Skills you'll develop during your Pre-Masters year

The Pre-Masters Diploma for International Students allows you to develop key skills and knowledge relevant to your academic subject, and also provides opportunities for you to integrate well in the academic and local cultures you will meet as a student at Royal Holloway.

Reading and writing skills

The Academic Reading and Writing course uses an integrated ‘reading to write’ approach, which combines research and use of sources with writing. You will learn to identify key features of sample texts, to read more effectively and efficiently, and develop a critical approach to reading. Attention to the ‘macro’ writing skills of organisation, structure and paragraphing is combined with ‘micro’ skills of use of academic vocabulary and grammar, linking language, style and referencing.

Academic skills and knowledge

You will be required to take the equivalent of one undergraduate course in an academic department where you will study alongside undergraduate students on their degree programmes. This course may consist of one full course unit, or two half-course units, and aims to provide you with the opportunity to develop understanding and familiarity with the language used and the approach taken to the study of the discipline which you intend to follow at Masters Level.

Presentation skills

Your academic presentation skills will be enhanced through dedicated classroom models and practice opportunities. A group presentation in Term 1 will assess your ability to present your own research as a team. An individual presentation in Term 2 will assess your ability to reflect critically on a ten hour volunteering placement in a non-academic context (for example with a charity, in a local museum, with arts and cultural centres, with environmental organisations or with animals,
or on campus), which also offers a structured opportunity to integrate with students from other disciplines, with other nationalities, and with the wider local community.

**Academic discussion skills**

To help you operate successfully in an English-speaking academic environment in the UK, the PDIS will provide opportunities for you to develop your ability to comprehend and respond to a wide range of spoken English, both academic and non-academic. Throughout Term 1, you will record a range of speaking and listening experiences, then reflect on strategies to improve your own skills through a group discussion assessment.

**Research skills**

Successful independent research skills are key to your success at postgraduate level. PDIS begins by introducing students in a practical way to principles of academic research and guides you closely to help you form research questions relevant to your chosen field of study. Thereafter, as the level of challenge increases, you will be supported in narrowing your field of focus, identifying a research gap, formulating questions, developing a methodology to conduct original research, and answering your research questions.

**Independent study skills**

In order to function successfully in the postgraduate academic environment, it is important to develop learner independence. This means that you have to take responsibility for recognising your learning needs as well as playing an active role in deciding what your learning priorities are. With the regular support of your personal tutor, significant emphasis is placed throughout the programme on developing your strategies as an independent learner so that you can make appropriate and informed decisions about your academic needs as well as your future plans and goals.