

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **International Foundation Programme (IFP)**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **January 2012**.

This programme aims to provide a bridge to undergraduate study for international students who are non-native speakers of English and whose current qualifications do not meet UK university entrance requirements. It is therefore useful for students who wish to take a 'stand alone' foundation programme which allows them to proceed onto undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway or another UK university. For progression to Royal Holloway, students will apply through UCAS and be offered guaranteed progression subject to meeting the entry requirements for the relevant department.

The IFP aims to develop English language skills, academic knowledge and understanding, and the critical thinking skills that will enable students to engage fully with university studies in the UK. More specifically, the IFP programme aims to enable students to:

- develop the English language and literacy skills needed to perform effectively within an academic context;
- attain an academic level at least equivalent to AS/A level in 2 subjects from: *International Business Management, Mathematics with Statistics, International Politics, Understanding Society, and Cultural Studies & the Arts*;
- become familiar with the academic and social environment of a UK university;
- acquire 'higher order' critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- develop a range of useful organisational and independent learning skills.

The programme is run on campus over a total of 30 weeks commencing in January. The teaching is divided into two blocks of 11 weeks each followed by one block of 8 weeks, which includes a final examination period lasting approximately 2-3 weeks. Students will receive a transcript of results upon completing the programme. Please note that the term dates and teaching blocks for the IFP commencing in January differ from the published College term dates during which teaching takes place.

Upon applying for the IFP, students select one of the following five streams: *Business Studies, Economics, Social Science, Arts and Science*. The choice of stream is confirmed upon enrolment on the programme. All students take a core course in *Global Perspectives & Academic English* and select 2 academic electives depending on which stream they wish to study. The core course in *Global Perspectives & Academic English* is weighted at 2 course units and each academic elective is weighted at 1 course unit each, thereby following the College model of 4 course units taken in each undergraduate year. The core course aims to provide the necessary framework for combining the acquisition of subject knowledge with acculturation to the HE environment in the UK and the development of appropriate linguistic and study skills. The academic electives available are: *International Business Management, Mathematics with Statistics, International Politics, Understanding Society, and Cultural Studies & the Arts*. Students need to pass all courses to pass the programme.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning are closely informed by the combination of courses being undertaken by students and by the syllabi in each IFP stream. However, on successful completion of this programme, students will be able to:

Knowledge and Understanding

- operate successfully in an HE academic environment in the UK;
- apply their awareness of contemporary British society;
- demonstrate knowledge, understanding and intellectual abilities in 2 academic subjects related to the Social Sciences or the Arts at AS/A2 level standard (NOF Level 3);
- communicate in an academic register of English to a level that enables participation in degree-level work.

Skills and Other Attributes

- locate, analyze, synthesize and critically evaluate academic sources, both paper-based and electronic*;
- construct evidence-based argument and present this in a coherent and cohesive manner in writing with due acknowledgement of sources*;
- understand the key points of lectures, and communicate opinions clearly and fluently in oral discussion; *
- apply a range of skills specific to the study of 2 academic subjects;
- participate effectively and appropriately in a range of academic settings, including lectures, seminars and workshops*;
- function effectively as an independent learner*;
- apply a range of study skills, including the ability to organise their studies*;
- make effective use of relevant ICT skills*.

* transferrable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Since the IFP aims to introduce international students to the academic environment of a UK university, there is a strong emphasis on active learning through small group discussions, problem-solving, independent research tasks, and assessed assignments that demand a range of analytical and critical skills. The core course (*Global Perspectives & Academic English*) plays an especially important role in acculturating students to university through a programme of lectures and seminars that map out key historical developments since the Enlightenment and explore a number of complex issues facing a globalised world. Both lectures and seminars are closely supported by English language classes that focus on academic literacy as well as grammar, vocabulary, and oral and written skills. These skills are applied and extended in the academic elective courses where discipline-specific skills are also acquired.

Given the aims of the programme, assessed coursework is important because it allows students to monitor their development through the year and also provides them with a strong motivation to learn. All assessed coursework receives detailed feedback which students are encouraged to incorporate in their

next piece of work. The College's plagiarism detection software, Turnitin, will be used for all summative coursework. Unseen written exams are also a key aspect of IFP assessment, and students are introduced to a range of techniques for preparing for and taking exams in a university setting.

Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the relevant [Department](#).

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Details of the programme structure

The IFP is divided into five streams. The structure for each stream is as follows:

IFP courses	Stream 1: Business Studies	Stream 2: Economics	Stream 3: Social Sciences	Stream 4: Arts	Stream 5: Science
Global Perspectives & Academic English	compulsory	compulsory	compulsory	compulsory	compulsory
International Business Management	compulsory	elective	elective	elective	elective
Mathematics with Statistics	elective	compulsory	elective	elective	compulsory
International Politics	elective	elective	compulsory*	elective	elective
Understanding Society	elective	elective	compulsory**	elective	elective
Cultural Studies & the Arts	elective	elective	elective	compulsory	elective

* if wishing to progress to Politics or a similar subject

** if wishing to progress to Sociology or a similar subject

Students will also have weekly small-group tutorials with a personal tutor. In addition, all students are required to take two hours of English language support classes per week and term. The designated personal tutor will guide students on choice of courses.

Please note that the list of available streams and courses offered to each cohort is subject to change and not all streams or courses run each year. A full list of streams and courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the International Study Centre.

The overall notional learning hours for the programme are 1200, with 300 per academic elective (equivalent to 1 course unit each) and 600 for the core course in *Global Perspectives & Academic English* (equivalent to 2 course units). Further information on weekly contact hours can be obtained from the relevant Department.

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Progression and award requirements

Students who successfully complete the programme will be awarded a Pass if they obtain at least 40% overall in each of the four course units taken. They will also be issued with a Royal Holloway Foundation Diploma.

For progression to the chosen undergraduate degree, each academic department specifies the grades required in particular courses. This is subject to an appropriate combination of subjects having been studied in each IFP stream, as detailed previously. For further details please refer to the Student Handbook for the IFP.

Progression to an undergraduate degree programme at Royal Holloway is based on the students' overall percentage mark for the IFP and the mark gained in the Academic Language & Literacy (ALL) component of the core course *Global Perspectives & Academic English*. The ALL mark replaces IELTS as a progression requirement for IFP students.

For each department, students are normally required to achieve the following results:

	Stream/s	Overall percentage	ALL mark
Classics & Philosophy	Arts	60%	65%
Comparative Literature & Culture	Arts	60%	65%
Drama & Theatre	Arts	65%	65%
English	Arts	65%	70%
European Studies	Arts	60%	60%
Modern Languages	Arts	60%	55%
Media Arts	Arts	60%	65%
Music	Arts	60%	65%
Criminology & Sociology	Social Sciences	60%	55%
Economics	Economics	60% (60% in Maths)	60%
History	Social Sciences	65%	55%
Management	Business Studies	65%	60%
Politics & International Relations	Social Sciences	65%	65%
Computer Science	Science	60% (65% in Maths)	55%
Earth Sciences	Science	No standard offer	
Geography*	Science/Social Sciences	60%	65%
Mathematics	Science	65% (70% in Maths)	50%
Psychology	Science	65% (55% in Maths)	55%

* FF68 and F840 – Science, all others – Social Sciences

The IFP does not prepare for programmes in Biological Sciences and Physics.

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Student support and guidance

- Compulsory one-week orientation programmes covering expectations and demands on the programme, the local environment, and the academic and support services available to students in both institutions.
- Weekly small-group tutorial with a personal tutor.
- The Head of Centre, Head of English and teaching staff are available and accessible by appointment and during office hours.
- Representation on the relevant Staff-Student Committee.
- Detailed Student Handbook.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College libraries at Royal Holloway, 24-hour access to independent learning facilities, computer and language laboratories at Royal Holloway.
- Access to all Royal Holloway support services including Student Counselling Service, Careers' Service and Health Service, as well as the [Educational Support Office](#) for students with special needs.
- Help and advice for undergraduate study at RHUL.

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Admission requirements

Applicants must have completed 12 years of schooling, usually having completed or almost completed secondary or high school education. Applicants must be at least 16 years old on the published start date of the programme. In order to be admitted to the programme, applicants must also be able to prove that their English language proficiency is at least equivalent to an IELTS score of 5.5 overall.

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Further learning and career opportunities

The programme will prepare students for an undergraduate level programme of study. It does not provide career training.

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Indicators of quality and standards

The International Foundation Programme has been fully validated by Royal Holloway, University of London. Quality and standards are monitored by the College. Teachers on this programme are either qualified and experienced subject specialists, or qualified and experienced teachers of English as a Foreign Language. Some staff members are qualified in both areas.

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List of programme

The programme is taught by staff at the Royal Holloway, University of London International Study Centre, and leads to the award of a Royal Holloway Foundation Diploma. The Banner programme code is given in parentheses.

International Foundation Programme (2505)

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