

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Pre-Masters Diploma for International Students (PDIS)**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2010**.

The programme focuses on the simultaneous development of linguistic and educational skills together with knowledge and understanding in the chosen academic subjects. It will enable students to develop their ability to study academic disciplines through the medium of English. More specifically the aims of the programme are to:

- prepare international students for postgraduate level study in most of the academic disciplines offered at universities in the United Kingdom;
- make effective use of English for academic purposes, and for a range of inter-personal and social purposes;
- help students acquire a range of study skills necessary for learning in a variety of modes at postgraduate level;
- enable students to study an academic subject at undergraduate level, thus providing an opportunity to develop understanding and familiarity with the language used and the approach taken to the study of the discipline which they intend to follow at Master's level;
- make effective use of computers to access information and support student learning;
- provide students with a clear view of their own capabilities and the postgraduate study opportunities open to them at Royal Holloway and other universities;
- develop a basic understanding of the British academic and social environment.

During Terms 1 and 2 students are required to take core English language courses equivalent to 8 hours of study per week in Term 1 and nine hours per week in Term 2. These courses focus on the English needed for academic purposes. Students also take a selection of courses from the In-sessional English Language provision totalling an additional 4 hours' study per week. All students take the equivalent of one undergraduate course unit in an academic department. This is usually in the subject they intend to follow at Master's level. In addition, each student has a one-to-one consultation with a Personal Tutor for one hour each week.

The programme lasts a period of nine months and is taught at RHUL over three semesters from late September to June including the exam period. By the end of the programme students will have applied for admission to a range of postgraduate degree programmes.

Further information

[Learning outcomes](#)

[Teaching, learning and assessment](#)

[Details of the programme structure\(s\)](#)

[Progression and award requirements](#)

[Student support and guidance](#)

[Admission requirements](#)

[Further learning and career opportunities](#)

[Indicators of quality and standards](#)

[List of programmes, with details of awards, degree titles, accreditation and teaching arrangements](#)

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

### *Knowledge and Understanding*

On completion of the programme students should:

- have developed a knowledge and understanding of the vocabulary relevant to their own subject discipline;
- have acquired some familiarity with texts relevant to their chosen academic field.

### *Skills and Other Attributes*

Completion of the programme will enable students to:

- produce written academic English to an acceptable graduate standard in a range of formats, including essays, projects and reports;\*
- summarise, analyse and evaluate written and spoken texts and understand their relevance and reliability; \*
- locate relevant information from a range of sources, including libraries and the Internet\*
- deal with writing essays in exam conditions;\*
- be able to understand and use appropriate oral communication within both academic and non-academic contexts, including participating in seminars, making a formal presentation and participating in informal discussions;\*
- develop effective listening skills in order to understand lectures and take notes;\*
- develop their IT skills;\*
- function as an independent learner\*
- exercise a reasonable degree of intercultural awareness;\*
- reflect on and prepare for their choice of future graduate study.\*

\*transferable skills

[Back to top](#)

## Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is primarily carried out in classes numbering approximately 15 students. A variety of learning forums are used throughout the year, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, and individual consultations. A range of formal and informal activities are also used to promote learning. These include: information-gathering and problem-solving activities; discussion activities in small groups or involving the whole class; role-play oral presentations; research activity; directed independent learning making use of the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) laboratory, the audio facilities in the Language Laboratories, and recommended materials from Royal Holloway International Student Resources.

All student performance is monitored by tutors and provides a basis for feedback.

Assessment on the programme is based on three elements:

an English Language and Academic Skills double component consisting of:

- an internal English language exam (50%)
- an assessed essay (10%)
- an oral presentation (20%)
- an assessed seminar discussion (20%)

an independent research project (6,000 to 8,000 words)

an examination on an academic unit.

Further details can be obtained via the [Royal Holloway International web page](#).

[Back to top](#)

## Details of the programme structure(s)

The Pre-Masters Diploma is taught over the three terms of the academic year. During Terms 1 and 2 students will participate in a range of English language and academic skills courses in Royal Holloway

International (see table below), take the equivalent of one undergraduate course unit in an academic department and participate in a Cultural Insights Task. Term 3 is devoted to the writing up of an independent project as well as English language and academic course assessments and examinations.

Core PDIS courses	Courses from Royal Holloway International Provision *	Academic courses
<p>Term 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy in Writing (1 hour per week)</li> <li>• Reading Focus (2 hours per week)</li> <li>• Writing Focus (2 hours per week)</li> <li>• Oral Communication Skills (2 hours per week)</li> <li>• Additional Skills** (1 hour per week)</li> </ul> <p>Term 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical Reading Skills (2 hours per week)</li> <li>• Writing Focus (2 hours per week)</li> <li>• Accuracy in Writing (1 hour per week)</li> <li>• Skills Focus (1 hour per week)</li> <li>• General IELTS preparation (2 hours per week)</li> <li>• IELTS Writing Preparation (1 hour per week)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A-Z: Key Aspects of Academic Writing (2 hours per week for 8 weeks)</li> <li>• Essay Structure and Academic Language (2 hours per week for 4 weeks)</li> <li>• Referencing Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism (2 hours per week for 4 weeks)</li> <li>• Critical Thinking for Academic Writing (2 hours per week for 4 weeks)</li> <li>• Academic Listening and Speaking Skills (2 hours per week for 4 weeks)</li> <li>• Presentation Skills (2 hours per week for 4 weeks)</li> <li>• Pronunciation 1 (1 hour per week for 8 weeks)</li> <li>• Pronunciation 2 (1 hour per week for 8 weeks)</li> <li>• Grammar (1 hour per week for 8 weeks)</li> </ul>	<p>One undergraduate course unit (or two half course units)</p>

*\*These courses are not specific to the PDIS programme. Students will study alongside other international students in the university and will select from the courses listed above.*

*\*\*This course includes preparation for independent study, information about the Cultural Insights Task and the Independent Project, and guidance on applying for postgraduate programmes.*

In addition to the taught courses, students are expected to spend at least 20 hours per week on independent study.

[Back to top](#)

### Progression and award requirements

The following levels of achievement are possible:

Pass which is defined as a student achieving

- a final mark no lower than 40% in the English Language and Academic Skills component;
- a final mark no lower than 40% in the Independent Project
- a mark of at least 40% in the academic unit or a mark of 40% in both of the two half course units taken during the Diploma year

Students who successfully complete this programme will be awarded a Royal Holloway Pre-Masters Diploma for International Students. Students will also receive a full transcript of their results.

For admission to a postgraduate programme, the receiving university specifies the level of achievement needed by PDIS students. Usually they are required to pass the PDIS and to achieve a specified IELTS score.

[Back to top](#)

## Student support and guidance

- Regular individual consultation with a Personal Tutor in Royal Holloway International where issues of an academic or personal nature may be discussed;
- Programme of orientation to the local environment and academic services ;
- Representation on Royal Holloway International Staff/Student Committee;
- Detailed Student Handbook;
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College library, Royal Holloway International Student Resources, CALL laboratories and language laboratories;
- Access to all College support services including Student Counselling Service, Careers Service, Health Centre and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.

[Back to top](#)

## Admission requirements

Applicants will normally be required to have completed a first degree with grades that are of a sufficiently high standard to qualify for graduate study at a university in the United Kingdom. Consideration will also be given to applicants over the age of 24 who do not have the equivalent academic qualifications but can demonstrate the necessary aptitude and commitment to complete the programme.

Applicants are expected to have a standard of English at least equivalent to an IELTS score of 5.5 (or TOEFL 527/TOEFL CBT 197 with TWE 4.0/TOEFL iBT 71 with 18 in Writing) in order to be admitted to the programme. Students with this score will normally be advised to participate in the Four-Week Pre-session English Language Programme run in Royal Holloway International. Candidates with an IELTS score of 5.0 or TOEFL 503/TOEFL CBT177 with TWE 4.0/ TOEFL iBT 62 with 19 in Writing) may also be considered but will be required to participate in the Eight-Week Pre-session English Language Programme. Further details can be obtained via the [Royal Holloway International web page](#).

[Back to top](#)

## Further learning and career opportunities

The Pre-Masters Diploma provides the opportunity for non-native speakers of English to develop the English skills necessary for postgraduate study and research. The postgraduate study then contributes to career development.

[Back to top](#)

## Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4\* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4\* standard and 18th for 3\* and 4\* research.

[Back to top](#)

## List of programme

The Pre-Masters Diploma is validated by Royal Holloway, University of London. The programme is taught by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and leads to the award of a Royal Holloway Pre-Masters Diploma. The Banner programme code is given in parentheses.

Pre-Masters Diploma for International Students (2438)

[Back to top](#)