



School of Engineering, Maths and
Physical Sciences (EPMS)

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-24



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Disclaimer

This document was published in September 2023 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 supported by a single joint admin team which acts as contact point for its Departments, professional services, and the senior management team.

We are located in the Bedford building, listed as building 2 on the [Royal Holloway map](#).

1.1 Map of the Egham campus

Paper copies of the Egham campus are also available at the EPMS helpdesk.

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 the University. Find more information about the Parking Permit [here](#). **Note, this is only for the Egham campus.**

1.2 Heads of Department:

Academic Department	Name	Email
Computer Science	Prof Carlos Matos	carlos.matos@rhul.ac.uk
Electronic Engineering	Prof Steve Alty	steve.alty@rhul.ac.uk
Information Security	Prof Chris Mitchell	c.mitchell@rhul.ac.uk
Mathematics	Prof Iain Moffatt	Iain.Moffatt@rhul.ac.uk
Physics	Prof Stephen Gibson	Stephen.Gibson@rhul.ac.uk

1.3 How to find us: the School Admin Team

The School Administrative Offices are in room 1-29 of the Bedford Building, on the Egham campus.

Computer Science and Information Security academics are located in Bedford Building.

Electronic Engineering academics are located in Shilling Building.
Mathematics academics are located in McCrea Building.
Physics academics are located in Tolansky Building.

1.4 The Departments

Below you will find links which will take you to your relevant Departmental Moodle page. These show specific information relevant to your Department and should be consulted regularly for important updates and information.

Academic Department
Computer Science (LINK)
Electronic Engineering (LINK)
Information Security (LINK)
Mathematics (LINK)
Physics (LINK)

Bookmark these links, they are important, you will use them regularly throughout the next academic year.

2 Support and advice

2.1 Support within your School

The School Helpdesk is there to help you with any questions or concerns you have about your studies. It is situated in room 1-29 in Bedford building. Opening hours are 10:00am to 4:00pm (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 01784 276 881 or email EPMS-school@rhul.ac.uk.

Helpdesk staff will try and answer your questions then and there or 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 ask to talk to them in private 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 College's attention (the Disability and Neurodiversity Team (D&N)) as soon as possible.

3 Communication

3.1 Email

All communications to students will be done primarily via your official student email provided by the University. School Administration will always respond using your RHUL email address. Students should not use their University address for private mail. Administrative staff will alert you, by email, of any internal mail received by the Department/School addressed to you. It is important to check your email account **daily** for important communication.

Information can also be communicated to you directly via Moodle, so it is important you regularly check Moodle announcements.

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 find out about how the University processes your personal data by reading the [Student Data Collection notice](#).

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!

The Department/University does not disclose students' addresses and telephone numbers to anybody else (including relatives and fellow students) without the student's specific permission to do so.

3.2 Personal Tutors

Your Personal Tutor is a member of the Academic teaching staff, assigned to you for the duration of your degree. Their function is to monitor your progress throughout your degree and to help maximise your potential as a student of RHUL. It is therefore important to maintain regular contact with your Personal Tutor to discuss your progress, as well as to consider how to enhance your skills and employability. Your Personal Tutor is also responsible for writing your letters of reference (e.g., for job or postgraduate study applications).

Your Personal Tutor can also refer you to other agencies that might be able to offer support and advice, for example, the College Counselling Service. While following college regulations, personal and other information that you provide to your Personal Tutor will be treated in strictest of confidence unless you give explicit permission to divulge information to specified sources outside of the College. 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 when you and your Personal Tutor will have an initial meeting. They have responsibility 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.

If for any reason you wish to change your Personal Tutor, you should consult the Senior Tutor, who will treat the matter in confidence should you so wish.

3.3 Questionnaires

Course questionnaires, issued at the end of the teaching for each module are used as a means of assessing 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 it is imperative that we have a high percentage of returns and that 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 to all staff. The comments on the back of the questionnaires are passed to the appropriate lecturers, to your Head of Department and to your Department's Education Lead.

3.4 Departmental Moodle Page

Whilst you are encouraged to read your emails regularly to ensure you do not miss important updates, sometimes your queries can be answered by checking your [Department Moodle page](#). This will provide you with links and information to University services such as extensions, extenuating circumstances, and wellbeing. Please bookmark the link for your Department (Departments if you are taught modules from several) as it will provide you with a quick response to many frequently asked questions.

4 Teaching

4.1 Lectures

Students are expected to attend all lectures. You are expected to be in the UK and engaging with your studies during term time. In the case of an emergency which requires you to leave the country and/or miss lectures/practicals etc., you are expected to inform your department and fill in a Notification of Absence Form, available on Campus Connect.

The method of instruction will vary for each of the modules. For each of them, there will normally be a time-tabled session that you will be expected to attend face to face. Additional learning materials may be provided online in the form of 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.

Students are very much encouraged to ask questions during lectures. A considerable

proportion of lectures are delivered by industry experts and their opinions are very much valued within the context of the field.

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

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

4.2 Tutorials, Workgroups, and Office Hours

Students are strongly encouraged to form informal workgroups which serve to promote cross-fertilisation between the very diverse range of students, some of whom already have a wealth of industrial/business experience. There is no doubt that such workgroups have a very positive effect on students' understanding (and a positive effect on exam results!).

All lecturers have office hours for dealing with students' questions about the syllabus or the worksheets relating to given modules. Office hours will be posted on the relevant Department Moodle page and will normally be carried out in person or via MS Teams.

Additional tutorials may also be available during the first term for any students needing to consolidate their background knowledge in particular areas.

4.3 Textbooks and the Web

Although your lecture notes and worksheets form the key 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 useful, and possibly suggest other less important texts. Throughout each module, lecturers will also point students in the direction of relevant web pages and other content.

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 that more copies of an important textbook are needed in the library, or you 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 degree course, including, the aims and learning outcomes to be achieved on completion, modules which make up the degree course and any degree course-specific regulations are set out in the course specification available through the [Degree Course Library](#).

To locate the course specification for your degree, start by selecting the year you commenced your degree and the degree type (i.e. 2020/21 Undergraduate) then search for your degree title.

5.1 Programme Schedule

Most undergraduate students (BSc, BEng, MSci and MEng) are full time.

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

Exams can be held either at the start of the January term or during the third term (typically during the latter half of May).

5.2 Module Registrations

You can only register for 120 credits' worth of modules in each academic year (this excludes modules which are being resat not in attendance). You can change any optional modules up to the end of the second week after the start of teaching in each term (excluding Welcome Week). You should refer to your Degree Specification to see what modules are optional and in which year of study for your degree. The Degree Specification may not list all optional modules so an updated list will be provided by your Department prior to the start of your next academic year.

You have the option of changing an optional module registration within the first two weeks after the start of teaching (excluding Welcome Week) but this can only be done with the agreement of your Department and the Department teaching the module (if different from your Department). Once you have submitted an assessment for an optional module, you may not replace it with another either in that term or in a subsequent term (e.g., Spring term).

6 Facilities

6.1 Facilities and resources within your School

Students in the Computer Science and Maths Departments and have access to Bedford building PC Labs – 0-04 and 0-06. Access to these labs is restricted to those times where there are no timetabled labs taking place. Access to these labs out-of-hours is by student ID card only. Access to these labs may also be restricted depending on social distancing and other pandemic-related restrictions. When using these labs, it is imperative that all students follow the corresponding health and safety guidelines. [See Appendix 1](#)

Students in EE have access to various spaces in the Shilling building. The **Creative Thinking Room, available** at any time between 9am and 5pm unless there is a scheduled class in there. This room can be used for both quiet study and for group work. **Two teaching labs** accessible to students via their University card during their class times. 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, laser cutter, pillar drill, robotics table and general fabricating equipment.

Students in Physics have access to spaces in the Tolansky building. The four-metre dome on top of the Wilson Building houses the department's telescope – a 12-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain computerised f/10 telescope. Depending on weather conditions and usage by

PH2260, PH3110 and PH4100 students, regular sessions are organised by the Physics Society to observe objects such as planets, multiple star systems, galaxies, galactic clusters, and globular clusters. In addition to the main telescope two portable telescopes (10-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain and 6-inch Newtonian) are available for supervised observations. In addition to the books available in the Emily Wilding Davison Library, the Physics department provides some books for physics students in the Physics Resources Room in T118.

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

6.2 The Library

The library is housed in the Emily Wilding Davison Building. The Information Consultant for EPMS is Eva Garcia Grau who can be reached at Eva.garciagrau@rhul.ac.uk.

6.3 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, which will allow you to make copies in either black and white or colour.

6.4 Calculators

All students will be provided with a School-approved approved calculator for examinations. Your calculator should have the relevant department sticker on it. Calculators are issued from the EPMS Helpdesk. If you are a joint student, ie. Physics and Maths, you must make sure your calculator has both department stickers.

It is your responsibility to make sure you have a properly labelled calculator.

7 Assessment information

7.1 Anonymous marking and cover sheets

All assessments are marked anonymously unless otherwise specified in your Departmental Moodle page. Exceptions apply for Group work, quizzes or if specified prior to sitting the assessment.

7.2 Submission of work

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

7.3 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 Undergraduate Taught Regulations <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/assets/docs/pdf/academic-regulations/general-regulations/general-regulations-2023-24-complete.pdf>

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.

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

Not every summative 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 or not. You may instead be asked to contact the Module Leader who will consider your request on an individual basis (Department applied extension). In some instances, neither a University or a department agreed extension will be permitted.

If a Central University Extension is permitted do not contact the Module Leader, instead refer to the Extensions Policy and guidance on the University's webpage about [Applying for an Extension](#). An assessment will not appear on the extensions portal, in Campus Connect, until 5 working days before the assessment is due for submission.

7.5 Summer Resits

The Summer Vacation Assessment Period (SVAP), which includes the summer resit exams, will run in the second half of August and the beginning of September during 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 and how to register for them. You will also be informed how the mark for a module you retake during SVAP will be determined.

Only failed components can be retaken. Marks for passed components will be carried forward. If you failed the exam, it may not be possible to retake failed coursework components during SVAP. Instead, the SVAP exam mark may be scaled to account for the weights of the failed coursework components.

7.6 How to apply for support and exam access arrangements

For students requiring support, 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 [Disability and Dyslexia Services 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 276473 or email the team at disability-dyslexia@royalholloway.ac.uk, after which they'll be able to advise you further.

Please see [University Handbook](#) for details.

7.7 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](#)

7.8 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 up to 24/03/2023
- Interrupt your studies up to 24/03/2023
- Withdraw from your studies

Further details can be found on the Student Intranet on the following page:

[Update my postgraduate taught study details - Royal Holloway Student Intranet](#)

7.9 Equality, diversity, and Inclusion

The University has made a commitment 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 equality and diversity work. One of our main priorities has been to ensure all our policies, existing and new, are inclusive to all employees.

The University is committed to ensure 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 practice.
- 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.

7.10 Academic misconduct - Plagiarism

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to plagiarism (see below), 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 working would 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 rules governing assessment, including those set out in the 'Instructions to Candidates'.

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

7.11 What is Plagiarism?

'Plagiarism' means the presentation of another person's work in any quantity without adequately identifying it and citing its source in a way which is consistent with good scholarly practice in the discipline and commensurate with the level of professional conduct expected from the student. The source which is plagiarised may take any form (including words, graphs and images, musical texts, data, source code, ideas, or judgements) and may exist in any published or unpublished medium, including the internet. Plagiarism may occur in any piece of work presented by a student, including examination scripts, although standards for citation of sources may vary dependent on the method of assessment.

Identifying plagiarism is a matter of expert academic judgement, based on a comparison across the student's work and on knowledge of sources, practices and expectations for professional conduct in the discipline. Therefore, it is possible to determine that an offence has occurred from an assessment of the student's work alone, without reference to further evidence.

To help you make good progress in your studies at RHUL, we have a simple mandatory on-line module [SS1001 in 'Academic Integrity'](#) which will guide you through preparing your assignments using the best academic standards. You will need to successfully complete this

short module, and you can have as many attempts as you like before the deadline to pass it. This must be completed **before** you complete any of your coursework assignments.

8 Health and Safety Information

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

8.1 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 [Dignity and Respect Policy](#) (for students), which includes personal harassment, should be read in conjunction with the [Student Disciplinary regulations](#) and the [Complaints procedure](#).

8.2 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.

9 School Code of Practice

This is the University's Code of Practice relating to the Acceptable Use of Information Technology, which applies to use of departmental technology.

[Acceptable Use Of Information Technology](#)

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 logon 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 the security of 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 logout to prevent unauthorised use of your user account.

It is permissible to “lock” the workstation for short time periods (less than 90 minutes) if this facility is available.

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 characters/symbols (e.g., 0-9, !"#@#%&^&*()_+~{}[]:;'?><,.!)
- Contain at least eight (8) characters
- Not contain any word in any language, slang, dialect, jargon etc.
- Are not based on personal information, username, names of family 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”)