

Royal Holloway, University of London
Programme specification for an undergraduate award
MSci COMPUTER SCIENCE (DISTRIBUTED AND NETWORKED SYSTEMS) (G4G5)

Section 1 – Introduction to your programme

This programme specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your programme and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the College's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the College's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

Your degree programme in **MSci Computer Science (Distributed and Networked Systems)** provides progressive structures in which you are able to gain ever-wider knowledge and understanding, and appropriate skills. The programmes contain a combination of mandatory and elective courses to introduce you to the theory and practice of Computer Science, including software development techniques and the technologies underlying specific application areas such as gaming and robotics.

The structure encourages you to develop your own interests through informed choice among specialist options. In the final year of the M.Sci. programmes, you undertake a project which accounts for 50% of your studies in the final year. There is a free choice of other penultimate and ultimate stage courses reflecting both core material, such as compiler theory, and currently important research areas such as machine learning, information security, software language engineering, intelligent agents, computational finance and bioinformatics. You will also attend core and optional courses in your final two years that reflect your specialism.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, programmes and the availability of individual course units, especially optional course units are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree programme – Also referred to as 'degree course' or simply 'course', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.

Course unit – Also referred to as 'module', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree programme. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of course units to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree programmes a certain number of optional course units must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Programme details			
Date of specification update	September 2018	Location of study	Egham Campus
Programme award and title	MSci Computer Science (Distributed and Networked Systems)	Level of study	Undergraduate
Programme code	3016	UCAS code	G4G5
Year of entry	2019/20		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	Computer Science	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the programme	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time	Duration of the programme	Four years
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	For queries on admissions:	study@royalholloway.ac.uk .

Section 3 – Degree programme structure

3.1 Mandatory course unit information

The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study

Year	Course code	Course title	Contact hours*	Self-study hours	Written exams**	Practical assessment**	Coursework**	Credits	FHEQ level	Course status (see below)
1	CS1811	Object Oriented Programming I	57	93	90	0	10	15	4	MNC
1	CS1812++	Object Oriented Programming II	55	95	90	0	10	15	4	MNC
1	CS1820	Computer Lab (Robotics)	44	106	0	0	100	15	4	MC
1	CS1830	Computer Lab (Games)	44	106	0	0	100	15	4	MC
1	CS1840	Internet Services	40	110	90	0	10	15	4	MC
1	CS1860	Mathematical Structures	42	108	90	0	10	15	4	MC
1	CS1870	Machine Fundamentals	42	108	90	0	10	15	4	MC
1	CS1890	Software Design	34	116	40	0	60	15	4	MC
2	CS2800	Software Engineering	33	117	60	0	40	15	5	MNC
2	CS2810	Team Project	40	110	0	0	100	15	5	MNC
2	CS2850	Operating Systems	44	106	80	0	20	15	5	MC
2	CS2855	Databases	44	106	60	0	40	15	5	MC
2	CS2860	Algorithms and Complexity	33	117	90	0	10	15	5	MC
2	IY2760	Introduction to Information Security	33	117	80	0	20	15	5	MC
2	IY2840	Computer and network Security	33	117	70	0	30	15	5	MC
4	CS4826	Project	10	590	0	0	100	60	7	MNC

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory courses on your degree programme. These courses are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree programme will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these courses each year. Mandatory courses fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) courses, you must pass the course before you can proceed to the next year of your programme, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) courses, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree programme may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example;

where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and programme requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.

*Contact hours come in various different forms, and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or, studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff.

**The way in which each course on your degree programme is assessed will also vary, however, the assessments listed above are all 'summative', which means you will receive a mark for it which will count towards your overall mark for the course, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the course you will gain the credits listed. 'Coursework' might typically include a written assignment, like an essay. Coursework might also include a report, dissertation or portfolio. 'Practical assessments' might include an oral assessment or presentation, or a demonstration of practical skills required for the particular course.

3.2 Optional course units

In addition to mandatory course units, there will be a number of optional course units available during the course of your degree. The following table lists a selection of optional course units that are likely to be available. However, not all may be available every year. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example; where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and programme requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection, so it is important that this specification is read alongside your department's Student Handbook, which you can access via their [webpage](#).

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 5
None	CS2910 Artificial Intelligence	CS3110: Bioinformatics	CS4220: Digital audio and applications+++
	CS2846: Human-Computer Interaction	CS3220: Digital audio and applications	CS4234: Large-scale data storage and processing
	CS2900 Multi-dimensional Data Processing	CS3470: Compilers and code generation	CS4490: Computational optimization+++
		CS3490: Computational optimisation	CS4504: Business Intelligence Systems, Infrastructures and Technologies
		CS3510: Functional programming and applications	CS4100: Data analysis (AI)
		CS3870 Advanced algorithms and Complexity	CS4200: On-line machine learning (AI)
		CS3250 Visualisation and exploratory analysis (AI)	CS4250: Visualisation and exploratory analysis+++ (AI)
		CS3920: Machine learning (AI)	CS4920: Machine learning+++ (AI)
		CS3930: Computational finance (AI)	CS4930: Methods of computational finance+++ (AI)
		CS3940: Intelligent agents and multi-agent systems (AI)	CS4940: Intelligent agents and multi-agent systems(AI)
		CS3945: Semantic Web (AI)	CS4945: Semantic Web+++ (AI)

		CS4580: Advanced data communications (DNS)	CS4950 Deep Learning (AI)
		CS3750: Concurrent and parallel programming (DNS)	IY4501: Security management (IS)
		IY3606: Smart cards/Token security and applications (IS)	IY4523: Secure business architectures (IS)
		IY3609: Digital forensics (IS)	IY4606: Smart cards/Token security and applications+++ (IS)
		IY3612: Cyber security (IS)	IY4609: Digital forensics+++ (IS)
		IY3660: Applications of cryptography (IS)	IY4610: Security testing theory and practice (IS)
		IY3840: Malicious software (IS)	IY4612: Cyber security+++ (IS)
		CS3480: Software language engineering (SE)	CS4580: Advanced data communications+++ (DNS)

3.3 Other course unit requirements

++ You may take CS1813 Software Development instead of CS1812 at the discretion of the department

+++ You cannot take this course if the course with the same title was taken in Year 3

In the **second year** you will take one further non-project elective course.

In the **third year** you will take eight non-project CS3XXX or IY3XXX elective courses, of which at least one must be from the Distributed and Networked Systems (DNS) strand.

In the **final year** you will take four further non-project CS4XXX or IY4XXX elective courses, of which at least one must be from the Distributed and Networked Systems (DNS) strand.

Note: 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.

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree programme

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

Section 5 – Educational aims of the programme

The aims of this programme 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, 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 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.

Section 6 - Programme learning outcomes

In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*))

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. an advanced knowledge and understanding of the facts, concepts, principles and theories relating to computing and computer applications (K); 2. 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 (K); 3. 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 (K); 4. 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 (K); 5. depending on their programme of studies, students may also gain a knowledge of the following key practical application technologies: operating systems; graphics; robotics, bioinformatics, information security, applied artificial intelligence and human-computer interfaces; theoretical foundations of algorithms and programming (K); 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. 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 (S); 7. employ the research skills needed to investigate a defined topic under supervision, through an extended individual project (S); 8. 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 (S*); 9. problem identification, analysis and solution using critical assessment and reasoned argument (S*); 10. taking responsibility for own learning and developing habits of reflection on that learning (S*); 11. skills in written communication, project documentation, verbal presentation; numeracy and computation (S*); 12. use of information technology (including spreadsheets, databases, word processing, email and WWW) (S*); 13. information handling and retrieval (including the use of libraries and computer technology) (S*); 14. ability to work autonomously, and to demonstrate time management and organisational skills (S*).
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Section 7 - 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](#).

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no other essential costs on this degree programme.

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree programme at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards

QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	4-7
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Your programme is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent programmes of study.

QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
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Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.

Section 10 – Further information

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate when taking full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. More detailed information on course units, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Course Catalogue](#). The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Your programme will be reviewed regularly, both by the university as part of its cyclical quality enhancement processes, and/or by your department or school, who may wish to make improvements to the curriculum, or in response to resource planning. As such, your programme may be revised during the course of your study at Royal Holloway. However, your department or school will take reasonable steps to consult with students via appropriate channels when considering changes. All continuing students will be routinely informed of any significant changes.

Section 11 – Intermediate exit awards (where available)

You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the programme as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory course units, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.

Award	Criteria	Awarding body
Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)	Pass in 210 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4 and at least 120 of which must be at or above FHEQ Level 5	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)	Pass in 120 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College

Section 12 - Associated award(s)

MSci Computer Science (Distributed and Networked Systems) with Year in Industry (G4G9)