

**Department of Social Work**

**Applying for the MSc in Social Work**

**Includes information about fees, funding and what we are looking for on admissions assessment days**

**Entry Requirements:**

The standard Royal Holloway MSc entry requirement for a higher degree is a first degree with a 2:1 classification. The Department of Social Work has some flexibility in its admissions and strongly encourages non-standard applicants (e.g. those with a lower class degree who have substantial relevant professional experience or another professional qualification and /or a considerable range of relevant experience and demonstrate an aptitude for working with vulnerable adults and children. All applicants must have obtained a minimum Mathematics and English qualification at Key Skills level 2 equivalent to grade C in GCSE and also a minimum of six months full-time or 12 months part-time experience working with vulnerable adults or children at the point of application. Preference will be given to applicants with a wide range of relevant experience and a 2:1 or above degree classification.

We also welcome Overseas applicants who have reached an equivalent level and standard and have a qualification in English at the level specified in the College Postgraduate Prospectus. If the first language is not English students will be required to demonstrate their English language at IETS level 7 through a recognised qualification – see website for information: - .

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/postgraduate/applying/entryrequirements.aspx>

See also see website relating to overseas Admissions: -

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/postgraduate/applying/home.aspx>

Employment sponsored students must be employed in a social care agency and have their employer’s financial and work support.

Applicants are required to complete a health questionnaire, a criminal background check and meet HCPC Social Work entry requirements. Applicants with an unclean Disclosure and Barring Service check or who have health issues will be interviewed by the Admissions Tutor and Practice Learning and Development Manager to ascertain the applicant’s suitability to undertake the programme and placements. In addition partnership employer agencies will also be consulted as part of this process, with their views contributing to the final decision. Candidates will be informed of the outcome of these enquiries within three weeks.

**For more information on our course see also our websites:-**

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/socialwork/prospectivestudents/home.aspx>

<http://www.rhul.ac.uk/socialwork/home.aspx>

**Applications** – through UCAS <https://www.ucas.com>

**HCPC Code of Conduct and Ethics for Students** – Important that you read this because this governs the professional conduct and ethics that you are required to adhere to.

<http://www.hpc-uk.org/assets/documents/10002D1BGuidanceonconductandethicsforstudents.pdf>

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**Shortlisted applicants**

All short listed applicants will be required to undertake the following selection process:

* Complete a written test
* Attend a group interview
* Attend an individual interview
* Write a reflective essay - to be completed in the applicant own time. (Applicants invited for interview will be emailed the essay title and will have three weeks to complete the essay from the date of the email).

Applicants are assessed against Professional Capabilities Framework for Social Work- Entry Level (see below). We are also looking for applicants that demonstrate an ability to write clearly and coherently in the writing tests and also demonstrate adequate spelling, grammar and structure. In the group & individual interviews we are also looking for sound inter-personal skills. The ability to reflect upon one’s own learning and practice is an essential skill in social work and we are looking to see the applicant’s potential to be able to do this in the reflective essay and interview.

**Fees information**

**NHS Social Work Bursaries** - There are NHS bursaries available for many of the places on our MSc in Social Work course. The Department of Social Work will select candidates for the bursary on merit in relation to academic ability, previous experience, how well they have completed the admissions activities (see above), their general understanding of social work and commitment to completing the course.

The Fees for 2016-17 are £7000

The NHS bursary will not cover all of Royal Holloway’s MSc course fees but will cover a substantial amount. College alumni are eligible for a fee reduction. Info on NHS bursaries can be found on <http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/986.aspx>

Post graduate loans see website <https://www.gov.uk/postgraduate-loan/overview>

Alternatively you can apply to a bank for a careers loan.

We welcome **self-funding** students.

**Credit Transfer** Applicants who consider that they may be eligible for Credit Transfer can discuss their situation with the Admissions Tutor who will consult the Assessment Tutor. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Subject to approval credit transfer may incur a fee. Credit may be recorded either as marks to be taken into account when considering the candidate for the award or as exemption from part of the programme. This information is available at; <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/regulations/postgraduateregulations.pdf>.

**Accreditation for Prior Experiential Learning -AP(E)L** . The MSc in Social Work course does not support AP(E)L due to the specific nature of the programme. However if applicants have any queries please contact the Admissions Tutor.

Applicants should be aware that there is no provision for an Aegrotat award,

**Support for students with special support needs**:- Shortlisted applicants invited to the interview/ selection day will be sent a letter asking them if they have any special support needs. If an applicant declares special support needs and is offered a place on the programme he/she will be contacted by the College Educational Support Office usually prior to the course starting

The MSc in Social Work programme has been approved by the HCPC. Once awarded a MSc in Social Work or a Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (as an exit award) students can apply to the HCPC to become a registered as a social worker.

**The following will help you have an understanding about social work and also the qualities we are looking for in applicants:-**

The Professional Capabilities Framework- Entry Level suggest that a successful applicant will usually have the following qualities-:-

Professionalism

Social workers are members of an internationally recognised profession, a title protected in UK law. Social workers demonstrate professional commitment by taking responsibility for their conduct, practice and learning, with support through supervision. As representatives of the social work profession they safeguard its reputation and are accountable to the professional regulator.

* *Demonstrates an initial understanding of the role of the social worker*
* *Demonstrates motivation and commitment to qualify and practice as a social worker*
* *Identifies own potential strengths and weaknesses in relation to the role of social worker*
* *Demonstrates an initial understanding of the importance of personal resilience and adaptability in social work*
* *Demonstrates the ability to take responsibility for own learning and development*

Values & Ethics

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making, including through partnership with people who use their services. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of their profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

* *Recognises the impact their own values and attitudes can have on relationships with others*
* *Understands the importance of seeking the perspectives and views of service users and carers*
* *Recognises that social workers will need to deal with conflict and use the authority invested in their role.*

Diversity

Social workers understand that diversity characterises and shapes human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. Diversity is multi-dimensional and includes race, disability, class, economic status, age, sexuality, gender and transgender, faith and belief. Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, marginalisation and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim, and are able to challenge appropriately.

* *Demonstrates an initial understanding of difference and diversity within society and the implications of this for social work practice*
* *Is receptive to the views of others.*

Rights, Justice & Economic Wellbeing

Social workers recognise the fundamental principles of human rights and equality, and that these are protected in national and international law, conventions and policies. They ensure these principles underpin their practice. Social workers understand the importance of using and contributing to case law and applying these rights in their own practice. They understand the effects of oppression, discrimination and poverty.

* *Recognises the contribution of social work to promoting social justice, inclusion and equality*
* *Is receptive to the idea that there may be conflicts in the social work role between promoting rights and enforcing responsibilities*

Knowledge

Social workers understand psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and physical influences on people; human development throughout the life span and the legal framework for practice. They apply this knowledge in their work with individuals, families and communities. They know and use theories and methods of social work practice.

* *Identify how own learning (formal, informal and experiential) contributes to understanding the social work role.*

Critical Reflection & Analysis

Social workers are knowledgeable about and apply the principles of critical thinking and reasoned discernment. They identify, distinguish, evaluate and integrate multiple sources of knowledge and evidence. These include practice evidence, their own practice experience, service user and carer experience together with research-based, organisational, policy and legal knowledge. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity.

* *Demonstrates an ability to reflect on and analyse own experience (educational, personal, formal and informal)*
* *Demonstrates curiosity and critical thinking about social issues*

Intervention & Skills

Social workers engage with individuals, families, groups and communities, working alongside people to assess and intervene. They enable effective relationships and are effective communicators, using appropriate skills. Using their professional judgement, they employ a range of interventions: promoting independence, providing support and protection, taking preventative action and ensuring safety whilst balancing rights and risks**.** They understand and take account of differentials in power, and are able to use authority appropriately. They evaluate their own practice and the outcomes for those they work with.

* *Communicates clearly, accurately and appropriately to the level of training applied for, in verbal and written forms*
* *Demonstrates an ability to engage with people with empathy*

Contexts & Organisations

Social workers are informed about and pro-actively responsive to the challenges and opportunities that come with changing social contexts and constructs. They fulfil this responsibility in accordance with their professional values and ethics, both as individual professionals and as members of the organisation in which they work. They collaborate, inform and are informed by their work with others, inter-professionally and with communities.

* *Demonstrates understanding of importance of working as a member of a team and an organisation*

Professional Leadership

The social work profession evolves through the contribution of its members in activities such as practice research, supervision, assessment of practice, teaching and management. An individual’s contribution will gain influence when undertaken as part of a learning, practice-focused organisation. Learning may be facilitated with a wide range of people including social work colleagues, service users and carers, volunteers, foster carers and other professionals.

* *Recognises how own learning, behaviour and ideas can influence and benefit others*

**For current developments in social work you may find the following Websites useful:-**

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk>

<http://www.scie.org.uk>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society>

<http://www.swap.ac.uk>

 <https://www.basw.co.uk/>

*The Department of Social Work adheres to Royal Holloway’s Fair Admissions Statement which includes a commitment to making sure that admissions processes ensure equality of educational opportunity and also to promote admissions processes that enable the fair treatment of each individual applicant without direct or indirect discrimination. This information is available at,* [*http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/undergraduate/applying/admissionspolicy.aspxis*](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/studyhere/undergraduate/applying/admissionspolicy.aspxis)