

# ADMISSIONS POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the position of Royal Holloway on key matters relating to the recruitment and admissions to all undergraduate and postgraduate (taught and research) programmes of study.
- 1.2 The university's admissions policy and procedures comply with relevant legislation and are guided by the expectations in the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education<sup>1</sup>, Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education and Chapter B11: Research Degrees for Research applicants and the practice statement from Supporting Professionalism in Admissions (SPA)<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Governance

- 2.1 The admissions policy is approved by the Academic Planning Committee and reviewed on an annual basis ahead of the relevant admissions cycle.
- 2.2 The policy is in accordance with the law of the United Kingdom, including specific compliance with legislation relating to equality, discrimination, data protection, human rights and immigration.

## 3. General Principles

- 3.1 Royal Holloway is committed to providing a professional admission service and to providing clear, fair and consistently applied policies and procedures. The university is guided by the principles articulated within the Schwartz Report: Fair Admissions to Higher Education (2004).
- 3.2 Royal Holloway aims to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students who have the potential to successfully complete their chosen programme of study and to contribute to the academic life at a research-intensive university.
- 3.3 The university recognises that, in order to provide fair and equal access to all prospective students, it may need to demonstrate a flexible approach and, where appropriate, make adjustments for individual applicants – for example, applicants who have faced exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4 The university is committed to Widening Participation and fair access and encourages applicants from all social and cultural backgrounds.
- 3.5 The university is committed to equal consideration of all 'on time' undergraduate applicants in accordance with UCAS guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=173#.VNOaN52sWnh>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.spa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Good-practice-admissions-policies.pdf>

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

- 4.1 The Admissions and Applicant Services Office forms an integral part of the Directorate of Marketing and Communications and works closely with academic departments to deliver a professional and equitable admissions and applicant enquiry service.
- 4.2 The Admissions and Applicant Services Office is responsible for:
- a) ensuring the accuracy and consistency of information provided to potential applicants on Course Finder and UCAS Course Search, in relation to programme entry requirements;
  - b) ensuring that the university delivers a fair, transparent and efficient admissions service;
  - c) ensuring that entry criteria are approved by the Academic Planning Committee prior to the start of each admissions cycle;
  - d) liaising with applicants throughout the admissions process;
  - e) decision making on individual applications for departments where this has been delegated to the Admissions and Applicant Services Office, using agreed admissions criteria;
  - f) processing and communicating all formal admissions decisions to applicants and making all offers to applicants on behalf of the university;
  - g) issuing Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) to enable international applicants to apply for their visa to study in the UK;
  - h) providing information, advice and assistance to admissions tutors and colleagues across the university on admissions processes and entry requirements, including the equivalencies of non-standard qualifications;
  - i) safeguarding the university from fraudulent applicants;
  - j) safe guarding the university from applicants with relevant criminal convictions and in conjunction with other key services within the university;
  - k) ensuring compliance with external regulations in relation to UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI), fee status, Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS), data protection and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and Consumer Protection Law as applicable to admissions;
  - l) compliance with data protection regulations and only communicating about an application with the applicant or, for undergraduate applicants, their nominee as given on their application form, as relevant.
- 4.3 Academic departments are responsible for:
- a) allocating suitable members of staff to act as Admissions Tutors for their department and ensuring these staff are appropriately inducted and trained for the role in collaboration with the Admissions and Applicant Services Office;
  - b) setting entry criteria for all programmes in liaison with the Directorate of Marketing and Communications and in line with university policies;
  - c) conducting interviews, where required, in accordance with section 8 of this policy on Selection;
  - d) making decisions on applications following interview or submission of portfolio, where this has been agreed by the Student Recruitment Committee and on borderline applications, in conjunction with the Admissions and Applicant Services Office;
  - e) conversion activity, including representation at Applicant Visit Days, with support from the Directorate of Marketing and Communications;
  - f) liaising with applicants throughout the admissions process in collaboration with the Admissions and Applicant Services Office, as appropriate;
  - g) compliance with data protection regulations and only communicating about an application with the applicant or their nominee as given on their application form. If the

Department is unsure whether a third party has been nominated by the applicant, any requests for information should be passed to the central Admissions and Applicant Services Office.

- 4.4 The Student Recruitment Committee advises on all matters relating to the admission of students to Royal Holloway and reports to the Academic Planning Committee. It monitors admissions numbers and makes decisions on the acceptance grades for undergraduate programmes at Confirmation and Clearing. Membership includes members of the Executive including Faculty Deans, representatives from academic departments and relevant staff from Professional Services.
- 4.5 The Academic Planning Committee considers admissions procedures and practices that impact on Royal Holloway's ability to meet student target numbers and makes recommendations on any improvements to be made. This Committee approves all academic and English Language entry requirements on behalf of Academic Board.

### Training for Admissions Staff

- 4.6 All members of staff with responsibility for the admissions process are given appropriate guidance by the central Admissions and Applicant Services Office in order to fulfil their roles competently and in line with this policy. Ongoing advice and guidance is provided by the central Admissions and Applicant Services Office to all departmental admissions staff on any national or institutional changes to admissions policy or procedures.

## 5. Advice and Guidance for Applicants

- 5.1 Royal Holloway is committed to providing high quality, up-to-date and accurate information, advice and guidance to applicants and their advisors.
- 5.2 The Directorate of Marketing and Communications is responsible for:
  - publishing entry requirements in the prospectus and online in a manner that is clear and accessible to applicants and their advisors;
  - maintaining the accuracy of the advice and guidance information provided on the university website and the UCAS entry profiles.
- 5.3 The university reserves the right to make changes to the content or delivery of some programmes, their entry requirements or other matters of admissions policy after the publication and distribution of printed materials, such as the prospectus. Such changes will only be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and programme requirements must change accordingly or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/ or the advice of external advisors to enhance academic provision. All online information will be kept up-to-date at all times. Where such changes have been made after offers have been made, all affected applicants will be written to. See section 10.
- 5.4 The university is committed to responding in a timely way with accurate and clear information to applicant and other enquiries, received by phone, email or other channels.
- 5.5 Applicants are advised to email any enquiries to the central Admissions and Applicant Services office in the first instance: [study@royalholloway.ac.uk](mailto:study@royalholloway.ac.uk).

## 6. Application process

- 6.1 Applications for undergraduate programmes of study and the MSc Social Work must be made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) at [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). An application fee is charged by UCAS, which will vary depending on the number of programmes applied for. Applicants must submit their application by 15 January in order to be guaranteed equal consideration for their chosen programme.
- 6.2 Separate admissions processes will be agreed with partner organisations.
- 6.3 Applications for postgraduate programmes, with the exception of the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology and some professional Social Work programmes, must be made directly to the university using the on-line application form. Information on how to apply can be found at: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studyhere/postgraduate/applying/howtoapply.aspx>
- 6.4 Postgraduate applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible after the start of the admissions cycle, as popular programmes may close during the cycle if sufficient applications to fill all of the available spaces have been received.
- 6.5 Applicants requiring a visa to study in the UK are strongly advised to apply as soon as possible and by no later than mid-August in order to ensure that admissions processes are completed in sufficient time to allow for visa processing before the beginning of the academic year. Final dates may vary from one country to another, depending on local processing times.
- 6.6 All applicants are sent an automated email acknowledgement from the university once their application has been received.
- 6.7 The turnaround time for complete undergraduate and postgraduate taught applications is normally no longer than three weeks, except where a 'gathered field' approach is used, although this may be increased during peak periods. Research applications are normally turned around within 8-10 weeks.

## 7. Entry Requirements

- 7.1 Entry requirements are detailed in the university publications. The primary sources of this information are the printed prospectuses, the university's website, and, for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the UCAS entry profiles. As the printed prospectuses are published well in advance of an admissions cycle, applicants should always refer to the university's website for the most up-to-date information.
- 7.2 Entry criteria are reviewed annually and any changes have to be approved by the Academic Planning Committee on behalf of the Academic Board, following consideration by the Student Recruitment Committee.
- 7.3 All applicants for undergraduate programmes are required to demonstrate a good standard of general education. Please refer to the undergraduate regulations <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/regulations/undergraduate-regulations-2016-17-v2.pdf> For those who have undertaken their education in the UK, this would normally be five GCSE passes at grades A\* to C (or grade 4 and above for new GCSEs), including Maths and English, although some programmes require higher grades and these are listed as part of the programme entry criteria.

All applicants are expected to demonstrate a suitable standard of English language proficiency which is set by the Academic Planning Committee. Details of the accepted English language qualifications and the required levels for each qualification are published on the university website. Where applicants do not meet the required level, they can choose or may be advised to take the university's Pre-sessional English Language Programme (PELP).

- 7.4 All applications must normally have at least one satisfactory reference. For postgraduate applications, if a reference is not supplied at the application stage, this may be made a condition of any offer.
- 7.5 The university accepts a wide range of country-specific qualifications and these are published on the university website. If an applicant is unable to find advice on the acceptability of their qualification(s), they should contact the Admissions and Applicant Services Office for further guidance before applying.
- 7.6 Where an applicant has taken a qualification that is not certificated in English, a notarised transcript translated into English will be required.
- 7.7 For undergraduate programmes, offers are normally based on three A-Levels or an equivalent qualification that is deemed acceptable by the university. General Studies and Critical Thinking A-Levels are normally excluded from any offer. Applicants are advised to look at course specific requirements in the university course finder pages <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/coursecatalogue/home.aspx> or to use UCAS Course Search facility. The university does not use the UCAS tariff for entry criteria.
- 7.8 The entry requirements for admission to a postgraduate taught degree is normally a UK Upper Second Class Honours degree or a recognised international equivalent. Please refer to the postgraduate taught regulations <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/regulations/postgraduate-taught-regulations-2016-17.pdf>. Entry requirements for each programme are published on the university's website.
- 7.9 International applicants who do not meet the entry requirements for a postgraduate taught degree programme may apply for the Pre-Masters Diploma, where automatic progression is available to named Masters programmes, provided that the requisite grades are achieved during the Pre-Masters year and other associate entry requirements are met. Information on participating Masters programmes can be found here: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/international/englishlanguage/premasters/home.aspx>
- 7.10 The entry requirement for a postgraduate research degree is normally a UK First or Upper Second Class Honours degree or a recognised international equivalent. Some departments will require a Master degree for PhD programmes.

## 8. Selection process

- 8.1 All applications to the university are assessed in the first instance by the relevant Admissions and Applicant Services Advisor.

8.2 All applications will be considered in line with the university's Equal Opportunities Statement and all decisions will be made in accordance with this Statement.

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/aboutus/governancematters/equalops/home.aspx>

8.3 All applications will be considered on an equal basis, against criteria which have been determined by the Admissions Tutor and approved by the Academic Planning Committee prior to the beginning of the admissions cycle. When assessing the academic suitability and potential of applicants, the following information will be considered, as provided on the application form:

- Qualifications achieved;
- Predicted achievement in qualifications which are currently being studied;
- Educational context in which qualifications have been taken (*undergraduate only*);
- Personal/supporting statement;
- Employment history (where relevant);
- Reference;
- Research proposal (research programmes only).

In addition, some departments may need to consider additional information by means of an interview or portfolio.

8.4 Undergraduate applicants whose predicted grades are more than three grades below the standard offer will not normally be made an offer.

8.5 All applicants who are successful in gaining an offer of a place at the university will be notified of this, either in writing, or through UCAS, by the Admissions and Applicant Services Office. This notification represents the formal offering of a place and a legal contract is formed between the applicant and the university on the basis of the terms and conditions of the offer.

8.6 If the university is unable to make an applicant an offer of a place on their chosen course, it may be possible to make an offer on a similar, alternative course. This may happen at either the initial offer stage or at 'Confirmation' once results are known. If this is the case, a change of course offer will be made and the applicant will be notified of this.

All undergraduate applicants who apply during the standard admissions' cycle and who are made an offer of a place will be invited to attend an Applicant Visit Day, unless they have already attended a separate interview/selection day. Invitations will be sent out within an appropriate timescale allowing applicants to make arrangements to visit the university or attend a Virtual Applicant Visit Day if that is preferred.

8.7 Applicants who are made an offer of a place will be given a deadline by which to meet the conditions of offer. In the event the applicant does not meet their conditions by the date stated, it may not be possible to hold their offer of a place open.

8.8 Historical trends and data will be used to determine the number of offers to be made for each course. Where a course attracts a high ratio of applicants to places, applications may be held in a "gathered field" until the application deadline, to allow for equal consideration. In the case of postgraduate courses, high levels of applications may result in the need to implement an application deadline. In such cases, the deadline will be published on the course pages of the university website.

### Interview and Portfolios

8.9 Where a course requires applicants to attend a selection interview or to submit a portfolio, this will be published on the university website and, for undergraduate courses, the UCAS website.

- 8.10 Where an interview is held for selection purposes (*postgraduate only*), only those applicants attending the interview will be considered for an offer.
- 8.11 All interviews will be conducted in a manner that is fair, consistent and transparent. It can take place face-to-face, by telephone or through electronic means (e.g. Skype). All interviews for the same taught programme of study will follow a similar format and similar questions will be asked. It will be the responsibility of the interviewer(s) to complete and retain interview assessment forms for each candidate, a template for which is available from the Admissions and Applicant Services Office. This assessment form may be used to provide feedback to individual applicants in cases where a decision to reject has been made. If a department wishes to use a different template, this must be approved by the Director of Student Recruitment to ensure compliance with fair admissions.
- 8.12 All interviews will be conducted in accordance with the university's Equal Opportunities Statement.

### Use of Contextual Data

- 8.13 As part of the university's holistic assessment of all applications, contextual data, provided as part of the UCAS application, may be taken into account. This contextual information sets an application into its educational or socio-economic context allowing the university to take into account additional factors which may have impacted on an applicant's education.
- 8.14 The university currently considers the following contextual information and these criteria are reviewed annually:
- Low performing school, based on whether the school or college performs below the national average at GCSE and/or GCE or equivalent qualifications
  - Disability
  - In care for more than three months
  - Mature students (aged 21 or over at the start of the course)
  - Resident in a lower participation in higher education neighbourhood (Polar 3)
- 8.15 Applicants who meet either (c) or (d) above or at least two of the criteria (a), (b) and (e) will be flagged as WP students i.e. these applicants are deemed to be from a widening participation background.
- 8.16 Consideration of applications from students who are flagged as WP will be based on the same criteria and principles as all other candidates. Where a department has an offer grade range, applicants flagged as WP will be given an offer at the bottom of the range.

### Offers

- 8.17 Where no additional assessment is required, an applicant will normally be given a decision on their application within three weeks of their application being received. For undergraduate applications received on or near to the 15<sup>th</sup> January deadline, this may take up to five weeks.
- 8.18 The majority of applicants, who have yet to complete their qualifications, will normally be given the standard conditional offer for their chosen programme, as published on Course Finder.
- 8.19 A small number of applicants, who have yet to complete their qualifications, are given an unconditional offer. The decision on whether an unconditional offer can be made in such cases

is based on qualifications already achieved for undergraduate degrees and on first and second year results for postgraduate degrees.

- 8.20 Where the College is satisfied that the applicant has met all academic requirements for admission, an unconditional offer will normally be made.
- 8.21 Offers are made only to applicants judged to have the academic potential to succeed in their chosen programme of study, including the required level of proficiency in the English Language. Applicants must also be able to satisfy any necessary immigration requirements and be able to satisfy the College as to the source of funding for tuition fees for the full period of study.
- 8.22 For programmes which are over-subscribed, some applicants may be offered a place on an alternative, related programme. If this is the case, this will be communicated to the applicant.

### Meeting offer conditions, Confirmation, Clearing and Adjustment

- 8.23 Applicants who fail to meet their conditions of offer by a small margin ("near miss") may be considered at 'Confirmation', subject to available space on the course, once those who have met all their conditions of offer have been accepted. Applicants who fail to achieve the university's minimum entry requirements will not normally be accepted.
- 8.24 Where it is not possible to accept "near miss" applicants because there are insufficient places available, offers to suitable alternative courses may be made at Confirmation. No obligation to accept this alternative offer would be placed on the applicant.
- 8.25 The university may consider undergraduate applicants with qualifications that are lower than the published standard entry requirements at 'Clearing', should a course still have space for additional students. Applicants who fail to meet the university's minimum entry requirements will not normally be accepted at 'Clearing' (see section 7 of this policy).
- 8.26 Those applicants eligible for Adjustment will be considered for any courses with vacancies, alongside Clearing applicants.
- 8.27 Courses which have vacancies for Clearing and Adjustment applicants will be published on the university website in August, along with the telephone number to call for enquiries. A Visit Day will be arranged for those applicants made an offer through Clearing or Adjustment, as well as additional campus tours.

### Extenuating Circumstances

- 8.28 Applicants with extenuating circumstances should ensure that the relevant exam board is notified of these circumstances, prior to the issue of results.
- 8.29 Applicants should provide the Assistant Director: Admissions and Applicant Services with a letter from their School or university to support their claim of extenuating circumstances, along with any additional supporting documentation, prior to the issue of results. It may not be possible to give any consideration to extenuating circumstances notified after results have been issued.
- 8.30 The university reserves the right to assume that the relevant exam board has taken account of extenuating circumstances and that appropriate adjustments have already been made and are reflected in the results. The university may choose to consider the extenuating circumstances

further if the applicant has narrowly missed the conditions of their offer but there is no guarantee that it will.

### Re-marks and Examination Appeals

8.31 Applicants who have applied for a re-mark or appeal with an awarding body should notify the university immediately. Whilst the university will make every effort to reconsider applicants whose grades are amended as the result of a successful re-mark, it may not always be possible to hold a place pending the outcome of an appeal.

8.32 In the event that a re-mark is successful and the applicant then meets the conditions of their offer, if the course is full at the time that information becomes available, the applicant may be offered an alternative programme or a deferred entry place for the following year.

### Deferred Entry

8.33 The university may consider applications for deferred entry and will also normally consider requests to defer after an application has been received. The university only allows applicants to defer their offer for one year, after which time the applicant is required to reapply.

8.34 Deferred entry applications will be considered using the same criteria as applicants for the current year.

8.35 Offers of a deferred place will not be made in Clearing, unless the applicant meets the standard published entry requirements for the course.

### Re-admission policy

8.36 Applicants whose registration has been terminated following the formal warning process will not normally be reconsidered until a minimum of one year has passed. Even where this period has passed, the university reserves the right to refuse re-admission.

8.37 Applications will not be accepted from anyone who has previously been a student at the university and has had their registration as a student of the university terminated for academic and/ or non-academic disciplinary offences. Any such applications that are received will be rejected without consideration.

8.38 An applicant who has already obtained an Honours Degree or an Integrated Master's Degree will only be admitted to a programme which the university has judged to be sufficiently different from that already completed.

### Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL/APEL)

8.39 Postgraduate applicants may request recent prior learning and experience to be taken into consideration in lieu of a degree in order to gain entry to a postgraduate programme.

8.40 Where applications are based on prior learning or experience, responsibility rests with the applicant to provide appropriate evidence to support their claim that they have achieved knowledge and skills.

8.41 The university will consider undergraduate applicants for second year entry on an individual basis. Vacancies for second year entry are extremely limited and may not be available in all departments. Applicants wishing to apply for second year entry should demonstrate a strong academic performance in their current course and will normally be required to meet the first year entry requirements for the course they are applying for. In addition, applicants need to

meet the required progression requirements. Any applicants wishing to apply for second year entry must do so via UCAS.

## Fraudulent Applications and Plagiarism

8.42 Where the university is notified that an applicant has been highlighted under the UCAS Similarity Detection Service, their application will continue to be assessed under the standard selection process. Such applicants will be contacted and advised of the serious nature of plagiarism and a note will remain on file but no further action will be taken.

8.43 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the information they provide is accurate and complete and does not contain false or misleading information. It is also the applicant's responsibility to provide additional information when requested to do so.

8.44 The university reserves the right to:

- Investigate any application suspected of including false, misleading or fraudulent information or appearing to be incomplete
- Request additional information to verify an application
- Put the application process on hold pending completion of such investigation

8.45 In the event that the university finds evidence that the applicant has submitted a false, misleading or fraudulent application, the university reserves the right to:

- Reject, withdraw or cancel the application before a decision is made
- Withdraw any offer of a place that has already been made
- Withdraw registration if an applicant has already been accepted onto a programme of study and registered as a student.

8.46 Any subsequent applications from anyone previously found to have submitted fraudulent information to the university will be rejected.

## 9. Specific Applicant Groups

### Under 18 applicants

9.1 The majority of students at Royal Holloway are 18 or above, and the academic life and social environment of the university reflect this. However, we recognise that some individuals who have already met the entry requirements for the programme are in a position to commence their university studies at a younger age.

9.2 The university strongly recommends that applicants who will be 16 years of age on entry consider carefully whether they would be able to benefit fully from the educational and social opportunities which are on offer. The university does not accept an *in loco parentis* responsibility for children (i.e. those under 18 years of age at entry). The university does however recognise that it has a duty of care and is committed to practice that protects children, young people and vulnerable adults from harm.

9.3 Applicants who will be under the age of 16 on entry are not permitted to enrol at the university. Any such applicants will, where appropriate, be offered a deferred entry place. If this is not possible the application will be rejected.

9.4 Applicants who will be under 18 years of age on the published start date of the programme, and their parents and guardians, must confirm to the university as a condition of registration:

- that they understand the nature of the university and the programme, the circumstances in which the individual would be studying and living, and the limitations of the university's supervisory role;
- that the contractual arrangements for the individual to study at the university are underwritten by a qualified person of adult status;
- that arrangements would be in place to support the individual in an emergency, including the existence of a qualified person in the UK willing to act as guardian;
- that the individual will obey the restrictions that English law places on minors.

### Mature applicants

9.5 Applications from mature candidates without formal qualifications will be considered on an individual basis and all aspects of the application will be taken into account when making a decision. All such applications will be considered by the member of academic staff responsible for the course. Where applications are based on prior experience, the following will apply:

- Any previous study or experience must be cognate with the course for which the applicant is applying;
- Responsibility currently lies with the applicant to identify, demonstrate and provide evidence of any claim of experience or prior learning.

### Care Leavers

9.6 The university is committed to supporting students who are care leavers and provides support in accordance with the Buttle Trust guidelines. See <http://www.buttleuk.org/>

9.7 Care leavers aged 18-25 will qualify for a £5,000 cash bursary each academic year, provided they have been in care for a minimum of 13 weeks since the age of 14 and were in care on their 16th birthday. In addition, they must be from England, have a Student Finance England verified family income of £25,000 per year or less, be in receipt of a full government maintenance loan and be paying at least £9,000 tuition fees. Additional supporting documentation demonstrating their status as a care leaver will also be required.

### Applicants with disabilities or specific learning needs

9.8 It is recommended that students declare any disability on application so that the university can assess the level of adjustment and support required at the earliest opportunity. Consideration of applications from students who declare a disability will be based on the same criteria and principles as all other candidates.

9.9 Applicants who require adjustments or assistance when attending an interview/selection day or an Applicant Visit Day or university Open Day should notify the Directorate of Marketing and Communications of their needs in advance to enable the necessary arrangements to be made.

9.10 Applicants who are successful in gaining an offer of a place at the university will be sent a support pack by the Disability and Dyslexia Services Office, identifying all the support available to them.

### Applicants declaring criminal convictions

9.11 The university has a duty of care to its staff and students and therefore all applicants are required to declare any relevant unspent convictions at the point of application. If a criminal

conviction is declared, this will be considered before any offer of a place can be made. Full details are available in the university's Disclosing Criminal Convictions Policy which can be found in the online student handbook:

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/onlinestudenthandbook.aspx>

- 9.12 Applicants to professional programmes, such as social work, are required to declare spent convictions at the point of application.

### International applicants

- 9.13 Royal Holloway is licensed to sponsor migrants wishing to study under Tier 4 of the point-based system and as such complies fully with UKVI regulations. Applicants will be expected to comply and abide by the regulations set out by United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI). For full details please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration>
- 9.14 Applicants who have been made a formal offer will be required to pay an agreed sum of money to be offset against their tuition fees in advance of the university issuing a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) which is required for visa applications. Should the visa be refused and therefore the applicant be unable to take up their place, this sum will be refunded, less an administrative charge.
- 9.15 Applicants will be not issued a CAS if it is believed that they will not pass the UKVI credibility interview.
- 9.16 International applicants are required to follow the same application process as Home/EU students – UCAS for undergraduate applications and the online form for postgraduate applications. Royal Holloway works with a number of third-party agents who can assist applicants with making their application and providing the required documentation.
- 9.17 The Advanced Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS), introduced by the UK Government in November 2007, is designed to ensure that those applying for undergraduate integrated masters programmes (or postgraduate taught or research programmes) in certain sensitive subjects do not acquire knowledge that could be used in Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes.
- 9.18 The university cannot issue a CAS to support a visa application until the applicant has been assigned an ATAS certificate. Applications for ATAS clearance can be made up to six months in advance of the beginning of a programme and may be submitted on the basis of a conditional or unconditional offer. Further details about this requirement can be found by visiting:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academic-technology-approval-scheme>

## 10. Changes to and discontinuation of programmes

- 10.1 The university aims to provide the programmes that have been advertised in the prospectus or elsewhere. However, if there is any significant change to the programme between the time at which an offer is made and the point at which registration is complete, the university will inform relevant applicants promptly and advise them of the options available to them and their best course of action. Such changes may include:
- i. A major subject content change to a degree programme, which means

- the introduction of one or more new and/or withdrawal of one or more existing mandatory course units;
  - a significant change to the fieldwork requirement on a mandatory course unit (e.g. removing it or adding it to the degree programme).
- ii. Significant changes to the assessment on mandatory courses, e.g. adding or removing a type of assessment (moving from exam based to coursework based assessment or vice versa, adding in a presentation as a mode of assessment).
  - iii. If the degree loses or gains accreditation from a professional body
  - iv. A significant change to the extra costs associated with a programme of study, e.g. the additional costs of £100 or more where no extra costs currently exist
  - v. Any changes to the academic regulations which impact significantly on progression or award requirements.
- 10.2 Should a programme be discontinued after an offer has been made and accepted and a suitable alternative programme cannot be found for an applicant, any deposit paid will be repaid in full.

## 11. Feedback, Complaints and Appeals

- 11.1 Royal Holloway is committed to providing a high quality, fair and transparent admissions service for all applicants. It is recognised, however, that there may be occasions when applicants will wish to establish why their application has been rejected or believe that they have cause for complaint. Applicants have no right of appeal against an academic decision not to offer them a place at the university.
- 11.2 In this context, feedback is defined as the communication from the university to an applicant, on request from the applicant, who has been unsuccessful in gaining an offer of a place. A complaint is defined as an expression of dissatisfaction either about the process by which an application has been handled or the outcome of the selection or fees classification process. In either case, it may concern actions or inaction by the university or its staff. An appeal is defined as a request for a formal review of the outcome of an admissions decision.
- 11.3 The Assistant Director: Admissions and Applicant Services will monitor, on an annual basis, formal complaints which have been referred and will be responsible for implementing or recommending changes to systems or procedures suggested by the nature of pattern of the complaints received. Such records may contain: age, gender and ethnicity (if known) of complainant, programme of study applied for, summary of complaint and summary of outcome. The outcome of such monitoring may also inform other processes or activities such as arrangements for interview or standard correspondence with applicants.

### Feedback

- 11.4 Unsuccessful applicants will be notified of this decision either through UCAS or by in writing by the university.
- 11.5 Requests for further, individual feedback should be sent to the Admissions and Applicant Services Office. Requests will be addressed as soon as workload allows, which may be after the peak admissions processing time. The university will only correspond about a decision with the applicant.

- 11.6 Requests for feedback from a third party will not be accepted and no information relating to an individual applicant will be released
- 11.7 In some cases, lack of success is due to the level of competition for places rather than any specific weakness in an application and consequently it will not be possible to advise applicants on how to strengthen any subsequent application.
- 11.8 In all cases, it will be made clear to the applicant that, even if another application will be considered, there is no guarantee that an offer will be made, even if the points raised in the feedback are addressed by the applicant. Previous applications are not kept for reference. There will be no discrimination against any applicant who requests feedback.

## Complaints

- 11.9 If, having received feedback regarding the decision not to offer a place at the university, an applicant feels they have cause for complaint, they may send a formal written request for a review to the Assistant Director: Admissions and Applicant Services.
- 11.10 Applicants should be aware that the university will not review an admissions decision where the grounds for requesting a review are simply that the applicant disagrees with the academic judgement that has been applied and where there is no evidence that the correct procedures have not been followed.
- 11.11 Any complaint must be made by the applicant and not by a third party.
- 11.12 Anonymous complaints will not be dealt with under this procedure.
- 11.13 In the first instance, applicants with a complaint should raise it informally with the Admissions and Applicant Services Office. If this course of action proves unsatisfactory, then the applicant should write to the Assistant Director: Admissions and Applicant Services including the grounds for complaint i.e. any alleged procedural irregularities and any supporting evidence including, where available, copies of any relevant documentation.
- 11.14 The Assistant Director: Admissions and Applicant Services will investigate the complaint in consultation with the relevant members of staff and will respond to the complaint normally within ten working days of a complaint being received. Where a response is not possible in that timeframe, the complainant will be informed of the timescale for the receipt of a full response.

## Appeals

- 11.15 If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the review conducted by the Assistant Director: Admissions and Applicant Services, they may appeal in writing to the Director of Student Recruitment within 7 days of receiving the complaint outcome. This should set out briefly: the nature of the complaint, the details of the response received, a statement why the applicant remains dissatisfied and, without prejudice to any formal remedy which might be determined, the remedy which is being sought. The Director of Student Recruitment will investigate the complaint and will provide a response within 15 working days of receiving the written request. Where a response is not possible in that timeframe, the Director of Student Recruitment will write to inform the applicant of the timescale for the receipt of a full response.
- 11.16 The decision of the Director of Student Recruitment shall be final.

END

22 September 2017