



# MSc in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and Networks - PIXNET

## Student Handbook



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## Introduction



Founded in 1895 and a University since 1966, Aston is a long established research-active University, known for its world-class teaching quality and strong links to industry, government and the professions. It is also an inclusive, forward-thinking and diverse institution, deeply committed to ensuring all of its students can maximise their achievements.

Whether you're a UK, EU or international student looking for advice on managing money, wanting to join or even set-up a student society or needing guidance and support when looking ahead to your future career, Aston has friendly and experienced professionals ready to help.

We take supporting our students very seriously. Aston was proud to have been awarded Gold by the government's Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) where we were acclaimed for "students from all backgrounds achieve consistently outstanding outcomes". Similarly, in the National Student Survey (NSS) Aston has achieved an overall satisfaction rate of at least 88% for the last four years (above the national average of 86%).

We are dedicated to equipping our students with the skills needed to thrive in the world of work. Aston is ranked among the top four universities for helping students secure a work placement year during their studies, helping them gain invaluable experience. With the aid of our award winning Careers+Placements team, Aston's graduates are some of the most employable in the UK. Six months after graduation, nearly eight out of ten Aston alumni are in graduate level destinations – an employability rate comparable to those of the traditional elite universities.

For those who do not want to take the traditional graduate route, however, our Careers+Placements team can assist with other options such as further study, voluntary or charity work, and starting your own business. For postgraduate students we have a specialist careers adviser who can help with career planning and we also have opportunities for postgraduate internships that can provide important work experience.

For students who are not based on campus Careers+Placements have an online collection of tools for career planning and research.

Having celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> year as a University in 2016 and welcomed our new Vice-Chancellor, we are constantly adapting to the changing needs of our students. In keeping with the University's progressive motto, 'Forward', we pledge to continue to do so.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'H.E. Higson'.

**Professor Helen E Higson OBE**

**Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor**

## Welcome from the Executive Dean of the School



As the new Dean of the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences at Aston University I am delighted to welcome you for the new academic year. The School has a vibrant, creative and innovative curriculum and I hope that you engage with the many additional opportunities that we are able to offer, both through the school and through engagement with the Student Union.

We aspire to create the very best graduates that are successful in gaining graduate jobs across a broad range of industrial sectors. The more you engage with opportunities available to you through the School and elsewhere, the more impressive your CV will be when you come to look for jobs.

There is a national shortage of STEM graduates so choosing to study an Engineering or Applied Science course at Aston will allow you to develop your skills and experience for an exciting and challenging career. I wish you a successful time with us where your engagement and hard work on the course fits you for a bright future.

**Professor Sarah Hainsworth**

**Executive Dean EAS**

## General Information for Erasmus+ Students



### Aston University

Founded in 1895 and a University since 1966, Aston is a long established research-led University known for its world-class teaching quality and strong links to industry, government and commerce.

Aston's four Schools offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. Aston promotes and supports academic excellence in everything that we do. You will be taught by academic staff with international reputations in their fields. Access to quality library, learning resources and information technology is an essential part of any university experience and at Aston this is given a high priority. Our learning and teaching facilities are modern, easy to access and user-friendly.

Aston University is located on a well-equipped and friendly campus in the heart of the vibrant city of Birmingham. All of our social, support and academic facilities are based on campus, so you will never have to go far.

Each year Aston welcomes students from over 120 countries, providing a fantastic opportunity for exchange students to study abroad, whilst also having the chance to experience new cultures, meet new people and improve their language skills.



## Birmingham

Birmingham is Britain's second city and is internationally recognised as a leader in leisure, entertainment, shopping and sport. Birmingham is an international centre for business, commerce and industry and attracts over 25 million visitors each year and the global Mercer Quality of Living Report 2017 recently placed Birmingham the second best city in England for quality of life. Aston's location in the centre of the UK means that Birmingham is easily accessible by road, rail or air. Birmingham Airport is located ten minutes from Birmingham City Centre by train, and London is less than ninety minutes. The central location of the campus means that shopping, restaurants and nightlife are all within a safe and easy walking distance.

## “Pre-Arrival”

### How to get your visa organized

If you are from outside the European Union, it is very likely that you will need to have a visa to study or work within the UK, so applying for the correct visa in this scenario is crucial. Entering the UK for a period of less than 6 months would mean that the correct visa to apply for would be the Short-term Study Visa or a Visit Visa and this would apply for both students who are studying, and for staff who would be attending to train. You can find details about Short Term Study Visas on our website: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/iss/visas/short-term-study-visas>. Staff who are coming to Aston to teach would need to contact our visa compliance team as this visa would vary depending on your profession, contact details below.

A period of more than 6 months would mean the correct visa to apply for would be the tier 4(General) student visa. If this visa applies to you, then it is important to start preparing for your visa application as early as possible – our website provides detailed information to help you make your application: [www.aston.ac.uk/tier4-visa](http://www.aston.ac.uk/tier4-visa). This would apply to students as staff teaching and training trips do not last this period of time.

If you are coming to Aston from a country within the European Union where you are an EU national, you will currently not need a visa to study, train or teach at Aston. However, depending on the Brexit outcome, this may change from March 2019 onwards.

If you do need to apply for a Short Term Study Visa or a Visit Visa, please complete our visitor questionnaire: [www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/visacompliance/questionnaire](http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/visacompliance/questionnaire). This process is the same for both students and visiting members of staff. If you have any questions about visas, please email [K.mengistu@aston.ac.uk](mailto:K.mengistu@aston.ac.uk) or call +44 (0)121 204 4737. For general visa or immigration queries, please email [astoninternational@aston.ac.uk](mailto:astoninternational@aston.ac.uk) or call +44(0)121 204 4567.

### Money

As you will probably already know, the currency used within the UK is the Sterling Pound (£) and will need to be readily available in your time within the UK.

If you are coming to Aston as a staff member on a teaching or training mobility, it is highly likely to be relatively short term, so a bank account is not needed as funds can be converted in to Sterling from your home currency before arrival or just after arrival, and can be converted at any time within the UK from many banks. If you are a student it is highly recommended that you open a bank account as you will be here for an extended period of time. However, you need to ensure your bank accepts the Euro (€) as Aston pay the Erasmus grant to the participant in Euros.

## UK Bank Account

To open a UK bank account, you will first need to complete online pre-enrolment. You will then need a letter from Aston confirming your student status, which you can request through MAP. You do not need to have completed face-to-face enrolment to request this letter.

Once you have completed your request, please bring your student card to the Hub reception to collect your letter. When you go to open your bank account you will need to take this letter along with your passport and visa (if you have one), proof of your address both at home and in the UK as well as a reference and statement from your current bank.

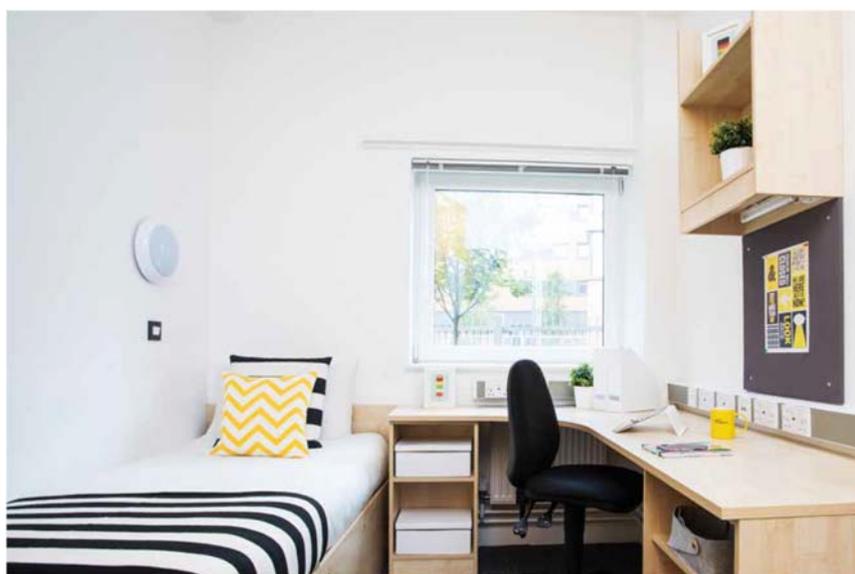
After you have opened your bank account, it is very easy to withdraw funds, but you just need to make sure your account comes with a debit card and check whether it offers free withdrawals or not, as some charge a small fee. Banks are usually open between 9.30am and 4.30pm in the week, with some major branches also open on a Saturday.

## What to pack

Depending on what time of the year you are coming to Aston, what you will need to bring might vary, as the weather in the UK can be very unpredictable, even in the summer! Bring some layers of lightweight clothing, as days can start off cool and get warmer, and items of national dress which you can wear on social occasions. Clothing can be easily and cheaply purchased in the UK, so you may wish to wait until you arrive in Birmingham to buy many items, particularly bulky winter-wear.

Our moving-in guide ([www.aston.ac.uk/moving](http://www.aston.ac.uk/moving)) provides more information on the types of basic things you may need in your accommodation. Remember that many of these items can be found cheaply in the UK, including course books and equipment. You may want to bring specialist items with you, so that you can cook food that you are used to at home.

## Accommodation



Accommodation is available on-campus to you as an Erasmus student if you are a full time student between September

We **guarantee** Aston University on-campus accommodation to the **first 40 full year (September – June) Erasmus and Exchange student applicants**, on a first-come first-serve basis.

On-campus accommodation is also **guaranteed** for the **first 20 Erasmus or Exchange students** who are registering for **Teaching period 1** (September – January). These 20 rooms will then be available for the **first 20 students** who are registering for **Teaching period 2** (January – June).

Incoming staff are able to book on campus serviced apartments above the accommodation office. The apartments are quiet, secure and at the heart of the campus while still being less than 20 minutes' walk away from the city centre. The flats are fully furnished en-suites with double beds and a separate living/kitchen room. Bed linen and towels are provided and the kitchen is equipped with cutlery, plates, cups and other essentials. To enquire and book please E-mail: [bedrooms@aston.ac.uk](mailto:bedrooms@aston.ac.uk)

Also, more detailed information please look here <http://www.aston.ac.uk/accommodation/>

## General Advice

Being one of the biggest cities in the UK, Birmingham is fortunate in the fact that it boasts a variety of alternative accommodation types for both students and staff. These include:

- Private student halls
- Conference Aston
- Shared houses
- Flats/Studios
- Hotels

We recommend that you search for your accommodation in advance, in particular if you are looking for shared/private housing. We also recommend that you arrive in the UK early so you can view properties and make arrangements in person.

If you look outside AstonStudentHomes for accommodation, please be careful which accommodation agencies you are using, as there are certain laws and regulations that must be followed.

Please remember that the University cannot recommend off-campus accommodation properties, but it provides a list to help guide your search with the information available from staff at ARC.

If you are going to be arriving to the UK later than what office staff work (normally past 5pm Monday – Friday) or on a Saturday/Sunday, please make arrangements so that your keys are available to you at the time you arrive by consulting with the accommodation provider to ensure security/out-of-hours staff are aware of your arrival. This would apply for both campus and alternative accommodation.

## “Arriving at Aston”

### Getting to Aston

You can easily get to campus via train or taxi. Birmingham Airport is connected to Birmingham International railway station via a monorail on the first floor of departures. From there you can take a 15 minute train ride to Birmingham New Street Station. Campus is then a 20 minute walk or 10 minute taxi ride. Alternatively, you can get a taxi directly to campus from Birmingham Airport, which will take 30 to 40 minutes.

View our arrivals video on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjAM6onB-CU>

### **What to do when you arrive**

Arriving at our Aston campus will be an exciting time for both yourself and us as this is just the start of an exciting journey with your time at Aston. There are a few steps you will need to take before you are able to carry out your mobility to Aston.

Please remember to let the International Office know you have arrived at Aston, as well as your academic point of contact. We are here to help with any queries you may have whilst at Aston.

Your International Office point of contact will be Jessica Neumann ([j.neumann@aston.ac.uk](mailto:j.neumann@aston.ac.uk)). Please email to let her know you have arrived and she will arrange a meeting to finalise any paperwork or outstanding Erasmus+ grant payments.

## Staff

Whether you are on a training or teaching mobility, you will need to meet with our Visa Compliance team to ensure you have the necessary paperwork to carry out your mobility. This will also be necessary if you are coming to Aston from one of our KA107 International Credit Mobility partners, who are located outside of the European Union. You will then be given a brief orientation/induction from Aston staff within the department you are visiting, ensuring that you understand the fire evacuation procedures and any other health and safety considerations. You will also receive a staff card which you should wear at all times around campus.

## Students

Prior to arriving, you will have to be pre-enrolled for the period that you are here. Once your place for study has been confirmed, you will receive an email on how to complete the pre-enrolment process via MAP (My Aston Portal). You will need to upload a copy of your passport and visa (if necessary) as well as a photo for your uniCARD and fill out some details. Once on campus you will have to carry out a face to face enrolment and this is where you will get your uniCARD and any other documents relating to your mobility at Aston. If you have a Tier 4 visa, you will need a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) and this will need to be collected within 10 days of arriving from the collection point you selected, preferably being Aston University, which means you can collect it at your face to face enrolment.

## Support Facilities

Aston University offers a range of services to support students with both academic and personal issues. These include personal tutors for each student and many other services provided by the Aston Schools, central University departments and the Students' Union.

Further information can be found at: [www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/](http://www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/).

The Hub, Student Support Services offer disability support, counselling, funding advice and international student support. Further information can be found online at: [www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/)

## Peer Mentoring

Further to the support facilities Aston is delighted to be able to offer all our exchange students a mentor during their time at Aston. This is a support scheme run by students for students and provides a great source of support from someone who has experience of being an Aston student. For more information please visit:

[www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/get-involved/mentoring-at-aston-university/peer-mentoring/](http://www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/get-involved/mentoring-at-aston-university/peer-mentoring/)

## Employment and Careers Services

Aston University's Careers Service is available to all students offering careers guidance, careers information and advice: [www1.aston.ac.uk/careers/](http://www1.aston.ac.uk/careers/)

The Students' Union provides advice and guidance on gaining part-time work in the UK. For further information please see the Job Shop website: [www.astonunion.com/jobshop/](http://www.astonunion.com/jobshop/)

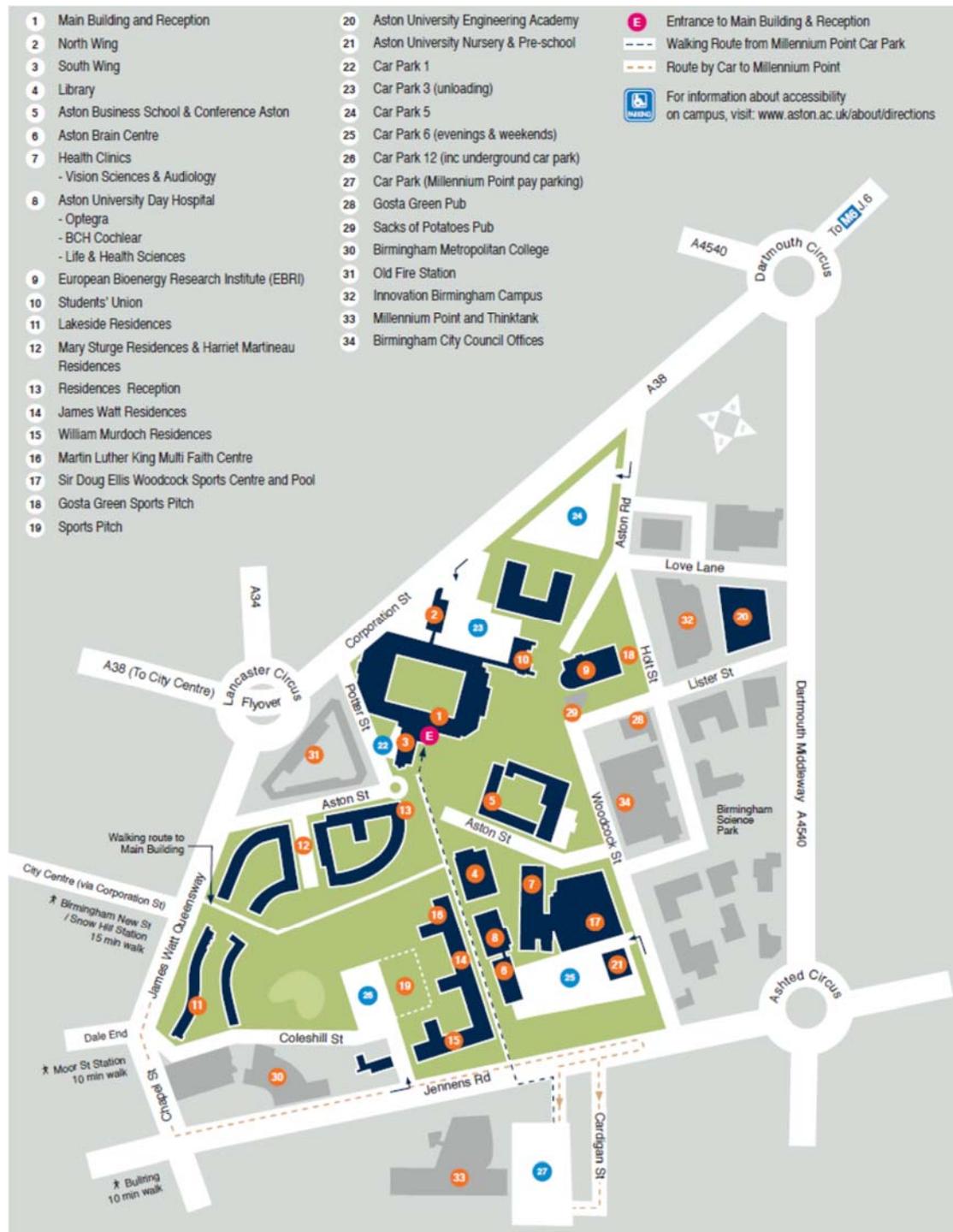
## Visas and Health Insurance

Students from outside the EU will need to make sure that they have the necessary visa to enable them to study in the UK. We will issue a 'short term study visa letter' for those studying less than 6 months. Students studying for a full year will need a Tier 4 visa.

For visa advice, please visit: [www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/iss/advice-for-international-students/visas](http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/iss/advice-for-international-students/visas)

EU students should obtain a European Health Insurance card. International students should click on the link below for detailed information relating to healthcare: [www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Health-andhealthcare/National-Health-Service-NHS-who-is-entitled/](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/International-Students/Study-work--more/Health-andhealthcare/National-Health-Service-NHS-who-is-entitled/)

# Campus Map





### Sport at Aston

Interested in taking part in some sort of sport? The Sir Doug Ellis Woodcock Sports Centre offers high quality sports facilities, including a 25m swimming pool, 100+ station gym, sports halls, squash courts, dance and martial arts studios and a range of fitness classes.

Find out more: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/sport/>

### Places to eat in and around Aston

Your uniCARD can act as touch pay cashless payment, which has been recently introduced to different outlets across Aston campus. In this scheme, a 5% discount will apply on all purchases combined with loyalty points which equates to 5 points every time a full £1 is spent, each point being worth £0.01. The touch pay scheme can be used in Café Tierra, Café66, Café Libro and Eros Coffee Bar.

#### **Café Tierra**

As the biggest food court on the Aston campus, with a number of different cuisines available, you will definitely find something to your liking at Café Tierra! From East Grill & Street food to the King Asia wok, Café Tierra has an assortment of foods that will get your taste buds going. For more information on type of foods available at Café Tierra, please visit <http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/catering/tierra/>

#### **Café Libro**

Located within the library on Aston campus, Café Libro offers Starbucks coffee, a range of other hot and cold drinks, and a wide selection of sandwiches and hot Paninis, as well as crisps, cakes and flapjacks. For more information please visit <http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/catering/cafelibro/>

#### **Tesco express**

This is a popular supermarket, located on the Aston campus, allowing you the freedom to buy and make your own lunch and dinner. They sell fresh produce so that you can make a meal from scratch, as well as meals ready to be warmed up.

#### **Wok & Go**

Located on the Aston campus, this fast food serves a fusion of Asian noodles and rice meals. For more information: <https://wokandgo.co.uk/restaurant/aston-university/>

#### **Gosta green**

If you feel like having some traditional British pub food, within 5 minutes' walk from the Aston campus, this popular students' hangout is a good choice! For more information: <https://www.social-squirrel.com/thegostagreenbirmingham>

And many more! There are many different restaurants and Cafés located in and around Aston campus and into the city centre which is only a fifteen minute walk away.



### Things to do in Birmingham

Birmingham is the UK's biggest city outside of London, with a wide range of cultural, social and sporting attractions. We are home to some of the best shopping centres, as well as numerous museums, art galleries and sporting venues. We have the oldest working cinema in the UK, over 50 festivals each year and a whole range of bars and restaurants with cuisines from all over the world. We are also renowned for our street food scene, with Digbeth Dining Club every Friday and Saturday evening, the Balti Triangle and China Town. We are confident that you will definitely have something to do in your free time!

#### **Shopping**

The Bullring, Grand Central and the Mailbox are the city's major shopping malls and are just a short walk away from the Aston campus, offering 300 shops and restaurants.

Birmingham has a strong reputation for independent shops for those seeking more unique and specialist choices.

The city also has a number of open and indoor markets which are popular with many seeking greater choice and value for money for their fresh meats, fish and produce.

For more information: <http://visitbirmingham.com/what-to-do/shopping/>

#### **Library of Birmingham**

The Library of Birmingham is the largest public library in Europe, and attracts nearly 2 million visitors a year.

For more information: <http://www.libraryofbirmingham.com/>

#### **National Sea Life Centre**

This aquarium has over 60 displays of freshwater and marine life with the UK's only fully transparent 360 degree underwater tunnel.

For more information: <https://www.visitsealife.com/birmingham/>

And much more! There is so much to see and do in Birmingham we couldn't possibly list it all on here, so please research what you are most interested in and Birmingham is more than likely to have it!

## Useful Links

- [www1.aston.ac.uk/international-students/](http://www1.aston.ac.uk/international-students/)
- [www.facebook.com/astonuniversity](https://www.facebook.com/astonuniversity)
- [www.facebook.com/auinternational?ref=hl](https://www.facebook.com/auinternational?ref=hl)
- [www.twitter.com/astonuniversity](https://www.twitter.com/astonuniversity)
- <http://instagram.com/astonuniversity>

## University Services

There are many support services to help your student experience at Aston.

### Student Services at the Hub

Our welcoming and knowledgeable team of professional advisers offer information, advice and support throughout your student journey at Aston

#### International Student Advices

Experienced International Student Advisers provide advice and support to all Aston EU and international students. They can assist you with a range of issues including: access to healthcare, banking in the UK, registering with the police if required, extending your student visa, what happens to your visa if you take a break from your studies, working in the UK during and after your studies and cultural and social activities that you can take part in.

For more information contact the International Student Advisers by telephone: +44 (0)121 204 4567 or email: [issu@aston.ac.uk](mailto:issu@aston.ac.uk) or visit the website at: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/iss/>

#### Student Advisers

There are so many things to think about when you enrol at university. If you do not know what to do, there's every chance our friendly and knowledgeable Student Advisers will be able to point you in the right direction.

You can ask our Student Advisers about student finance funding, financial assistance, access to benefits and healthcare as well as academic matters including what happens if you take a break from your studies and what to do if you have personal circumstances which affect your academic progress.

For more information, contact the Student Advisers by telephone: [+ 44\(0\)121 204 4007](tel:+44(0)1212044007) or email: [thehub@aston.ac.uk](mailto:thehub@aston.ac.uk) or visit the Hub website at: [www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/)

#### Student Funds Administrators

The Student Funds Administrator provides advice on managing money, assistance in cases of unexpected hardship and financial assistance through a number of different funds, trusts and bursaries. They also administer the US Federal Loans and offers support to Care experienced students.

For more information, contact the Student Funds Administrator by telephone +44 (0)121 204 4031, by email at: [fau@aston.ac.uk](mailto:fau@aston.ac.uk) or visit the Hub (ground floor of the main building) website at: [www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/fau/](http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/fau/)

### The Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service

The Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service is a confidential and professional service, staffed by qualified, experienced counsellors, psychotherapists and a mental health specialist.

Meeting with one of our team members offers you the opportunity to discuss issues that may be affecting you either personally, or in your academic work. These could include issues such as relationship difficulties, anxiety and stress or loss of motivation. Each year, many students benefit from discussions with us.

Counsellors /psychotherapists do not give advice or tell you what to do. Our role is to help you take responsibility for your own decisions, to become more aware of your own resources and to work with you in developing skills which will help you to manage your own difficulties and concerns more effectively.

We offer face-to-face sessions for students on Campus, and also SKYPE appointments and e-counselling for students on placement or who are distance and transitional learners.

Our Mental Health Specialist provides support, advice and guidance to students with on-going mental health conditions, and co-ordinates care plans with external services where appropriate.

Appointments can be made through the Hub in person (first floor of the main building), by telephone: 0121 204 4007 or you can email the Counselling and Mental Wellbeing Service on [counselling@aston.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@aston.ac.uk).

Our Mental Health Specialist offers drop-in sessions three times a week in the ARC – 1st floor Students' Union. These sessions provide opportunity for students to discuss mental wellbeing / mental health issues. These are bookable by calling in at the ARC reception, calling [0121 204 4848](tel:01212044848), or email [advice@aston.ac.uk](mailto:advice@aston.ac.uk) and further information can also be found on the service web site: <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/health-wellbeing/counselling/>

### The Enabling Team

The Enabling Team (formerly known as the Disability Team) provides advice and guidance if you have a disability. We can help to co-ordinate any support you require if you have a physical, sensory or hidden disability, or specific learning difference. Our service is confidential, and we will liaise with teaching and other support staff within the University to help make adjustments which support your studies if you give us permission to do so. We also:

- Provide free screening and partly fund full diagnostic assessments if you think you may have a specific learning difference such as dyslexia and would like help with this.
- Offer group study skills sessions and drop-in sessions with a dyslexia specialist
- Liaise with external providers to arrange for non-medical helpers for Aston students. We also have an 'in-house' non-medical-helper service.
- Assist you with applications for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and other sources of funding.
- Advise teaching teams about the provision of individual examination arrangements and teaching adaptations (with your consent)
- Make arrangements for Personal Evacuation Plans
- Help provide assistive technology support and advice through our colleagues in the I.T. Department and our Dyslexia Specialist.

Contact details: Email: [EnablingTeam@aston.ac.uk](mailto:EnablingTeam@aston.ac.uk) Telephone: 0121 204 4007/5015 Web: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/thedisabilityteam/> Located on the Ground Floor of the Main Building

## The Visa Compliance Team

The Visa Compliance Team look after the University Tier 4 Sponsor Licence and make sure that the University is meeting all the Home Office requirements so that students' journey to the UK and your studies at Aston University go as smoothly as possible.

We make sure all the systems and processes are in place at the University so that you can be confident you are meeting the requirements of your visa. We will:

- Assess your suitability to study in the UK and issue you with a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to apply for a Tier 4 visa;
- Issue you with your Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) when you arrive in the UK and check your visa is correct;
- Monitor your academic progress and engagement with your studies throughout your whole student journey;
- Send reports to the Home Office on your behalf if your situation changes.
- The team also manage the process for exchange students, short term students, academic researchers and professional visitors to the University.

Contact details: 2017-18 Email: [vct@aston.ac.uk](mailto:vct@aston.ac.uk) Telephone: 0121 204 4007 Web: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/hub/visacompliance/> Located on the Ground Floor of the Main Building

## The Finance Centre

The Finance Centre is responsible for collecting your tuition fee payments but we are also your main contact if you are having difficulties in paying your fees. Call into the Finance Centre on a "drop in" basis to see a member of the Collection Helpdesk team who will be pleased to discuss and sort out any queries you may have or, if you prefer, you can book an appointment. There are confidential interview rooms if you would like to talk to someone in private. Where appropriate we will liaise with staff in your School and Central Departments to help resolve your queries.

For more information see the student finance website either through-[New Students Finance Information Website](#) link or through the Current Student link [Finance - All the help and support you need](#)

How to contact us: Email: [Creditcontrol@aston.ac.uk](mailto:Creditcontrol@aston.ac.uk) Telephone: 0121 204 4355 You can also pay online by clicking on: [www.aston.ac.uk/payments](http://www.aston.ac.uk/payments) or visit us on the ground floor of the main building.

Additional useful Contacts: If you have any queries about the amount of fee you are being charged. Tuition Fees Charges In Person: Visit the Advice Zone Email: [reg\\_studentrecords@aston.ac.uk](mailto:reg_studentrecords@aston.ac.uk) Telephone: [0121 204 4689](tel:01212044689)

## Academic Services

Registry provides a range of administrative support services for students throughout your time at Aston, from initial application to graduation.

### Examinations Office

The University Examinations Office is responsible for organising the scheduling and invigilation of most examinations on campus and at authorised overseas venues. This includes the issue of personalised examination timetables to students and putting in place special arrangements for students with additional needs [The Examinations Office Webpage](#) provides useful information on examination calendars, examination forms (including information about exceptional circumstances) and links to the University Examination Regulations.

## Student Records

The Student Records section is responsible for all student records from initial enrolment through to graduation. [The Student Records webpage](#) provides more detailed information on the services provided, which include: re-enrolment, tuition fee invoices, Aston Bursaries and Scholarships, liaison with the Student Loans Company and issue of degree certificates.

## Appeals, Complaints and Disciplinary Regulations

Information is available via the Registry's Regulations Disciplinary Regulations and Policies Page.

Academic Appeals:

<http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/academic-appealsprocedure/>

Suggestions, Comments, Complaints and Concerns: <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/complaintsprocedure/>

Disciplinary Regulations: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/academic-services/for-students/a-to-z-of-registryservices-for-students/>

Exceptional Circumstances: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/quality/a-z/exceptional-circumstances/>

## Employability Services



Planning your next steps can seem like a challenge alongside your studies, but this is where Careers+Placements can help!

The Careers+Placements Team are on hand to offer friendly and professional advice throughout your time at Aston, to develop the skills and experience required to help you choose the right career path for you and help you to stand out in a competitive job market once you graduate.

As an Aston student you are eligible to use our services online and in person throughout your study years and for up to three years after graduation.

Check out our online resources, including application and interview advice, practice psychometric & video tests and CV & cover letter templates at [www.aston.ac.uk/careers](http://www.aston.ac.uk/careers)

**Drop by and meet the team!** Come and see us in the Main Building, 1st Floor, South Wing. We're open 9.00am- 4.30pm, Monday to Friday, all year round. Book an appointment via [Aston Futures](#) or alternatively give us a call on [0121 204 4757](tel:01212044757)

### Access to Aston Futures

Your Future's in your hands. And it's still unwritten. Login to your [Aston Futures](#) account to search job vacancies, events and book appointments with our friendly and experienced advisers. The online platform run by the Careers+Placements Team is easy to use and packed full of opportunities posted by employers actively looking to recruit Aston students and graduates. You can customise your dashboard to create job alerts for part time jobs, summer internships, placement opportunities and graduate roles.



### Access to Placement Support

At Aston, we believe real life work experience is key to help you stand out from the crowd.

At present, over 70% of Aston students complete a work or study placement in the UK or abroad at the end of their second year before they enter their final year of university, making them better prepared for industry and the professions.

Our dedicated Placements Team are on hand to help you secure a gem of a placement. Each student is assigned a Placement Coordinator who will assist you throughout the placement application process.

Our Employer Team works to create strong business links with local and national employers in the UK and abroad to source opportunities, ensuring you can reap the personal and professional rewards from a year in industry to complement your academic achievements.

To find out more visit: [www.aston.ac.uk/placement](http://www.aston.ac.uk/placement)



### Access to Students' JobShop



Combine your academic career and boost your employability skills by utilising the diverse range of opportunities such as volunteering, paid part time and vacation positions on offer in the JobShop.

Our JobShop team, based in the Students' Union are on hand to check your job application and answer your queries on early employability. We are open from 10.00am-4.00pm Monday to Friday all year round.

Telephone: [0121 204 4844](tel:01212044844) Online: [astonsu.com/support](http://astonsu.com/support) In person: Students' Union 1st Floor.

## Chaplaincy



### The Martin Luther King Centre

The Martin Luther King Centre (MLK) is concerned with religious, social and political issues worldwide; searching for the meaning of life; exploring justice, peace and mutual understanding. The Centre is there for those from all faiths or none.

At the MLK Centre we:

- **Offer a Chaplaincy Service.** We have a team of chaplains who are here to support students and staff. Chaplains are experienced at listening, offering spiritual guidance, prayer, support, and friendship. There are chaplains of different faiths: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan and Sikh - who are available at different times throughout the week.
- **Host Events and Societies.** The MLK Centre is available for student and university activities and events. We are happy to host any gathering that is in line with our aims. To book space, contact MLK Reception on: [0121 204 4729](tel:01212044729) or call into see us.
- **Social activities.** We host regular social events. Catering is normally vegetarian and no alcohol is allowed in the Centre.
- **At times of remembrance, grief and difficulty.** The MLK Centre is the University's focal point for times of sadness and remembrance.
- **Location:** We are situated at the heart of the campus opposite the library. Please feel free to pop in and see us, browse our webpages for more information

For more information visit our [Chaplaincy website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#)  and [Facebook](#)  or contact us:

- Email: [chaplaincy@aston.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@aston.ac.uk)
- Telephone: [0121 204 4729](tel:01212044729)

## Equality and Diversity

We believe that the diversity of our staff and student community is fundamental to creative thinking, innovation and intellectual challenge, and we are committed to creating an environment where

diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or nationality.

We have a genuine commitment to equality of opportunity for our staff and students, and to promoting equality and diversity within the University community from admissions and assessment policies for students to recruitment, selection and employment processes for staff. This is brought alive by our outreach work in Schools, our recruitment on merit, whatever a students' background, and our relevant degrees with linked work experience, which have a track record of transforming lives.

We have ambitious diversity goals and an excellent record of achievement (widening participation targets, Athena SWAN awards, Positive about Disability award etc). We publish equality information each year on all staff and students at the University together with our Equality and Diversity Policy Statement, and a number of other relevant policies. See <http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/equalops/>

If you have any questions about equality and diversity at the University, please contact Human Resources by email at [HR@aston.ac.uk](mailto:HR@aston.ac.uk)

## IT Services

Aston has extensive IT facilities with over 1100 desktop computers specifically for student use. These are located in 30 separate computer areas across the campus.

Many of the computer labs can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and offer a range of networked software packages, database systems, modelling tools, computer-aided learning materials and access to online sources of information. You can search for available computers via the myAston mobile application or via our student guide on the IT website (details listed below) enabling you to identify them without visiting each location.

We have also created WiFi Study Spaces around the campus that are open to all students and have dedicated wireless access points so that you can study using your own equipment in a comfortable and relaxing environment. Some of these spaces also contain a number of computers with standard software which can be used.

WiFi is available across the campus and is called \_Aston Connect. It is really simple to use - Just connect your phone, tablet or notebook and enter your computer login details when requested – details can be found via our student guide on the IT website (details listed below).

IT facilities are free to all students and are linked by our high speed network, which spans the campus providing access to the internet and other networks worldwide.

My Aston Portal (MAP) is an internet portal that acts as a secure single point of contact for many of the services you use as a student. You will have been sent details of how to log into this portal to complete your enrolment before arriving at the university and should continue to use this throughout your studies to access your personalised teaching timetables, the modules you are studying and Blackboard VLE which is our virtual learning environment.

Blackboard VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) is a web-based resource that can be accessed any time from any place via MAP. You will be able to log onto all of your modules, access lecture notes, read course announcements, complete assignments and collaborate with your classmates.

To help you make the most of the IT facilities, we have created a Student Computer Guide which contains information on all of the services provided including email, My Aston Portal (MAP), Blackboard VLE and much more. You can view the guide online at; <http://www.aston.ac.uk/ict/studentguide>

The IT Helpdesk is available from 8am to 6pm during term time and can provide assistance with any issue relating to your IT services or the operation of your uniCARD for building access. You can visit the helpdesk in person or contact us via any of the options below;

IT Helpdesk IT Services Main Building East, Ground Floor. Tel: [0121 204 3445](tel:01212043445). Email: [it\\_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk](mailto:it_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk). Follow us on Twitter [@aston\\_its](https://twitter.com/aston_its) for tips, latest issues and new service information.

## Learning Development Centre

The Learning Development Centre (LDC) is a central service which provides academic advice and resources for students throughout their studies at Aston. We are a team of experienced teachers, lecturers and Student Writing Mentors.

The LDC offers one-to-one group tutorials to help students develop their maths and academic skills. Our maths centre offers a drop - in tutorial service to assist with maths and statistics and our tutors are available to work with students at all levels of study. The LDC also delivers a series of workshops for undergraduate, international, final year and postgraduate students, covering several topics including academic writing, referencing, revision strategies and dissertation writing.

The LDC is also a popular for students to study, particularly for students working in groups. The centre has bookable rooms with presentation facilities which you may find useful during your time at Aston.

Students who are unable to visit the centre can access our advisors through our e-tutorial and skype service. Additionally, all students can access a variety of study resources within the LDC blackboard module.

For more information about using our services, study advice and resources available, please check our [website](#), [Facebook page](#) or follow us on [twitter](#) for more information.

- The LDC is on the first floor of the Library building.
- Email: [ldc@aston.ac.uk](mailto:ldc@aston.ac.uk)
- Telephone: [0121 204 3040](tel:01212043040)

## Library Services



You automatically become a member of the University Library at enrolment. The barcode on your uniCARD shows your Library membership number. You must use your uniCARD to get in to the Library and to take books out. The Library has over 2017-18 1000 reader places, group working

spaces and extensive IT equipment. Library 2 (MB 225) offers additional study space in the Main Building.

The University Library has flexible opening hours, which are always displayed in the foyer and on the website. During exam and revision periods, it is open 24/7. An access control system has been implemented in the Library in order to maintain the safety of students, staff and visitors.

The Library contains over 148,000 volumes, with access to 120,000 journals (electronic and print) and 179,000 e-books across all subject areas. Reservations can be placed on specific titles that are in high demand.

Each summer Library Services reviews the reading lists provided by academic staff to ensure that all recommended books are available to borrow. Reading lists are available on Blackboard sites for each module.

Large, full-text databases such as ABI Inform Complete (Proquest), Business Source Complete (EBSCO), Emerald Fulltext, JSTOR, ScienceDirect and Econlit with Full Text (all full-text business and management journals) are supplemented by access to Web of Science, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, Datastream, Fame (financial databases), Economist and Nexis UK (international press coverage). Most databases are also available via the Internet, both on and offcampus via the A-Z Databases listing: <http://libguides.aston.ac.uk/az.php>

Support is available from the Help Point on the Ground floor of the Library, staffed 9am till 6pm, Monday to Friday in term-time. Staff and students can also email enquiries ([library@aston.ac.uk](mailto:library@aston.ac.uk)) and book appointments with one of the Information Specialists. If you have any questions about Library Services, you can Live Chat or post questions via AsktheLibrary: <http://libanswers.aston.ac.uk/>

## University Student Rules, Regulations and Policies

Detailed information is available via the [A-Z of Academic Regulations and Policies](#), including the following important areas:

- [Academic Appeals Procedures](#)
- [Disciplinary Regulations for Students](#)
- [Examination Regulations for Candidates](#)
- [General Regulations for Programmes](#)
- [Guide to Exceptional Circumstances](#)
- [Student Complaints Procedures](#)

## Aston Student's Union



Aston Students' Union exists for one reason; to impact positively on the life of every student.

Whether it is through representing your views to the University, coordinating the many clubs and societies on offer, solving welfare issues, organising BIG events on and off campus or campaigning for the changes you need, we are here to support you! Please do not hesitate to get in contact with the Union Executive, with any feedback you may have, however big or small.

- Union President: [union.president@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.president@aston.ac.uk)
- Vice President Education & Welfare: [union.vpew@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.vpew@aston.ac.uk)
- Vice President Student Activities: [union.vpsa@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.vpsa@aston.ac.uk)
- Vice President Finance, Media & Entertainment: [union.vpfme@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.vpfme@aston.ac.uk)
- Find out more about all the great services available at the Union at [www.astonsu.com](http://www.astonsu.com)

If you'd like to speak to someone in person, please phone Union Reception on 0121 204 4855 or pop in to see us 9am-5pm Monday to Friday.

### Student Representation

The University is committed to listening to the views of its students and to including them in the development of their own learning experience. If you are interested in finding out more about what a Student Representative does, please contact Aston Students' Union Vice President Education at [union.vpe@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.vpe@aston.ac.uk)

Elections for Student Representatives will be held early in the Autumn Term for new students, and toward the end of the academic year for continuing students and we would like to encourage all students to participate, either by standing for election or by taking part in the democratic process and casting your vote. Aston Students' Union is looking for students to volunteer to stand for election and represent the members of their course. If you would like to get involved, you can find out more at: [www.astonsu.com/voice/representation/courserepresentatives/](http://www.astonsu.com/voice/representation/courserepresentatives/)

### Advice & Representation Centre



**INDEPENDENT –FREE –CONFIDENTIAL**

Advice and Representation Centre (ARC) is a professional advice Centre run by Aston Students' Union. ARC is here to help throughout your time at Aston University. Experienced and qualified staff offer advice on a wide range of issues, study related or personal, and can refer you on for specialist services. ARC offers free, independent advice that is confidential, in a friendly and welcoming environment. ARC advisers can represent and support you at formal hearings and appeals.

Advice from ARC is:

- **Professional** - ARC staff are experienced and trained in advice.
- **Free** - There is no charge for services provided by ARC.
- **Independent** - Aston Students' Union is an independent charity and company led by elected students.
- **Non-judgmental** - ARC aims to treat everyone with respect and courtesy. ARC challenges discrimination.
- **Confidential** - ARC will not pass on the information that students share to anyone outside the service without permission. This includes Aston University.
- ARC offers advice and support with a range of subject areas including:
- **Academic** - ARC advisers provide help and support in relation to exceptional circumstance claims, course issues, leave of absence, examination boards, academic appeals, disciplinary action and complaints about the university. ARC advisers are able to accompany and represent students at university meetings.
- **Money** - ARC provides professional money advice. This includes advice in relation to tuition fees, issues with student finance, grants and bursaries and applications to hardship funds. ARC can provide debt counselling and support dealing with creditors. ARC operates the Union Emergency Loan fund.
- **Housing/accommodation** - ARC offers advice on housing rights and responsibilities. ARC offers a tenancy checking service, advises on disrepair, tenancy deposits, disputes and eviction.
- **Employment rights** - ARC advises on employment rights issues including pay rights, time off, equality at work, disciplinary and grievance processes and termination of employment.
- **Consumer** - ARC advises on consumer issues such as the return or replacement of goods and issues with utility bills.
- **More** - ARC can provide guidance on small claims court processes and procedures; ARC provides information on sexual health and alcohol and substance abuse and can signpost students to specialist services; Students can collect health costs forms income tax forms maps and information about bus routes and time tables.
- **Hate Crime Reporting** - ARC is recognised by West Midland Police as a third party hate crime reporting centre.

**House Hunting – Aston Student Homes (ASH)** - ARC is an ideal place to help with house hunting. ARC operates a housing advertising service called Aston Student Homes (ASH) [www.astonstudenthomes.org](http://www.astonstudenthomes.org) All of the properties advertised by ASH have gas and electricity safety certificates and the relevant housing licenses if applicable. There is also an ASH notice board that displays properties to let. Students can contact ASH on [astonstudenthomes@aston.ac.uk](mailto:astonstudenthomes@aston.ac.uk)

Contact the Advice & Representation Centre ARC – First Floor, Aston Students' Union 0121 204 4848 [advice@aston.ac.uk](mailto:advice@aston.ac.uk) Open Monday to Friday 10 am to 4 pm

**ARC is a member of AdviceUK the largest network of independent advice agencies. ARC is supported by specialist consultancy support from Citizens Advice and the National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS).**



**Aston Students' Union, Advice & Representation Centre is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Authorisation no. 618885.**

[Students' CopyShop](#)

The advertisement for Students' CopyShop features a vibrant rainbow background. At the top, the word 'Students' is written in a green, cursive font, and 'COPYSHOP' is in large, bold, white letters on a dark purple banner. Below this, a list of services is presented in various colors: 'THESIS/DISSERTATION BINDING' (orange), 'COURSEWORK PRINTING' (blue), 'ACETATE/TRACING PAPER PRINTING' (purple), 'HIGH QUALITY GLOSS PRINTING' (pink), 'PHOTO BOOKS | PHOTOCOPYING' (blue), and 'DIGITAL COLOUR/B&amp;W PRINTING' (orange). A black box contains the text 'EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE &amp; COMPETITIVE PRICES. OPEN TO ALL, WITH MOST PRODUCTS PRINTED WHILE YOU WAIT.' At the bottom, there are images of a black thesis binder, a spiral-bound notebook, and several printed items including a photo book and a brochure.

You'll find us on the 1st Floor, Students' Union. We provide all the printing, copying and binding services you will need, all at affordable prices.

We pride ourselves on excellent customer service and we always try to provide service with a smile...even on deadline day!

You can find all our prices online at [www.astonsu.com/explore/copyshop/](http://www.astonsu.com/explore/copyshop/) and if there is anything you're not sure of, please call us on 0121 204 4834 or email [copy.shop@aston.ac.uk](mailto:copy.shop@aston.ac.uk)

During term-time, we're open Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 5pm and we look forward to seeing you soon!

### The Loft



Head up to the second floor of the Union to check out our newly refurbished social study area!

The Loft can seat up to 100 students, and its open to everyone - from first years to final years to postgrads; you are all welcome! It is open 8am – 11pm Monday - Saturday during term time, and 8am - 5pm Monday - Friday out of term.

The loft also has power supplies on every table, and a Presentation Suite with projector that can be booked out for group work and studios get-togethers.

To book time in the Presentation Suite, please visit Union Reception, email [union.reception@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.reception@aston.ac.uk) or phone 0121 204 4855; Here's to happy studying!

### Aston Students' Union Club and Society Room Bookings - University Buildings

1. Every club and society should nominate at least one committee member to handle room bookings with the university.
2. Bookings should be made by emailing [union.reception@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.reception@aston.ac.uk) or in person at Union Reception.
3. The student making the booking should provide full contact details including, name of club/society, the nominated student name, student number and contact telephone number.
4. The booking should indicate the date and times of the booking and if the booking is a recurring event.
5. If equipment is required, the club/society must inform AV-Support by email, [av-support@aston.ac.uk](mailto:av-support@aston.ac.uk)
6. If the booking is for a time after 18:00 or on the weekend, an ID number will be issued to the student making the booking. This should be quoted to Security staff who will then issue a key to the student. The key will only be given to the named person on the booking; the named person is responsible for the unlocking/locking of the room.
7. Arrangements should be made by organisers for admittance/exit of non-Aston students and visitors. If there are to be any external guests or speakers, the club/society should liaise with Aston Students' Union Student Activities office and a risk assessment form should be completed.

8. Any event with external speakers requires a Risk Assessment form to be completed and submitted to Aston Students' Union Student Activities office at least 15 days prior to the event. This will be sent on to University Security and a security check may be carried out with West Midlands Police and/or other security services. Download the form at [www.astonsu.com/activities/resources/](http://www.astonsu.com/activities/resources/) and email it to [r.broome@aston.ac.uk](mailto:r.broome@aston.ac.uk)
9. If the event is to attract VIP/high profile guests or speakers advice should be sought from the Marketing & Communications team at [marketing@aston.ac.uk](mailto:marketing@aston.ac.uk)
10. If food is to be provided at the event the Head of Catering must be contacted and this must be agreed. Catering must normally be provided by University Catering or an agreed supplier. Other external catering will not normally be allowed. Please contact the Head of Catering at [k.glynn@aston.ac.uk](mailto:k.glynn@aston.ac.uk)
11. Aston Students' Union clubs and societies must not enforce or encourage gender segregation at any events whether in university buildings or 2017-18 elsewhere. This applies to meetings which follow on from acts of religious worship or practice.

*Disclaimer: Bookings are made on first come first served basis. Teaching takes priority so some rooms may not be available, particularly during the exam period. Please note rooms may be changed at short notice; if this should happen every effort will be made to offer a suitable alternative room.*

### Useful Contacts

Asim Mir: Union Reception 0121 204 4855 [union.reception@aston.ac.uk](mailto:union.reception@aston.ac.uk)

AV-Support: It should be noted that if attendees or organisers are non- Aston students they may be subject to charges for hire of room and equipment. To book and make enquiries about availability of equipment email [av-support@aston.ac.uk](mailto:av-support@aston.ac.uk) or telephone ext. 4221 (Collections/returns for equipment is from room MB509.) Teaching and Learning Community Supporting our staff and students' use of learning technologies available at <http://TLC.aston.ac.uk/>

Security: Non-Aston students attending must be provided with proof of attendance such ID badges or stickers indicating the event they are attending. For events that take place after hours, advice on procedures should be sought from the Security team [security@aston.ac.uk](mailto:security@aston.ac.uk)

University Reception: Signage and use of tables and chairs in the foyer can be booked by [reception@aston.ac.uk](mailto:reception@aston.ac.uk)

Aston Students' Union – Student Activities office Nadine Al-kudcy, Student Activities Manager, [athletic.union@aston.ac.uk](mailto:athletic.union@aston.ac.uk)

## The MSc Programme on Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and Networks (PIXNET)

### Programme Overview

**Erasmus Mundus Joint Master degrees programme PIXNET** is a collaborative two-year (120 ECTS) joint master degree programme aimed at training students in the design, creation and assessment of innovative integrated devices based on photonic technologies. PIXNET exploits a significant complementarity of the expertise of the consortium partners and well defined mobility paths that bring practical and specific competence to the perspective students. All partners have strong expertise on optical communication theory and techniques and extensive system and network experimental facilities. The partners that participate in this Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree are:

- **Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna** (Pisa, Italy), SSSA, Coordinator
- **Aston University** (Birmingham, UK), ASTON

- **Technische Universiteit Eindhoven** (The Netherlands), TUE
- **Osaka University** (Japan), OSAKA

The programme complies with the ERASMUS mobility rules. Incoming students will start from any of the three institutions where they will spend the first two semesters of their studies and receive the core part of their training. The third semester will be carried out in a different institution and will include specialization courses that enhance the interdisciplinary of the offered degree. The fourth semester will be devoted to an independent project that will be reported in the Master's thesis. Students will carry out their MSc project in close collaboration with industrial partners.

**PIXNET** has received the strong support of **20 industrial partners and international research institutes** (19 of them are formally registered as Associated partners). All these non-academic partners have shown interest in the program for either hosting students (e.g. during the thesis periods) or suggesting case studies (for thesis), or providing equipment for the laboratories, or offering free licences of their software tools for designing photonic integrated circuits or offering short courses or potentially hiring the graduates at the end of the programme. Specifically, PIXNET is supported by:

- **2 Large multinational companies:** [Ericsson](#), [STMicroelectronics](#);
- **3 Large national companies** operating in different sectors: [TIM](#), [Trenitalia](#), [Rete Ferroviaria Italiana](#) (Italy);
- **5 International Research Institutes:** [Interuniversity Consortium for Telecommunications](#) (CNIT, Italy), [KDDI R&D Lab](#) (Japan), [Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research](#) (TNO), [National Institute of Information and Communication Technologies](#) (NICT, Japan), [SurfNet](#) (The Netherlands);
- **10 Small Medium Enterprises:** [EFFECT Photonics](#) (The Netherlands), [Bright Photonics](#) (The Netherlands), [VTEC Lasers & Sensors](#) (The Netherlands), [Phoenix Software](#) (The Netherlands), [Lumerical Solutions2](#) (UK & Canada), [Pilot Photonics](#) (Ireland), [Smart Photonics](#) (The Netherlands), [Genexis](#) (The Netherlands), [Phoenix Photonics](#) (UK), [InFibra Technologies](#) (Italy).

## Double Degree Award and Diploma Supplement

At the end of the Master's Course, the partner institutions will award to the participating students Double degrees, i.e. two national diplomas issued by two institutions and recognized officially in the countries where the degree-awarding institutions are located. Each institution will be responsible for the issuing of the title it awards and reciprocally recognize any teaching module attended in the other institutions.

Students who have satisfied all the requirements of the final assessment, mobility periods and other relevant programme requirements shall be awarded a diploma supplement as part of a Double-Degree diploma arrangement. The Diploma Supplement will be issued by the Coordinating Institution on behalf of the Consortium. The title of the Master degree awarded shall be in accordance with the national accreditation of the degree programme of the universities involved.

The diploma supplements shall follow the template developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO/CEPES and shall be adapted to any further specifications in national legislation where applicable.

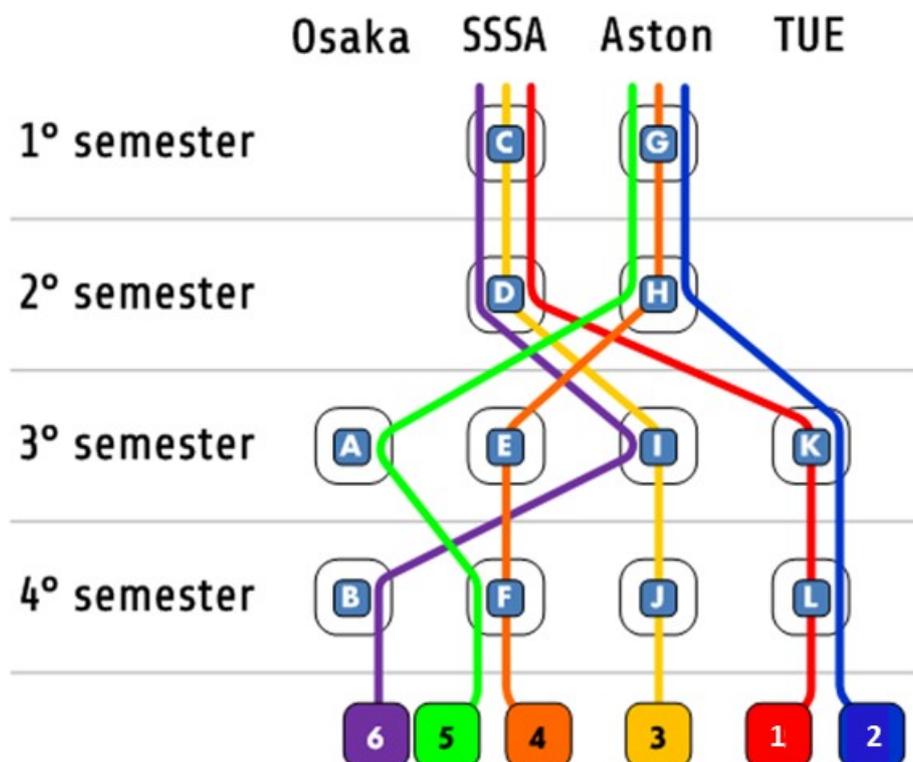
The offered national degrees upon which PIXNET is based are:

Name of institution	Awarded title of degree
Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna	Master of Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETworks
Aston University	Master of Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETworks
Osaka University	Master of Engineering
Technische Universiteit Eindhoven	Master in Electrical Engineering

## Student Mobility

The PIXNET study programme is divided into **four semesters**. 30 ECTS can be gained for each semester. The first **three semesters** are based on traditional **courses**, lab exercises and laboratory sessions, while the **final semester** is based on **independent work** related to the Master's thesis.

**Six different curricula** are available depending on the mobility options selected, and each curriculum requires the completion of **four modules**, each corresponding to one semester. Except for mobility path n. 5, the **first year** of the Master's (i.e. the first and second semester of the Master's course) will be spent in the **same Programme-country institution**. The **third semester** of the Master's will be spent in a **different institution**, while the Master's thesis can be done in the **same or in another institution**.



The six curricula and the relevant degrees awarded are defined as follows (the curricula of mobility 5 and 6 are the same):

- **Mobility 1:** SSSA (1st and 2nd semester), TUE (3rd and 4th semester) defines the “**Optical Switching Technologies**” curriculum.

The two awarded degrees are: *Master's Degree in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by SSSA and the *Master of Science in Electrical Engineering* by TUE.

- **Mobility 2:** **ASTON** (1st and 2nd semester), **TUE** (3rd and 4th semester) defines the “**Optical Transceiver Technologies**” curriculum.

The two awarded degrees are: *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by ASTON and the *Master of Science in Electrical Engineering* by TUE.

- **Mobility 3:** **SSSA** (1st and 2nd semester), **ASTON** (3rd and 4th semester) defines the “*Design of Photonic Integrated Devices*” curriculum.

The two awarded degrees are: *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by SSSA and the *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by ASTON.

- **Mobility 4:** **ASTON** (1st and 2nd semester), **SSSA** (3rd and 4th semester) defines the “**Photonic Integrated Devices Manufacturing**” curriculum.

The two awarded degrees are: *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by SSSA and the *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by ASTON.

- **Mobility 5:** **ASTON** (1st and 2nd semester), **OSAKA** (3rd semester), **SSSA** (4th semester) defines the “**Theory and Techniques for Photonic Integrated Devices**” curriculum.

The three awarded degrees are: *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by SSSA, the *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by ASTON and the *Master of Engineering* by OSAKA.

- **Mobility 6:** **SSSA** (1st and 2nd semester), **ASTON** (3rd semester), **OSAKA** (4th semester) defines the “**Theory and Techniques for Photonic Integrated Devices**” curriculum.

The two awarded degrees are: *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by SSSA and the *Master in Photonic Integrated Circuits, Sensors and NETWORKS* by ASTON.

## ASTON's MSc PIXNET Degree

Modules for the ASTON-PIXNET MSc programme are delivered over 11 weeks periods, from September to December (i.e. Teaching Period 1) and from January to April (Teaching Period 2), with two examination periods, one in January and one in April. Teaching Period 3, i.e. from April to June can be also used in some cases. In addition to examinations there will be coursework which will need to be submitted at various times over the teaching periods.

Note that although there are breaks at Easter and Christmas, between university terms, it is expected that students will still be studying on their own over this period and this is designed into the module workload. Coursework for the modules in the first teaching period may continue after the examinations, over the end of the year vacation to be submitted in January.

### UK credits and ECTS

To get the MSc PIXNET Degree of ASTON University (i.e. one of the multiple degrees offered in mobility paths (2, 3, 4, 5, 6)) you will need to secure 180 UK credits (i.e. 90 ECTS, since 1 UK credit  $\approx$  0.5 ECTS) within your mobility path. A basic module of 100 hours of student effort has a value of 10 UK credits, and the MSc project has a value of 60 UK credits (i.e. 30 ECTS). Once credit is awarded, it is “in the bag”. You will not be required, or allowed to change awarded credit.

Passing successfully the modules of each semester will provide you 60 UK credits (i.e. 30 ECTS). So, during a 1 year of study at ASTON, if you are successful, you should collect 120 UK credits (i.e. 60 ECTS).

**“So, how can I secure the 180 UK credits (90 ECTS) that are required for getting the ASTON MSc degree?”**

The answer is simple. ASTON will recognise the additional credits from your study periods in the other institutions of the mobility path. Credit recognition will be achieved through the following two mechanisms:

- a) Joint supervision of MSc Dissertation
- b) Prior Learning Recognition

Joint supervision of MSc Dissertation will be considered for students in **mobility paths 2, 4, 5 and 6**, who will spend the second year of their studies in different institutions. During this 2<sup>nd</sup> year period, they will be still considered as ASTON students, even though they will not be residing at ASTON. An ASTON academic should be one of the formal supervisors and he should participate in the examination process. The thesis should be also submitted at ASTON university following its relevant regulations and templates, which can be found in the following link <http://www.aston.ac.uk/clipp/quality/a-z/general-regulations/> (please read regulations about **Postgraduate Taught Programmes** and about **Presentation of Theses**)

Prior learning recognition will be considered for the students in **mobility paths 3 and 6**, who spend the 1<sup>st</sup> year of their studies at SSSA. Specific modules from SSSA’s 1<sup>st</sup> year curriculum have been identified to have equivalent modules at ASTON’s MSc programme. When they are successfully passed, there is no need to retake them at ASTON whereas the credits of ASTON’s equivalent modules will be counted for the MSc degree. Therefore, *it is very important these modules to be considered as mandatory in the mobility path*. The table below, shows the mapping of equivalent modules between ASTON and SSSA in mobility path 3.

PIXNET - PLR for Mobility Paths 3 and 6			
Aston Modules	ECTS	SSSA Modules	ECTS
Optical Communication Systems	5	Fundamentals of Optical Communications	3
		Photonic Technologies	2
Information Theory, Coding and Traffic Theory	5	Stochastic Processes and Queuing Theory	6
Digital Transmission	5	Communication Theory and Digital Transmission	4
		Simulation Techniques for digital communication systems	4
Radio Systems and Personal Communication Networks	7.5	Electromagnetic fields and propagation – I	2
		Electromagnetic fields and propagation – II	2
		Communication Networks	4
Optical Networks	7.5	Network Simulation	3
		Design of Access, Metro and Core Networks	4
		Lab of Network Software	3
<b>Total Prior Learning Credits:</b>	<b>30</b>		

Be aware of the prior learning rules that ASTON will implement, which are listed in <http://www.aston.ac.uk/clipp/quality/a-z/general-regulations/> (please read regulations about **Postgraduate Taught Programmes**). Please note that ASTON University will award the credits but not marks. The claim for Prior Learning should be submitted by the student, before the beginning of the relevant semester of the programme. This responsibility rests with the student.

Note that in mobility paths 6, **both** prior learning recognition and joint MSc supervision mechanisms are applied. For any other question, please do not hesitate to approach [Dr. Stylianos Sygletos](#).

## Module List

The study of 10 credits is equivalent to 100 learning hours. The learning hours may include but are not limited to lectures, seminars, tutorials, lab sessions, online activity, reading, other independent study, reflecting on assignment feedback, field trips and work placements.

Availability of the optional modules will be subject to, mobility path selection (i.e. some optional modules might not be available to all mobility paths), staff availability and a minimum number of students who express an interest in studying the optional modules

Module Title	UK Credits	ECTS	Teaching Period	Core /optional
Telecommunication Networks and Quality of Service	15	7.5	1	Core
Radio Systems and Personal Communication Networks	15	7.5	1	Core
Broadband Wireless Networks	10	5	1	Optional
Information Theory, Coding and Traffic Theory	10	5	1	Optional
Software Engineering	10	5	1	Optional
Strategic Management and Finance	15	7.5	1	Optional
Optical Networks	15	7.5	1	Core
Modelling and Characterization of Fibre Photonic Devices	15	7.5	1	Core
Mobile Data Networks	10	5	2	Optional
Pervasive and Mobile Communication Networks	10	5	2	Optional
Optical Communication Systems	10	5	2	Core
Digital Transmission	10	5	2	Core
Project Management	15	7.5	2	Optional
Machine Learning	15	7.5	3	Optional
Introduction to Parallel Programming Techniques	15	7.5	3	Optional
Erasmus MSc Dissertation	60	30	3	Core

## Key PIXNET Contacts at ASTON

### MSc admission office

Samantha Bonnaud and Nisbett Karen <[pgadmissions@aston.ac.uk](mailto:pgadmissions@aston.ac.uk)>, Tel: +44 (0) 121 204 3200

All general admission questions should be made to this office.

### PIXNET Management Team at ASTON

Dr. Christiane Doering-Saad ([C.DOERING-SAAD@aston.ac.uk](mailto:C.DOERING-SAAD@aston.ac.uk)), Room N706, Ext. 3511

Ms Tatiana Kilina ([t.kilina@aston.ac.uk](mailto:t.kilina@aston.ac.uk)), Room N706, Ext. 5212

Will perform the day-to-day management of the programme and its support mechanisms, specifically in tasks related to student scholarships, applications, admissions and student administration.

### **MSc PIXNET Programme Director at ASTON**

Dr. Stylianos Sygletos, Room N709, Ext. E-mail: [s.sygletos@aston.ac.uk](mailto:s.sygletos@aston.ac.uk)

Overall academic responsibility of the PIXNET MSc programme at ASTON. Academic matters not resolvable by module owners and personal issues, which may affect study should be directed to the programme director.

## The North Wing

Electronic Engineering occupies the first nine floors of the North Wing. The rooms chiefly used by taught students are on the ground, first, second, third, fourth and fifth floors. In the University room numbering scheme, all rooms in the Main Building have the prefix "MB", those in the North Wing have the prefix "N", and rooms in the South Wing are prefixed by "SW". One-and two-digit numbers with prefix "G" indicate rooms on the ground floor of a particular building. In three-digit room numbers, the first digit indicates the floor number.

During term time, the University is open from 8.00 am to 10.00 pm, Monday to Friday, and 8.00 am to 1.00 pm on Saturday.

## Computing Facilities

### Electronic Engineering Computing Facilities

#### CAD Projects laboratory (N508)

This provides state-of-the-art facilities for the teaching of CAD (Computer- Aided Design) on 20 Windows NT workstations. Students on the Masters programmes, perform Network Simulation practical work in this laboratory.

#### Telecommunications laboratory (N406)

Several PCs interfaced to a number of demonstration kits for teaching telecommunications theory and practical exercises. The laboratory also supports final-year practical classes in Optoelectronics and investigations into Wireless LAN networks.

#### Ground-floor Student Common Room

This is a relatively new facility for quiet study containing a small number of personal computers and wireless networking (contact computer officers for hardware requirements and access permission for this).

#### Programmable Systems laboratory (N502)

A suite of PCs which support the teaching of Microprocessors, and Digital Signal Processing (DSP). The experiments for microprocessor interfacing and control are conducted within a modern prototyping environment hosted by the PCs. Investigations into DSP uses Matlab, and Texas Instruments 32010 DSP boards, programmed in assembly language to perform signal analysis, waveform generation, and the design of digital filters. The laboratory also accommodates elementary PSpice and Matlab exercise classes, and is the venue for training in Printed Circuit Board design. When not timetabled for classes this laboratory is available for

general use by arrangement. The refurbishment of equipment in this laboratory has been made possible by a generous donation from Hitex and Ifineon.

### University Computing Facilities

Information Systems is the central provider of computing facilities and other I.T. services for the University. There are computer suites distributed around the campus, with Personal Computers, and Linux workstations, with powerful Servers and backup facilities. These systems provide Computer-Aided Design, Expert Systems packages, programming languages, database and graphics utilities, and numerous other applications software packages. They are used for Undergraduate Teaching such as Programming, Engineering Drawing, Image Processing, and Electronic Circuit Design and Simulation. The following facilities are provided throughout the University for the use of all students:

- Access to Personal Computers and UNIX systems

The following are 24 hour Open Access (by ID card) Laboratories

- MB476 - 15 PCs, non-book-able
- MB478 - 15 PCs, non-book-able
- MB480 - 32 PCs, LHS priority for bookings 0900 - 1800
- MB471 - 10 PCs, LHS priority
- MB110 - 26 PCs, EAS priority
- MB473 - 30 PCs, EAS priority
- MB475 - 30 PCs, EAS priority
- MB419 - 30 PCs, ABS priority
- Personal Productivity tools:
  - Word Processing facilities for report preparation and printing
  - Spreadsheets
  - Databases
  - Drawing packages
  - Design, Modelling, and Simulation packages
  - Access to personal Email and the World-Wide Web
  - On-line Library computer

The University LAN (Local Area Network) interconnects all sections of the University, providing high-speed data access to the central servers, Library facilities, and links to JANET, the Joint Academic NETWORK, and allowing access to other U.K. universities and gateways to world-wide networks. When not in use for a time-tabled laboratory session, all the University computing facilities are available for general use for word-processing, programming, and project work.

## Academic and School Support

If you are experiencing any problems with your course, there are several people linked with your studies that you can talk to. Course contacts and School services are listed below.

- Personal Tutors
- Programme Directors
- WASS
- EAS School Centre

### Personal Tutors

You are provided with a named personal tutor who will work with you throughout your studies. Personal tutoring operates to the following principles:

- Your Personal Tutor is your primary contact for general academic guidance and personal support

- A Personal Tutor is there to listen to your issues or concerns sensitively and responsively
- They will support and advise you, and sometimes signpost you to other sources of support within the School, University, or Aston Students' Union where required
- A Personal Tutor will endeavour to help you develop yourself and your skills, and encourage you to make the most of the opportunities available at Aston
- They will contact you via email to arrange meetings throughout the year, but you can also contact them yourself between meetings
- You can have a personal learning experience from somebody that knows you, so we encourage you to make the most of the support that Personal Tutors can offer

Further information about personal tutoring including points of contact in individual Schools is available here:

<http://www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/academic-support/personal-tutoring-guide-for-students/>

The name of your Personal Tutor should be listed when you log into MAP. If you do not have a tutor listed here please email the Taught Programmes Team: [eas\\_pg@aston.ac.uk](mailto:eas_pg@aston.ac.uk) to rectify this. EAS academic teaching staff also operate an Office Hours policy and publish when they are available to meet with students. These are published via WASS "Web Appointment Scheduling System" (<https://wass.aston.ac.uk/wass/pages/login.page.php>). Please see below for more information on WASS.

### Programme Directors

If you cannot resolve a problem with your personal tutor, you may wish to contact your Programme Director. It may also be necessary to meet with them to get various forms signed. Their details should be available to you on My Aston Portal (MAP). Students who are not able to contact their academic tutor or Programme Director within a day or two (or immediately in the event of an emergency) may approach EAS School Centre Reception for advice (first floor, main building). If you cannot approach your Programme Director and need an appointment to see one of the School's Associate Deans you can also approach EAS School Centre Reception to arrange this.

### WASS

You are able to book appointments with an academic member of staff using Aston's Web Appointment Scheduling System (WASS). This can either be your Personal Tutor which is listed on MAP, or a module lecturer if you are experiencing some difficulties with a module and need further help or guidance. To book an appointment with a tutor visit the link below:

<https://wass.aston.ac.uk/wass/pages/login.page.php>

1. First log-in using the same USERNAME / PASSWORD that you use for all other Aston Information Systems.
2. Search for the calendar of the tutor you wish to meet with (type in surname of lecturer) or click 'Browse' to give a directory of calendars. Then select 'Search' on the bottom right hand side.
3. A list of all matching names will be displayed. Click on 'Make Appointment' for the person you want to meet with. This will take you to their calendar showing when appointments are available.
4. Click on the date suitable for you, then select a time on the next screen. Clicking the + sign will open a new box, automatically populated with your details. Click on the 'Save' box and you have made your appointment.
5. To book an appointment with another member of staff click on the 'Make an Appointment' box on the left hand side and continue to follow steps 2 - 4.

## EAS School Centre



The administration of your course is handled by Staff in the EAS School Centre. This is situated on the First Floor of the main building (MB133). School Centre staff will always be willing to help you where possible, it is important to keep the School/University informed of any changes in your situation.

The School Centre offers:

- A reception area open Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm;
- A coursework office dealing with all coursework submissions and returns, covering all EAS subject groups;
- Dedicated meeting rooms where students can meet with Centre staff in a confidential environment;
- An enlarged student lounge area;
- PCs in the Reception area for student use.

### **Drop in Sessions**

The Taught Programmes Team of the School of Engineering and Applied Science are here to answer any of your questions and queries regarding the administration of your programme/student record etc. Whilst they cannot answer academic questions they have a broad knowledge of the support services offered by the University and how to access these services.

The opening times are as follows:

- Monday 9.30 – 17.00
- Tuesday 9.30 – 14.00
- Wednesday 09.30 – 14.00
- Thursday 09.30 - 14.00
- Friday 09.30 – 16.00

## **Administrative Matters**

### Communication Channels

Information related to the administration of your programme may be conveyed to you by several means. Formal communication will usually be by means of Blackboard announcements which are received by email or at certain times of year written correspondence will be received by post. Less formally, information may be issued by members of the academic staff during lecture classes, tutorials etc.

## Email

Everyone is provided with a University email address and you are strongly advised to check your email daily. You have a limited quota, so delete unwanted emails as to not run out of space. Simply go to: <http://webmail.aston.ac.uk/>, and login with your username and password whilst not on campus. You can set up your smart phone to receive your university emails to keep up to date. Guides on how to do this are available [here](#).

## Blackboard

Many subject areas have information modules on Blackboard where course related announcements will be sent from, and useful documentation stored. For School-wide matters these will come from the 'EAS Postgraduate Information' which holds useful announcements, forms and information.

## Contact details

Some correspondence will be sent via post, for example your end of year transcript. For this reason it is vital you keep your contact details up to date. Your contact address can be updated at any point in the year through the MAP system. Please visit <http://www.aston.ac.uk/ict/map/> to do this. Remember to update your mobile phone number on here as well in case of emergencies.

## Contacting Staff

The main route of contact for staff is via email, and staff addresses can be obtained by consulting the staff directory here: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/eas/staff/a-z/>. You can also book appointments with members of staff through the WASS system. [See here for more details](#). Alternatively, you can often pass post onto staff via the administrative staff at the EAS School Centre if you can't drop it off personally

## Attendance

Attendance and engagement with your studies may be monitored by your tutor. If you are absent from lectures for any reason you should let someone know. If your absence is likely to be short (one or two lectures due to a short term illness for example) it may be a good idea to let your tutor know out of courtesy. If your absence may be longer than this you may wish to speak to your [Personal Tutor](#) or [Programme Director](#) about your options.

A contribution based on your attendance may count towards the mark of some modules – this will be communicated in the relevant programme or module specifications. If you do not attend laboratory classes and there are no [Exceptional Circumstances](#) affecting your capability to attend then you will be penalised by receiving a zero mark. You can read more about Exceptional Circumstances [here](#).

## Feedback

The School encourages feedback from students, and has created a variety of avenues to express your concerns and commendations. These are taken seriously and are used to improve your student experience

- **Module Questionnaires:** At the end of a series of lecture classes you will be issued with a questionnaire seeking your views on various aspects of the module. Please complete these questionnaires openly and honestly to enable us to improve the student experience. Your comments are collated and the resulting actions taken by your school are fed back when the module is next delivered, either in class or via Blackboard.
- **Online surveys:** Occasionally the School runs online surveys on various topics, usually completion of the survey results in a chance to win a prize as a thank you for taking time out to feed back to the School. These are often advertised via the 'EAS Undergraduate Information' module on Blackboard.

- **Open forums/Focus groups:** Throughout the year the School holds many smaller group meetings with students, where the School's management team ask for your opinions on various aspect of your experiences as a student so far, usually focussing on a 'hot topic'. Lunch is provided for willing participants and these events are usually advertised via email/Blackboard announcement.

### Student Representatives

At the beginning of the academic year Course Representatives (Reps) will be elected on your course to represent any issues you may have with your course on the Student Staff Committee (SSC). The Student Staff Committee is a formal committee with student and staff representatives from your course, the minutes of which go forward to the School's Learning and Teaching Committee. Once the course representatives has been confirmed, the students on the course will be informed and you can raise course-related issues with them to feed into SCC and in turn, School meetings. To find out more about how to become a Course Representative see the Student's Union's for more information [here](#). You can see who your course representatives are by logging into MAP.

The University is committed to listening to the views of its students and to including them in the development of their own learning experience. The items raised in SSC's a regularly responded to and an 'action tracker' posted in the EAS Postgraduate Information area of Blackboard. Please contact the School's Engagement Officer at [h.s.ordidge@aston.ac.uk](mailto:h.s.ordidge@aston.ac.uk) for more information on this.

## Assessment, Coursework and Examinations

This section of the handbook goes into more detail about submitting coursework, the importance of its originality and a brief introduction to the role of the exam board and decisions they could make (along with listing the external examiners for you course).

### Submission of coursework

You will be notified of the dates of your coursework submission for the modules you are taking by the lecturers concerned. This information should also be available on the module specification on Blackboard. Coursework will be submitted either via the Coursework Submission Office or via Blackboard and your lecturer will inform you of any specific submission instructions.

The Coursework Submission Office (Reception area of the EAS School Centre) is open from 10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday. The office is closed promptly everyday at 2pm and a drop-box facility is available during out-of-office hours. Coursework submitted via the drop-box will be stamped with the submission date of the following day. Don't leave submission of your work until the last minute as there can be queues! Students will be notified of a submission deadline via MAP and from here you will be able to print off a cover sheet prior to the submission of your work.

For work to be handed in to the Coursework Submission Office, students will need to:

- Print off the Submission Cover sheet from MAP and attach it to your work securely.
- Take it to the Coursework Submission Office where the work will be stamped, then scanned and an email notification will be sent to you confirming receipt.

It is the student's responsibility to bring the coursework bound and secured for submission. Ensure you have appropriate stationary for submission (folders, stapled, etc), as you cannot purchase this from the Coursework Submission Office.

### Late submission

Policy on the late submission of work and subsequent penalties:

- This policy applies to all assessments detailed in Module Specifications for which there is a formal deadline. In the case of assignments that are submitted in more than one format, the date of submission recorded for lateness penalty purposes will be that of the last piece of work submitted.
- The late submission of group work will be subject to the same lateness penalties as those for an individual piece of work.
- Students may submit work up to 5 working days after the formal assessment deadline, but the work will be subject to a penalty. (NB: 'working days' excludes submission at weekends and on Bank Holidays or University closed days, when School offices are not open to receive submissions, but it does not preclude submission during vacations. The 5-working day submission window will therefore continue to run after the last day of a term.)
- The penalty will be based on a proportion of the awarded mark.
- The late submission penalty will be 10% of the awarded mark for each working day that the piece of work was submitted after the formal deadline
- There will be a penalty collar at first attempt (or any uncapped attempt), in that the final mark for the component of assessment after penalty has been imposed will not fall below the pass mark for that component. If the awarded mark for the component was already below the pass mark, prior to late submission penalty, the awarded mark will stand as the final mark.
- Work submitted after the 5 working day deadline will be accepted by the School office but will be recorded with a mark of zero (0-PN). Such work will require evidence of exceptional circumstances which meet the regulations before an academic mark for it will be considered at the module board.
- Work submitted more than 5 days late may be passed to markers in order for students to receive feedback on it, at the discretion of the School. Where this practice is adopted the mark formally recorded will be zero (0-PN).
- Any exceptions to the late submission policy at module level will be subject to approval by the relevant School's Learning & Teaching Committee and will be clearly stated in the appropriate Student Handbook. Exemptions to cover a whole programme should be approved by Regulation Sub-Committee.
- The penalty collar will not apply to second or third attempts, for which a mark capped at the pass mark is formally recorded. Any lateness penalties due will be applied to the mark awarded and may result in a mark that falls below pass level
- Late penalties are considered to be discrete from other penalties, and the late penalty collar does not prevent a fail mark resulting in cases where another penalty is also applicable. Late penalties should therefore be levied before any other penalty.

The University's full regulations and policies regarding assessments can be found [here](#).

### [Extensions and Exceptional circumstances](#)

Students' ability to meet coursework deadlines may be affected by legitimate issues such as illness. To request an extension, contact your Year Tutor (if you have one) or your Programme Director as soon as you can. There will be occasions where an extension cannot be granted for practical reasons, e.g. not delaying feedback to other students.

Where you believe that circumstances have affected your performance in, or ability to attend an assessment, an Exceptional Circumstances form can be completed. This must be submitted together with supporting evidence attached in accordance with the deadlines found [here](#). You can find more information on what constitutes as Exceptional Circumstances, acceptable forms of supporting evidence and what happens with your forms once submitted [here](#). This page also contains the application forms themselves for download.

For the University's regulations on Examinations and assessments, visit this [link](#).

## Past Exam Papers

Copies of Past Examination papers are available on Blackboard under each module where available.

**Referred Assessments:** Students who fail a module may be allowed a Referred assessment. These take place (normally) in the last week of August and first week of September. You should avoid booking a holiday during this period unless you are sure you do not have a referred assessment.

**Publication of Examination Results:** End of year results will be posted on MAP shortly after the end of the Board of Examiners' Meeting. A transcript of results will be sent annually to each student's home address during the summer vacation. Results will not be released by telephone or by e-mail. Formal class test results will be displayed normally within six weeks of the class test taking place, on MAP.

For the University's regulations on Examinations and assessments, visit this [link](#).

## Originality and plagiarism

It is important that all the material you submit as continuous assessment (essays, project reports, laboratory reports, computer assignments etc.) and all examination answers are your own original work. Where material is used from other sources these sources must be clearly identified. If you do not do this you may be guilty of plagiarism and/or collusion.

This form of cheating associated with assessed work is considered a serious offence. Any student found to have "borrowed" from published work without acknowledgement, or from other student's work, may be awarded a fail mark for the work in question and/or may be failed in the relevant unit of assessment. Plagiarism may be regarded as an offence against the University's Examination Regulations and as such may be the subject of formal disciplinary proceedings. The University Regulations and definition of academic offences are detailed [here](#). It is strongly recommended that you familiarize yourself with these definitions.

To avoid the offences of plagiarism and collusion always:

- **Refer** to each source used in your work at the point where it arises in your text;
- Use **quotation marks** whenever you are citing an author's views in his or her own terms;
- **Acknowledge** the source of any diagrams, tables or graphical representations of data that have been copied directly from a literature source at the point where they are used;
- **Identify** fully all your sources (text, tables, illustrations etc.) in a reference list at the end of your work. You should use a standard format for your reference list and unless otherwise advised this should be the author-date (Harvard) system;
- **Name** fellow students with whom you have worked.

The [Learning and Development Centre](#) can assist you with referencing systems.

## Exam Board

The marks from your assessments are used for your module mark. You may receive marks and feedback for assessments from your tutors throughout the year but these marks are not formal until they have been considered by an Exam Board.

When the Exam Board meets, it will consider all of your results and decide whether or not you have passed and if you can progress to the next stage of your course (or which classification of degree to award, if you are in your final stage of a course.) If you have not passed, then the Exam Board will decide whether or not you can resit any failed assessments and how and when they want you to resit.

The University and School has a lot of support measures in place to help you succeed in your studies, but there may be instances of you encountering a failed module. For detailed explanation of the assessment process and options in case of failure you should consult the General Regulations for Postgraduate Programmes contained [here](#).

## EAS Health and Safety Booklet

Please study carefully the EAS Health and Safety Booklet, which can be found [here](#)

## MAP, Blackboard and IT

### My Aston Portal (MAP)

My Aston Portal is the web-based system at Aston University that is a single point of contact for many of the services you use at the University as a student. MAP gives students access to student information, including personalised teaching timetables, access to Blackboard and allows them to keep the University up-to-date with addresses and personal details.

Future developments will also allow the viewing of accommodation and finance details directly through MAP. New students will be able to log into MAP once they have completed enrolment and have received their University computer account details.

### Blackboard

The Blackboard Learning System is the University-supported web-based virtual learning environment that can support a range of online teaching, learning and assessment styles and add value to students' learning. As it is a web-based system, it can be accessed from any computer with a connection to the Internet. It is integrated with the student record system which ensures that students are automatically enrolled onto Blackboard and can access their programme/modules online. It has an easy-to-use interface and is an ideal way to provide students with support materials such as module outlines, lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations and reading lists, as well as more interactive use of the system through chats and discussions, individual or group assessment exercises and audio and visual materials. You may also be required to submit coursework via Blackboard.

**How do we get to Blackboard?** From the [current students page](#) click on the My Aston Portal - MAP icon and use your allocated username and password and follow the link to "Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment." Ensure your browser is compatible with Blackboard, click [here](#) to go onto the TLC site for further details on browser compatibility. For more information on MAP please go to: <http://www.aston.ac.uk/ict/map/>. For the logging-in session material used during induction week please visit the 'EAS Undergraduate Information' module on Blackboard.

### Computer Labs

There are more than 50 computer labs across the University campus. Many labs can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and offer a range of software packages, database systems, modelling tools, computer-aided learning materials and access to online sources of information for research. You can search for available computers via the myAston mobile application or via our student guide on the IT website [here](#).

Computer labs are categorised as either Open Access or School Specific:

- **Open Access Labs** - these are available to all students regardless of your School of Study.
- **School Specific Labs** - these computer labs offer a range of software packages and tools to suit the particular needs of the school. Access to these labs is restricted to students of that school only.

### Where to find help with ICT problems

IT Services at Aston have a help desk for any further ICT problems you may have...

## Contact the IT Helpdesk

### Term Time Opening hours\*

Monday - Thursday : 8.00am - 6.00pm

Friday : 8.00am - 5.00pm

### Out of Term Opening hours\*

Monday - Thursday : 8.45am - 5.00pm

Friday : 8.45am - 4.30pm

**Drop-in:** Main Building East G16  
**Telephone:** +44 (0) 121 204 3445  
**E-Mail:** [it\\_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk](mailto:it_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk)  
**Twitter:** [@aston ITS](https://twitter.com/aston ITS)

\* Excluding University Holidays

As well as this service you can find lots of handy 'how to' guides on their ICT help webpage [here](#).

**Aston Tools and TLC (Teaching and Learning Community)** Blackboard is one of the many tools that Aston University use as part of its teaching. Other tools could include: Turnitin, Aston Replay and Pebblepad. To find out more about each of Aston's Tools visit the **TLC** site: <http://tlc.aston.ac.uk>

## Printing

Details on how and where to print can be found in the ISA (Information Systems Aston) student guide:

<http://www1.aston.ac.uk/ict/studentguide/printing/>

Charges are made for printing on the laser printers provided centrally on the 4th floor of the Main Building (currently 3p per A4 page). You will need to set up an account first. A couple of points worth noting at this stage with regard to the computer facilities are: Firstly, you can purchase computer storage media from the computer shop Room 469 main building.

Secondly, **always** keep backup copies of your work. Repeating several hours or days work is not fun, and staff will not be sympathetic to the excuse that a disk failure caused you to lose your work, when a back-up copy can easily be made.

## MAP Check-in system for Attendance Recording

Aston firmly believes in the value of attendance, and its relationship with engagement and achievement is very important. Attendance at scheduled teaching sessions enhances the experience of all students, and provides the opportunity for you to benefit fully from the support and guidance the University offers.

You should 'check in' to timetabled classes by placing your uniCARD on readers on entry to all your scheduled teaching sessions including lectures, seminars, tutorials, lab session etc. You will then be able to access your record of attendance in My Aston Portal (MAP). This supports the University's proactive approach to learning and we encourage you to assume responsibility for your own academic progress, and manage your time effectively.

### Tier 4 students

If you hold a Tier 4 visa, MAP Check-in will create an automatic face to face engagement for you and will form part of your Student Engagement Monitoring information for the UKVI.

For further information please visit the [MAP Check-in webpages](#)

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