



**International Student Handbook  
2011-2012**

Royal Holloway  
University of London



### **Term dates 2011–12**

Monday 19 September – Friday 9 December (12 weeks)  
(4-week Christmas break)

Monday 9 January – Friday 23 March (11 weeks)  
(4-week Easter break)

Monday 23 April – Friday 8 June (7 weeks)

Graduation Ceremonies: 9–13 July 2012

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Dear student,

Welcome to Royal Holloway, University of London. We are very pleased that you have chosen to study with us. Studying overseas offers many exciting experiences but it can also be challenging to adjust to a new environment. Things may be confusing at first. I hope that the information in this handbook will help to make your time here as easy and enjoyable as possible.

If you have any worries or concerns, please feel free to visit the International Student Support Office, located on the west side of Founder's, room 139.

Regards,  
Denise Keable  
Deputy Head of Support and Advisory Services

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# Arrival



## Enrolment

All students must enrol with the College before they begin their studies. Enrolment is simple and easy. You will be sent full enrolment information before you arrive. This information is also available at:

**[www.rhul.ac.uk/registry/enrolment/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/registry/enrolment/)**

To enrol you need to have:

1. Completed the online sign-up at:  
**[www.rhul.ac.uk/registry/enrolment/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/registry/enrolment/)**
2. Sufficient finances to meet both tuition and accommodation expenses for the duration of your studies here (see fee payment below).
3. Your passport showing permission for you to be in the UK as a student or your UK ID card (as an identity check for new students).

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Once your enrolment is complete you will receive a College Card, which is your Royal Holloway student ID card, giving you access to the College facilities.

## Fee payment

Before you are able to register as a student, you must provide official confirmation that you, or your sponsor, has sufficient finances to meet tuition and living expenses for the duration of your studies here.

Payments should be made out to RHBNC (Royal Holloway and Bedford New College) in pound sterling. You can pay your fees in the following ways:

- A cheque or banker's draft payable in the UK
- Credit card (MasterCard, Visa and JCB)
- Debit card (Delta, Solo, Switch)
- Bank-to-bank transfer
- Travellers cheques (in pound sterling)
- Cash
- epay – **[www.rhul.ac.uk/epay/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/epay/)**

Royal Holloway does not accept Eurocheques or cheques drawn on an overseas bank. We may also refuse payments in a foreign currency and, if accepted, the College is likely to deduct bank charges. As the UK is outside the Euro currency zone, the Euro is only recognised as a foreign currency, and is subject to a moving exchange rate.

Royal Holloway has a vibrant community of students from over 130 countries. Around 20 percent of our students come from outside the UK

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It is possible to pay all or part of your fees in cash, but we would strongly urge you not to carry around large sums of money. You should only pay cash or traveller's cheques in person, never by post. Make sure you get, and keep, a receipt as proof of payment.

Please note that you must have organised the means to pay your tuition fees before you start at Royal Holloway. You will not be allowed to enrol if you cannot pay the amount for which you are liable. If you have a sponsor, please bring with you proof of payment by a third party.

The regulations concerning payment and remission of tuition fees apply to students taking standard undergraduate or postgraduate degree programmes, and most diplomas and certificates. Students with Royal Holloway International as their home department should refer to the payment requirements specified by Royal Holloway International for their programme.

Exceptionally, arrangements may be made with the Student Fees Office to pay tuition fees in up to three installments. To do this, you must have written agreement from the Student Fees Office. There is an administration charge for an installment facility in the region of £100–£200 depending on the number of installments and the value of fees.

If you find yourself in financial difficulties, please inform the Student Fees Office immediately. They can help you to negotiate a way round the problem.

Tuition fees are set annually and adjusted according to inflation and market conditions.

For more information, please visit the Fee Payment Centre, Founder's West 141.

Opening hours are 10am–4pm term time, 11am–2pm during the holidays.

## Halls of residence

### Fees

Accommodation fees are charged on a termly basis and must be paid at the beginning of each term. There is no facility for students to pay on a monthly basis. The fees are based on the number of weeks of each term. You should also be aware that some student accommodation is on a term-time only basis, which means that students must fully vacate their rooms during the Christmas and Easter breaks. Students living in this type of accommodation who want to remain over the holidays or leave personal belongings at the College will need to budget for the rental of storage space or for renting a room through the 'vacation residence' provision (£14.20 approx.).

# Arrival continued

## Local accommodation

If you will be renting accommodation in the local community, you will probably be asked for a deposit of two months or more rent (Please note you may be asked for a guarantor). This will be approximately £500–£700 if you are renting a house, and less if you take up lodgings (houses are rented by groups of between three and six students and lodgings are rooms which local residents rent out within their family home). Students living in a house will also be responsible for the utility bills for the property; you will need to budget for electricity, gas and water bills. Utility bills are usually included within the rent for lodgers.

If you will be renting off-campus accommodation, you will also need to budget for expenses while you are looking for a place to stay. If you arrive more than three days before the start of term, you may be able to stay in vacation residence, which costs around £14.20 per day on a room only basis. If you arrive less than three days before the start of term, you will have to stay in a local hotel or Bed and Breakfast.

## Food

Students living in College halls of residence will either be in self-catering or catered 'pay-as-you-go' accommodation. Students in self-catering accommodation will have unlimited access to

a kitchen where they can prepare their own food. Basic food items can be purchased at the College shop on campus. There is also a small grocery store a few minutes walk away in Englefield Green. Several larger grocery stores are located in Egham, which is a 15 to 20 minute walk from the campus.

In self-catering accommodation, you can expect to spend about £6 per day on food if you buy only basic ingredients and cook for yourself. However it is important to remember that if you buy frozen or ready-meals, prepared sandwiches or other convenience food, your costs could run as high as £10 per day.

In catered 'pay-as-you-go' accommodation, students must purchase their meals from one of



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the College dining halls. On average, students in pay-as-you-go accommodation spend about £6 per day on food. They also have access to a pantry, with an electric kettle for boiling water and a small microwave to warm snacks or make hot drinks. Students are not permitted to have any cooking appliances such as microwaves, toasters, steamers or pressure cookers in their rooms. Students in 'pay-as-you-go' accommodation who are found to be cooking, will be formally disciplined and may be asked to leave College accommodation.

Please be aware that rooms in halls of residence are allocated on an annual basis only and applications to continue residence for a further year should be made to the Housing Bureau in February.

In the case of Founder's and Reid, the accommodation fee applies for term time only and rooms must be vacated during holiday periods. The College does make a provision for vacation residence. Details of this provision are available from the hall reception desks.

Students who give notice to leave their rooms before the end of the agreed residence period will be liable for the rent for the whole session unless the room can be re-let by the Housing Bureau to another eligible student. There is an administrative charge when a room change occurs.

Students must only occupy the room they have under contract themselves. They may not let it to another student (this is called sub-letting), nor may they allow another person to share their room, or occupy a room for which they do not have a proper contract. Students may not give money to or receive money from other students for the unauthorised use of a room. Students who do this risk losing the money they have paid unofficially, being asked to leave the room and, in severe cases, being disciplined by the College.

### RCS card

The RCS account is a facility available on your student card and works as a debit card. If you submit your application for an RCS account by the deadline, you should be able to use the facility as soon as you collect your College Card at enrolment. You can put additional money into your RCS account at the FM Support Office (Founder's West 43) and all hall receptions. When you make a transaction on your RCS card, the point of sale machine will tell you how much money you have left. If you lose your card, you should inform staff in the RCS card office immediately and obtain a replacement.

# Arrival continued

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## Orientation programmes

During the first week of the session in September there are a number of special activities planned to help new students to become familiar with the College. Students living in halls will have special activities planned to allow the residents to meet each other and the hall staff. Each academic department will hold enrolment and meetings during the first week, to enable students to meet each other and the lecturers, as well as to discuss departmental policies and academic issues. There are also special orientation programmes specifically for international students. These are designed to inform students about the services and support available at the College, and to discuss issues of particular interest to international students.

Information on these programmes is available at:

**[www.rhul.ac.uk/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/)**

## Tier 4 Student Responsibilities

As the sponsor for your Tier 4 Student visa, Royal Holloway has a duty to maintain your student record and keep copies of your passport and visa. These will be taken at enrolment, but please inform Student Records if you renew either your passport or visa or change your contact details. Royal Holloway must also inform the UK Border Agency if you fail to enrol, withdraw or interrupt your studies or if you have any unauthorised absences.

## The College Health Centre and the National Health Service

We hope that your stay with us will be free from any health problems, but from time to time students do experience illness. For this reason we have our own Health Centre on campus. Situated on the first floor of Founder's East, it provides full National Health Service (NHS) General Practitioner services for registered students and is part of the Clarence Medical Centre, Windsor. A wide range of medical services is available, including psychiatric and physiotherapy services at the discretion of your doctor.

Studying overseas has huge benefits, but moving to another country can be stressful. If you have a pre-existing medical or psychological condition, you may be particularly vulnerable to problems. You must therefore plan ahead to ensure that you can receive appropriate medical or psychological support when you arrive in the UK.

Students living in halls of residence, or in the vicinity of the campus, may register with the College Health Centre. Registration takes place during the first week of the session in September, and a Health Centre Registration card is sent to all students. Students arriving at other times during the year should register with the Health Centre as soon as possible.

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If you are not registered with the College Health Centre, you may still make use of the Centre in the case of sudden illness or accident whilst you are at Royal Holloway. If you are living in the local community, a list of doctors outside the immediate College area may be obtained from the Health Centre receptionist.

If you have a medical or psychological condition for which you are currently receiving treatment, you are strongly advised to discuss your plans for studying in the UK with your doctor, counsellor or psychologist. The Educational Support Office (ESO) at Royal Holloway can advise students about the type of support facilities available at the College and in the local area. It is recommended that you contact the ESO ([educational-support@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:educational-support@rhul.ac.uk)) before arriving so that support can be discussed and any necessary arrangements made before your arrival.

If you have a long term medical or psychological condition, it is a good idea to bring a letter from your doctor with you to the College Health Centre. It should be in English, and outline your medical history with a full list of the medication that you are taking. You should also bring a four-week supply of your medication with you, to make sure that you have enough whilst you transfer to the UK health system.

The College Health Centre advises students to have a Meningitis C vaccination before they come to the UK, if it is available in their home

country. If you are not able to have this before you travel, the vaccination is available from the College Health Centre for those under the age of 25.

The National Health Service Regulation (HC83/10) states that an international student enrolled on a course of study of six months or longer is eligible to use the National Health Service (NHS). The spouse and dependants under 16 (or under 19 if studying in school or further education) of such students are also eligible. If you are eligible for NHS treatment, cover starts from the date that you arrive in the UK, but does not continue while you are out of the country. Therefore, you will not be covered while you are travelling to or from the UK or while you are in any other country. You are therefore strongly urged to make appropriate arrangements for travel/health insurance for any periods of time when the NHS will not cover you.

Under the NHS, you will be asked to pay towards the cost of any prescriptions. These and other medicines can be bought from the pharmacy counter at a chemist. You are, however, entitled to free prescriptions if you are under 19 and studying full-time, if you are pregnant or if you have had a baby within the last 12 months. If you are an EU national, you may also be able to get free prescriptions on the grounds of low income, in which case you should complete a form HC2, which may be

# Arrival continued

obtained from the Students' Union Welfare Centre. You should complete the form and send it to the Department of Social Security (DSS) for assessment. If you are eligible, you will be issued with an exemption certificate lasting six months.

You should try and get your teeth checked by a dentist at least once a year. You need to be registered with a doctor in order to qualify for NHS dental treatment. Your doctor can provide lists of NHS dentists. Check first whether the dentist accepts NHS patients, as some only accept private patients. Once accepted, you will need to give the dentist the NHS number on your medical card. As an NHS patient, you will have to pay the minimum charge, but you may get help with the cost on the basis of low income. To apply, you need to obtain and complete form HC2 (see above, EU students only).

If you think you may need glasses, or need to visit an optician for an eye test, there is a minimum charge for getting your eyes tested on the NHS. If the test shows that you need glasses or contact lenses, the optician will give you a prescription. The costs of frames and lenses can vary considerably, so check costs with several opticians before buying. You can apply for help with the costs of your glasses on the basis of low income, in the same way as for medical and dental treatment, if you

are from the EU. If you have already paid for your glasses, you cannot apply for a refund afterwards.

If you are referred to a hospital for tests or treatment, you may be subject to simple questions about the length of your residence, to make an initial assessment of your NHS coverage.

## Police registration

If the visa stamp in your passport or ID card requires you to register with the police, officers from Guildford Police Station will be in the large boardroom on **Monday 26 September**, IN244 on **Monday 3 October**, and FE139 on **Monday 10 October**, between 10am–3pm. If you arrive at the start of session, you may wait until these dates. You should present the following documents at the time of registration with the police:

- A valid passport and ID card
- Two passport-sized photographs of yourself
- A letter of acceptance from the College or your College Card
- A fee of approximately £34

You will need to make an appointment at Founder's West 139 or email: [internationaladvice@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:internationaladvice@rhul.ac.uk)

International students who are arriving mid-session and need to register with the police

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should register at Surrey Police Headquarters. Please visit the International Student Support Office for more information.

### **Clothing and climate**

The UK has a relatively mild climate compared to much of northern Europe, without extremes of hot or cold. However, if you come from a warm or hot climate, the UK will probably feel quite cold and wet. Generally the coldest (winter) months will be between November and March. The warmest (summer) weather will occur between May and September. However, you can sometimes enjoy a beautiful warm day in March or get a cold and rainy day in July! An umbrella and waterproof coat are essential as rain showers occur throughout the year. While we rarely get prolonged periods of rain, showers can occur several times in one day. It only snows occasionally in our part of the country, but during the winter months the temperature will often dip below zero degrees Celsius, particularly at night.

### **Electrical equipment**

The British electrical supply is rated at 240 volts/50 cycles. It is important to review manufacturers' instructions to ensure that any electrical equipment you wish to bring to the UK is compatible. Conversion plugs are widely available from electrical shops or at airports.

You should also be aware that many of the older halls of residence have only one or two electrical plugs and have restrictions on the amount of power which can be used. You will be advised about any limitations or restrictions on electrical equipment. Please be advised that you cannot use personal cooking equipment in the pantries in many halls or in your personal rooms.

### **Photographs**

When you enrol at Royal Holloway, you will be asked to produce several passport size photographs of yourself. There is a photograph booth inside the Students' Union.

### **Insurance**

Unfortunately students may sometimes experience problems, such as losing property or having it stolen, or becoming ill. That's why you need to seriously consider purchasing appropriate insurance for your time at Royal Holloway. You need to have the appropriate medical coverage for your entire stay at the College and any travelling that you intend to do. You should also have insurance cover for your personal belongings, especially for expensive items such as computers. Please be aware that Royal Holloway does not insure or accept any liability for the property of students living in halls of residence. The Students' Union has information about UK insurance providers that specialise in policies for students.

# Living in the UK and student life



## Teaching and study methods

Students from outside the United Kingdom may have experienced teaching methods different from those commonly used in British universities. Some international students may find that they are expected to participate in discussions and debates and to study more independently than they did in their home country.

Teaching at Royal Holloway takes place mainly in the first and second terms and takes the form of lectures, seminars, tutorials and practical work. Field studies are also included when studying Biology, Geography and Earth Sciences.

## Lectures

At Royal Holloway there will usually be between 20 and 100 students in a lecture.

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The lecturer is normally a permanent, full-time member of academic staff who is an expert on the subject area being taught. Lectures are usually formal occasions where students listen to the views of the lecturer and take notes. However, lack of active participation does not make for an undemanding learning situation. Following the argument of an expert will require close attention as well as a good understanding of the English language.

## Seminars

Seminars take the form of group discussions. They are usually led by an academic member of staff and attended by between eight and 20 students. Students participate by asking questions and putting forward their views. You might also be asked to make presentations.

## Tutorials

Most departments offer tutorials, which are meetings with a small number of students. They provide an opportunity to discuss academic work in detail with a member of staff.

## Private study

Learning does not finish when the student leaves the classroom. Students will be expected to do many hours of private study, such as reading, researching and writing essays or projects.

## Assessment

Assessment varies with programmes of study.

Royal Holloway is located in a beautiful part of Surrey, just 40 minutes by train from the heart of the capital

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In some cases assessment is by coursework. In other cases it is by examinations, or sometimes it can be a combination of both. Students will normally be informed about the assessment methods of their course during the departmental orientation sessions.

Examinations take place in the third (summer) term. Students are only permitted to sit examinations if they have fulfilled all course work and attendance requirements. Therefore it is important for you to understand what you must attend and what coursework you must complete. If you have any questions or concerns about the requirements of your course, you should speak to your Personal Advisor in your department. Students are not permitted to progress if they do not successfully complete all end of year assessments.

### Course expenses

In addition to your tuition fees, you can expect some other academic expenses while you are studying. Students in every department should budget for items such as books, notebooks, paper, pens and photocopying. Additional expenses will depend upon your course and department. For example, some students will be required to purchase lab coats and protective eyewear for laboratory work, and some students may have to pay expenses for

field trips or for study abroad. Other students may be required to attend films or stage productions. Your department should be able to advise you about the expenses you are likely to have on your course.

Postgraduate students should allow for additional expenses such as travel associated with conferences and thesis presentation of their research. It may cost up to £300 to prepare a thesis (typing/photocopying/binding) for examination.

### Departmental and College notice boards

Students are responsible for keeping themselves informed of events, activities, changes to lecture schedules, etc. that are posted on departmental or College notice boards. You are strongly advised to regularly check your Royal Holloway email account and the information displayed on notice boards; the details they provide may be helpful and important.

### Academic expectations

An information session for international students on Academic Expectations in the UK will be held on Thursday 22 September at 1.30–2.30pm in the Windsor Building Auditorium.

# Living in the UK and student life continued

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## Academic services

### Royal Holloway International

Royal Holloway International brings together internationally focused activities at the College, including international student recruitment, the management of all international institutional agreements, academic oversight of all student exchanges and English and foreign language learning. The department offers a range of English language and foreign language courses throughout the year.

### In-sessional English language

A range of group and one-to-one consultations and weekly classes aim to enable non-native students to meet the challenges of study at a British university. Students can develop academic study skills such as essay writing and seminar discussions, but there is also support in language areas such as grammar or pronunciation. This in-sessional support is available during terms one and two and can be fitted in around your main academic timetable. A small charge may be made for teaching materials.

### Background to Modern Britain for the Arts or Social Sciences

The credit-bearing Background to Modern Britain courses aim to introduce international students to a range of issues and concepts relevant to contemporary British society by

examining important social, cultural and political themes in recent British history. At the same time, students develop the language and academic study skills relevant to undergraduate work in either the Arts or Social Sciences. A small charge is made for teaching materials.

Come and meet us during Fresher's week, 19–23 September 2011. The Royal Holloway Language Fair will take place on Wednesday 21 September, 2–4pm, in the International Building Foyer.

### Libraries

The Library Service is situated in three buildings: the Bedford Library (between Bourne and McCrea buildings) houses Science, History and Social Sciences; Founder's Library, at the south end of the main Founder's building, houses the language and literature collections, Fine Arts and Ancient History.

The Library, with half a million books, provides for the needs of undergraduate students, and, in co-operation with a wider range of libraries, for those of research students. Most material, books, journals, videos and DVDs are accessible on open shelves and may be borrowed.

Operating a variety of loan periods for material, including short loan books housed in a separate collection, caters for undergraduate needs.



In addition, the provision of a wide variety of electronic resources contributes to teaching and research. Much of the electronic library, comprising full texts of books, journals and reference sources, is available both on campus and off.

Students have access to PC suites in each library and may use a range of self-service equipment including laptops, video and DVD players. Other facilities provided include a library training service to teach students information skills to

enrich their studies. Basic instruction in using the library is offered to students during their first week in College and professional staff are always on hand to offer assistance.

Because of our proximity to London, students have the opportunity to use the facilities and services of many of the national, university and special libraries in the capital. In particular, full borrowing privileges are available from the University of London Library, which is open six days a week, and reference facilities are available in most of the other libraries of the University of London.

### Computer Centre

The Computer Centre supports a number of open-access PC Labs located around campus for student use. Each PC offers a wide range of software including Microsoft Office and graphic manipulation software, along with access to your College email and a high-speed link to the Internet. Normal opening hours are weekdays from 8.30am-7pm but your RCS card will allow you 24-hour access to most facilities.

We also offer a range of IT training courses, designed to equip you with the relevant IT skills needed to complete and enhance your academic work, and which will also be of benefit when you go into a working environment. For further details about this, and more, visit: [www.rhul.ac.uk](http://www.rhul.ac.uk)

# Living in the UK and student life continued

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## Campus bookshop

There is a bookshop on the main campus, next to the College shop. It is normally open Monday to Friday, 9am–5.30pm and stocks an excellent range of academic books, non-academic books, book tokens, etc. All major credit cards are accepted. Items not in stock will be readily ordered.

## Student services

### Support and Advisory Services

Mr Christopher Butler is the Head of the College's Support and Advisory Services.

He is responsible for all matters of student welfare and discipline. The Deputy Head, Denise Keable, is particularly responsible for addressing the specific needs of International students.

### Religious services

Royal Holloway is a multi-faith community and has services and facilities for students from both the Christian and Islamic traditions.

Royal Holloway has two Christian Chaplains who are happy to talk to students from any religious background, whether you are Christian or not. Students may wish to discuss issues with the Chaplains ranging from the position of the church in contemporary British society to matters relating to personal faith and belief. The Chaplains do their best to see students who simply drop in, but it is better to make an appointment. The Chaplains

are pleased to assist students of any faith in contacting others of the same faith and finding local places of worship.

The College Chapel is part of the north side of the main Founder's Building. It is used for daily worship, and services are open to everyone. Services in which Christians of all denominations participate are held on Sunday evenings at 6pm and every other day at 8.45am. Students are encouraged to take an active part in leading worship, and are also welcome to join (without an audition) the Chapel Choir. The College Chapel is fully ecumenical and welcomes all members of Royal Holloway. Various Christian Societies organised by students meet for prayer, fellowship and study during the week, and many students are also involved in the life of local churches of all denominations.

The Chaplaincy office is Founder's West 169.  
**[www.rhul.ac.uk/chaplaincy/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/chaplaincy/)**

### College Islamic Society

The College has an active Islamic community. The Islamic Society organises religious services and functions on Islamic occasions. For further details ask at the Students' Union Office or visit: **[www.rhulisoc.com](http://www.rhulisoc.com)**

### Student Counselling service

Professional counselling is available for any student wanting confidential help with emotional or psychological concerns. The aim

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of counselling is to help students to find their own personal solution to a particular problem and great care is taken to allow the student to reach individual conclusions. In addition to individual counselling, various support groups are available. The Counselling Service office is Founder's West 171. For more information visit: [www.rhul.ac.uk/counselling/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/counselling/)



### Educational Support Office

The Educational Support Office (ESO) is Royal Holloway's central office for co-ordinating the support of students with special needs. We work closely with students with:

- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia and dyspraxia)
- Mobility difficulties
- Special psychological needs
- Visual or hearing impairments
- Medical conditions

The ESO offers advice and support throughout the student's time at Royal Holloway and we also represent the needs of students on a variety of relevant College committees. We provide three types of support:

#### Academic support

One-to-one and group sessions are available with our Specific Learning Difficulties Tutor. We liaise on the student's behalf with Academic Departments.

#### Personal support

To co-ordinate assistance around campus and in lectures, e.g. via personal helpers, note-takers and book fetchers. We advise and assist students applying for priority to College accommodation and we advise about Library support, Counselling, the Health Centre, Careers, Chaplaincy and other student services.

# Living in the UK and student life continued

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## Financial support

To provide advice and assistance for students in applying for support funding.

If you have any questions, or would like our Handbook for Students with Special Needs, please contact the Educational Support Office: Founder's West Room 151; +44 (0)1784 443966; Educational-Support@rhul.ac.uk. Information is also available on the College website: [www.rhul.ac.uk/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/)

## Security

Royal Holloway has a uniformed security staff. Patrols of the College grounds and buildings take place both day and night. A closed circuit television system with a recording facility is in operation and the campus is lit at night. The campus can be generally regarded as a safe place but you should still exercise care. For example, don't walk alone in isolated areas at night, or let strangers into your room or department. If you see anything that gives you cause for concern you should call College Security on +44 (0)1784 443063 at once.

Please note there is a booklet available, Safe and Secure at RHUL, for your information.

If you lose property on College premises, inform the Security Office (FE39). If you find money or other valuables, hand them in to the Security Office and a record will be kept.

## Firearms and other weapons

The UK has some of the strictest gun-control laws in the world. It is almost impossible for a private citizen to legally own a firearm in the UK. Air-guns are also strictly regulated and individuals even suspected of carrying a weapon are likely to be the subject of rigorous police action. Irrespective of whether students are licensed or trained to carry weapons in their own country, they should ensure that they do not bring a weapon to the UK and should ensure they never give rise to suspicion that they are carrying or own a weapon. There are also strict rules on carrying other weapons such as knives, mace sprays, etc. The College's and Students' Union rules reflect this; students suspected of carrying or owning weapons will be subject to strict College discipline as well as possible police action.

## Students' Union

The Students' Union is an organisation run by a team of students operating from their own building at the lower end of main campus. All students at Royal Holloway can become members of the Union and can make use of any of the services and facilities it provides.

More than 80 clubs and societies are based in the Union. These range from sports clubs, such as basketball and rowing, to societies such as the debating and international students' societies.



The Union also provides a welfare service, giving advice and help to students.

To find out the opening times of Tommy's Bar, The Stumble Inn and Medicine, please visit the website: [www.su.rhul.ac.uk](http://www.su.rhul.ac.uk)

### **Banking**

You are advised to open a bank account in the UK in order to make it easier for you to manage your money safely.

To open a bank account, you will need official identification (passport), proof of student status, proof of address and funds. Royal Holloway has a standard letter, which can be used by students as proof of their status and address. You can request this letter from the Student Administration Centre, located opposite the Windsor Building, after you have registered.

Royal Holloway has its own branch of the National Westminster Bank (NatWest) on the

main campus. The major banks and building societies have branches in Egham and Staines.

All international students should be eligible for a basic bank account. This type of account allows for basic services such as payment in and out of the account. It also allows for the use of Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) or cash machines. Current accounts and student accounts offer additional services such as chequebooks and overdrafts. However, many banks are not willing to allow international students to open these. If you are interested in opening either a current account or student account, you will need to discuss this with a bank representative. Although it may be time consuming and delay your opening an account in the UK, it may be worth speaking to several banks to try and get the services you think you will need.

**Please note that you should *never* provide anyone with your bank details by email.**

# Living in the UK and student life continued

## Employment and volunteer work

### Vacation and part-time employment

Immigration rules state that international students may not take paid employment exceeding more than 20 hours a week during term time. During vacations there is no restriction on the number of hours a student may work. Students from the European Economic Area and Swiss nationals are able to seek employment without any restrictions.

If you take up employment you will need to apply for a National Insurance number. In order to be eligible to receive a National Insurance number, you must have an offer of a job or be actively seeking work. It is not possible to receive a number before this. To apply you will

need to make an appointment with the nearest Job Centre Plus, +44 (0)0845 6000643.

Full details are available from the International Student Support Office in Founder's, or at the Careers Office: [www.rhul.ac.uk/careers/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/careers/)

### Volunteering programme

The College runs a Volunteering programme through which students carry out voluntary work in the local community (working with children, the elderly, the disabled, with animals, as teaching assistants, in conservation and many other areas). All persons who work with children, the elderly, or disabled need to be police-checked. If you are interested in doing this type of voluntary work while you are at Royal Holloway, please bring documentation which proves that you have been police-checked in your home country. Preferably obtain a certified English translation of that documentation. If you have any questions, please email: [volunteering@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:volunteering@rhul.ac.uk)

### Television licence

In the UK all owners of a private television must pay for a licence. Each student who has a television in his or her room in a College residence must obtain a separate television licence (the fine for using a television without a licence is £1,000). Students living in a house where one television is shared by all of the residents may purchase a single licence together. A television licence can be purchased



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from a Post Office. You can pay the fee in full or arrange for payment by a monthly direct debit from your bank account. For further details, or to buy a licence online, visit:

**[www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk)**

### **Cars, parking and driving**

Parking facilities at Royal Holloway are very restricted. In most cases, students who are living in halls of residence or within one mile of the College are not permitted to have cars at the College. None of the halls on the main campus allow residents to have parking permits. Students living in halls located away from the main campus (such as Kingswood Hall and North A30 properties) do allow residents to park at the hall, but not on the main campus. Students who are entitled to use a car on campus, normally disabled students and those living more than 1.5 miles away, must register their vehicle with the College and display a student car parking permit at all times. Permits may be obtained from Founder's East 37.

To drive any car in Britain you must have a valid driving licence and insurance cover. During your first year in the UK, your own overseas driving licence or International Driving Permit will qualify you to drive here. If this expires during the year, it must be renewed in your own country, or you can take the British driving test and qualify for a British driving licence. If you come from a

European Union country you can exchange your licence for a British Driving Licence.

After a year, if you have not passed the British Driving Test or exchanged your licence, you will have to revert to 'learner' driver status. You must then apply for a provisional British licence and you will no longer be able to drive without supervision from a licensed driver. Full details about the British Driving Test are available from the Post Office or from the DVLA website:

**[www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)**

If you wish to buy a car, please note that all car owners must pay an annual road tax. In addition, cars more than three years old must also be inspected on an annual basis by a garage to ensure roadworthiness. This is known as an MOT inspection. British law also requires that all drivers have car insurance for their vehicles. It is compulsory for the occupants of a car to wear seat belts in the UK.

### **Postal services**

Most towns have a main Post Office, with other smaller sub-Post Offices in business and shopping areas. They are usually open 9am–5.30pm, Monday to Friday and 9am–12.30pm on Saturday. Some smaller Post Offices may close on a Wednesday afternoon. Post Offices supply stamps, travel cheques, TV licences, postal orders, lottery tickets, and handle car tax payments, amongst other services.

# Living in the UK and student life continued

Letters within the UK can be sent by First or Second Class post, but it is best to send a letter overseas by airmail. First class letters need a 46p stamp, and are usually delivered next day within the UK. Second class letters need a 36p stamp, and usually take 2–4 days for delivery within the UK. Stamps can be bought from a Post Office, the College shop and most newsagents and supermarkets. Postmen make collections from (red) post boxes and deliveries to your address every day except Sunday.

Mail for students living on campus will be delivered to a central point within the halls of residence. Students should also regularly check their department mailbox.

There is a post box outside the College Shop and inside Founder's Reception. Egham Post Office is located on the High Street just past Café Piccolo.

## Letters and parcels overseas

All letters to Europe go by air. For other countries, airmail is a little more expensive than surface mail, but it is faster.

The cost of sending a parcel depends upon its weight and the destination. Parcels are weighed and stamped by staff in Post Offices, and you will be required to fill in a customs form declaring the contents of the parcel.

## Laundry facilities

There are self-service washing machines, clothes dryers and ironing facilities available on campus near the halls of residence. The cost of washing and drying a load of clothes will be about £3 depending on how much drying time the clothes require. There are also a number of shops in the local community which offer dry cleaning and laundry services.

## Telephones

Telephones are not provided in individual halls of residence study/bedrooms. In some halls of residence it is possible to have a landline installed, if the student wishes. Details about this, or about how to have an existing line activated, are available from the hall reception desks.

There are usually well-signed telephones in public places and shopping areas, as well as in main buildings on campus. Instructions of how to use a coin phone box are displayed beside the telephone. Public telephones will take coins or credit cards.

National calls in the UK are charged at standard rates from 8am–6pm, Monday–Friday, and at a cheaper rate at other times. International calls are generally cheaper after 6pm.

Many students prefer to use mobile telephones. The cost varies considerably depending on the phone's functions and the calling facilities

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used. There are a number of shops in the local area which sell mobile telephones, and you are strongly encouraged to consider carefully what facilities you need and to compare prices between different service providers before you sign any contract. In some cases you will be asked to show proof of address when signing a contract. The Student Administration Centre is able to provide a letter confirming your address only if you are living in a hall of residence.

### Smoking and alcohol

England, and Royal Holloway, became 'smokefree' on 1 July 2007, meaning that smoking in public places is no longer permitted. You are permitted to smoke outside the College, providing it's not within five metres of any building. The only place where smoking indoors is permitted is in individual rooms of residential accommodation (and only those designated as smoking rooms). If you are caught smoking, you will be fined or may be asked to leave College accommodation.

The legal age that a person may purchase and consume alcohol in the UK is 18. Bad behaviour due to excessive use of alcohol will not be tolerated on campus; you may be subject to disciplinary action by the College. If you are found to be drunk and disorderly in a public place off-campus, this could result in criminal action by the police.

### Local travel

#### Travelling by train

If you are between 16 and 25 years of age, you are eligible to purchase a Young Person's Railcard (costing approximately £26). This card will get you reduced fares (between 30–50 percent lower) on most rail journeys for one year. A Young Person's Railcard may be purchased at any train station or at the Students' Union. Full-time students aged 26 and over may also buy a railcard, although the application has to be endorsed by the College. Information on trains and fares in the UK is available at: **[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)**



# Living in the UK and student life continued

## Travelling on the underground

The easiest way to travel in central London is by underground train (tube). There are 11 lines and each has its own name and colour on the map. Free maps can be obtained from most tube stations. Tickets must be purchased from a machine or from a ticket office before you travel, or buy an Oyster Card (please visit [oyster.tfi.gov.uk](http://oyster.tfi.gov.uk)). You then have to pass through an automatic barrier by putting your ticket into a slot and collecting it at the other side or by swiping your Oyster Card. Remember to keep your ticket, as you will need it when you reach your destination and wish to leave the underground system.

For a day out in London, a One-Day Travelcard from Egham costs approximately £15.80 at off-peak times and £21.60 travelling at any time. This Travelcard covers your travel into and

out of London plus unlimited travel on the tube and London buses for that day.

## Tours in the UK and Europe

International Student House Travel Club organise trips and tours in the UK and Europe. For more information, please go to [ishevents.org.uk](http://ishevents.org.uk). More details and information will be given during orientation.

## Visa information

### Extending leave to remain

The length of time for which you are given permission to stay in the UK will be clearly stated on your visa in your passport or ID card.

You should therefore:

- Check the date on which your leave to remain is due to expire and make a note in your diary or on a calendar to ensure you remember.



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There could be severe problems or penalties if you allow your leave to remain to expire, as you will be in violation of the law.

- Apply to the UKBA for an extension before your leave to remain expires. Applications for an extension can be made in person, by post or processed through the College Batch scheme. However, keep in mind that you will have to submit various documents with your application, so you should begin to prepare your application several weeks in advance.

To extend your leave to remain, you must complete a TIER 4 (G). Copies of this form and notes on how to correctly complete it are available from Founder's West 139 or online at:

**[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/  
sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/  
tier4generalapplication](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/pbs/tier4generalapplication)**

**It is the student's responsibility to keep photocopies of all letters/documents sent to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND).**

### Batch scheme

Under this scheme, higher education institutions may submit applications for an extension of leave to remain on behalf of their international students. Your application is submitted to a member of staff on campus, so there is no need to travel to the office in Croydon or pay special postage. A Home

Office official who only deals with student visas will review your request. The cost for processing this way is £386 – the same as the postal application. In many cases applications submitted in this way are processed quickly and with fewer problems. For further details please contact [Internationaladvice@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Internationaladvice@rhul.ac.uk), or visit the International Student Support Office, Founder's West 139.

Payment may be made through the following methods:

Postal Service or Batch scheme

- Postal order only

Premium Service (Application in person)

- Banker's draft (drawn on a UK bank only)
- Postal order
- Debit or credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Delta, Switch only)

The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) has stated that they will not accept payment by any other means, including sterling drafts drawn on foreign banks.

### Personal applications

A charge of £702 will be made for applications made in person at the Immigration Department's Public Enquiry Office.

Applications made in person will normally be dealt with on the same day, as long as the

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application is complete and the IND does not need to make further enquiries. The office is busy and you must make an appointment in order to be seen. Please be aware that appointments may have to be booked up to several weeks in advance during peak periods. The Immigration and Nationality Department office closest to the College is in Croydon. The address is:

Border and Immigration Agency  
40 Wellesley Road  
Croydon  
Surrey CR9 2BY  
+44 (0)870 6067766



### Postal applications

There is a charge of £386 for applications made by post. The Home Office has stated that applications by post will be dealt with within 14 weeks of receipt at the IND. Remember to keep copies of all documentation sent by post and send your application by recorded or special delivery.

### Other requirements: ATAS certificate

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) was introduced in November 2007. In common with other Governments around the world, the British Government is working hard to stop the spread of knowledge and skills that could be used in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. The ATAS is designed to ensure that people who are applying to study certain sensitive subjects in the UK do not have links to WMD programmes.

If you intend to undertake postgraduate studies and/or research which lead to a Doctorate or Masters degree in certain designated subjects, you will have to get an Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate before you apply for your visa. Full details about this scheme can be found on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website:

**[www.fco.gov.uk/ATAS/](http://www.fco.gov.uk/ATAS/)**. Further information is available from [sue.silk@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:sue.silk@rhul.ac.uk).

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# Information for students with dependants



It is very important for you to think carefully about both the benefits and difficulties of bringing your family with you to the United Kingdom. If you do wish to bring your family with you during your studies, you must plan carefully. It is also strongly recommended that you plan to arrive first, in order to make all the necessary arrangements for housing and schooling before your family arrives.

## Accommodation for families

Royal Holloway has a limited number of flats and houses for postgraduate students with families. Most married students, however, live in privately rented accommodation in the local area.

Information and application forms for College accommodation are automatically posted to students. Only postgraduate students

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are eligible to apply for College family accommodation, and because of the limited number of properties we cannot guarantee that this facility will be available to all interested students. It is therefore recommended that you apply for accommodation as early as possible. The rent for family accommodation depends upon the size of the property. A guide to rental prices is available at: [www.rhul.ac.uk/](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/)

In addition to rent, you will also be responsible for paying the gas, electricity, water and telephone bills for your house, as well as council tax.

Council tax is only payable by non-students. If your spouse is not a student, you will have to pay Council tax on any house which you rent. Council tax is assessed on the value of a house and therefore varies depending on the house. A 25 percent discount is available if one adult in the household is a full time student, so you should not have to pay the full Council tax bill. For budgeting purposes, you should plan to pay about £80–£120 per month in Council tax.

The College has no facilities for assisting students in finding family accommodation in the local area. You will need to contact local estate agents in order to find appropriate family housing. The Housing Bureau has a list of estate agents in the local area, which is available upon request. Please keep in mind that the area around the College is relatively expensive, and house prices and rents have

# Information for students with dependants

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been rising steadily. As a guide, rent in March 2010 for a two bedroom flat in the local area was about £750–£1,200 per month; a local two-bedroom house was in the region of £950–£1,100 per month; and a three-bedroom house was £1,140–£1,450 per month.

Please be aware that there is no facility at Royal Holloway to house families on a temporary basis. If you wish for your family to come with you before you have made arrangements for accommodation, you will have to stay in a local hotel or Bed and Breakfast. Unaccompanied students may be housed in 'vacation residence' prior to the start of the session in September, to give them an opportunity to look for family housing. Information about local hotels and about the vacation residence facilities is available from the Housing Bureau.

### Childcare and schools

Arrangements for children will largely depend upon their age. In the UK, the local County Council is the government agency in charge of regulating schools and childcare. Royal Holloway is located in Surrey and most students live in this county. Surrey County Council has a website which provides information about all of its services, including schools and the regulation of childcare:

**[www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)**

Generally children in the UK start school between the ages of four and five and it is mandatory for children to attend school between the ages of five and 16. Schools run by the government are free of charge and the students attending are normally from the geographical area around the school. Therefore, it will not normally be possible to apply for a school until you know exactly where you will be living. Most school children will be required to wear a simple and practical school uniform. Details about the school's uniform and where they can be purchased are available from individual schools.

There is a wide variety of childcare available for children who are not yet of school age; this includes nurseries, crèches and child minders. Information about the types of childcare available, and a list of registered childcare providers, is available through the Surrey County Council website, listed above. Please be aware that childcare in the London area, including Surrey, is expensive. It is unlikely that care can be found for less than £5.00 per hour per child, and costs can go as high as £8 per hour per child. There is a nursery, Little Echoes, at the College providing care for children between the ages of three months and five years. Space at the nursery is limited and there is often a waiting list. Little Echoes can be contacted on +44 (0)1784 433279. In addition, the Sports Centre on campus offers childcare for school children from the age of five

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during school holidays and half-term breaks. Information about this service is available from the Sports Centre and registration forms are normally made available a few weeks before the holiday.

### **Health care for dependants**

The dependants (spouse and children) of a student are eligible for medical care from the National Health Service under the same conditions as a student. Therefore, in order for the family to be eligible for care, the student must be registered for a course of more than six months. If you and your family live in College accommodation or in the immediate area, you are eligible to register with the College Health Centre and can see the doctors there. If you live further away, in Egham or Staines, you will normally have to register with an NHS doctor there. Information about doctors in the local area is available

from the College Health Centre. More detailed information about the National Health Service can be found on pages 8–10.

### **Employment for spouses**

The ability of a spouse to work in the UK is dependent upon their nationality and in some cases on the length of the student's course. Spouses who are a national of a European Union country can be employed in the UK. Spouses of other nationalities are normally eligible to work only if the student is enrolled on a course of 12 months or more and has been granted leave to remain in the UK for at least 12 months.

If your spouse will be arriving in the country separately from you, they should carry photocopies of your passport/ID card to show the entry clearance officer. The photocopies should show your name, other details and your student visa.



# Contact information and useful websites

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## Royal Holloway, University of London

### College Switchboard

+44 (0)1784 434455

### Student Housing Bureau

+44 (0)1784 443358

accommodation@rhul.ac.uk

### Admissions Office

+44 (0)1784 443882

admissions@rhul.ac.uk

### Educational Support Office

+44 (0)1784 443966

educational-support@rhul.ac.uk

### International Student Support

+44 (0)1784 443663

internationaladvice@rhul.ac.uk

### Students' Union

+44 (0)1784 486300

Departments and services at the College have information on the Royal Holloway website:

**[www.rhul.ac.uk](http://www.rhul.ac.uk)**

## The United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

UKCISA offers information and advice to international students who are studying or considering studying in the UK. Their website offers information on a wide range of issues of interest to international students:

**[www.ukcisa.org.uk](http://www.ukcisa.org.uk)**

Student helpline: +44 (0)207 1079922  
(Monday–Friday, 1–4pm)

## HOST

Host offers the opportunity for international students to spend a weekend or holiday with a British family in their home:

**[www.hostuk.org](http://www.hostuk.org)**

## The British Council

For information about British Council activities and a list of offices worldwide:

**[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)**

## International Students House, London

**[www.ish.org.uk](http://www.ish.org.uk)**

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### Useful government websites

For information about who needs a visa to enter the UK and how to apply:

**[www.ukvisas.gov.uk](http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk)**

For information on leave to remain in the UK, including application forms:

**[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)**

For information on local county government services including schools and registered childcare:

**[www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)**

For information about driving licenses in the UK, car registration and taxes:

**[www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)**

### Travel Information

For information about rail travel and train times: **[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)**

For information about bus services in the local area, including service route maps and journey planner: **[www.tellingsgoldenmiller.co.uk](http://www.tellingsgoldenmiller.co.uk)**

For information on inter-city and airport link bus services including those from Stansted and Luton airports: **[www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)**

For information about the London underground, including fare information and journey planner: **[www.thetube.com](http://www.thetube.com)**

For information about travelling in and around London, including buses, river services and the Docklands Light Railway (DLR):

**[www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)**

The information given in this handbook is believed to be correct at the time of going to print. However, information and regulations may change from time to time, and the College reserves the right to alter or withdraw any of the information given here.



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