

# Admissions Policy 2023

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the position of Royal Holloway on key matters relating to the recruitment and admission to all undergraduate and postgraduate (taught and research) courses.

1.2 The College's admissions policy and procedures comply with relevant legislation and are guided by the expectation for quality in the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education<sup>1</sup>. From admission to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education as well as the guidance provided in the UK Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access<sup>2</sup> and the Fair Admissions Code of Practice, published by Universities UK<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Governance

2.1 The admissions policy is approved by the Academic Board and reviewed on an annual basis ahead of the relevant admissions cycle.

2.2 The policy is in accordance with the law of the England and Wales including specific compliance with legislation relating to equality, discrimination, data protection, human rights, and immigration.

## 3. General Principles

3.1 Royal Holloway is committed to providing a professional admissions service and to providing clear, fair, and consistently applied policies and procedures. The College is guided by the principles articulated within the Universities UK Fair Admissions Code of Practice (2022).

3.2 Royal Holloway aims to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students who have the potential to successfully complete their chosen course and to contribute to the academic life at a research-intensive institution.

3.3 The College recognises that, in order to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students, it may need to demonstrate a flexible approach and, where appropriate, make adjustments for individual applicants – for example, applicants who have faced exceptional circumstances.

3.4 The College is committed to widening participation and fair access and encourages applicants from all social and cultural backgrounds.

3.5 The College is committed to equal consideration of all 'on time' undergraduate applicants in accordance with UCAS guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/admissions-recruitment-and-widening-access>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/publications/fair-admissions-code-practice>

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Admissions and Applicant Services Office forms an integral part of the Directorate of Marketing and Communications and works closely with academic departments to deliver a professional and equitable admissions and applicant enquiry service.

4.2 The Admissions and Applicant Services Office is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring the accuracy and consistency of information provided to potential applicants on Course Finder and UCAS Course Search, in relation to course entry requirements.
- b) Ensuring that the College delivers a fair, transparent and efficient admissions service.
- c) Ensuring that entry criteria are approved by the Education Strategy Committee prior to the start of each admissions cycle.
- d) Liaising with applicants throughout the admissions process.
- e) Decision making on individual applications for departments where this has been delegated to the Admissions and Applicant Services Office, using agreed admissions criteria.
- f) Processing and communicating all formal admissions decisions to applicants and making all offers to applicants on behalf of the College.
- g) Issuing Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to enable international applicants to apply for their visa to study in the UK.
- h) Providing information, advice and assistance to Academic Recruitment Leads, and colleagues across the College on admissions processes and entry requirements, including the equivalencies of non-standard qualifications.
- i) Safeguarding the College from fraudulent applicants.
- j) Safeguarding the College from applicants with relevant criminal convictions for particular courses (in conjunction with other key services within the College);
- k) Ensuring compliance with external regulations in relation to UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) requirements, fee status, Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS), GDPR; the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Consumer Protection Law as applicable to admissions.
- l) Compliance with GDPR regulations, which includes a requirement to only communicate about an application with the applicant themselves or their nominee as given on their application form.

4.3 The College's strategic partner, Study Group, has been contracted to support the Admissions and Applicant Services team with delivering these responsibilities in respect of applications submitted through international educational agents in the majority of countries. (Note that Study Group is not responsible for agent relationships on behalf of Royal Holloway in the EU and EEA member states plus Switzerland, United Kingdom, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, Study Group does not support agents recruiting international students domiciled in the UK).

4.4 Academic Schools are responsible for appointing an Academic Director of Student Recruitment and Communications who will oversee compliance with the College's admissions policy across the school and will propose entry criteria for courses.

Academic departments are responsible for:

- a) Allocating suitable members of staff to lead on each of UG and PGT recruitment for their department and ensuring these staff are appropriately inducted and trained for the role in collaboration with the Admissions and Applicant Services Office.
- b) Recommending entry criteria for all courses in liaison with their School Academic Director of Student Recruitment and Communications and in line with college policies.
- c) Conducting interviews, where required, in accordance with section 8 of this policy on Selection.
- d) Making timely decisions on applications following interview or submission of portfolio, where this has been agreed by the Education Strategy Committee, and on borderline applications, in conjunction with the Admissions and Applicant Services Office.
- e) Conversion activity, including representation at College Open Days, with support from the Directorate of Marketing and Communications.
- f) Compliance with GDPR regulations, which includes a requirement to only communicate about an

application with the applicant or their nominee as given on their application form. If the Department is unsure whether a third party has been nominated by the applicant, any requests for information should be passed to the central Admissions and Applicant Services Office.

4.5 The College's Executive Board has oversight of policy as it relates to the admission of students. This includes approval of all academic and English language requirements. This responsibility is carried out on recommendation from the Education Strategy Committee

4.6 All members of staff with responsibility for the admissions process are given appropriate guidance by the central Admissions and Applicant Services Office in order to fulfil their roles competently and in line with this policy. Ongoing advice and guidance is provided by the central Admissions and Applicant Services Office to all school and departmental recruitment staff and to Study Group, on any national or institutional changes to admissions policy or procedures.

## **5. Advice and Guidance for Applicants**

5.1 Royal Holloway is committed to providing high quality, up-to-date and accurate information, advice and guidance to applicants and their advisors.

5.2 The Directorate of Marketing and Communications is responsible for:

- a) publishing entry requirements in the prospectus and online in a manner that is clear and accessible to applicants and their advisors.
- b) maintaining the accuracy of the advice and guidance information provided on the College website and the UCAS entry profiles.

5.3 The College reserves the right to make changes to the content or delivery of some courses, their entry requirements, or other matters of admissions policy after the publication and distribution of printed materials, such as the prospectus. Such changes will only be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/ or the advice of external advisors to enhance academic provision. All online information will be kept up to date at all times. Where such changes have been made after offers have been made, all affected applicants will be written to. See section 11.

5.4 The College is committed to responding in a timely way with accurate and clear information to applicant and other enquiries, received by phone, email or other channels.

5.5 Applicants are advised to direct any enquiries to the Admissions Enquiry Form in the first instance: [www.royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery](http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery)

## **6. Application process**

6.1 Applications for undergraduate courses, including the Integrated Foundation Year and the MSc Social Work must be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). An application fee is charged by UCAS, which will vary depending on the number of courses applied for. Applicants must submit their application by 25 January in order to be guaranteed equal consideration for their chosen course.

6.2 Separate undergraduate admissions processes have been agreed for students applying through international agents supported by our strategic partner, Study Group.

6.3 Separate undergraduate admissions processes may be agreed with other partner organisations.

6.4 Applications for postgraduate courses, with the exception of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and some professional Social Work courses, must be made directly to the College using the on-line application form. Information on how to apply can be found on our [website](#).

6.5 Separate postgraduate admissions processes have been agreed for students applying through international agents supported by our strategic partner, Study Group.

6.6 Postgraduate applicants, applying directly to the College are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after the start of the admissions cycle, as popular courses may close during the cycle if sufficient applications to fill all of the available spaces have been received.

- For courses starting in September 2023: To guarantee a decision by 23 July 2023, applicants must apply by 1 June 2023. The final deadline for submission of all postgraduate applications is 31 July 2023
- For courses starting in January 2024: The final deadline for submission of all postgraduate applications is 1 November 2023

6.7 Different application deadlines have been agreed for undergraduate and postgraduate applicants applying through an agent supported by our strategic partner, Study Group

- For courses starting in September 2023, applicants must apply by 14 August 2023, submit documents needed to meet any offer conditions specified by 16 August 2023 and complete all the steps needed to qualify for a CAS by 18 August 2023.
- For courses starting in January 2024: applicants must apply by 4 December 2023, submit documents needed to meet any offer conditions specified by 6 December 2023 and complete all the steps needed to qualify for a CAS by 8 December 2023

6.8 Applicants requiring a visa to study in the UK are strongly advised to apply as soon as possible and by no later than 31 July in order to ensure that admissions processes are completed in sufficient time to allow for visa processing before the beginning of the academic year. Final dates may vary from one country to another, depending on local processing times.

6.9 All applicants are sent an automated email acknowledgement from the College once their application has been received.

6.10 The turnaround time for complete undergraduate and postgraduate taught applications is normally no longer than 20 working days, except where a 'gathered field' approach is used, although this may be increased during peak periods. Research applications are normally turned around within 8-10 weeks.

## 7. Entry Requirements

7.1 Entry requirements are detailed in the College publications. The primary sources of this information are the printed prospectuses, the College's website, and the UCAS entry profiles. As the printed prospectuses are published well in advance of an admissions cycle, applicants should always refer to the College's website for the most up-to-date information.

7.2 Entry criteria are reviewed annually, and any changes have to be approved by the College Executive Board, on recommendation from the Education Strategy Committee.

7.3 All applicants for undergraduate courses are required to demonstrate a good standard of general education. Please refer to the [undergraduate regulations](#). For those who have undertaken their education in the UK, this would normally be five GCSE passes at Grade 4 and above including Maths and English, although some courses require higher grades, and these are listed as part of the course entry criteria. All applicants are expected to demonstrate a suitable standard of English language proficiency which is set by the Education Strategy Committee and approved by the College Executive Board. Details of the accepted English language qualifications and the required levels for each qualification are published on the College website. Where applicants do not meet the required level, they can choose or may be advised to take the College's Pre-sessional English Language Programme (PELP).

7.4 All applications must normally have at least one satisfactory reference. For postgraduate applications, if a reference is not supplied at the application stage, this may be made a condition of any offer.

7.5 The College accepts a wide range of country-specific qualifications, and these are published on the College

website. If an applicant is unable to find advice on the acceptability of their qualification(s), they should contact the Admissions and Applicant Services Office for further guidance before applying.

7.6 Where an applicant has taken a qualification that is not certificated in English, a notarised transcript translated into English will be required.

7.7 For undergraduate courses, offers are normally based on three A-Levels or an equivalent qualification that is deemed acceptable by the College. General Studies and Critical Thinking A-Levels are normally excluded from any offer. Applicants are advised to look at course specific requirements in the [College course finder pages](#) or to use UCAS Course Search facility. The College does not use the UCAS tariff for entry criteria. Entry requirements are set taking account of a range of factors including the academic background required to succeed on a programme; the number of places available and anticipated level of competition for places for the year of entry in question; performance of previous applicants and alignment with requirements for similar courses elsewhere in the sector. Entry requirements are therefore likely to differ from the actual grades accepted in previous cycles. Entry requirements may also be reduced during the August Confirmation and Clearing period (see section 8) once the number of confirmed applicants is known.

7.8 The entry requirement for admission to a postgraduate taught course is normally a UK Second Class Honours degree with consideration given to a recognised professional or international qualification, or equivalent relevant industry experience. Please refer to the postgraduate taught regulations (<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/assets/docs/pdf/academic-regulations/general-regulations/5.-postgraduate-taught-regulations-2022-23-fv.pdf>). Entry requirements for each course are published on the College's website.

7.9 International applicants who do not meet the entry requirements for a postgraduate taught course may apply to study a Pre-Masters programme at the Royal Holloway International Study Centre, where automatic progression is available to named Masters' courses, provided that the requisite grades are achieved during the Pre-Masters year and other associate entry requirements are met. (Students who apply through an agent supported by our strategic partner, Study Group, and who do not meet the entry requirements for direct entry to an undergraduate or postgraduate degree course will automatically be considered for admission to one of the pathway programmes offered by the Royal Holloway International Study Centre.

7.10 The entry requirement for a postgraduate research course is normally a Masters degree course but some departments may accept a UK First or Upper Second Class Honours degree or a recognised international equivalent.

## 8. Selection process

8.1 All applications to the College are assessed in the first instance by the relevant Admissions Advisor.

8.2 All applications will be considered in line with the College's Equal Opportunities Statement and all decisions will be made in accordance with this [statement](#).

8.3 All applications will be considered on an equal basis, against criteria which have been approved by the Education Strategy Committee and Executive Board prior to the beginning of the admissions cycle. When assessing the academic suitability and potential of applicants, the following information will be considered, as provided on the application form:

- Qualifications achieved
- Predicted achievement in qualifications which are currently being studied
- Educational context in which qualifications have been taken (undergraduate only)
- Personal/supporting statement
- Employment history (where relevant)
- Reference
- Research proposal (research programmes only).

In addition, some departments may need to consider additional information by means of an interview or portfolio.

8.4 Undergraduate applicants whose predicted grades are more than three grades below the standard offer will

not normally be made an offer.

8.5 In most cases, personal statements are not formally assessed as part of the selection process. However, they may be used to provide context for borderline decisions, to differentiate between equally qualified applicants in situations where there is significant competition for places, or to provide additional support where an applicant has gaps in education.

8.6 In most cases, References are not formally assessed as part of the selection process. However, they may be used to provide context in relation to, extenuating circumstances that may have impacted a student's academic performance to date. We reserve the right to take references into account to differentiate between equally qualified applicants in situations where there is significant competition for places.

8.7 Selection criteria are not weighted differentially.

8.8 All applicants who are successful in gaining an offer of a place at the College will be notified of this, either in writing, or through UCAS, by the Admissions and Applicant Services Office. This notification represents the formal offer of a place, and a legal contract is formed between the applicant and the College on the basis of the terms and conditions of the offer.

8.9 If the College is unable to make an applicant an offer of a place on their chosen course, it may be possible to make an offer on a similar, alternative course. This may happen at either the initial offer stage or at 'Confirmation' once results are known. If this is the case, a change of course offer will be made, and the applicant will be notified of this.

8.10 The College offers a programme of Open Days and virtual Open Days. Applicants and prospective applicants can register to attend these events at any point. However, all undergraduate applicants who apply during the standard admissions cycle and who are made an offer of a place will be informed of the dates of upcoming Open Days and encouraged to register. Information will be sent out within an appropriate timescale allowing applicants to make arrangements to visit the College or attend a Virtual Open Day if that is preferred.

8.11 Applicants who are made an offer of a place will be given a deadline by which to meet the conditions of offer. In the event the applicant does not meet their conditions by the date stated, it may not be possible to hold their offer of a place open.

8.12 Historical trends and data will be used to determine the number of offers to be made for each course. Where a course attracts a high ratio of applicants to places, applications may be held in a "gathered field" until the application deadline, to allow for equal consideration. In the case of postgraduate courses, high levels of applications may result in the need to implement a non-standard application deadline. In such cases, the deadline will be published on the course pages of the College website.

## **Interview and Portfolios**

8.9 Where a course requires applicants to attend a selection interview or to submit a portfolio, this will be published on the College website and, for undergraduate courses, the UCAS website.

8.10 Where an interview is held for selection purposes (postgraduate only), only those applicants attending the interview will be considered for an offer.

8.11 All interviews will be conducted in a manner that is fair, consistent, and transparent. It can take place face-to-face, by telephone or through electronic means (e.g. Microsoft Teams). All interviews for the same taught course of study will follow a similar format and similar questions will be asked. It will be the responsibility of the interviewer(s) to complete and retain interview assessment forms for each candidate, a template for which is available from the Admissions and Applicant Services Office. This assessment form may be used to provide feedback to individual applicants in cases where a decision to reject has been made. If a department wishes to use a different template, this must be approved by the Director of Student Recruitment to ensure compliance with fair admissions.

8.12 All interviews will be conducted in accordance with the College's [Equal Opportunities Statement](#).

## Use of Contextual Data

8.13 As part of the College's holistic assessment of all applications, contextual data, provided as part of the UCAS application, may be taken into account. This contextual information sets an application into its educational or socio-economic context allowing the College to take into account additional factors which may have impacted on an applicant's educational achievement to date. The criteria used and the contextual information considered are reviewed annually.

8.14. Currently, applicants who have been in care for more than three months or who meet two of the following criteria will be flagged for a contextual offer i.e., these applicants are deemed to be from a widening participation background:

- a) Attend an [Aspiring School](#) (low performing school), based on whether the school or college performs below the national average at GCSE and/or GCE or equivalent qualifications
- b) Disability
- c) Mature students (aged 21 or over at the start of the course)
- d) Resident in a lower participation in higher education neighbourhood (Polar 4 and where possible, IMD Q1)
- e) No parental experience of Higher Education

8.15 Consideration of applications from students who are flagged as from a widening participation background will be based on the same criteria and principles as all other candidates, but applicants flagged will be provided an offer at 2 Grades below the standard offer.

## Offers

8.16 Where no additional assessment is required, an applicant will normally be given a decision on their application within 20 working days of their application being received. For undergraduate applications received on or near to the 25th January deadline, this may take up to five weeks.

8.17 The majority of applicants, who have yet to complete their qualifications, will normally be given the standard conditional offer for their chosen course, as published on Course Finder.

## Meeting offer conditions, Confirmation, Clearing and Adjustment

8.19 Applicants who fail to meet their conditions of offer by a small margin ("near miss") may be considered at 'Confirmation', subject to available space on the course, once those who have met all their conditions of offer have been accepted. Applicants who fail to achieve the College's minimum entry requirements will not normally be accepted.

8.20 Where it is not possible to accept "near miss" applicants because there are insufficient places available, offers to suitable alternative courses may be made at Confirmation. No obligation to accept this alternative offer would be placed on the applicant.

8.21 The College may consider undergraduate applicants with qualifications that are lower than the published standard entry requirements at 'Clearing', should a course still have space for additional students. Applicants who fail to meet the College's minimum entry requirements will not normally be accepted at 'Clearing' (see section 7 of this policy).

8.22 Undergraduate courses which have vacancies for Clearing applicants will be published on the College website in August, along with the telephone number to call for enquiries. Additional campus tours will be arranged for those applicants made an offer through Clearing.

## Extenuating Circumstances

8.24 Applicants with extenuating circumstances should ensure that the relevant exam board is notified of these circumstances, prior to the issue of results.

8.25 Applicants should provide the Head of Admissions and Applicant Services with a letter from their School or university to support their claim of extenuating circumstances, along with any additional supporting documentation, prior to the issue of results. It may not be possible to give any consideration to extenuating



circumstances notified after results have been issued.

8.26 The College reserves the right to assume that the relevant exam board has taken account of extenuating circumstances and that appropriate adjustments have already been made and are reflected in the results. The College may choose to consider the extenuating circumstances further if the applicant has narrowly missed the conditions of their offer but there is no guarantee that it will.

## **Re-marks and Examination Appeals**

8.27 Applicants who have applied for a re-mark or appeal with an awarding body should notify the College immediately. Whilst the College will make every effort to reconsider applicants whose grades are amended as the result of a successful re-mark; it may not always be possible to hold a place pending the outcome of an appeal.

8.28 In the event that a re-mark is successful, and the applicant then meets the conditions of their offer, if the course is full at the time that information becomes available, the applicant may be offered an alternative course or a deferred entry place for the following year.

## **Deferred Entry**

8.29 The College may consider applications for deferred entry and will also normally consider requests to defer after an application has been received. The College normally allows applicants to defer their offer for one year, after which time the applicant is required to reapply.

8.30 Deferred entry applications will be considered using the same criteria as applicants for the current year.

8.31 Offers of a deferred place will not be made in Clearing, unless the applicant meets the standard published entry requirements for the course.

## **Re-admission policy**

8.32 Applicants whose registration has been terminated following the formal warning process will not normally be reconsidered until a minimum of one year has passed. Even where this period has passed, the College reserves the right to refuse re-admission.

8.33 Applications will not be accepted from anyone who has previously been a student at the College and has had their registration as a student of the College terminated for academic and/ or non-academic disciplinary offences. Any such applications that are received will be rejected without consideration.

8.33 An applicant who has already obtained an Honours degree or an Integrated Masters degree will only be admitted to a course which the College has judged to be sufficiently different from that already completed.

## **Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL/APEL)**

8.34 Postgraduate applicants may request recent prior learning and experience to be taken into consideration in lieu of a degree in order to gain entry to a postgraduate course.

8.35 Where applications are based on prior learning or experience, responsibility rests with the applicant to provide appropriate evidence to support their claim that they have achieved knowledge and skills.

8.36 The College will consider undergraduate applicants for second year entry on an individual basis. Vacancies for second year entry are extremely limited and may not be available in all departments. Applicants wishing to apply for second year entry should demonstrate a strong academic performance in their current course and will normally be required to meet the first-year entry requirements for the course they are applying for. In addition, applicants need to meet the required progression requirements. Any applicants wishing to apply for second year entry must do so via UCAS.

## **Fraudulent Applications and Plagiarism**

8.37 Where the College is notified that an applicant has been highlighted under the UCAS Similarity Detection

Service, the application will be put on hold while the applicant is contacted and advised of the serious nature of plagiarism. At the discretion of the Head of Admissions, the applicant may then be invited to submit a new personal statement before the application can be processed, however the College reserves the right to reject applications immediately where they contain significant quantities of plagiarised content.

8.38 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the information they provide is accurate and complete and does not contain false or misleading information. It is also the applicant's responsibility to provide additional information when requested to do so.

8.39 The College reserves the right to:

- Investigate any application suspected of including false, misleading, or fraudulent information or appearing to be incomplete
- Request additional information to verify an application
- Put the application process on hold pending completion of such investigation

8.4 In the event that the College finds evidence that the applicant has submitted a false, misleading, or fraudulent application, the College reserves the right to:

- Reject, withdraw, or cancel the application before a decision is made
- Withdraw any offer of a place that has already been made
- Withdraw registration if an applicant has already been accepted onto a course and registered as a student.

8.41 Any subsequent applications from anyone previously found to have submitted fraudulent information to the College will be rejected.

## **9. Deposits for securing your course**

9.1 All international students (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research) are required to pay a deposit of £3,000 at the earliest opportunity in order to secure their place, subject to meeting any conditions of offer.

9.2 All Home students (postgraduate taught and postgraduate research) are required to pay a deposit of £100 at the earliest opportunity in order to secure their place, subject to meeting any conditions of offer.

9.3 Students applying for PELP (Pre-sessional English Language Programme) courses must accept and pay the full tuition fees for their course as outlined in the offer letter.

## **10. Specific Applicant Groups**

### **Under 18 applicants**

10.1 The majority of students at Royal Holloway are 18 or above, and the academic life and social environment of the College reflect this. However, we recognise that some individuals who have already met the entry requirements for the course are in a position to commence their higher education studies at a younger age.

10.2 The College strongly recommends that applicants who will be 16 years of age on entry consider carefully whether they would be able to benefit fully from the educational and social opportunities which are on offer. The College does not accept an in loco parentis responsibility for children (i.e., those under 18 years of age at entry). The College does however recognise that it has a duty of care and is committed to practice that protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.

10.3 Applicants who will be under the age of 16 on entry are not permitted to enrol at the College. Any such applicants will, where appropriate, be offered a deferred entry place. If this is not possible the application will be rejected.

10.4 Applicants who will be under 18 years of age on the published start date of the course, and their parents and

guardians, must confirm to the College as a condition of registration:

- that they understand the nature of the College and the course, the circumstances in which the individual would be studying and living, and the limitations of the College's supervisory role.
- that the contractual arrangements for the individual to study at the College are underwritten by a qualified person of adult status.
- that arrangements would be in place to support the individual in an emergency, including the existence of a qualified person in the UK willing to act as guardian.
- that the individual will obey the restrictions that English law places on minors.

## **Mature applicants**

10.5 Applications from mature candidates without formal qualifications will be considered on an individual basis and all aspects of the application will be taken into account when making a decision. All such applications will be considered by the member of academic staff responsible for the course. Where applications are based on prior experience, the following will apply:

- any previous study or experience must be cognate with the course for which the applicant is applying.
- responsibility currently lies with the applicant to identify, demonstrate and provide evidence of any claim of experience or prior learning.

## **Care Leavers**

10.6 Royal Holloway welcomes and supports students who have been in local authority care. When an application form is submitted, the appropriate box should be ticked to declare that an applicant has been or is currently in care. We will then contact the applicant to tell him/her what support is on offer.

10.7 We also use this information to keep in touch with applicants about other support available, helping to find the right people to talk to, throughout a student's time at College.

10.8 Care leavers and estranged students aged 18-25 will qualify for a £3,000 cash bursary each academic year, provided they have either been in care for a minimum of 13 weeks since the age of 14 or have independent/other status on Student Finance England. In addition, they must be from England, have a Student Finance England verified family income of £25,000 per year or less, be in receipt of a full government maintenance loan and be paying at least £9,000 tuition fees. Additional supporting documentation demonstrating their status as a care leaver will also be required.

10.9 Care leavers are eligible for consideration for a contextual offer (see section 8)

## **Applicants with disabilities or specific learning needs**

10.9 It is recommended that students declare any disability on application so that the College can assess the level of adjustment and support required at the earliest opportunity. Consideration of applications from students who declare a disability will be based on the same criteria and principles as all other candidates.

10.10 Applicants who require adjustments or assistance when attending an Open Day should notify the Directorate of Marketing and Communications of their needs in advance to enable the necessary arrangements to be made.

10.11 Applicants who are successful in gaining an offer of a place at the College will be contacted by the Disability and Dyslexia Service regarding any support or adjustments that can be put in place.

## **Applicants declaring criminal convictions**

10.12 Applicants to courses that involve work with children and vulnerable adults, such as social work, are required to declare spent and unspent convictions at the point of application.

## **International applicants**

10.13 Royal Holloway is licensed to sponsor migrants wishing to study under Tier 4 of the points-based system

and as such complies fully with UKVI regulations. Applicants will be expected to comply and abide by the regulations set out by United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI). For full details please see <https://www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa>

10.14 Applicants who have been made a formal offer will be required to pay an agreed sum of money to be offset against their tuition fees in advance of the College issuing a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) which is required for visa applications. Should the visa be refused and therefore the applicant be unable to take up their place, this sum will be refunded, less an administrative charge.

10.15 Applicants will not be issued a CAS if it is believed that they will not pass the UKVI credibility interview or will not meet any UKVI Tier 4 regulations.

10.16 International applicants applying directly to the College are required to follow the same application process as Home/EU students – UCAS for undergraduate applications and the online form for postgraduate applications. Royal Holloway works with a number of third-party agents who can assist applicants with making their application and providing the required documentation. The majority of these agents (see para. 4.3) are supported by our strategic partner, Study Group. In these cases, separate application processes have been agreed.

10.17 The Advanced Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS), introduced by the UK Government in November 2007, is designed to ensure that those applying for undergraduate integrated Masters' courses (or postgraduate taught or research courses) in certain sensitive subjects do not acquire knowledge that could be used in Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes.

10.18 The College cannot issue a CAS to support a visa application until the applicant has been assigned an ATAS certificate. Applications for ATAS clearance can be made up to six months in advance of the beginning of a course and may be submitted on the basis of a conditional or unconditional offer. Further details about this requirement can be found by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

## 11. Changes to and discontinuation of courses

11.1 The College aims to provide the courses that have been advertised in the prospectus or elsewhere. However, if there is any significant change to the course between the time at which an offer is made and the point at which registration is complete, the College will inform relevant applicants promptly and advise them of the options available to them and their best course of action. Such changes may include:

- a) A major subject content change to a course, which means
  - The introduction of one or more new and/or withdrawal of one or more existing mandatory modules.
  - A change in status of a module e.g., making a mandatory module optional or vice versa.
  - A significant change to the fieldwork requirement on a mandatory course unit (e.g., removing it or adding it to the course).
- b) Significant changes to the assessment on mandatory courses, e.g., adding or removing a type of assessment (moving from exam based to coursework-based assessment or vice versa, adding in a presentation as a mode of assessment).
- c) Suspension or closure/withdrawal of a course (programme).
- d) Change to a course (programme) title.
- e) Changes in accreditation of a degree course e.g., loss or gaining of an accreditation, decision to allow accreditation to elapse/not apply for re-accreditation from a professional statutory or regulatory body.
- f) A significant change to the extra costs associated with a course, e.g., the addition of costs of £100 or more where no extra costs currently exist, or £100 or more in addition to the existing costs already specified.
- g) Any changes to the academic regulations which impact significantly on progression or award requirements.
- h) Changes to location of delivery, e.g., Egham or Central London
- i) Changes to mode of delivery, e.g., block mode, only evening teaching, weekend

11.2 Should a course be discontinued after an offer has been made and accepted and a suitable alternative course cannot be found for an applicant, any deposit paid will be repaid in full.

## **12. Feedback, Complaints and Appeals**

12.1 Royal Holloway is committed to providing a high quality, fair and transparent admissions service for all applicants. In this context, feedback is defined as the communication from the College to an applicant, on request from the applicant, who has been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place.

A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction about an applicant's admissions process which may include but is not limited to the following:

- the process by which an application has been handled
- the outcome of the selection
- the fees classification process.

In either case, it may concern actions or inaction by the College or its staff.

An appeal is defined as a request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.

12.2 It is recognised, however, that there may be occasions when applicants will wish to establish why their application has been rejected or believe that they have cause for complaint. Applicants have no right of appeal against an academic decision not to offer them a place at the College.

12.3 The Head of Admissions and Applicant Services will monitor, on an annual basis, formal complaints which have been referred and will be responsible for implementing or recommending changes to systems or procedures suggested by the nature or pattern of the complaints received. Such records may contain age, gender and ethnicity (if known) of complainant, course applied for, summary of complaint and summary of outcome. The outcome of such monitoring may also inform other processes or activities such as arrangements for interview or standard correspondence with applicants.

### **Feedback**

12.4 Unsuccessful applicants will normally be notified of this decision either through UCAS or by in writing by the College. Unsuccessful applicants applying through agents supported by our strategic partner, Study Group (see para 4.3), will be notified by their agent. Applicants will also be notified of their outcome of fees status.

12.5 Requests for further, individual feedback should normally be sent to the Admissions and Applicant Services Office. Requests will be addressed as soon as workload allows, which may be after the peak admissions processing time. The College will only correspond about a decision with the applicant.

12.6 For international students who have applied to the College via an agent, supported by our strategic partner, Study Group (see para 4.3), different processes have been agreed. In these circumstances, requests for further individual feedback should be sent to Study Group's Global Customer Services team via [RHapplicants@studygroup.com](mailto:RHapplicants@studygroup.com). Requests will be addressed as soon as workload allows, and normally within two working days.

12.7 Requests for feedback from a third party will not be accepted and no information relating to an individual applicant will be released.

12.8 In some cases, lack of success is due to the level of competition for places rather than any specific weakness in an application and consequently it will not be possible to advise applicants on how to strengthen any subsequent application.

12.9 In all cases, it will be made clear to the applicant that, even if another application will be considered, there is no guarantee that an offer will be made, even if the points raised in the feedback are addressed by the applicant. Previous applications are not kept for reference. There will be no discrimination against any applicant who requests feedback.

### **Complaints**

12.9 If, having received feedback regarding the decision not to offer a place at the College, or the outcome of their fee status, an applicant feels they have cause for complaint, they may send a formal written request for a review to the Head of Admissions and Applicant Services (or, if they applied to the College via an agent supported by our strategic partner, Study Group, to Study Group's Global Customer Service team via [RHapplicants@studygroup.com](mailto:RHapplicants@studygroup.com)).

12.10 Applicants should be aware that the College will not review an admissions decision where the grounds for requesting a review are simply that the applicant disagrees with the academic judgement that has been applied and where there is no evidence that the correct procedures have not been followed.

12.11 Any complaint must be made by the applicant and not by a third party.

12.12 Anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under this procedure.

12.13 In the first instance, applicants with a complaint should raise it informally. If this course of action proves unsatisfactory, then the applicant should write to the Head of Admissions and Applicant Services including the grounds for complaint i.e., any alleged procedural irregularities and any supporting evidence including, where available, copies of any relevant documentation. Students who have applied via an agent supported by our strategic partner, Study Group (see para 4.3) should address send their formal complaint to [RHapplicants@studygroup.com](mailto:RHapplicants@studygroup.com). The formal written complaint must be submitted within 8 weeks of the issue/incident to which it relates. Complaints received outside this timeframe will not be considered,

12.14 The Head of Admissions and Applicant Services (or, for students who have applied via an agent supported by our strategic partner, Study Group, Study Group's Global Customer Services team) will investigate the complaint in consultation with the relevant members of staff and will respond to the complaint normally within ten working days of a complaint being received. Where a response is not possible in that timeframe, the complainant will be informed of the timescale for the receipt of a full response.

## Appeals

12.15 If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the review of their formal complaint, they may appeal in writing to the Director of Student Recruitment within 7 days of receiving the complaint outcome. This should set out briefly: the nature of the complaint, the details of the response received, a statement why the applicant remains dissatisfied and, without prejudice to any formal remedy which might be determined, the remedy which is being sought. The Director of Student Recruitment will investigate the complaint and will provide a response within 15 working days of receiving the written request. Where a response is not possible in that timeframe, the Director of Student Recruitment will write to inform the applicant of the timescale for the receipt of a full response. For students applying via an agent supported by our strategic partner, Study Group, written appeals should be sent to [RHapplicants@studygroup.com](mailto:RHapplicants@studygroup.com) but will be forwarded by Study Group to the Director of Student Recruitment, who will investigate in accordance with the above provisions.

12.16 The decision of the Director of Student Recruitment shall be final.

## 13. International Agent-Supported Applications: Applicant Route Resolution

13.1 Applications submitted via international education agents in the majority of countries (see para 4.3) are processed on the College's behalf by our strategic partner, Study Group. If an applicant no longer wishes to progress their application with the educational agent, they can use the Applicant Route Resolution process to request to progress their application directly with Royal Holloway.

13.2 To do this, an applicant should first notify their educational agent and not yet have confirmed acceptance of their offer. The applicant should put their request in writing to [RHapplicants@studygroup.com](mailto:RHapplicants@studygroup.com), a dedicated inbox monitored by the Study Group, Global Customer Services team. The applicant should typically do this within 48 working hours (excluding weekends) of notifying their educational agent of this decision. When submitting their request, an applicant should try to address the two points below:

- The name of the educational agent who has assisted with their application
- The events that have taken place, in date order, including what action they have taken that have led to this decision

13.3 A written response will be made to every application resolution request , normally within 48 working hours (excluding weekends)

13.4 Students who have applied directly to the College but who subsequently decide that they wish to progress their application with the support of an educational agent, supported by our strategic partner, Study Group should put their request in writing to the Head of Admissions and Applicant Services. The applicant should typically do this within 48 working hours (excluding weekends) of engaging the educational agent.

When submitting their request, an applicant should try to address the two points below:

- The name of the educational agent who will be assisting with their application
- The basis on which the educational agent has been commissioned (i.e. to offer full application support or to support with specific aspects of the process e.g. visa applications)