragraph (6) of the University's Postgraduate Taught Regulations:

"Any work (written, oral presentation, film, performance) may not be marked beyond the upper limit set. The upper limit may be a word limit in the case of written work or a time limit in the case of assessments such as oral work, presentations, films, or performance. In the case of presentations, films, or performance these may be stopped once they exceed the upper time limit."

In addition to the text, the word count should include quotations and footnotes. Please note that the following are excluded from the word count: candidate number, title, course title, preliminary pages, bibliography, and appendices.

# What to do if things go wrong – Extensions to deadlines

Please refer to the Extensions Policy and guidance on the University's webpage about Applying for an Extension.

Not every assessment is eligible for an extension. If the assessment does not appear on the Extensions Portal in Campus Connect, refer to your department's Moodle page to see if a Central University extension is permitted. Instead, you may be asked to contact the module leader, who will consider your request individually (known as a "department-applied extension"). In some instances, neither a University nor a department-applied extension will be permitted.

## How to apply for support and exam access arrangements

For students requiring support, the <u>Disability and Neurodiversity service</u> (DNN) might approve Exam Access Arrangements (EAAs) if you're unable to sit formal exams under standard examination conditions because of a disability or another condition. EAAs are designed to allow you to demonstrate your knowledge and abilities in exams without compromising academic standards. If you disclose a disability, we'll take appropriate steps to make sure we provide reasonable adjustments.

To apply, contact the DNN team to register with their services.

- The easiest way to register is to visit the team in Founder's East, room 140. They'll talk you through the process and explain what you must do.
- Alternatively, you can call them on 01784 414621 or email the team at disability@royalholloway.ac.uk, after which they can advise you further.

Please see the <u>University Handbook</u> for details.

## Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to plagiarism, Al tools, commissioning, duplication of work (that is, submitting work for assessment which has already been submitted for assessment for the same or another module), falsification, impersonation, deception, collusion, (for example, group-work may constitute collusion where the discipline or the method of assessment emphasises independent study and collective ideas are presented as uniquely those of the individual submitting the work). Failure to comply with the assessment rules, including those in the 'Instructions to Candidates'.

The Regulations set out some types of academic misconduct in more detail, the procedures for investigating allegations of such offences and the penalties. Students are strongly encouraged to read these Regulations and to speak with their Personal Tutors or other staff members in their Department should they have any queries about what constitutes academic misconduct. The University treats academic misconduct very seriously, and misunderstandings about what constitutes academic misconduct will not be accepted as an excuse. Similarly, extenuating circumstances cannot excuse academic misconduct.

## The use of Artificial Intelligence

Large Language Models (LLMs) (also referred to as generative AI) are now widely used. The School believes promoting legitimate use in our learning activities is important. We believe that generative AI should and will be used widely by staff and students. In recognition of this, most departments will have assignment briefs that clearly explain the extent to which generative AI use is required, encouraged, permitted or prohibited. Any assessments that deviate from this will clearly indicate so. When using such a tool is permitted, students must provide a statement within any assignment submission that has been used, clarifying which tool they used and how.

This statement must include:

- Name, version (if available), and provider of the AI tool used (e.g. Copilot, Microsoft).
- URL of the tool used (e.g. https://copilot.microsoft.com).
- A short description of how the generative AI tool was used in the assignment.

All direct outputs from the tool must be referenced, including the tool's name (and version if available), the date the tool was accessed (e.g. Copilot, Microsoft, accessed 3rd June 2024), and, if relevant, the prompts. For an in-text citation, please name the tool and the year accessed (e.g. Copilot, 2024).

It is an academic offence to present the output of an LLM/AI tool as your own work. Under the current regulations, this is considered commissioning and a major academic offence. Even in cases where such tools are permitted, you must not present the output of the tool verbatim and claim it as your own work. Furthermore, it is an academic offence to use an LLM/AI in a permissible manner but omit the statement of use. Depending on the scale of the usage, this may be seen as plagiarism, collusion or commissioning at the discretion of the investigation lead. Additional guidance on the appropriate use of AI can be found in the University guidance.

## **Extenuating Circumstances**

While studying at Royal Holloway it is important that you learn how to manage your assessment deadlines, as you are expected to hand in your assessments on time. However sometimes things go wrong, and situations occur that disrupt you. The University recognises that this can affect your ability to complete and/or submit a piece of assessed work or undertake an exam. As a result, there are situations where you can apply for Extenuating circumstances such as:

- If you can't submit by the published deadline but you feel that the standard
  of your work has been substantially affected by your current circumstance,
- If you are unable to complete or submit your coursework at all,
- When you have reached the limit of permissible extensions in an academic year but experience circumstances which effect further assessments,
- For Exams (including in person invigilated exams, online assessment, open book exams and other non-coursework assessment),
- Coursework modules where extensions are not permissible.

Further guidance can be found here

#### **Summer Resits**

The Summer Vacation Assessment Period (SVAP), which includes the summer resit exams, will run from August to September of the academic year. The exact dates will be announced in due course.

After the end of the Summer Term, you will be informed which, if any, assessments you may take during SVAP, how to register for them, and how the mark for a module you retake during SVAP will be determined

#### 8 Attendance and Engagement Requirements

To ensure your success, students are expected to attend all timetabled events, including lectures, labs and tutorials. You are expected to be on campus for all scheduled teaching and engaging with your studies during term time. In circumstances requiring you to miss inperson activities, you must inform your department and fill in a Notification of Absence Form, available on Campus Connect.

Please refer to the central Engagement web pages and Attendance and Engagement Policy for full details of how we will help you to remain engaged in your studies.

# 9 Health and Safety Information

The Health and Safety webpage provides general information about our health and safety policies.

## Code of practice on harassment for students

The University 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 University Code of Practice on personal harassment for students should be read in conjunction with the Student Disciplinary regulations and the Complaints procedure.

### Lone working policy and procedures

The University has a 'Lone Working Policy and Procedure' that can be found here.

Lone working means working in an isolated space or outside of the University timetabled hours. Your work is considered low risk but if you have any health and safety concerns, please contact your Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator or the University Health and Safety Office. Contact details can be found on the University website.

It is likely that most activities will take place on University premises. However, the principles contained in the above section will apply to students undertaking duties off campus.

## 10 School Code of Practice

## Acceptable Use of Information Technology

The University provides access to a range of Information Technology tools; when using these, please ensure you respect the University's Code of Practice relating to the <u>Acceptable Use of Information Technology</u>.

#### Access to a Computer and Password Conventions

You have been provided with an individual user account with a unique username and initial password. When you first log on to "the computer", you will be required to change the initial password to a password of your choice. You must keep your password secure, not reveal it to others and not share or permit sharing of user accounts.

You are responsible for securing your password and associated account(s). You will be prompted to change your password every 90 days. You may not leave an interactive user session unattended and must log out to prevent unauthorised use of your user account. If this facility is available, it is permissible to "lock" the workstation for short periods (less than 90 minutes).

User passwords must have the following characteristics: -

- Contain a mixture of upper- and lower-case letters (e.g., A-Z, a-z)
- Contain at least one (1) digit and one (1) punctuation character/symbol (e.g., o-9,

!"@#\$%^&\*()\_+~{}[]:;'?><,./)

- Contain at least eight (8) characters
- Not contain any word in any language, slang, dialect, jargon etc.
- Are not based on personal information, username, family names, etc.

Passwords must never be written down or stored in unencrypted electronic form.

Guidance on choosing a good password that is memorable:

- Think of a phrase, for example "the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog".
- Take the first letter of each word in the phrase ("tqbfjotlz") OR
- Take the last letter of each word ("eknxsreyg") OR
- Take the first letter of some words and the lengths of other words ("t5b3j4t4d")
- Substitute digits and punctuation character/symbols to produce a password that conforms to the password policy, e.g. ("t5b! j4t4d")

# 11 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

The University has committed to the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion for all and strives to go beyond the public sector duty placed upon us by the Equality Act 2010. We believe that all staff, students, and visitors should find the University to be a supportive and nurturing environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, or victimisation, and we hope that we can support this to be the case through our proactive diversity, equality and inclusion work. One of our main priorities has been to ensure all our existing and new policies are inclusive to all staff and students.

The University is committed to ensuring that:

It creates a positive, inclusive environment free from prejudice, bullying, harassment, and unlawful discrimination. We will take action to challenge inappropriate behaviour and discriminatory practices.

Staff, students, applicants for employment or study, visitors, and other persons in contact with the University are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

People and diverse groups with multiple identities and individual differences are recognised and valued.

We will provide our staff and associates with the knowledge and skills they need to understand and meet their equality and diversity responsibilities.

The EPMS School has a Vice-Dean of EDI, Professor Tracey Berry and Departmental EDI leads, you can find these on the Departmental Moodle pages. If you would like to discuss any EDI issue, contact your personal tutor, Departmental EDI lead or EPMS Vice-Dean or contact the EPMS helpdesk.

#### 12 Core Student Handbook

The <u>University's Core Student Handbook</u> has further information about the following: -

- Support and Advice
- Communication

- Teaching
- Attending Classes and Engaging with your Studies
- Degree Structure
- Facilities
- Assessment Information
- Careers information
- Complaints and academic appeals procedure
- Equal opportunities statement and University codes of practice