

Natasha Angwin
BA English 2018
Executive Officer at UK Home Office

Why did you choose Royal Holloway for your degree?
Honestly.. the campus is gorgeous. I wanted to go somewhere that made me feel at home.

What did you enjoy most about your course?

The flexibility to study in a way that worked for me! I had the freedom to choose the modules that I was interested in, from a huge list that focused on 'Queer Histories' all the way to courses on contemporary debates and critical thinking (and I wasn't just limited to taking modules within the English degree program)! There were no daunting 12-hour mandatory exams either - assessment requirements were shown to me before I signed up for any courses, meaning I could tailor my studies to suit me whether that was exam or coursework based!

How did your experience at Royal Holloway help shape your future career path (academically and/or from an extra-curricular point of view)?

Before I came to university, people kept assuming that I'd become a teacher once I graduated - and whilst that's an amazing job, I knew that it wasn't what I wanted to do. The only problem was, I didn't know what I *did* want to do. When I was studying my A-levels, the support that was given to me was solely focussed on helping me apply to get into university rather than to shape my career path. As soon as I got to Royal Holloway, there was an abundance of talks and events that got me thinking about how the next three years could be used to shape the rest of my life. In the first few months, the English department organised an away-day to London's Southbank, where we had alumni speak to us and offer advice, which was held at The Globe theatre!

I've always been interested in delving into complicated texts and deciphering the meaning of language, but I didn't know how to translate this into a career. Having the freedom to choose the direction of my studies at Royal Holloway by studying what I was passionate about enabled me to learn skills that have given me a huge advantage with the beginning of my career. If you're passionate about something, then you're going to learn the skills needed to succeed and all of my tutors guided me through a mutual enthusiasm for the subject!

Alongside the freedom of my course, the Careers and Employability Service provided so much support to help me decide on my steps for after university. I made use of the 1:1 meetings, where I could discuss my CV, specific job applications or even just have an informal chat to get my head around the infinite amount of jobs out there. Learning what I was good at and the subjects that I enjoyed the most made it easy to decide what kind of work I wanted to do; from there, it was just about being able to talk to someone with the knowledge of where I can find those jobs!

There were so many helping hands at Royal Holloway that helped me to shape my career path, and I'm saying this less than a year after graduating. I don't feel like I'm fumbling around in the world, I feel like I'm ready to go with where these first steps will take me.



Tell me about your career since graduation and what you are doing now.

I was offered my job about a month before I graduated! I had applied for it in February and since it was part of a new department, I didn't start straight away - which meant that I got to enjoy my summer stress-free!

I work at the Home Office as a team member for the new Settlement Scheme which will come into play after Brexit takes place. My role encompasses the aspects of my course at Royal Holloway that I loved and utilizes the analytical skills that I developed during my time there. In this position, I am working on an exciting new team at a pivotal moment in Britain's history and Royal Holloway has helped me to get here.

What advice would you give to students thinking about a career in your sector?

The public sector is an amazing sector to work for and knowing that my role has a real impact to improve people's lives is rewarding. My advice would be to build up your CV while you have the chance to at university because it's competitive, as a lot of people want the chance to work within the government! There are so many opportunities to take advantage of, and ensure that you have the work-based skills as well as the academic skills.

What would you say to a student considering coming to Royal Holloway?

Royal Holloway was the best three years of my life, and everyone I know will say the same thing! Everything from the lecturers, support networks, staff and facilities is amazing - everyone is always happy to help and I've made some amazing connections from my time here. If you're undecided then coming to an open day will definitely persuade you!