

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Study Abroad with Academic English** programme. This specification is valid for new entrants from **April 2009**.

The programme is designed primarily to meet the needs of international students who wish to spend up to one year in the UK developing their linguistic skills, learning about British culture, and participating in first year undergraduate courses. Ultimately, it will enable students to develop their ability to study academic disciplines through the medium of English. More specifically the aims of the programme are to:

- develop the reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English needed to meet the challenge of participating in up to two terms of academic study alongside undergraduate students;
- develop a broad understanding of contemporary British society and culture;
- develop strategies for effective language learning;
- develop the ability to work independently and in teams.

In the first 14 weeks of the programme (Stage One: Intensive English A, April - July), all students embark on a programme of study comprising general academic English with a focus on contemporary British society and culture. The main aim of this initial part of the course is to prepare students for the English language demands which the students will encounter later in the programme in academic departments.

In the next part of the programme (Stage One: Intensive English B, mid August – mid September), students take part in the September Pre-Sessional English Language Programme. The aim here is to provide further practical preparation for the challenges which the students will meet in academic courses. The skills developed in the first part of the programme will be reinforced and consolidated.

Stage Two of the programme takes place in the Autumn and Spring terms. Students take up to 2.0 course units in academic departments for the remainder of the programme. Progression onto Stage Two is dependent on the successful completion and passing of Stage One, which is formally assessed (see below). During this stage of the programme, students are also required to take three classes at a suitable level taken from the In-Sessional English Language courses.

The complete programme therefore lasts over a period of one year and is taught over the Summer Term and part of the summer break, continuing into the Autumn and Spring Terms of the new academic year. All elements of the programme are taught at Royal Holloway, University of London.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable

of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

By the end of the programme students should:

- a. have developed a broad understanding of contemporary British society and culture which involves an appreciation of how values and attitudes are culturally determined;
- b. have developed a clear understanding of the social and academic environment of a British university;
- c. have acquired a knowledge and understanding of English language and culture sufficient for successful completion of an undergraduate degree programme in a chosen discipline.

Skills and other attributes

By the end of the programme students should:

- d. have developed the key reading and writing skills relevant to academic life in a British university. In particular, they should be able to access and reference library and web sources; skim read academic articles for the main points and scan for specific details; and write academic essays that are coherent, cohesive and written in a suitably formal style;*
- e. have developed the key listening and speaking skills relevant to academic life in a British university. In particular, they should have developed the skills required to understand the main points of lectures; participate in discussions by asking questions and offering opinions; give formal oral presentations making use of visual aids; and initiate and sustain conversation in social contexts.*

This programme also promotes the development of a range of personal skills that are not only important within a British university setting but also useful for careers in industry and the professions, especially those that depend on the ability to communicate successfully across cultural boundaries. By the end of the programme students should:

- f. have become resourceful and effective language learners;*
- g. be able to work independently, planning their learning effectively and managing assignments within a given time framework;*
- h. be able to work effectively within a team;*
- i. be able to adapt to a different culture.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

The classes and other study activities in the first 14 weeks are all designed to help students achieve the learning outcomes of the programme (see Outcomes *a-i* above). In particular, students will be helped to develop their knowledge and understanding of the English language, and their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills (see Outcomes *c, d and e* above):

Students will also be helped to achieve a broad understanding of contemporary British society and culture through the weekly lecture and a range of classes and activities, in particular *British Society, Explore British Culture* and the *Educational Visits, Panel Discussions and Film* (see Outcome *a* above). These classes involve the reading and discussion of texts related to key British institutions; the analysis of a range of 'everyday' cultural products such as advertisements and films; the examination of social practices such as 'the wedding'; and meetings with a broad range of people from the local community. In addition students will develop the ability to work in teams through collaboration with classmates on group tasks including an assessed team presentation (see Outcome *h* above). Finally, students will need to spend a significant amount of their time working independently (see Outcome *g* above). They will be helped to do this by their Personal Tutor who will meet each student for a weekly 30-minute consultation.

The teaching and learning activities on the courses which make up the rest of the programme (see 'Details of the programme structure' below) will also help students achieve the main learning outcomes (see Outcomes *a-i* above). More information on the specific learning outcomes as well as the teaching and learning activities for each of these courses can be found in:

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- the Programme Specifications for the *Pre-sessional English Language Programme* and the *In-sessional English Language Provision*;
- the Course Specifications available for each academic course.

There are 4 elements of assessment on the Certificate programme:

- Element 1 assesses the listening and speaking skills taught and practised in the study of British society and culture in the Intensive English A course (see 'Details of the programme structure' below). It consists of a lecture comprehension test, an oral team presentation, and an interview. The weighting for these three elements is 20%/40%/40%.
- Element 2 assesses reading and writing skills taught and practised in the study of British society and culture in the Intensive English A course (see 'Details of the programme structure' below). It consists of two written assignments, one of 1000 words, and the second 1500 words, with the assessment weighted 40%/60%.
- Elements 3 and 4: Students take two undergraduate academic units for the Autumn and Spring term from a selection offered by academic departments. Students could also select half-course units from the Royal Holloway International course menu for the Autumn and Spring terms: Background to Modern Britain for the Arts 1; Background to Modern Britain for the Arts 2; Background to Modern Britain for the Social Sciences 1; Background to Modern Britain for the Social Sciences 2; there are also course units available in Spanish, German and French offered by Royal Holloway. Assessments and assessment criteria for the academic courses are determined by the academic departments concerned. The following assessment methods are typical: essay assignments; short research tasks; project work; oral presentations; oral interviews; written language tests.

Details can also be obtained via the [Study Abroad with Academic English](#) web page.

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Details of the programme structure(s)

The full programme consists of four components:

- Intensive English A: British Studies (April – July 2009)
- Intensive English B: Pre-sessional English Language unit (August – September 2009)
- One undergraduate course unit (or two half units could be selected) in the student's chosen academic disciplines plus three classes from the In-sessional English Language Support programme (September –December 2009)
- One undergraduate course unit (or two half units could be selected) in the students chosen academic disciplines plus three classes from the In-sessional English Language Support programme (January –March 2010)

There are therefore 4 exit points from the programme: in July, in September, in December, and in March.

More detailed information about the content of the programme and the individual course units is provided in:

- The Programme Guide for *Study Abroad with Academic English*
- The Programme Specifications for the *Pre-sessional English Language Programme*
- The Programme Specifications for the *In-sessional English Language Provision*

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Progression and award requirements

Progression Based on Performance in Stage One : Intensive English A

a. Students who achieve 40% and above in both of the following elements of assessment:

Listening and Speaking Skills
Reading and Writing Skills

can proceed on to Stage Two of the programme.

- b. Students who fail to achieve 40% in either of the elements of assessment specified above may not be permitted to take two academic course units during the Autumn and Spring Terms. Students in this category will be limited to academic courses in Royal Holloway International, and required to take additional courses from the *English Language Support Provision*. Students who have failed any element of assessment will **not be** eligible for a *Royal Holloway Certificate: Study Abroad with Academic English*.

Progression Based on Performance in Stage One: Intensive English B

One of the key purposes of the *Pre-sessional English Language Programme* is to determine the level of English language support that international students will need in the Autumn and Spring terms. Certificate students receive this support through the *In-sessional English Language Support* courses. However in some cases, students who perform exceptionally well in the *Pre-sessional* assessments are not *obliged* to attend the *English Language Support* courses, although attendance is recommended.

Awards

In order to be awarded the *Royal Holloway Certificate: Study Abroad with Academic English*, students will need to pass each of the 4 elements of assessment given above (see 'Teaching, learning and assessment' above) with a mark of 40% or more.

- c. If students pass all 4 elements of assessment with 2 of these elements passed with a mark of 60% or more, they will receive the *Royal Holloway Certificate: Study Abroad with Academic English with Merit*.
- d. If students pass all 4 elements of assessment with 3 of these elements passed with a mark of 60% or more, and 1 of these elements passed with a mark of 70% or more, they will receive the *Royal Holloway Certificate: Study Abroad with Academic English with Distinction*.

All students on the Study Abroad with Academic English programme - including those leaving in July, September and December - will receive a Statement of Achievement (i.e. a transcript).

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Student support and guidance

On this programme students enjoy a wide range of support and guidance, including:

- Scheduled 30 minute meetings with a Personal Tutor each week;
- Week-long programme of campus and study orientation;
- Four meetings of Staff Student Committee attended by the Assistant Director, Programme Leader, Administrative Assistant and student representatives;
- Detailed Student Handbook;
- Dedicated self-access centre providing a range of independent study materials;
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in the College libraries and the Computer Centre;
- Access to resources in the CALL laboratory, two Language Laboratories and in Moodle;
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, College Careers Service, and the Education Support Unit for students with special needs.

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Admission requirements

Admission to the programme normally requires students to have at least IELTS 4.5 or TOEFL 475 (paper-based test) or TOEFL 150 (computer-based test). For further details please refer to the [Study Abroad](#) web page.

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Further learning and career opportunities

This programme is particularly suited to international students who later wish to:

- study on degree courses in the humanities, social sciences, management, or information sciences through the medium of English;
- use English to communicate with colleagues or clients from different cultures.

For further details please refer to the [Careers Service](#).

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research.

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List of programmes

The programme is taught by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and leads to the award of a Royal Holloway Certificate: Study Abroad with Academic English. By the end of the programme students should achieve a level of English language proficiency broadly equivalent to Level 4 ('Competent User') within the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). The programme has 4 Banner Codes, each relating to an exit point:

- Study Abroad with Academic English: **1039** (14 weeks); **1040** (18 weeks); **1041** (30 weeks); **1042** (40 weeks).

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