

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes **M.Sci. degree programmes in Computer Science (Software Engineering)**. This specification is valid for new entrants from: **September 2015**

The aims of these degree programmes are:

- to produce graduates with the ability to engage in the lifelong learning and with the skills required for a professional career in a computer-based environment or for a research career in Computer Science and related areas;
- to develop a mastery of computing-related cognitive abilities and skills as described in the QAA Computer Science benchmark statement;
- in a flexible and progressive structure, to develop students knowledge and understanding of essential facts and theory, with the ability to use this knowledge to devise, cost, specify, design, implement, test, document and critically evaluate computer-based systems;
- to develop an advanced understanding of professional and ethical issues involved in the deployment of computer technology;
- to produce graduates who can work effectively within teams;
- to produce graduates who can understand and work within a small company;
- to produce graduates with a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond higher education, including information retrieval and use, numeracy, the ability to devise and present logical arguments to inform and support actions, and organisational skills.
- to develop an advanced understanding of knowledge and current awareness of current problems and/or new insights in the area of computing science research;
- to produce graduates who can deliver business value to their customers through the software they develop.

The programmes described here correspond to level 7 of the QAA framework. The length of these degrees vary from four years for the M.Sci. programme to five years for the M.Sci. with the year in Industry option.

Apart from the year in industry, each stage comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of 120 credits.

The programmes provide progressive structures in which students are able to gain ever-wider knowledge and understanding, and appropriate skills. The programmes contain a combination of mandatory and elective courses to introduce students to the theory and practice of Computer Science, including software development techniques and the technologies underlying specific application areas such as gaming and robotics.

Team work will be emphasised in the curriculum of the first, second and final years. Students will also have extensive opportunities to engage companies, organisations and professionals.

The structure encourages students to develop their own interests through informed choice among specialist options. In the final two years of the M.Sci. programmes, students undertake projects, which accounts for 25% of their studies in the penultimate year and 50% of their studies in the final year. There is a free choice of other penultimate and ultimate stage courses reflecting (i) core material, such as compiler theory, operating systems and concurrent programming, (ii) modern applications such as computer games technology, web design and digital sound and music, and (iii) currently important research areas such as machine learning, information security, software language engineering, intelligent agents, computational finance and bioinformatics. They will also attend core and optional courses in their final two years that reflect their specialism.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning in the programmes are closely informed by the active research of staff, particularly in the areas of computer learning, information security, compiler algorithm design and analysis, languages and computer architectures, combinatorial algorithms and complexity, and bioinformatics. The programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge of both core subject material and specialised research areas.

The students will have an opportunity to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

- an advanced knowledge and understanding of the facts, concepts, principles and theories relating to computing and computer applications;
- mastery of the implications of recent research in Computer Science, artificial intelligence and related fields, and how such research results can be incorporated into computer-based systems;
- a command of the professional, moral and ethical aspects of the use of computer-based systems, and ability to recognise any risks or safety aspects in a given context;
- knowledge of how computers are programmed and used; advanced programming; software engineering and team work for developing a significant software system; the fundamental technologies used for artificial intelligence; the functioning of the Internet and the World Wide Web; the main concepts of database technology and design; background theory necessary for a deeper understanding of computing and computers;

- an advanced understanding of the principles of Software Engineering and the importance of good design;
- an advanced understanding of how to work within a team in developing a significant software system;
- an understanding of the principles of information security and its context in Computer Science;
- depending on their programme of studies, students may also gain a knowledge of the following key practical application technologies: operating systems; graphics; robotics, bioinformatics, applied artificial intelligence and human-computer interfaces; theoretical foundations of algorithms and programming;
- a mastery of how to work within a small software company and deliver software within required user specifications.
- an ability to apply the practical and analytical skills present in the programme as a whole
- show innovation and/or creativity
- synthesise information, ideas and practices to provide a quality solution together with an evaluation of that solution
- show awareness of wider customer contexts and the identification of problems that such contexts might deliver
- exhibit the ability to work co-operatively to deliver a significant piece of work
- exhibit critical self evaluation of the process

Additional for Computer Science (Year in Industry)

- an appreciation of the importance of computing and information technology for commerce and industry and an understanding of expected industry changes and the effects they will have.

Skills and other attributes

- ability to deploy appropriate theory, practices and tools for the modelling, specification, design, implementation and evaluation of computer-based systems (including stand-alone computer systems, information systems, embedded systems, distributed systems and web-based systems) to meet given requirements under practical constraints;
- employ the research skills needed to investigate a defined topic under supervision, through an extended individual project;
- interpersonal skills, including the ability to work as a member of a development team, recognising/respecting the viewpoints of others, recognising the different roles within a team and the different ways of organising teams;*
- problem identification, analysis and solution using critical assessment and reasoned argument;*
- taking responsibility for own learning and developing habits of reflection on that learning;*
- skills in written communication, project documentation, verbal presentation; numeracy and computation*
- use of information technology (including spreadsheets, databases, word processing, email and WWW);*
- information handling and retrieval (including the use of libraries and computer technology);*
- ability to work autonomously, and to demonstrate time management and organisational skills;*
- manage small projects;

Additional for Computer Science (Year in Industry)

- ability to apply knowledge and skills in computing to large-scale practical applications.

* transferable skills

Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, small-group tutorials, practical and problem classes, supervised computing laboratory work, group work, completion of coursework and private study, guided independent study and research in the stage three individual project.

Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal, unseen written examination, coursework assignments, project reports, oral presentations, and the final stage project report. Transferable skills are also inherently assessed through the assignments, reports and oral presentations. Feedback is provided on students' performance in coursework, both assessed and non-assessed, and during tutorial and practical sessions. Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

Details of the programme structure(s)

Please note that the list of available courses offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

STAGE 1		Number of credits
CS1802	Software development	30
CS1820	Computing laboratory (robotics)	15
CS1830	Computing laboratory (games)	15
CS1840	Internet services	15
CS1890	Software design	15
CS1860	Mathematical structures	15
CS1870	Machine fundamentals	15

STAGE 2		
CS2800	Software engineering	15
CS2815	Small enterprise team project	15
CS2821	Systems Programming	15
CS2850	Operating systems	15
CS2855	Databases	15
CS2860	Algorithms and complexity	15
IY2760	Introduction to information security	15
IY2840	Computer and network security	15

STAGE 3/4		
CS3001	Year out in Industry	30
CS3003	IT project management	15
CS3821	Full unit project (<i>cannot be taken with CS3810</i>)	30
CS3110	Bioinformatics	15
CS3210	Image processing	15
CS3220	Fundamentals of digital sound and music	15
CS3250	Visualisation and exploratory analysis	15
CS3450	Software verification	15
CS3480	Software language engineering	15
CS3470	Compilers and code generation	15
CS3490	Computational optimisation	15
CS3510	Functional programming and applications	15
CS3580	Advanced data communications	15
CS3750	Concurrent and parallel programming	15
CS3846	HCI	15
CS3870	Advanced algorithms	15
CS3920	Computer learning	15
CS3930	Computational finance	15
CS3940	Intelligent agents and multi-agent systems	15
CS3945	Semantic Web	15
IY3840	Malicious software	15
IY3660	Applications of cryptography	15

STAGE 4/5		
CS4001	Deferred Year in Industry	30
CS4825	M.Sci. team project	60
CS4100	Data analysis	15
CS4200	On-line machine learning	15
CS4920	Computer learning (<i>cannot be taken with CS3920</i>)	15

CS4930	Methods of computational finance (<i>cannot be taken with CS3930</i>)	15
CS4450	Software verification (<i>cannot be taken with CS3450</i>)	15
CS4234	Large-scale data storage and processing	15
CS4490	Computational optimization (<i>cannot be taken with CS3490</i>)	15
CS4940	Intelligent agents and multi-agent systems (<i>cannot be taken with CS3940</i>)	15
CS4580	Advanced data communications (<i>cannot be taken with CS3580</i>)	15
CS4520	Fundamentals of digital sound and music (<i>cannot be taken with CS3520</i>)	15
CS4910	Running a small business	15
CS4915	Standards, IP and technology seminar series	15
CS4945	Semantic Web (<i>cannot be taken with CS3945</i>)	15
CS4563	Technology entrepreneurship	15
IY4606	Smart cards/Token security and applications	15
IY4609	Digital forensics	15
IY4610	Security testing theory and practice	15
IY4612	Cyber security	15

- At stage two or stage three, students may choose to substitute a 15 credit course for another course unit outside the department provided the department approves the external unit. Students taking an industrial year take one of the additional courses CS3001 or CS4001 and thus have 150 credits in their penultimate or final year.
- While students are normally allocated a specific lab for any given course they are registered for, they may if they wish attend additional labs of that course where space allows.
- Students for each year are expected to take part in the Advanced Topics seminar course (CS3010). This course is not part of the degree programme but attendance will be placed in the student's transcripts.

The course units taken for each of the M.Sci. Degree Programmes are as follows:

M.Sci. Software Engineering

First	CS1802 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for the purposes of progression</i> CS1820, CS1830, CS1840, CS1860, CS1870, CS1890 <i>mandatory, condonable</i>
Second	CS2800 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS2815 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS2850, CS2855, CS2860, CS2821, IY2760, IY2840 <i>mandatory, condonable</i>

Third	CS3821 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS3003, CS3480, CS3846, IY3840 <i>mandatory, condonable</i> <i>two further non-project CS3XXX or IY3XXX elective courses</i>
Final	CS4825 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS4910, CS4915, CS4563 <i>mandatory, condonable</i> <i>one further non-project course from the above Stage 4/5 list</i>

A year out in industry (CS3001) may be taken between second and third year or between the third and fourth year (CS4001).

M.Sci. Software Engineering with Year in Industry

First	CS1802 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for the purposes of progression</i> CS1820, CS1830, CS1840, CS1860, CS1870, CS1890 <i>mandatory, condonable</i>
Second	CS2800 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS2815 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS2850, CS2855, CS2860, CS2821, IY2760, IY2840 <i>mandatory, condonable</i>
Third	CS3001 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title (cannot be taken with CS4001)</i>
Penultimate	CS3821 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS3003, CS3480, CS3846, IY3840 <i>mandatory, condonable</i> <i>two further non-project CS3XXX or IY3XXX elective courses</i>
Fourth	CS4001 <i>mandatory, non-condonable (cannot be taken with CS3001)</i>
Final	CS4825 <i>mandatory, non-condonable for degree title</i> CS4910, CS4915, CS4563 <i>mandatory, condonable</i> <i>one further non-project elective course from the above Stage 4/5 list</i>

Progression and award requirements

Full details of progression and award requirements are given in the College's [Undergraduate Regulations](#). On some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage, or to qualify for a particular degree title (see programme structure above).

To progress from stage two to the following stage the student must achieve at their first attempt an average calculated to two decimal places of 50.00% or above. M.Sci. To progress from the penultimate to final stage the student must achieve both of the following criteria

- a weighted average of 55.00% or above computed to two decimal places, where the second stage average is weighted as 1 and the penultimate stage average is weighted as 2;
- a grade of 55.00% or above computed to two decimal places in CS3821.

Students who fail to progress from stage two will be transferred to a B.Sc. programme.

M.Sci. students who fail to progress to the final stage will also be transferred to a B.Sc. programme. In particular :- students taking M.Sci. Software Engineering and M.Sci. Software Engineering with Year in Industry who fail to progress will be transferred to B.Sc. Software Engineering.

Student support and guidance

- Advisors: All students are allocated a personal academic advisor who meets with them regularly through the programme. The advisor's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. Students have tutorials with their advisor during the first year.
- The programme co-ordinator, the director of pastoral care, the director of undergraduate studies and the head of department provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- All staff are available and accessible. Initial contact can be arranged via email or through the departmental office.
- A student handbook is supplied to every student, and course notes and other learning resources are available either in hard copy or on the department's web site.
- Induction sessions are run at the start of each academic year by technical support staff on the use of the departmental computing systems.
- Technical back up is provided by the systems support staff for problems with using the departmental computing system.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources are available in the College libraries and the Computer Centre.
- Careers advice is provided by the [College Careers Service](#) and the departmental careers service liaison officer.
- Students have access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Disability and Dyslexia Service for students with disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties.

Admission requirements

The Department's standard conditional offer for M.Sci. programmes is normally 320 UCAS tariff points, with a standard A-Level offer of ABB. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. We are particularly looking for students with some aptitude for Computer Science: this could be demonstrated by, for example, an A-level with a technical component, such as Maths, Physics, Chemistry or Economics, an interest in a particular field of Computer Science, experience in programming or through an interview with us.

Normally we require that non-native English speaking students can demonstrate their proficiency in English with an IELTS of 6.5 or an equivalent grade in similar examination systems.

For further details of admission requirements, please refer to the [Prospective Students](#) web page. It may also be helpful to contact the [Admissions Office](#) for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

Further learning and career opportunities

Computer Science opens up a wide range of career opportunities for graduates and the department has a number of important links with industry. Computer Science graduates from the Department have found employment in a wide range of jobs. Many have gone into software houses such as Logica, while others have entered larger organisations such as British Telecom, Texas Instruments and BAE Systems. A large number enter careers with a management or financial slant, for example Accenture or large multi-national companies. The College Careers Office organises

recruitment visits by companies and there are a number of careers fairs during the year when final year students can make useful contacts with prospective employers. In addition, the industrial year programme allows students to work within a company for one year between the second and final years. Students taking this option often find that the employer will encourage them to apply for posts at the completion of their degree. For further details please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions for Computer Science was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). It was ranked 11th in the UK for the quality of the Computer Science research output, with 32.2% classified as 4* (world leading) and 54.5% as 3* (internationally excellent). This is an outstanding performance that reflects the department's strong research culture and significant expansion in its research portfolio, which transmits to the inspiring teaching that delivered across the degree programmes. 40% of the Research Impact has also been classified as 4* (world leading), which reflects the strong engagement the department has with companies and the influence that its research has in the economy and society.

In the 2014 National Student Survey the Computer Science Department was joint sixth in the UK (third in England) rankings for Computer Science departments.

List of programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and either lead to degree awards of the University of London or alternatively Diploma of Higher Education awards of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. The QAA subject benchmark statement in Computer Science describes the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in the subject, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see www.qaa.ac.uk). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see www.ucas.ac.uk).

Specialist Honours Degree programmes within Computer Science – Software Engineering strand

MSci Computer Science (Software Engineering)

MSci Computer Science (Software Engineering) with Year in Industry