International and Domestic Student Barometer
Autumn Wave 2013
Summary Comparing Royal Holloway with the London Group and other UK Institutions

Strategic Development, April 2014
Executive Summary (1)

**Overall recommendation:** (Note that 'recommendation' here refers to the student recommendation of RHUL)

1) Recommendation at RHUL (83%) on par with the UK ISBSB average (87%)
2) UG (84%) more likely to recommend than PGT (82%) and PGR students (78%)
3) Propensity to recommend up slightly on 2012/13 (+3%)
4) Recommendation scores across the departments vary from 62% to 94%

**Decision making, application and arrival:**

1) The website and league tables continue to be influential sources for all students – agents influential for international and the open day for home students
2) Reputation factors perform well against the UK benchmark groups – perceptions of safety and research quality both key differentiators in the study decision at RHUL
3) Application to offer time ahead of the benchmark – particularly for UG students
4) Most aspects of the arrival process continue to perform well – internet access, host friends, meeting staff and accommodation condition all top half of the UK ISBSB
5) Concerns for students were around social activities (improved), the registration process and the Housing Bureau (both have lower ratings than last year)
Student experience:

1) In the academic context we continue to perform well in lecture quality, course content, course organisation and performance feedback (all top half UK ISBSB)

2) Many learning areas have seen improved rating in the last 12 months (1-5% points)

3) Main concerns continue around the library resources (all students), work experience and employability (particularly for UG students)

4) Ratings of key learning elements vary by up to 31% across the departments

5) Many living areas continue to perform well and many have improved ratings—campus buildings, internet access, earning money and safety all top half UK ISBSB

6) Transport links and social facilities continue to be a frustration (both have improved) – accommodation cost and quality both have lower ratings on last year

7) Most support areas perceived positively on satisfaction and a number have seen improved ratings over the last 12 months

8) Some areas have seen a drop in ratings and are falling bellow sector averages for satisfaction
Christopher Butler (Head of Support & Advisory Services) notes:

- Counselling – decline in recent performance is likely due to recent high demand and staff illness. This is being addressed through a reorganisation and making other enhancements which we hope will restore our customary higher rating.

- Work experience – although we are not principally responsible for this area, we already provide a number of employment opportunities – especially as student helpers to disabled students. We are hoping to add to up to 25 volunteer positions as student mediators to resolve disputes between students for 2014-15.

Sarah Tattam (Student Life & Support Manager) notes:

- The Welcome Week Planning Group is reviewing the first 48 hours of arrival and how we can make the process easier, more efficient and clearly communicated to students.

- Founder’s students were probably dissatisfied with social facilities because both common rooms have been closed all year due to project issues. Residential Support is working with the Premises and Projects team, providing a plan for use and furniture shopping list. From Sept 14 we will have 2 fully functioning common rooms for Founders residents with space to relax, study and attend Hall community social events.

- Kingswood is being refurbished over the next 2 years.

- With the new Campus Life Programme next year we will have more social events. We are looking at making better use of social facilities.
John Tuck (Director of Library Services) notes:

- Library - we intend to follow up the lower scores for physical and online library with the Departments concerned, e.g. Geography and History, and identify and agree actions which, we hope, will address the concerns. We are examining individual student free-form comments to build up a bigger picture across the spectrum.

- Reaching Stage D of the planning and construction of the new Library and Student Services Centre is a really important example of work in progress (working together) to address many concerns and transform the heart of the campus. Also, we have acquired and are in the process of implementing a new Reading List system which, working with academics, will help address concerns about levels of course provision. This is linked to the continuing investment by the College in the budget for acquiring information resources in e- and print forms (books and journals) for our students.

Anna Sendall (Deputy Director and Academic Registrar) notes:

- Registration times - options are being explored for improving the management of queues. There is agreement that this will include better advice, and an increase in the staff providing this advice to students who are in the queues.

- Accommodation – a major review of the Accommodation Office has taken place in terms of its processes and function to identify where it is best located, in order to ensure that (a) it is factored into strategic decision making about recruitment and (b) it is central to the development of the student community life outside the class room.
Liz Wilkinson (Head of Careers Service) notes:

WORK EXPERIENCE & PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES
In Spring 2014 we launched new curriculum linked placement schemes in Classics, Maths, Music, Criminology, Computer Science and Politics and International Relations with a plan to scale them up on 2014/15.
Our Autumn Part-Time Work Fair was the biggest yet with 30 local employers and 100s of jobs. We are working with the SU to expand further our promotion of part-time work opportunities on and off campus as part of the phased development of the Recruitment Agency that will be located in the new library.

CAREERS WEEKS
The comments about lack of events based on specific industries came from the Faculty of Science. We will take this into account when planning Science Careers week schedule for November 2014 and will feed back to academic departments for their planning of alumni evenings.

CUSTOMER SERVICE
Since this survey was taken we have run more customer service training for our front desk staff, conducted peer review for all our careers consultants and application advisers and undertaken random quality sampling using a Mystery Shopper approach. We will repeat as an annual process using the themes of this feedback to inform the content. For example, we will be running training on personalising the experience and emphasising the added value of face-to-face appointments. It seems to be an unfortunate side effect of equipping our careers consultants with iPads and their enthusiasm to share resources that the client can get the impression that the interaction is mainly about being referred to a website which I don’t think is the actual case.

EXPANDING CAPACITY TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR 1:1 APPOINTMENTS IN SUPER-PEAK TIMES
We continually review the demand for and supply of 1:1 appointments in our super peak times. Our necessary controls to allocate appointments fairly do provide a barrier to some, and is a source of some student dissatisfaction. This is a constraint of space rather than staff and this has been factored into our bid for space in the new library building. We will continue to lobby for more 1:1 space for the transition period until the new library is open in 2017.
54 UK Institutions participated in the survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aberystwyth University</th>
<th>University of Greenwich</th>
<th>Royal Holloway, University of London</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglia Ruskin University</td>
<td>Heriot-Watt University (UK Campus)</td>
<td>University of Roehampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aston University</td>
<td>Lancaster University</td>
<td>The Royal Veterinary College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Bedfordshire</td>
<td>Leeds Metropolitan University</td>
<td>The University of Sheffield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Birmingham</td>
<td>Liverpool John Moores University</td>
<td>Sheffield Hallam University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Bradford</td>
<td>London South Bank University</td>
<td>University of St Andrews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
<td>The University of Manchester</td>
<td>University of Strathclyde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunel University</td>
<td>Manchester Metropolitan University</td>
<td>University of Surrey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff Metropolitan University</td>
<td>Newcastle University</td>
<td>Teesside University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Chichester</td>
<td>The University of Northampton</td>
<td>University for the Creative Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coventry University</td>
<td>Northumbria University</td>
<td>University College Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Dundee</td>
<td>University of Nottingham (UK Campus)</td>
<td>University College London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham University</td>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
<td>University of Central Lancashire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Edinburgh</td>
<td>Plymouth University</td>
<td>University of East London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Exeter</td>
<td>Queen Margaret University</td>
<td>University of Ulster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Glasgow</td>
<td>Queen Mary University of London</td>
<td>University of the West of England, Bristol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow Caledonian University</td>
<td>University of Reading</td>
<td>University of Warwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Gloucestershire</td>
<td>Robert Gordon University</td>
<td>University of York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 London Institutions participated:

| Brunel University |
| University of East London |
| University of Greenwich |
| London South Bank University |
| University College London |
| Queen Mary, University of London |
| The Royal Veterinary College |
| University of Roehampton |
| Royal Holloway, University of London |
Respondents: all students

(Left top) 2,410 students took part in the Autumn 2013 survey. There were 976 in Autumn 2012. The increase was due to running the survey for all students (not just first years).

(Left bottom) The largest proportion (13%) of respondents were from the School of Management, as last year. Psychology and English had the next highest proportions (with 9% each).
Choice of Destination: Study Factors

- The top 10 most important factors in where they should study, for RHUL domestic students, were similar to others in the UK (left).

- As with RHUL international students, RHUL domestic students consider institution reputation and qualification reputation to be the two most important study factors.

- Research quality was seen as more important to RHUL domestic students than to the average UK student (above).

- For RHUL international students, the reputation of the education system was seen to be as important as the institution reputation and qualification reputation, all with 94% importance (right).
56% of domestic students considered their visit to Royal Holloway to be the most important factor in helping them choose us. This is a lot higher than those attending open days at other UK institutions (43%, left).

League tables were also more important to RHUL students (affecting 42% of RHUL students) than other UK students (ascribing 35% importance to league tables).

RHUL international students perceived agents as having a far greater influence on them (31%) than other London students did (22%).

For the purpose of this document the following institutes were included in the London Group: Brunel, East London, Greenwich, London South Bank, UCL, Queen Mary, Royal Veterinary College, Roehampton, RHUL.
Domestic UG students were processed in an average of 38 days for 2013 entry. This is significantly better than the UK average 58 days (above).

The graph below shows that significant improvements to the RHUL admissions process took place in 2012, with response times reduced from 54 days to 28 days. Largely automating the process led to significant improvements in the time taken from application to offer for the UG 2012 entry cohort. However, 2013 was significantly worse than 2012, with processing times increasing from 28 days to 38 days for UG domestic students.

Whilst RHUL UG processing times are significantly better than the UK average, RHUL PGT application processing times are slightly above the UK average, and RHUL PGR application times are worse than the UK average (top).
Arrival satisfaction levels among students have continued to improve at Royal Holloway over the past 8 years for most elements, with none worse now than they were in 2006.

The most significant increases seen in satisfaction since Autumn 2012 are in host friends (81% in 2012, 87% in 2013) and formal welcome (85% in 2012, 90% in 2013).

Social activities (77%) and accommodation office (80%) are the two arrival elements that have the lowest satisfaction. Social activities has the same satisfaction ranking now as it did in 2006.
Some positive comments from students:

“Everyone here was extremely friendly and made me much calmer on such an anxious day for me. It made me sure I’d chosen the right place to come for University”

“Everyone was smiling, it was a great chance to meet new people, everyone was in the hall ways. Fantastic help from anyone i asked about anything i was unsure of. this is still the case now”

“My overall impression of the people’s effort to welcome us and to guide us during welcome week was very satisfying”

“Was a lovely experience, and enjoyed the day. The campus volunteers where friendly and helped a lot with moving equipment and settled me in fine”

A few negative comments from students concerning registration times:

“There was a huge queue (3hrs) to get our temp room keys, then another huge queue (~1hr) to complete our registration”

“The queue for registration was incredibly long, it felt as if it had been organised better, we wouldn’t have had to wait so long”

“The fees and registration process could be a little clearer, with people who know what they are talking about outside the rooms so you don’t queue up in the wrong place for a while before being told”

“Registration - waited in line for about 3 hours to register”

“It seemed generally unorganised on arrival, there were long queues for everything involving registration and settling into accomodation. Unclear where to go/what to do”
The table on the right shows learning satisfaction by RHUL department, for departments where more than 100 responses were received.

Work experience remains the most challenging learning area at RHUL with 61% satisfaction. Although the 221 RHUL Psychology students responding to the survey showed 79% satisfaction with work experience, BioSciences students were only 48% satisfied.

Opportunities to teach were down 12% in satisfaction between 2011 and 2012 but has recovered for 2013, with a 13% increase on 2012 (left). Most learning areas have stayed about the same or improved slightly compared with 2012.
RHUL student satisfaction with the library facilities is shown (out of 4) for each Autumn i-Graduate survey over the past 8 years.

Increases in satisfaction were seen every year between 2007 and 2011.

Satisfaction has remained very steady between 2011 and 2013.
Some positive comments from students:

“The quality of the supervision and departmental support I have been given during my PhD has been outstanding”

“This university has met all of my needs and is a very professional environment in which to study. It far surpasses my previous experiences”

“The university has a good reputation, the teaching is good and there are different opportunities for students”

“The standard to teaching is fantastic and the number of opportunities available to you after graduating are vast”

“It's a great university with great academic staff. They are always helpful and truthful”

A few negative comments from students concerning careers and employability:

“No career advice whatsoever, which is particularly worrying as a third year student”

“POOR EMPHASIS ON POSTGRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY. NEED SERIOUS ATTENTION REGARDING THIS”

“Although there are lots of career events going on, none of them are really suited to what I want to do on either an work experience or paid level”

“Finding parttime and/or paid and/or less London-centric internships would be a huge improvement for me and other students like me”

“Haven't been told once about job prospects or possible work experience places”
Living

Kingswood received the worst accommodation ratings with 41% and 68% satisfaction for Kingswood I and II respectively (right).

Gowar, Butler and Wedderburn had the highest levels of satisfaction, all above 96%.

Founders students were very dissatisfied with social facilities (36% satisfaction).

Kingswood II students were generally the most dissatisfied, particularly with accommodation cost (31% satisfaction).

Campus buildings were rated the best in London, the best in the UK, and the best in the world (although it should be noted that for this survey, 178 institutions took part from 13 countries).

Only 51.5% of RHUL students were satisfied with the cost of accommodation (left), and living cost scored poorly too (55.9% satisfaction).

However, these scores placed RHUL 3rd in both measures out of the 9 London institutions surveyed (left).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Average</th>
<th>RHUL</th>
<th>ISBSB %</th>
<th>UK ISBSB %</th>
<th>London %</th>
<th>ISBSB</th>
<th>UK ISBSB</th>
<th>London</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living Overall</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus environment</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
<td>90.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>93.7%</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>93.1%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus buildings</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-friendly attitude</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>88.6%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship facilities</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other friends</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>89.7%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet access</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa advice</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host friends</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>88.4%</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host culture</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good place to be</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>86.2%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport facilities</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>79.7%</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home friends</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation quality</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
<td>85.4%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport links uni</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>87.2%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social activities</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport links</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>79.5%</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good contacts</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>60.6%</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social facilities</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>69.9%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earning money</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living cost</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation cost</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>59.3%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kingswood received the worst accommodation ratings with 41% and 68% satisfaction for Kingswood I and II respectively (right).
Living Experience: Comments

Some positive comments from students:

“The university being very international means that you can make many new friends from around the world with many different outlooks on life”

“It is a lovely campus, and it appeals to people who would like a quieter University experience”

“The closeness to London is ideal, the school population is diverse, I was able to have an active social life, and the housing is great”

“I have so far really enjoyed my time here, it’s a very good university it has a great and friendly atmosphere, beautiful place, good facilities and support”

“Really great community and people here”

A few negative comments from students concerning accommodation cost and quality:

“Kingswood could use some maintenance. When it rains, some ceilings look like they could collapse”

“The cost of accommodation is in my opinion very high and the quality is not good”

“The common room at KW 1 is quite poor, the one source of entertainment, the piano, isn’t even in tune”

“Kingswood is not value for money at all, it is a severely poor accommodation and I would never recommend it to anyone”

“The amount people pay for accommodation in Williamson, yet some of the basics that you previously offer to the students in the hall have been removed this year”
Compared to the 54 UK institutions, the highest ranked support element at RHUL is faith provision, ranked 4th in the UK.

The lowest ranked RHUL support elements are Students’ Union and Careers Service, both ranked 22nd in the UK.
A few positive comments from students:

“IT have been brilliant. The quality of knowledge and advice given by the two people I have dealt with has been excellent”

“The counselling service is brilliant, really helpful and very friendly”

“The Student Union provides great entertainment and is a general good environment!”

“very helpful and supportive with housing problems that we have had”

“Personal Tutors have been a highlight, I really enjoy the experience”

“Health Centre were very efficient and helpful”
The number of students positive or neutral about the institution (adding up the top 3 categories) is the same as the UK average (97%).

However, RHUL has fewer students ‘actively’ encouraging people to apply (37%) than the average UK institution (46%).

RHUL PGR students are far less satisfied than UG and PGT students with 78% encouraging people to apply compared to 84% for UG students and 82% for PGT students (bottom left). RHUL PGR students are also more likely to discourage others from applying (7%) than UG (3%) or PGT (2%).