


Matt Luckcuck BSc (Hons), MSc, PhD(Ebor)

Orcid: 0000-0002-6444-9312 

Email: m.luckcuck@tutanota.com

Summary

I am an Assistant Professor in Computer Science at the University of Nottingham, my research focusses on the formal specification and verification of autonomous systems. My work often uses model checking and runtime verification, and I have a particular interest in developing approaches with practical benefits. My previous research experience was as a Post-Doctoral Researcher on the EU ECSEL-funded Verification and Validation of Automated Systems' Safety and Security (VALU3S) project at Maynooth University, Ireland; and as a Research Assistant on the Robotics and AI in Nuclear (RAIN) Hub at the Universities of Manchester and Liverpool, UK.

Through my post-doctoral work I have experience in applying formal specification and verification techniques to automated software controllers and autonomous robotic systems, often modelling the system's intended behaviour from natural-language descriptions. I have become interested in requirements engineering, to ensure that the system's requirements are captured correctly; and runtime verification, to ensure that the system continues to operate correctly at runtime. I have also had experience collaborating on guidance for developing safe autonomous systems, with UK's Office for Nuclear Regulation.

I received my PhD from the University of York UK, where I was supervised jointly by Professors Ana Cavalcanti and Andy Wellings. My PhD work involved developing a formal model of a new safety-critical language, Safety-Critical Java, using the state-rich process algebra *Circus*, which combines Z and CSP.

I have teaching experience at a variety of age-ranges and ability-levels, and have found it both enjoyable and rewarding. I have developed and co-delivered teaching materials for university modules, and marked both programming and essay assignments. I also have highly transferable experience of teaching outside of a university setting. I developed and delivered an adult education course introducing programming using Python. I also assisted in the teaching of several degree modules, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Also, I tutored an A-Level Computing student one-to-one, improving their result by two grade boundaries. Finally, I taught school-age children basic programming skills, including using the visual language Scratch.

Selected Publications

- Dara MacConville, Marie Farrell, **Matt Luckcuck**, Rosemary Monahan '*CSP2Turtle: Verified Turtle Robot Plans*' in Robotics, 2023
- Marie Farrell, **Matt Luckcuck**, Oisín Sheridan, Rosemary Monahan '*Towards Refactoring FRETish Requirements*' in NASA Formal Methods, 2022
- Marie Farrell, **Matt Luckcuck**, Oisín Sheridan, Rosemary Monahan '*FRETting about Requirements: Formalised Requirements for an Aircraft Engine Controller*' in Requirements Engineering: Foundation for Software Quality, 2022
- **Matt Luckcuck**, Marie Farrell, Oisín Sheridan, Rosemary Monahan '*A Methodology for Developing a Verifiable Aircraft Engine Controller from Formal Requirements*' in IEEE Aerospace Conference, 2022
- Angelo Ferrando, Rafael C Cardoso, Marie Farrell, **Matt Luckcuck**, Fabio Papacchini, Michael Fisher, Viviana Mascardi '*Bridging the gap between single- and multi-model predictive runtime verification*' in Formal Methods in System Design, 2021
- **Matt Luckcuck** '*Using Formal Methods for Autonomous Systems: Five Recipes for Formal Verification*' in Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, Part O: Journal of Risk and Reliability, 2021
- Rafael C. Cardoso, Marie Farrell, **Matt Luckcuck**, Angelo Ferrando, and Michael Fisher '*Heterogeneous Verification of an Autonomous Curiosity Rover*' in NASA Formal Methods Symposium, 2020
- **Matt Luckcuck**, Marie Farrell, Louise Dennis, Clare Dixon, and Michael Fisher '*Formal Specification and Verification of Autonomous Robotic Systems: A Survey*' in ACM Computing Surveys, 52(5) 2019
- Marie Farrell, **Matt Luckcuck**, and Michael Fisher '*Robotics and Integrated Formal Methods: Necessity meets Opportunity*' in iFM2018, 2018

Education

PhD in Computer Science *University of York, UK* (2012 – 2016)

Safety-Critical Java Level 2: Applications, Modelling, and Verification

My PhD work models Safety-Critical Java (SCJ) using the state-rich process algebra *Circus*, which combines elements of Z and CSP. SCJ adopts a new programming paradigm for applications that must be certified. SCJ programs use a particular concurrency model and use region-based memory management (instead of garbage collection); specialised virtual machines are available to execute SCJ programs. It is organised into three compliance levels, of ascending complexity. My PhD focuses on the most complex compliance level, the programs of which are highly concurrent, potentially multi-processor, and make use of suspension and a variety of release patterns. My PhD provides the most complex compliance level of SCJ with its first semantics, enables further integration with other *Circus* semantics for SCJ, and provides automatic translation from SCJ to my model.

Supervisors: Ana Cavalcanti and Andy Wellings

MSc with Merit in Computing *University of York, UK* (2011 – 2012)

Bsc (Hons) First Class in Computer Science *University of Wolverhampton, UK* (2007 – 2011)

Work Experience

Assistant Professor in Computer Science *University of Nottingham, UK* (2023 – Current)

Lecturer in Computer Science *University of Derby, UK* (2022 – 2023)

Teaching and marking for three first-year undergraduate modules. This has included: redeveloping the practical teaching material while concurrently co-delivering practical sessions, and marking student essays that analysed the impacts of computer technology. I was also responsible for a group of pastoral tutees, and I was the internal moderator for a graphics module.

Post-Doctoral Researcher: VALU3S *Maynooth University, Ireland* (2021 – 2022)

Investigating formal requirements engineering and verification techniques for automated aircraft engine control systems, as part of the Verification and Validation of Automated Systems' Safety and Security (VALU3S) project. I worked in close collaboration with colleagues and an industrial partner from the aerospace industry.

My work on this project focussed on adapting software refactoring to apply to requirements written in the NASA Formal Requirements Engineering Tool (FRET). My work also involved an extensive survey paper of formal verification for aerospace systems, formalising the natural-language requirements of the engine controller, and integrating formal verification with a Simulink diagram of the engine controller.

Research Associate: RAIN Hub *University of Liverpool and University of Manchester, UK* (2017 – 2021)

My research focussed on formal verification for robotics and autonomous systems in nuclear environments, on the Robotics and AI in Nuclear (RAIN) Hub. Originally my group was based at the University of Liverpool, but we later moved to the University of Manchester.

My work on this project began with an extensive survey paper, and then focussed on linking heterogeneous verification approaches applied across an autonomous software system, and runtime verification of an autonomous system's behaviour. I also lead a collaboration with the UK's Office for Nuclear Regulation on developing guidance for developers of autonomous systems that ensures their systems are amenable to robust verification and can provide useful assurance evidence.

Adult Education Tutor *York Learning, UK* (2017)

I delivered a 6 week adult-education course teaching introductory programming skills using Python. This involved presenting a lecture and then guiding the students through Python programming exercises designed to reinforce the material in the lecture and teach them the basic practical skills of programming. The lectures and resources were designed by me from scratch.

Tutor and Course Design *York Maker Hub, UK* (2017)

Tutor I taught children (ranging from 8-14) basic programming skills, in a busy environment that allowed the children some freedom in choosing the platform they used. The day-long sessions provide the opportunity for the children to build and program various projects on a variety of platforms, including Scratch, Makey Makey, and Lego Mindstorms. This role also involved supervising the children during breaks and lunch.

Course Design I developed a new pathway for older or more advanced children who wanted to learn programming. This involved reviewing the currently available projects, collaboratively designing new Python projects, and then writing up the project instruction sheets and developing resources.

Research Assistant *University of York, UK* (2015)

During my PhD I was employed, part-time, to build a software tool to automatically translated program code for Safety-Critical Java into a formal model written in the state-rich process algebra *Circus*. This role was closely related to my thesis, so I managed the work alongside my PhD.

Teaching and Outreach

- **Co-delivered and marked** three first-year undergraduate modules, while at the University of Derby:
 - *Introduction to Computer Science*
 - *Foundations of Computer Science*
 - *Programming 2*
- **Running outreach events** for children aged 7–14 using an existing programme called *Lego Rovers*, which introduces the topic of autonomous systems. This involved running workshops and a ‘drop-in’ stand at larger events.
- **Taught a 6 week adult-education course** introducing programming skills, using Python. I designed the course and resources from scratch, delivered weekly lectures, and guided students through Python programming exercises.
- **Taught basic programming skills** using a range of platforms including Scratch and Lego Mindstorms. These were day-long sessions with a large, mixed age (8–15) and ability groups.
- **Volunteered at a local Code Club**, teaching children aged 9–11 years basic programming skills using Scratch. The small group was of mixed ages and abilities. Each week we worked on a small game, each introducing increasingly complex techniques.
- **Tutored an A-Level Computing student**, one-to-one. We focussed on covering key topics, and improved the student’s exam grade by two grade boundaries. My contact time was 20 hours (1 hour per week).
- **Post-Graduate Teaching Assistant** during my PhD (2013–2016):
 - *Workshops for two terms of a first year undergraduate module*, introducing programming concepts: Python in the first term, where my contact time was 20 hours; and Java in the second, where my contact time was 28 hours. Each group contained around 65 students of very mixed ability.
 - *Workshops for a \LaTeX module* with around 12 PhD students and my contact time was 5 hours, and a \LaTeX for an MSc module, also with around 12 students.
 - *Marking a first-year undergraduate programming module*. There were 108 scripts for one exam and 130 for the other. This involved working to the mark scheme and keeping to the marking deadline.
 - *Marking MSc Software Engineering group projects*. There were eight groups of six students. This involved reading each group’s project report and grading it, along with any supplementary material, against the module mark scheme; to a strict marking deadline.

Administration

- **Co-organise a successful, peer-reviewed academic workshop** called Formal Methods for Autonomous Systems (FMAS), now in its fifth year. The first FMAS was held at Formal Methods 2019; the second and third were online due to Covid-19 disruptions; the fourth edition was held at the conference on Software Engineering and Formal Methods (SEFM 2022); and FMAS 2023 will be held at the integrated Formal Methods conference (iFM). I take particular responsibility for organising the Programme Committee and advertising the workshop. I also run the workshop’s Twitter account and website.
- **Co-administer the web site for the Autonomy and Verification Network**, which is a network of researchers from the fields of autonomy and verification, facilitating communication and collaboration. I also run the Network’s Twitter account, facilitating announcements of papers, research, etc.
- **Run the ACM SIGAI Twitter account**, as part of my duties as Co-Information Officer.

- **Organised a series of workshops on Safety Cases for Nuclear Robotics**, in 2018/2019, which drew attendees from academia, the nuclear industry, and the Office for Nuclear Regulation. The presentations and open discussions focussed on ensuring that autonomous robotics used in the nuclear industry are safe.
- **Programme Committee chair for the York Doctoral Symposium on Computer Science and Electronics**(YDS2014), a student conference organised at the University of York. I was responsible for recruiting the Programme Committee and ensuring that submissions were reviewed fairly. I also co-led the symposium's interdepartmental Organising Committee.

Committee Membership

- **Co-Information Officer**, *ACM Special Interest Group on Artificial Intelligence* (SIGAI) (2021–Current)
- **Member of the Communication Committee** for the *Formal Methods Europe Association* (FME) (2021–Current)
- **Working Group Member**, *IEEE P7009 Standard for Fail-Safe Design of Autonomous and Semi-Autonomous Systems* (2019–Current)

Funding

- Value: **€1500**. Sponsorship from *Formal Methods Europe Association* (FME): Funding to provide travel grants for an invited speaker and students to attend the Fifth FMAS workshop (2023).
- Value: **€2000**. *Network and Collaboration Support* at Maynooth University: Travel and accommodation while running the Fourth Formal Methods and Autonomous Systems (FMAS) workshop, and attend the Software Engineering and Formal Methods conference. (2022)
- Value: **€1760**. *Network and Collaboration Support* at Maynooth University: Funding to attend the 2022 edition of the Integrated Formal Methods conference, where I chaired a session. (2022)
- Value: **€1200**. Sponsorship from *Formal Methods Europe Association* (FME): Funding to provide travel grants for an invited speaker and students to attend the Fourth FMAS workshop (2022).
- Value: **€1000**. Sponsorship from *Formal Methods Europe Association* (FME): Funding to provide travel grants for an invited speaker and students to attend the Third FMAS workshop (2021).
- Value: **£1400**. *Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund* at the University of Liverpool: Funding to run the First Workshop on Formal Methods for Autonomous Systems (2019).

Reviewing Experience

- **AAMAS**: International Conference on Autonomous Agents and Multiagent Systems (2022)
- **RAS**: Robotics and Autonomous Systems journal (2022)
- **AREA**: Workshop on Agents and Robots for reliable Engineered Autonomy (2022, 2023, 2023)
- **TSE**: IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering (2022)
- **AESM**: IEEE Aerospace and Electronic Systems Magazine (2022)
- **SEKE**: Conference on Software Engineering and Knowledge Engineering (2022 [Subreviewer])
- **iFM**: International Conference on Integrated Formal Methods (2019, 2021, 2022)
- **JAAMAS**: Journal of Autonomous Agents and Multi-Agent Systems (2020,2022)
- **FMAS**: Formal Methods for Autonomous Systems Workshop (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)
- **STVR**: Journal of Software Testing, Verification and Reliability (2018, 2021, 2022)
- **FM**: Symposium on Formal Methods (2021 [Subreviewer])
- **CSUR**: ACM Computing Surveys Journal (2020)
- **KR**: Conference on Principles of Knowledge Representation and Reasoning (2020 [Subreviewer])
- **IJCAI**: International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (2020)
- **HFM**: History of Formal Methods Workshop (2019)
- **SCP**: Science of Computer Programming (2019)
- **ACSP**: International Journal of Adaptive Control and Signal Processing (2018, 2019)
- **YDS**: York Doctoral Symposium (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)
- **JTRES**: Workshop on Java Technologies for Real-time and Embedded Systems (2014)
- **ICTAC**: Theoretical Aspects of Computing (2013 [Subreviewer])

Referees

Previous Supervisor

Professor Rosemary Monahan,
Department of Computer Science,
Maynooth University, Co. Kildare, Ireland

Email: rosemary.monahan@mu.ie

Previous Supervisor

Professor Michael Fisher,
Department of Computer Science,
University of Manchester, M13 9PL, UK

Email: michael.fisher@manchester.ac.uk