

Lila

BSc Criminology and Sociology
Graduate



At college I studied Psychology, Sociology and English Literature A levels. I knew I wanted to potentially have a career where I could support others and make a difference. I was the first one in my family to go to university so it was quite a daunting prospect at first but I felt that I wanted to push myself and study further to better prepare myself for the future careers I was interested in. After looking at different degree courses I decided I wanted to study Criminology alongside Sociology because it would allow me to learn more about the Criminal Justice System and how policy is created.

I chose Royal Holloway because they have strong academics in my subject area that were carrying out research that was influencing current policy and practice and I wanted to be a part of it. I felt drawn to the university ever since my initial visits because the campus was so beautiful and there was a genuinely friendly atmosphere. I have just completed my final year of my Criminology and Sociology degree, and I am very happy that I completed it at Royal Holloway. To anyone thinking about coming to Royal Holloway I cannot recommend the university enough! The university will challenge and support you during this next part of your academic journey and allow you to try different things and meet new people. I hope you enjoy this next step in your life!

Top Tips for Studying and how this looks online.

Lectures

Lectures are where you go to learn most of the core content for your modules so many students will attend the same lecture. It is important to go to lectures prepared so that you can follow along with the PowerPoint and what the lecturer is saying. Most people will either take a laptop with them or a notepad and pen to write their own additional notes about what is being discussed. Others will print off the lecture slides beforehand and write alongside them. It can sometimes be difficult to write notes at a quick pace so if the lecturer has moved on to a new point, I would recommend moving along with them. After the lecture you can always go over the slides again (found on your online Moodle account) and copy down any information you may have missed.

Online Lectures

If your lectures move online, much of the information will remain the same. Most lecturers have been recording what they would have normally said over the top of their PowerPoints. These recorded PowerPoints are available on the different module pages on Moodle. You can follow along at your own pace and pause or rewind the recording every time you need to better understand a point or more time writing up notes. Therefore, with online lectures you can sometimes better grasp difficult concepts and, because you can complete them in the comfort of your own home or elsewhere, you do not need to carry a laptop or notepad around campus with you to different lecture halls (just switch tabs!).

Seminars

Seminars are smaller and are made up of between 10-20 students. These sessions are an opportunity for students to ask the lecturer follow up questions about the lecture they have just heard. This is also an opportunity to discuss and debate the pre-reading material that the lecturer would have recommended for the session. To make the most of seminars, I would recommend being vocal to share your point of view and to hear what others have to say. These are also a good opportunity to get to know people on your course.

Online Seminars

Seminars continue in online learning, but they look slightly different. The lecturer sends a link to a Microsoft Teams chat room so that those from that seminar can see and hear each other and still discuss things as they would have done in a seminar room.



How do you work best?

Working Independently

Studying at university encourages you to work independently. I would recommend organising your time into sections where you focus on completing work and others that are kept free for socialising and relaxing. This will ensure you keep a healthy work/life balance. When working independently it is important to keep to deadlines and stay focused on the tasks at hand. To do this it is important to remove distractions and to recognise where you work best. Some students work best in silence and so prefer to work in their room or in the silent section of the library while others prefer to work in different cafes around campus. If you find working independently hard, your personal tutor and lecturers can always give you extra help and advice about the work you are doing and students from the same courses often support each other to stay focused on their work and deadlines.

Working in a Group

Sometimes at university you will have tasks where you will need to work in a group. These could be presentations or a different type of project. You may have chosen this group, or you may be placed in a group. It is important to work professionally in these groups and to remain focused on the task when meeting up together. Try and split the work into equal parts and assign these to different people in the group to ensure that the work is divided equally. When working remotely, group work can still take place using online forums and group chats.

Utilising the Library



Using the Library

The library is an important location on campus, especially for Independent study. It is where a lot of students will go to work because the silent sections allow you to remain focused and the group-study sections offer big tables for groups to work together. The library is also the source of thousands of books and articles that you may need for coursework and revision. To make the most out of the library, there will be a member of library staff there linked to your department and they will be able to help you find the books you need for your modules and pre-reading. I would also recommend exploring the library earlier on or taking a library tour, so you know where different things are. The library is open 24/7 and is also where you can go to use a computer, print off work or even buy a coffee.

Using the Library Online

Most of the library's books and articles can be found online on their website. This is helpful when learning remotely off campus. You can search for any book or article and the website will let you know where the piece is in the library or where you can access it online. Searching using the library website will give you access to more articles than other search engines because Royal Holloway has permission for their students to access articles from hundreds of different journals and websites. You can still talk to library staff online through the library website or via email if you need any help finding something.

Summary of Top Tips:

- Always be prepared for lectures and write additional notes (whether in person or online).
- Actively engage in seminars (this helps if you know the pre-readings well).
- Set out times to work independently and try to remain focused during those periods.
- Fully participate in group work- delegating work equally so it compliments one another's strengths.

- Take full advantage of the library's resources and the staff available to support you.
- Working independently does not always mean alone- utilise the support around you and find people who you can study with, even if that is in silence.
- **Finally, have fun and try new things!** Enjoy this time in your life when you have freedom to explore how you best learn and develop.