Collaborating

Being collaborative is about your ability to work effectively with others to achieve specific goals. Another popular word for being collaborative is ‘teamwork’ or being a ‘team player’. Employers look for collaborative people as many jobs will involve you having to work with others.

As someone who is collaborative you will be able to communicate with others clearly by expressing your ideas and sharing your concerns. You’ll also be able to listen to others and encourage contributions from all members of the team.

A great collaborator is also someone who can effectively manage conflicts that may arise, remaining positive, open, and calm whilst working towards resolving challenges.

Employers are also increasingly looking for people who can collaborate confidently and comfortably in culturally diverse settings, as well as individuals who can use technology to collaborate with others (for example using MS Teams, Zoom etc). Collaboration is therefore one of the most important skills employers look for.

How can I develop collaboration skills on my course?

- If you’re involved in a group project commit to being an effective team player by making contributions, taking responsibility for tasks, and staying positive if faced with challenges
- Collaborate with students and academic staff by representing your School, Department or Course as an Academic Rep and create positive changes to the educational experiences of students across the College.
- If your School or Department organises events consider getting involved
- If you’re studying a course that is very practical or interactive (e.g. Performing and Digital Arts, Earth Sciences) think about ways you can support others or make a contribution.
- Think about how you are using technology to collaborate during your course. Are you communicating via MS Teams or Zoom? Are you sharing ideas using tools like Padlet? These are all great examples of virtual collaboration you can add to your CV.

How can I develop collaboration skills outside of my course?

- Join a sports team as this will require lots of collaboration and teamwork to succeed
• Think about ways you can be a positive team member in a part-time job or internship, for example by offering to support colleagues with tasks or consciously adapting your approach when others have a different working style
• Join a volunteering team and collaborate with others to help address community and social challenges
• Become an active member of a student society, or create your own!
• Consider joining the team of student ambassadors who represent and promote Royal Holloway to prospective students and schools.
• Develop your ability to collaborate virtually by taking part in a virtual internship programme

How do people use this skill in the workplace?

Royal Holloway Graduates have used collaboration skills as:

• A Graduate Trainee Surveyor working in a team on large town planning projects
• A Museum Curator working with colleagues to plan a new collection
• An Events Executive discussing venues and speakers for major exhibitions.

How will employers assess my collaboration skills?

If you are applying for a role and the job descriptions states they are looking for someone who is a strong team player/ collaborator, make sure you can demonstrate this skill on your CV. You may also be asked specific questions on an application form or in an interview which are designed to assess your collaboration skills. Examples of questions that could be asked include:

• Tell me about a task you completed as a member of a group
• Can you describe a situation where you have had to work to resolve a conflict within a team?
• What are some approaches you take when collaborating with others?

If you’d like to get some help with structuring your answers for application forms or interviews, visit the CVs and interviews section of the Careers Moodle site.

ShortListMe, Graduates First and eCareersGrad are available on the Moodle page to help you practice interview skills, case studies and psychometric tests.

For more ideas on how you can ‘sell’ your skills on your CV then please watch our VIDEO CV workshop series, Part 3: Selling your 'Skills' on your CV (panopto.com)

If you are applying for a graduate scheme and are invited to an assessment centre, it’s very likely that you’ll be assessed on your ability to collaborate. You might be given a business case study to analyse or a group activity to complete. Assessors will want to see a range of collaboration skills such as how you contribute to the task, listen and engage with others, facilitate and manage time. If you’d like to practice a group activity keep an eye out for the Assessment Centre workshops that run during the Autumn and Spring terms. These will be available to book via The Careers Portal.
You can make an appointment to speak with one of our Careers Consultants via the Careers Portal, where we can give feedback on your CV or application or help you to prepare for interviews and assessments, as well as help you think about your career options.