

MSc Social Work

Royal Holloway, University of London

Additional Admissions and Programme Advice

"A fantastic course, with knowledgeable and supportive staff, who are able to offer you a realistic insight into what it's like to be Social Worker"

- Joseph, MSc 2017-2019

"I moved from teaching to social work not without a feeling of trepidation. On the MSc in Social Work at Royal Holloway I have been consistently supported to manage the transition. I feel real positivity on this course. It's rigorous and demanding but there is a prevailing attitude of care and interest which pushes me forward."

- Nick, MSc 2017-2019



Maximise Your Application and Prepare Effectively

This admissions guidance should be read in conjunction with MSc Social Work Guidance for Candidates and Royal Holloway's admissions procedures for postgraduate taught programmes. Please read this guidance carefully prior to completing an online application.

Admissions Cycle

Admissions for the MSc Social Work programme are open from early October and remain open until all places are allocated. Early application is therefore advised.

Admission Requirements

All applicants must hold or be on track to achieve an Upper Second Class (2.1) Honours degree in any discipline. If you are currently undertaking an undergraduate degree any offer would be conditional on achieving this. Lower second class degrees are considered if applicants demonstrate that they have substantial relevant professional work experience and demonstrate a strong aptitude for social work.

Regardless of degree, all applicants must demonstrate that they have achieved Grade A

- C in GCSE Maths and English (or equivalent international or alternative qualifications e.g. Key Skills Level 2).

Relevant social care experience is essential, applicants should have a minimum of six months full-time or 12 months part-time relevant professional experience at the time of application. This experience can include paid and voluntary work. Experience as a paid or family carer will also be considered if relevant. Maximising your experience prior to application will be beneficial. See additional advice below.

Admissions Process

Admissions for the MSc Social Work programme must be completed online via UCAS (course code L508) or Royal Holloway Direct

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/applying/postgraduate/how-to-apply/>

In order to be shortlisted it is essential that applicants demonstrate in their application that they meet the required academic qualifications and relevant social care experience. (See advice below on completion of personal statement). Required documents should be uploaded directly with the application.

Required documents:

- Degree certificates
- Academic transcripts or certificates to indicate Maths and English grades (A-C) at GCSE level or equivalent.
- One work reference from a social care related job or voluntary role. Work references should be provided with full contact details for the referee i.e. postal address of organisation, telephone number and organisational email. Personal emails are not acceptable.
- For international students with English as a second or additional language, English language certificates- see below.

UCAS - please note that applicants can continue to apply via UCAS post-January. The standard UCAS cut-off date in January only relates to undergraduate programmes.

Please continue to apply.



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'Three years after qualifying, I'm working in a rehab and recovery team as care coordinator, I've been in this role for three years and recently qualified as an approved mental health professional. I enjoyed the role in spite of all the challenges it entails.'

The training provided by Royal Holloway was extremely beneficial in preparing me for the role of social worker. I felt very supported by the tutors, and found the course itself helped me to prepare for the challenges that the role entails.

The tutors often shared their lived experience of the role, and we often had guest speakers who were also working in the field in various capacities. This brought the role to life, and therefore the focus was not solely on the theoretical aspects of social work, but also on the actual practice itself.

- Shazia MSc 2015

Personal Statements:

Advice on how to complete

This statement is a central part of the screening and selection process. Before writing your personal statement you should prepare by considering your knowledge and understanding of contemporary social work.

Social work is a challenging and rewarding profession in which qualified social workers work with individuals and families across the lifespan in difficult and often distressing circumstances. It involves working collaboratively with service users, carers and professionals to address and resolve problems and needs in contexts of social inequality and injustice.

Your statement should tell us why you are pursuing a career in social work and how your previous education, work and life experience contribute to this. Your statement should make very clear what relevant social care experience you have gained (formal or informal, including time periods and details, particularly if part-time), and show how this meets essential requirements for selection. Reflecting on your experience and motivation for social work, you should indicate how you are developing and preparing for professional social work training.

Personal statements should be written clearly and concisely. If applicants experience any difficulty with uploading documents or have queries on the technical process of application please contact study@rhul.ac.uk in the first instance.

Selection Process

Shortlisting is based on the standard of applicants' personal statements and demonstration in their applications that they meet essential minimum requirements for the course.

The overall selection process is informed by the Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work for England (BASW, 2018) and is based on candidates demonstrating the following during the selection process:

- Good standards of written and verbal English
- Initial understanding of the professional social work role
- Capacity to reflect on and analyse relevant social care and personal experience
- Understanding of and commitment to the values and ethics of social work
- Capacity to consider and prepare for the ethical dilemmas and conflicts of the social work role
- Capacity to reflect on and be open to learning and developing knowledge

Shortlisted applicants are invited to attend a selection event which includes 4 elements:

1. Brief presentation about the MSc Social Work programme
2. Written exercise - applicants will be provided with brief reading material on a topic relevant to social work. They will then complete a written task in response to a question on this topic. In this task you should demonstrate your ability to write clearly and accurately, demonstrating a good standard of written English and the capacity to write coherently and logically in response to the set question.
3. Group exercise - applicants will undertake a group task in which they will be invited to discuss a topical question as a group. In this task you should demonstrate your personal and interpersonal communication skills and capacity to engage in group work.
4. Individual interview - each applicant will undertake an individual interview with an academic, a service user / carer representative and / or a practitioner.

Personal statements should be written clearly and concisely. If applicants experience any difficulty with uploading documents or have queries on the technical process of application please contact study@rhul.ac.uk in the first instance.

International Students

The Centre for Social Work welcomes international applicants with relevant social care experience and equivalent qualifications. Students with English as a second or additional language must demonstrate that they have IELTS with 7.0 overall and no sub score below 5.5. Accepted alternatives can be found here:

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/international-students/english-language-requirements/>

International students coming to the UK to study full-time are required to have a student visa. Guidance on Visa requirements and Tier 4 visas are available at: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/international-students/visas-and-immigration/before-you-arrive/tier-4-general-student-visa/>

NB If successfully offered a place on the MSc Social Work programme international students are advised to ensure that they prepare fully for course requirements. This includes, as with all social work students, completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check which is a criminal records check completed via our placements team. DBS clearance is required for learning activities in term 1 in addition to placements. A list of all required documentation is available from the Placement Administrator whom you are advised to contact once you accept a place. Having key documents with your UK address is an important element in the DBS process and will avoid delay. See additional information on declaration requirements below.

Further general information and advice for international students is available here: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/international-students/>

Fees and Finances

Fees for 2019-20 entry are £7700 per annum for Home/EU students, £16400 for international students. Fees are subject to annual review. More information on fees can be found at <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/postgraduate/social-work/social-work/>

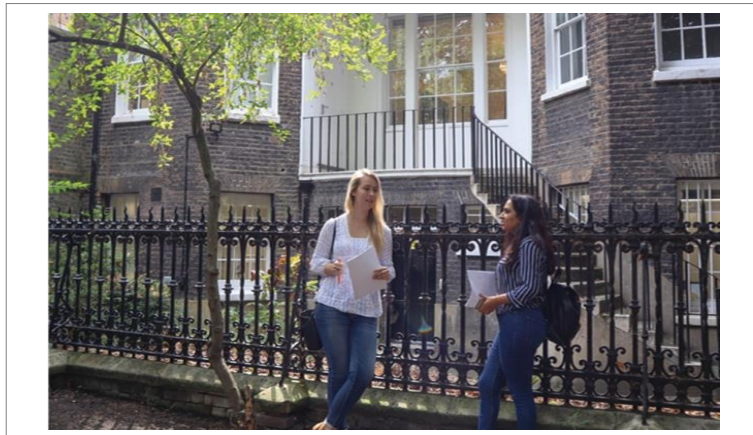
Royal Holloway graduates automatically benefit from a 15% fee reduction for alumni.

Currently the Department of Health social work bursary is available to some students subject to eligibility and residency criteria. The MSc Social Work programme at Royal Holloway is allocated a number of bursaries each academic year. This is subject to change and government policy. Subject to availability we allocate bursaries to students who accept a place in our course. Allocation is based on your performance during the selection process. Bursaries covers some but not all costs. To find out more about social bursaries and eligibility please see the NHSBSA website for more details:

<https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/social-work-students>

There are more places on the programme than bursaries. Consequently, a number of students will be self-funding. If you are not allocated a bursary place you may be eligible for a fixed contribution towards your placement travel expenses through the Placement Travel Allowance (PTA). If you satisfy residency and other eligibility criteria, the PTA may be available to you (subject to continuing availability from the NHSBSA, see above link).

All students are advised of the need to prepare for additional financial commitments that may occur during the programme. For example, any additional costs which arise due to travel, resubmissions or repeat placements which may incur costs. It is advisable to budget in advance for any unexpected costs or fees which are subject to an annual review. More information on fees, funding and financial support is available at: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/fees-and-funding/> Other sources of funding include postgraduate loans, more information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/funding-for-postgraduate-study>



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Personal Health and Circumstances Declaration

Education providers have overall responsibility for ensuring that social work students are and remain fit to practise. Applicants for social work programmes are required to make personal health and circumstances declarations to comply with professional regulatory requirements set by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

If you attend a selection day you will be invited to complete a declaration form which covers your personal health, previous cautions or convictions, including spent convictions* and any prior or current contact with children's or adults' social work services. The Centre for Social Work welcomes a wide range of people from diverse backgrounds and does not automatically exclude students who have a criminal or disciplinary record, who have experience as service users or carers or have previously experienced poor health. In many instances, there is no simple criterion of suitability and each case will be assessed individually. We recognise that prior life experience provides valuable skills and knowledge relevant to motivation and learning.

Declaration forms are dealt with separately to the rest of the admissions process. The declaration form will only be reviewed if your performance in the selection process meets our criteria to offer a place. At this point if relevant declarations have been made the Admissions Tutor will discuss further with you as necessary. You may be invited to meet with the Admissions Tutor and Placement Development Manager to ensure that your circumstances will not constitute a barrier which would prevent successful allocation of placements during the programme or registration with the HCPC on completion. If you have any queries about this aspect of the admissions process you can consult the admissions tutor. Declaration forms from applicants who are not offered a place are destroyed.

* Once you accept a place on the programme you will be contacted prior to the start of the academic year to undertake an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This criminal records check is completed by our Placements Administrator to comply with HCPC Guidance on Conduct and Ethics for Students <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/applying/admissions-policy-and-procedures/>

DBS clearance is required for learning activities in term 1 in addition to placements. Having key documents with your UK address is an important element in the DBS process and will avoid delay. A list of all required documentation is available from the Placement Administrator whom you are advised to contact once you accept a place on the programme. The Centre for Social Work adheres to Royal Holloway's Fair Admissions policy: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/applying/admissions-policy-and-procedures/>

Programme Structure and Learning Styles

The academic team are committed to providing a challenging and enjoyable learning experience for students. Academics have extensive experience as practitioners and researchers, all of which inform your learning experience. Learning and teaching take a number of forms including traditional lectures, small group seminars, interactive tasks and problem-based learning activities. The latter include university and community-based self-directed learning activities.

Service users and carers from our Insight Service User and Carer Network and experienced practitioners from partner agencies all take an active part in programme delivery. On accepting a place students are required to formally sign up to active participation in learning activities and placements.

You will have opportunities to participate in Integrative and Child Observation Seminars, Critical Reflection Groups and two Practice Learning Placements in social work or social care agencies.

The MSc Social Work programme is full-time, incorporating University-based days, self-directed learning and placement days. Teaching takes place in Senate House or Bedford Square.

Placements are provided and allocated in conjunction with our wide range of partner agencies which include Local Authorities (Children's and Adults' Services), Mental Health NHS Trusts and established social care agencies, for example providing mental health, homelessness or drug and alcohol services. We have an extensive and well established placements network all over the central London and Greater London regions.

Timetables are subject to change but largely follow a standard format, with breaks for Christmas and Easter vacations. Social work timetables do not follow standard college timetables due to placements. Placement structure: Year 1 students 70 days; Year 2 students 100 days.

Indicative timetable (subject to change):



Key Contacts

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Year 1	University attendance	In Placement
September-December	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Child Observation & problem-based learning activities undertaken outside attendance hours/days.	N/A
January- June	Friday	Monday - Thursday
Year 2		
September-February	Monday- Tuesday	Wednesday-Friday
February-March	Mondays	Tuesday-Friday
March-May	N/A	Monday/Tuesday-Friday