

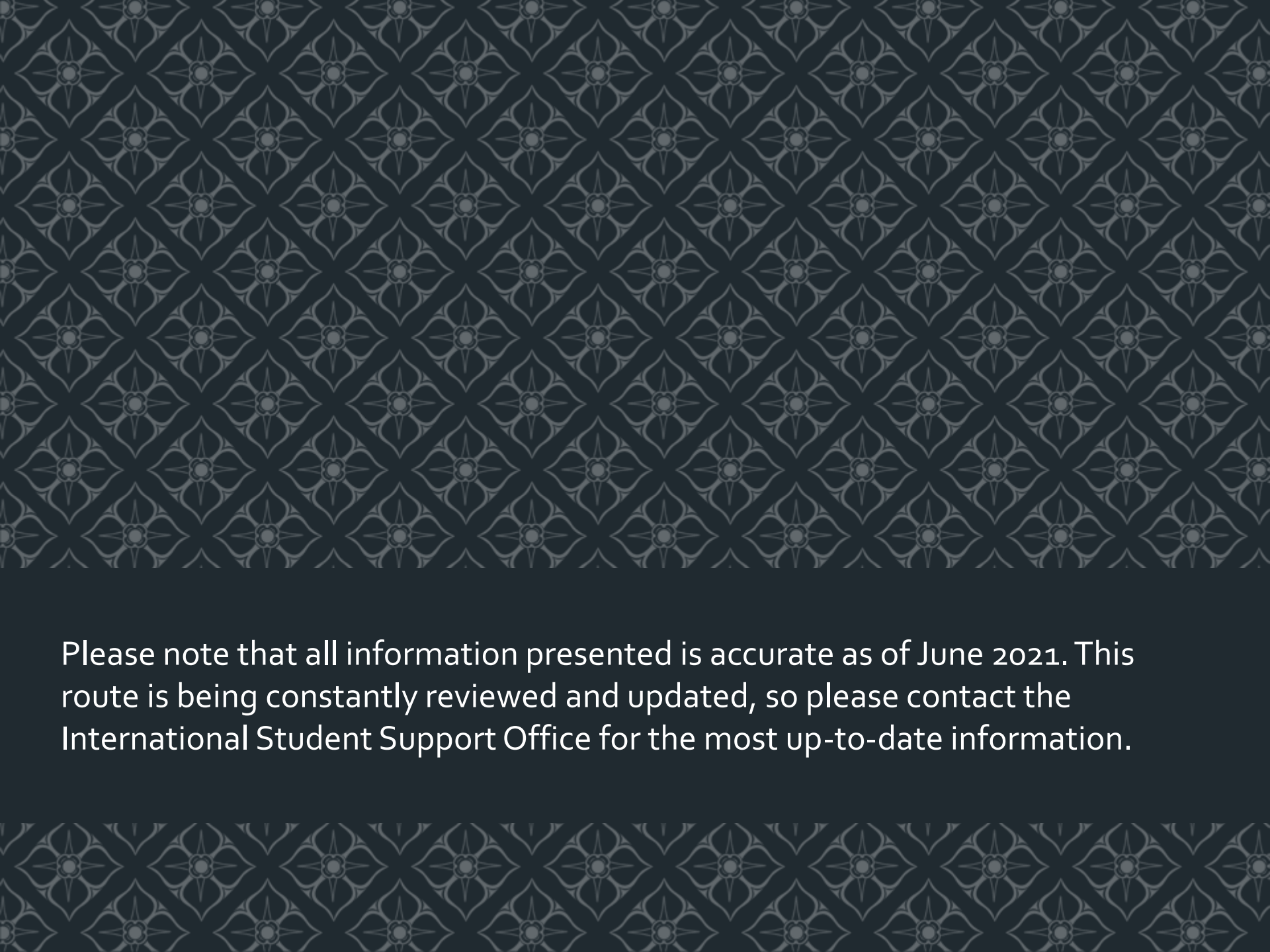
Graduate Route

What we know so far (June 2021)

International Student Support Office
Royal Holloway, University of London



ROYAL
HOLLOWAY
UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON



Please note that all information presented is accurate as of June 2021. This route is being constantly reviewed and updated, so please contact the International Student Support Office for the most up-to-date information.

What is the Graduate Route?

- The Graduate Route (GR) is a new immigration permission that is being introduced this year
- It is designed to give international students in the UK an easier way to remain in the UK and to look for work
- It will be for those students that have completed a degree or other related qualification from an approved Higher Education Provider

How and when to apply

- The Graduate route opens on 1 July 2021 at 9am GMT
- You apply online
- You can only apply in the UK (this will be covered later on)
- You do not require sponsorship for this route

How long can I stay?

Undergraduate degree	2 years
Masters degree	2 years
PhD degree	3 years

Requirements

Current visa

- You must have valid Tier 4 or Student permission when you apply
- You cannot switch into the Graduate route from any other type of permission
- If your Student permission expires before 1 July 2021 you cannot apply
- You must not have previously had leave under the Graduate route or under the Doctorate Extension Scheme (you can apply for GR if you have previously held leave under Tier 1 (PSW))
- You cannot switch into Graduate route from exceptional assurance

Requirements

Qualification

- You must have successfully completed a UK degree
- Start date of the course is not relevant
- Royal Holloway must have notified the Home Office that you have successfully completed your qualification
- 2019, 2020 graduates not eligible
- Qualification must have been obtained during your current Student permission
- Exception for Sabbatical Officers (contact ISSO)

Requirements

Qualification

- Qualification must be the same as was listed on your CAS (limited exceptions, contact ISSO)

This requirement means that if you have changed course at any point during your study, your eligibility for GR may be affected. If you have questions about this please contact us, but as a general rule the following course changes are acceptable:

1. Your CAS was assigned for an integrated programme and you completed an undergraduate or postgraduate degree as part of that programme (i.e. CAS was issued for MSci, you completed a BSc)
2. You were allowed to change course without needing to apply for a new visa
3. Royal Holloway changed the name of your course but the content remained the same, or a work placement/study abroad year was added

Requirements

Study in the UK

- You must have been studying in the UK on Tier 4/Student permission for a minimum period of time. This “relevant period” depends on what length of course you are on:

Total length of course	Relevant period of Student permission granted during which all study took place in the UK (apart from permitted study abroad programmes)
12 months or less	Full duration of course
Longer than 12 months	At least 12 months

- If you have been outside of the UK due to Covid-19 there are some exceptions (old deadline of 6 April 2021 to re-enter UK has now been extended)
- You must include your recent CAS number in your online application
- If you were sponsored by an official financial sponsor within the last 12 months you will need to submit a letter from that sponsor confirming they are permitting you to remain in the UK

Requirements

My course is 12 months long or less, I started in 2020, and I have not yet entered the UK - you must arrive in the UK on/before 21 June 2021

My course is 12 months long or less, I started in 2021, and I have not yet entered the UK - you must arrive in the UK on/before 27 September 2021

My course is 12 months long or less, I started in either 2020 or 2021, I have previously entered the UK: you must be present in the UK before your course end date on your CAS

My course is longer than 12 months: you must be present in the UK before your Tier 4/Student permission ends & any distance learning between 24 January 2020 and 27 September 2021 will not affect your eligibility for GIR

Costs

- There is no maintenance requirement for this route
- **Application fee is £700 per applicant** (discount of £55 can be applied for CESC nationals: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Turkey)
- **Immigration health surcharge is £1,248 per applicant (£1,872 for PhD graduates)**

For example: PhD student from Iran with two eligible dependents would pay £9,360 under the Graduate route

- The route is quite expensive so do bear this in mind

What can I do on the Graduate route?

- You can work with any employer ✓
- Part-time and temporary work ✓
- Internships, work experience ✓
- Self-employment, freelancing, consultancy, contracting ✓
- Set-up a business ✓
- No work as a professional sportsperson/coach ✗

No sponsorship is required and you do not need an offer of a job to apply for the route

Be aware – employers should be aware of GR, however you may find that they do not fully understand it. You may also be their first employee with GR permission, so do be prepared to be able to discuss the visa with employers if required. Further assistance and advice can be sought from ISSO.

Are there any problems or issues with the Graduate route?

Dependants

- Can only apply in the UK, and only those who were in the UK as your Student/Tier 4 dependant can apply (this includes babies born in the UK)
- This means most undergraduates and part-time postgraduates won't be able to bring dependants
- If you have questions regarding this please contact ISSO

Study

- No study that could be sponsored under the Student route (i.e. full-time degrees) ❌
- Online, evening, or recreational study ✓
- Study at a college/university without a Student licence ✓
- Part-time undergraduate study ✓

Are there any problems or issues with the Graduate route?

Covid-19 and the impacts on GR

- You must be careful to time your travel carefully if you are returning to the UK to apply for GR
- The UK still has restrictions in place for those travelling to the UK, including mandatory periods of self-isolation, mandatory Covid-19 testing, and a traffic light system for each country and its nationals: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england>
- You should bear this in mind when travelling – if you need to enter the UK by a certain date to qualify for GR, make sure you consider the time it will take to complete any mandatory self-isolation periods
- The job market and UK economy has been affected by Covid-19 and there may be fewer jobs available
- If you do apply for GR, how will you maintain your life in the UK if you cannot find work? Do you have sufficient funds to sustain yourself?
- This route is not sponsored, so you will not have an employer or university to offer guidance and support – is this OK? Do you feel you can be self-sustainable?

Options after the Graduate route?

A Graduate route visa will always be 2 or 3 years, and cannot be extended.

1. You can switch into Skilled Worker route for sponsored work (you would count as a new entrant, therefore qualifying for a lower salary minimum)
2. Switch into a family route
3. Switch back into Student route
4. Switch into another qualifying route
 - **Be aware** – you can only have Graduate route permission once; think and be careful if you are planning further study in the UK
 - **Be aware** – the rules currently would not allow you to switch into the Start-up or Innovator routes from Graduate route in the UK
 - **Be aware** – time spent in the UK under the Graduate route does not count towards indefinite leave to remain (settlement) after 5 years
5. Leave the UK

What next?

- When you have completed your studies at Royal Holloway the College will conduct checks to ensure that you would be eligible for the Graduate route
- The College must then report your completion of studies and eligibility for the Graduate route to the Home Office
- The College will then contact you (likely via email) to confirm that we have reported your completion, and that you are eligible to apply
- ***Be aware*** – **DO NOT** apply under the Graduate route before you have received confirmation from Royal Holloway as you may be refused
- ***Be aware*** – the administrative processes for universities with this route are very complicated. We are expecting you to have to wait for a few weeks minimum after having completed your studies before we are in a position to confirm to you that we have informed the Home Office of your eligibility. Please do be patient with us as this is a new route, new processes, and new demands.

What next?

- Do consider whether the Graduate route is the appropriate route - it has good and bad points, and it may not be suitable for everyone. Carefully consider all of your options and make an informed choice as to whether the Graduate route is the best choice for you as an individual. If you need support in making this decision, or if you have questions regarding your own circumstances, please contact ISSO.
- For further guidance please check out UKCISA's presentation on the Graduate route here: <https://www.ukcisa.org.uk/Training--Events/Online-events/Webinars-recordings-for-students>

FAQs

- My course includes a work placement/year in industry. What happens if I do not obtain a placement?

We are still waiting for absolute clarification however currently we believe that as long as you meet the other qualifying criteria this will not affect your eligibility.

- What do I need to do to make sure the College reports my eligibility to the Home Office?

Nothing; the College has to report all eligible students.

- I am in a red list country, can I travel to the UK to make sure I am eligible for GR?

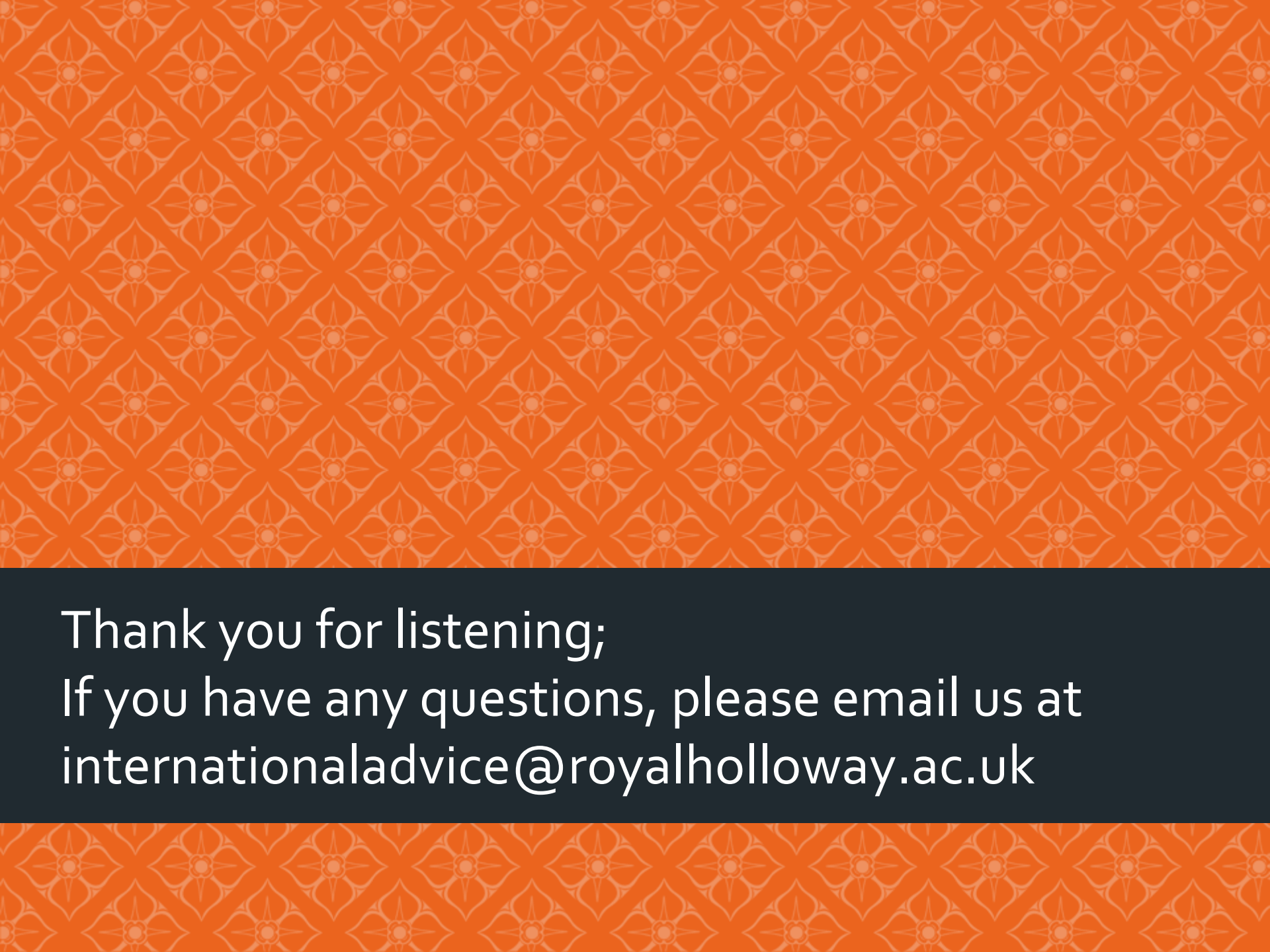
Currently yes, Tier 4/Student visa holders have residency rights according to red list rules. You must quarantine in a government approved hotel however and follow all relevant rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england>

- Can I apply for GR on 1 July 2021 as soon as it opens?

If you have not had confirmation that Royal Holloway has reported eligibility to the Home Office, please do not apply for GR.

- How long will it take for Royal Holloway to process the report to the Home Office?

As mentioned earlier, we don't know how long this may take at this moment in time as all of the processes are new. Please bear with us, when we know more information we will share it.

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Thank you for listening;
If you have any questions, please email us at
internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk