



CeDAS – Centre for the Development  
of Academic Skills

# CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024/2025

## 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 course should check both departmental handbooks.

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# 1 Introduction to your department

## 1.1 Welcome

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

A warm welcome in particular to the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS)! We are pleased you have decided to study with us, and we look forward to helping you achieve your full academic potential as a student in the UK over the coming months.

CeDAS unites a number of activities which includes the support of international students. As part of this role, CeDAS comprises:

- A Study Abroad office providing support for visiting students whilst they are at Royal Holloway;
- the teaching of academic English language support courses for both international students and native English-speaking students.

Some of you have joined us shortly after arriving in the UK for the first time, while others may have previous experience of studying in this country. Royal Holloway provides everyone with a wonderful opportunity to learn and to develop the necessary language and study skills for success as a student in the UK.

This Student Handbook contains comprehensive information, both about the Department and the University. Please make sure you keep this handbook safely for future reference.

We look forward to working with you and hope that you have an enjoyable and productive time whilst at Royal Holloway.

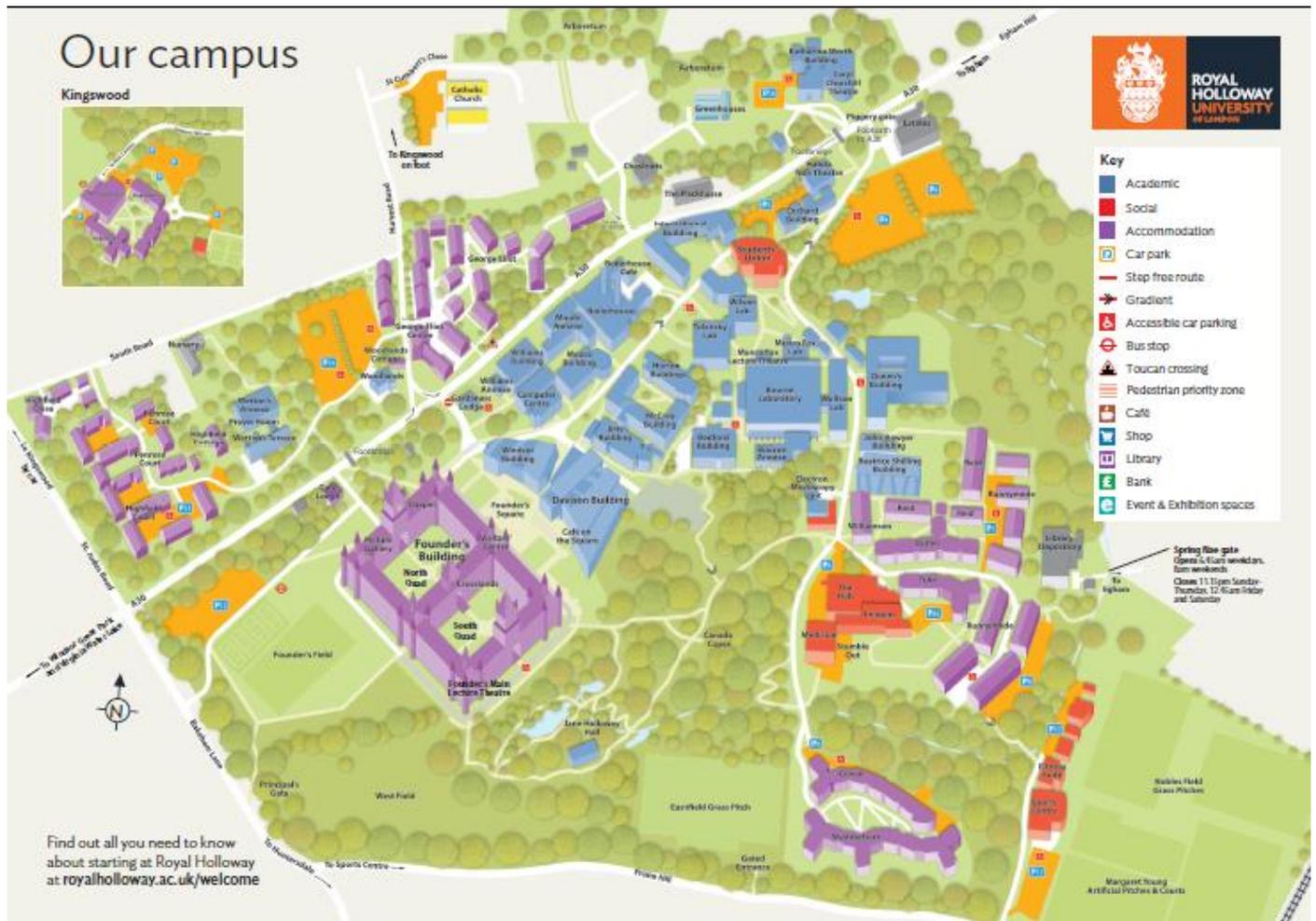
Silke Placzek  
Head of the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS)

## 1.2 How to find us: the Department

CeDAS is located in Founders West, first floor. This can be found on the University [campus map](#) as Founders Building – we are on the side next to Founders Field (not Founders Square).

[Map of the Egham campus](#)

### 1.3 Map of the Egham campus



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 portal [here](#).

## 1.4 How to find us: the staff

### CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Head of Department</b>	Name: Silke Placzeck Email: <a href="mailto:S.Placzeck@rhul.ac.uk">S.Placzeck@rhul.ac.uk</a>	Room N/A
<b>Teaching staff:</b>	Name: Norlene Conway Email: <a href="mailto:N.Conway@rhul.ac.uk">N.Conway@rhul.ac.uk</a> (LSS School and Outgoing visiting students)	Room: FW134
	Name: Brett Harmony Email: <a href="mailto:Brett.Harmony@rhul.ac.uk">Brett.Harmony@rhul.ac.uk</a> (LSE School and Academic Success director)	Room: FW126
	Name: Sophia Stavrakakis Email: <a href="mailto:Sophia.Stavrakakis@rhul.ac.uk">Sophia.Stavrakakis@rhul.ac.uk</a> (Incoming visiting students and Contemporary Britain)	Room: FW134
	Name: Dr Kinga Boulton (Maths and Statistics) Email: <a href="mailto:Kinga.Boulton@rhul.ac.uk">Kinga.Boulton@rhul.ac.uk</a> (EPMS School/Maths and Statistics)	Room: FW130
	Name: Dr Jan Koseki Email: <a href="mailto:Jan.Kosecki@rhul.ac.uk">Jan.Kosecki@rhul.ac.uk</a> (Humanities School and Contemporary Britain)	Room: FW129
	Name: Marion Engrand O'Hara Email: <a href="mailto:M.E.Ohara@rhul.ac.uk">M.E.Ohara@rhul.ac.uk</a> (PDA School and Contemporary Britain)	Room: FW133
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<b>Administrative Team:</b>	Name: Nicky Valentine Email: <a href="mailto:Nicky.Valentine@rhul.ac.uk">Nicky.Valentine@rhul.ac.uk</a> (Study Abroad/visiting students)	Room: FW139
	Name: Alanah Harrington Email: <a href="mailto:Alanah.Harrington@rhul.ac.uk">Alanah.Harrington@rhul.ac.uk</a> (Academic Success)	Room: FW139
	Name: Sylvia Hankin Email: <a href="mailto:Sylvia.Hankin@rhul.ac.uk">Sylvia.Hankin@rhul.ac.uk</a> (Academic Success)	Room: FW139
<b>Disability &amp; Dyslexia Services Network Member:</b>	Name: Nicky Valentine Email: <a href="mailto:Nicky.Valentine@rhul.ac.uk">Nicky.Valentine@rhul.ac.uk</a>	Room: FW139
<b>Information Consultant:</b>	Name: Rachel White Email: <a href="mailto:Rachel.White@rhuk.ac.uk">Rachel.White@rhuk.ac.uk</a>	Room: Library

## 1.5 The Department: practical information

Please be aware that staff do sometimes work from home and therefore may not be present in the office

every day. Therefore, you may wish to contact a specific member of staff from the list above, or use our departmental email [CeDAS@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:CeDAS@rhul.ac.uk) for queries.

## 2 Support and advice

### 2.1 Support for Contemporary Britain students

Contemporary Britain students can contact their tutors via email using the contact details in the staff list above. We encourage students to seek advice where needed. If students wish to ask questions about feedback given, they can contact directly the tutor who gave the feedback, or they can contact another Contemporary Britain tutor if they wish to remain anonymous to the marker.

### 2.2 General support within CeDAS

CeDAS support for visiting students can be sought in the following ways:

- Through visiting student induction and catch-up social events throughout the academic year
- Visiting student Moodle pages
- Email [studyabroadstudents@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:studyabroadstudents@rhul.ac.uk) or [Sophia.Stavarakakis@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Sophia.Stavarakakis@rhul.ac.uk) to get responses from Sophia Stavarakakis and Nicky Valentine
- Visit our administrative office in FW139 during office hours and ask for Nicky or Sophia, if available

CeDAS' other main activity is supporting Academic Success. Information about the following provision and how to book can be found on our [Moodle pages CeDAS Skills for Academic Success](#). There you will find information about:

- Workshops on a range of themes such as academic writing, focus and concentration, delivering presentations etc.
- 1-1 tutorials to review your writing and advise on how to improve
- Maths and statistics workshops, drop-ins and 1-1s

However, you may also phone +44 (0)1784 443368 or email [CeDAS@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:CeDAS@rhul.ac.uk). Depending on your query, staff will answer your questions then and there, put you in touch with a colleague who can help, or find out the answer and get back to you. If you wish, you may also talk to them in private and they will make sure you receive the support you require.

## 3 Communication

### 3.1 Noticeboards and Email

CeDAS does not maintain an information noticeboard, so any changes to class arrangements will be given via email, **so please check your university email address regularly.**

**It is your responsibility to check the times and venues of all class meetings and of any requirements (e.g. essay deadlines) relating to your courses, so, if in doubt, please ask!**

### 3.2 Personal Tutors

You will be allocated a Personal Tutor within CeDAS after the first week of teaching.

### 3.3 Questionnaires

You will receive two visiting student surveys during your time at Royal Holloway: one after the induction and welcome period is over, and another at the end of your studies.

All data is collected anonymously and is used internally only to review and improve the visiting student experience.

Contemporary Britain modules are also surveyed towards the end of each term as part of a university-wide module review. Again, this data is collected anonymously and used for the purpose of reviewing and improving module content and teaching.

## 4 Teaching

### 4.1 Study weeks

'Study Week' is in the 6<sup>th</sup> teaching week of term, so there are 5 weeks of teaching, then a Study Week, then 4 further weeks of teaching, followed by a final assessment week for the presentation. There is no teaching during Study Weeks and students are expected to use the time to read and to work on coursework. However, there is no check on student activity on campus during this period.

## 5 Module structure

Full details about your modules including, amongst others, the aims, learning outcomes to be achieved on completion, are in the module specification available through the [Module Catalogue](#).

## 6 Facilities

### 6.1 The Library

Please find information about Royal Holloway's library services [here](#).

### 6.2 Photocopying and printing

Printing facilities are provided by IT services and information can be found [here](#).

### 6.3 Computing

[How to find an available PC](#)

## 7 Assessment Information

### 7.1 Anonymous marking and cover sheets

The assessed coursework essay, worth 60% of the overall grade, is marked anonymously, and candidate numbers only used on the work and in the submission form. Students' individual candidate numbers can be found on Campus Connect.

The Study tasks (worth 10% in total) and assessed presentation (worth 30%) are not marked anonymously.

### 7.2 Submission of work

Study Tasks are worth a maximum of 2% each, and required on some, but not all weeks to be completed after the Tuesday lecture and by the Thursday midnight before Friday's seminar.

The presentation is given during the final week of term, week beginning 9 December. Days/times to be confirmed, but could be as late as the last Friday of term (13 December).

The essay is submitted in three stages to help students develop their writing over the term, but only the final essay is given a grade.

Submission deadlines for the coursework essay are as follows:

WHAT?	WHEN?	HOW?
Submit essay title and plan, including a bibliography	25 October 2024, 10 am	Turnitin
Receive feedback on title and	1 November 2024, 6 pm	Turnitin

plan		
<b>Submit 1<sup>st</sup> draft of essay</b>	<b>11 November 2024, 10 am</b>	<b>Turnitin</b>
Receive feedback on 1 <sup>st</sup> draft	22 November 2024, 6 pm	Turnitin
<b>Submit final essay</b>	<b>2 December 2024, 10 am</b>	<b>Turnitin</b>
Receive feedback and mark	13 December 2024, 6 pm	Turnitin

### 7.3 Penalties for over-length work

The reason a set length of work is given is to ensure fairness in assessment and to ensure students can write to a particular brief, as they may be expected to in other areas of life.

Regarding fairness, if one student writes a lot more than another, they may be able to include more depth and evidence, and therefore receive a better mark. Word limits are therefore set to ensure no-one writes more and has a great advantage over anyone else. However, if work is very much underlength, it is likely it will be assessed as weaker anyway, and no specific penalty is needed.

Work which is longer than the stipulated length in the assessment brief will be penalised in line with Section 13, paragraph (7) of the University's [Academic Taught Regulations](#):

#### Section 13 (7)

*Any work 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.

The coursework essay for Contemporary Britain modules has a word count range of 1500-2000. Study Tasks should not be lengthy, and 200-400 words should be sufficient.

### 7.4 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](#).

**Please note:** Study Tasks are exempt from extensions.

The essay is eligible for extensions. The presentation is also eligible, but students may have to be assessed online via Teams if the deadline is extended to after the end of term.

### 7.5 Support and exam access arrangements for students requiring support

Requests for support and exam access arrangements will be made, wherever feasible, in accordance with advice from Disability and Neurodiversity.

### 7.6 Academic misconduct – Plagiarism and Generative A.I.

As a visiting student it is important that you understand Royal Holloway's approach to academic misconduct, plagiarism and also use of AI tools in assessed work. This may be very different from the approach taken at your home university, but you are expected to adhere to Royal Holloway's regulations whilst you are here.

You can check the university's policies below.

- [Academic Misconduct](#)
- [Generative AI](#)

For Contemporary Britain, the following guidelines apply:

You must acknowledge secondary sources and clearly identify ideas which come from your reading and wider research. This means:

- you need to describe and comment on the topic in your own words and only use 'direct quotations' from other texts sparingly.
- if you quote someone else's words, or refer to someone else's ideas, you need to signal by using in-text referencing in [Harvard style](#) for the essay, or by saying it in your presentation, for example: *According to Brown + paraphrase or, '....direct quotation....'*.
- writing, or reading out chunks of text found online, or in other published texts, or produced by someone other than you, is considered plagiarism, just as it would be if written down in an essay.
- a list of references should be given in [Harvard style](#), both in your essay bibliography. and on the last slide of your presentation
- **Use of Generative A.I. is not permitted in any assessments.** However, in acknowledgment of the need to explore this tool, selected classes will involve exploring generative A.I.'s capabilities and discussing the pros and cons of its use.

## 7.7 SS1000 optional module

To help you make good progress in your studies at RHUL, we have a simple online module SS1000 in 'Academic Integrity' which will guide you through preparing your assignments using the best academic standards. This is not compulsory for visiting students, but highly recommended.

## 8 Attendance and Engagement Requirements

### 8.1 Engagement and attendance monitoring

Engaging with your studies is important so that you can enjoy your time here and get the most out of your academic work.

The engagement and attendance of visiting students is monitored by CeDAS, and if students are not attending classes and engaging regularly with their studies, they may be sent an 'engagement reminder'. If attendance and engagement do not improve a short period after the reminder is sent, formal warnings may be sent. **NB students on a full year visa may have the visa revoked if they do not attend and engage regularly in their studies.**

### 8.2 What students need to do

Students are required to self-report their attendance online (see links below) at class during or immediately after class finishes.

**Visiting students are required to attend at very least 70% of face to face classes** and can also demonstrate engagement with their studies by using Moodle and by submitting assessed work regularly and on time.

Please refer to the central [Engagement web pages](#) and [Attendance and Engagement Policy](#) for full details of how to log your attendance.

## 9 Health and safety information

The [Health and Safety webpage](#) provides general information about our health and safety policies.

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

### 9.2 Lone working policy and procedures

The University has a 'Lone Working Policy and Procedure' that can be found [here](#).

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. Please check the department handbooks for modules you are studying to see if this is relevant to you as a visiting student.

Any health and safety concerns should be brought to the attention of the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator or the University Health and Safety Office.

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.

### 9.3 Field trips

Contemporary Britain modules offer one subject related field trip each. The cost of any travel/tickets is to be borne by the student, and therefore the field trip is not compulsory. However, it will enrich the overall experience. Staff will always seek the best value options for students so that any costs can be kept to a minimum.

## 10 Core Student Handbook

The [University's Core Student Handbook](#) 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