



ROYAL DRAWING SCHOOL

DRAWING YEAR - POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME
ADMISSIONS POLICY

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ADMISSIONS POLICY

This Policy describes the admissions process for the Drawing Year at the Royal Drawing School and is designed to ensure that our admissions process is consistent, transparent and promotes fairness and equality. It is also intended to inform prospective applicants of the details of the admissions process to help them through the process and also to manage their expectations of the School.

At the Royal Drawing School, we recognise our community is enriched by a diverse student body, and faculty. Our aim is to make all our courses as inclusive as possible. We are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, irrespective of: age; gender (including gender reassignment and gender identity); race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin); being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; disability; religion or belief (including no-belief); sex or sexual orientation; caring responsibilities; socio-economic class; and whether such an identity is actual or perceived or whether this is by association with persons from any of these equality strands. This policy supports our objectives of diversity and inclusion.

1. Who can apply?

The RDS actively seeks to attract the widest range of students who would benefit from our course. We recognise the value in a broad range of talents, backgrounds and opportunities.

Anyone aged 18 and over are welcome to apply at any stage in their career as long as they can demonstrate their work is of postgraduate level and they intend to use the course to further their professional artistic practice.

Applicants will usually have completed a BA (Hons) degree in Fine Art or a related subject, but this is not essential; all relevant experience or qualifications will be taken into account.

We will consider a wide range of qualifications and relevant work or life experience as evidence of academic suitability. Although evidence of recent formal study or artistic practice (normally defined as having been undertaken within the past five years) is usually required.

Applicants are expected to show a strong portfolio of work demonstrating a commitment to drawing and a level of artistic professionalism appropriate for study at MA-level.

Regrettably, we cannot consider applications from international and EU students who are not eligible for a UK visa, Graduate visa or already have settled/pre-settled status. (See section 11 for information relating to international students.)

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2. Selection Panel

Each year the Academic Board of the Royal Drawing School appoints a Selection Panel responsible for assessing the suitability of a candidate for study on the Drawing Year in accordance with the School's published admissions requirements, and to offer applicants places.

The Selection Panel is also responsible for making recommendations to the Drawing Year programme staff of any reasonable adjustments (in accordance with the Equality Act 2010)

that the Royal Drawing School should make to support and enable students to complete the Drawing Year.

The minimum configuration of the Selection Panel is three members of Royal Drawing School senior faculty, chaired by a director of the School. Other members of the School's faculty and staff may be invited to join the panel. All members of the Selection Panel will have received selection training. Any change to the Selection Panel must be agreed by the Academic Board at the earliest opportunity.

All members of the panel have equal voting rights and responsibilities no matter their experience or connection to the school (other than the Chair of the Selection Panel who is non-voting). The Chair is responsible for ensuring that every member of the board understands their rights and responsibilities and for the integrity of the admissions process.

3. Application and assessment process

Each year the Royal Drawing School publishes its admissions requirements online and in other literature for applicants to make a decision on whether to apply based on accurate, timely and clear information.

Important dates relating to the application process are published on the School's website alongside other information for applicants including FAQ's and Open Day dates.

Applications typically open at least four months before the application deadline.

We provide a range of opportunities for applicants to visit the School in order to understand the course and facilities available. We welcome prospective students to attend in person Open Days or virtual events.

The assessment process takes place in two stages:

- First round assessment – this is a desk-based review by the Selection Panel of materials and information submitted by candidates.
- Second round assessment and interview – shortlisted candidates attend (either in person or online) an interview, with further review of their portfolio.

Following this, offers are made to successful candidates.

3.1 First round – Assessment

All applicants apply via the Schools [website](#), by filling out our online application form. The form asks for information about:

- Personal Details
- Digital Portfolio Upload
- Personal Statement (max 1000 characters)
- 2 Referees
- Education and Employment

- Equal Opportunities Monitoring¹

Referees should know applicants in an academic or professional capacity if possible, and be prepared to comment on work ethic, artistic practice, interaction with other students/colleagues and suitability for higher education. Referees are normally contacted after an applicant is invited to interview as part of the second stage of the application process.

In addition to their submission online, applicants must also submit physical sketch books to the School.

The application fee of £25 should also be paid in full before the application is submitted.

Digital portfolio

An applicant's digital portfolio should comprise:

- 10 Drawings - made in dry media, ink or watercolour
- 10 Additional Works - these can be work made in any media you choose

Images should be saved as JPEGs or PNG files, no larger than 200dpi and maximum 4MB per image. Please ensure images are of good quality. Works should be created within the last three years.

Animators may submit short video files or a combination of video and 2-D images of work within their Additional Works. Please limit each video file to 2 minutes.

Every image must be labelled in the following way:

Drawing1_TitleOfWork_Dimensions.jpeg
Drawing2_TitleOfWork_Dimensions.jpeg

AdditionalWork1_TitleOfWork_Dimensions.jpeg
AdditionalWork2_TitleOfWork_Dimensions.jpeg

'Drawing' or 'AdditionalWork' should be at the beginning of every file name to match the category you have uploaded the work in to, followed by the title of the work and the dimensions.

Dimensions should be measured in centimetres.

Supporting sketchbooks

Each applicant must support their digital application by sending or delivering physical sketchbooks to the school. Sketchbooks support applications in showing an applicant's working process and visual ideas.

¹ This information is used to enable us to ensure our processes are fair and consistent, and is not considered as part of the admissions process.

Sketchbook submission dates are advertised on the School's website and submission instructions are emailed to applicants following the final application deadline.

Applicants can bring sketchbooks to the School in person only on designated drop off dates, alternatively sketchbooks can be posted to arrive at the School before the final submission date.

Sketchbook submission must consist of:

- A maximum of 2 sketchbooks per candidate
- No books larger than A3 in size
- Single sheets may be submitted if they are bound together in a secure fashion so as to constitute a book of work
- No loose or rolled sheets of work
- No Portfolios

Unfortunately, the School is not able to accept or review sketchbooks that do not meet these criteria. Folders and portfolios of loose works are not eligible.

The Royal Drawing School accepts no liability for loss or damage to sketchbooks during any part of the application process.

We recognise that some applicants may face challenges in submitting physical sketchbooks (e.g. shipping costs, location, etc.) and want to support people to participate. The School is able to accept digital sketchbook submissions in these instances.

Assessment

During the first stage of the admissions process, the Selection Panel review all applications that have been submitted to the school correctly.

The Drawing Year is an intensive, skills-based programme that requires dedicated personal creative investigation and development of artistic practice. Only those students who the Selection Panel believe have the ability and potential to benefit from the course will be considered for interview.

We aim to contact all applicants by email or letter within a month of the application deadline to let them know whether or not they have been shortlisted for interview.

3.2 Second Round - Interview

All applicants who pass the first round assessment are interviewed in person. Interviews may be conducted by video conference or telephone, at the discretion of the Chair of the Selection Panel.² We recognise that some applicants may face challenges in attending in person (e.g. travel costs, mobility, caring responsibilities etc.) and want to support people to participate.

² We recognise that some applicants may face challenges in attending in person (e.g. travel costs, mobility, caring responsibilities etc.) and want to support people to participate. If you would prefer to undertake the interview by video conference please contact the School!

During the interview, the Selection Panel will re-review the candidate's digital portfolio (which they will be required to bring in physical form), along with their submitted sketchbooks and application form.

Candidates will also be invited to bring any additional works, images or sketchbooks that were not included in their original application to interview. Applicants may bring any works in any medium however the School cannot offer any physical assistance delivering the work to the interview room.

The selection panel will ask a series of pre-agreed questions. Each candidate will be asked to talk about the role of drawing in their work and the ways they see The Drawing Year benefiting their practice.

As the Panel must interview and review all shortlisted candidates before any offers of places can be made, the Selection Panel will not give any indication to interviewees about how well they have performed during the interview or the likelihood of them receiving a place.

3.3 Offers

All interviewees can expect to be contacted approximately a week following their interview with the Selection Panel's decision.

Deferred entry

The Royal Drawing School feels it important that applicants' current circumstances and artistic practice are taken into account when offering a place on the course, therefore, we do not offer a deferral system.

If after formally accepting a place on The Drawing Year, or at any point whilst studying on the course, a student decides to leave the course, they will be asked to formally give up their place and will not receive a completion certificate for the course, nor may they list the course on a professional CV.

Students who wish to restart the course on a following year will be required to reapply in the usual way within the advertised time frame.

3.4 Feedback

The Royal Drawing School receives high numbers of applications to the Drawing Year and as such the School does not normally provide feedback to applicants who do not progress to interview. Applicants rejected following interview may request feedback within one month of the date of the interview.

In line with GDPR, the Royal Drawing School will hold applicant data for one year only after the admissions procedure has concluded. Following this, all data will be deleted.

4. Appeals

Appeals can be made within one month of the application process closing. Appeals will only be considered if the Royal Drawing School has made an administrative error or mitigating circumstances have not been properly considered. Appeals will be referred back to the Selection Panel, or if required, to members of the Academic Board. The School will not accept appeals against the educational judgement of the Selection Panel in the context of an applicant's ability to succeed on the Drawing Year. The Selection Panel's decision is final.

5. Plagiarism and Fraudulent Applications

All work and material submitted during application process must be the work of the applicant. The Selection Panel will evaluate the originality of all work and any anomalies found in portfolios, personal statements and qualifications will be investigated. Applicants will be made aware of the evidence found and be given the opportunity to make representations. The Royal Drawing School reserves the right to reject any application if there is evidence of plagiarism or fraud.

6. Applicant Communications

The Royal Drawing School recognises the importance of keeping applicants informed throughout the application process.

Important dates relating to the application process are published on the School's website alongside other information for applicants including FAQ's and Open Day dates.

Key updates are provided throughout the admissions process and are usually communicated via email. Communications include, but are not limited to:

- Acknowledgement of application via email
- Confirmation of sketchbook drop-off dates and procedures
- Confirmation of rejection or offer of interview
- Information relating to Interview, including how to prepare for the interview; time, date and format of the interview; and how to make any accessibility requirements known to the school so reasonable adjustments can be made during the applicants interview.
- Information relating to student visas and UK settlement (where applicable) for overseas students
- Confirmation of interview outcome
- Formal offer of scholarship place on Drawing Year Programme
- Welcome and enrolment information
- Student Agreement and other documentation

FAIR ACCESS, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Royal Drawing School actively seeks to attract the widest range of students who would benefit from our course. We recognise the value in a broad range of talents, backgrounds and opportunities.

7. Removing financial barriers and providing access to financial support

The Drawing Year is a full scholarship course for all students – students pay no fees whilst on the course. We believe removing financial barriers to high quality tuition is an effective way to open access to education and careers in the arts.

Means tested bursaries and access to a hardship fund are available to support those students who require additional financial support whilst on the course. Bursaries are means tested and awarded on a term-by-term basis to reflect student's changing circumstances over the course of the year.

8. Academic requirements

Places are offered based on the quality of the work presented in the portfolio, supported by the applicant's personal statement and interview, not on academic qualifications or achievement.

Following an independent review in 2019, the Royal Drawing School currently chooses to remain unaccredited. We have taken this decision to ensure that people from all backgrounds and experience can apply and access the course based on talent and aptitude. This means that students without a formal qualification may apply if they can demonstrate their work is of postgraduate level standard and they have relevant professional experience, such as having exhibited their work or have equivalent professional experience.

We also welcome applicants from other disciplines such as English, History, History of Art, Science, Math etc. The Royal Drawing School welcomes and encourages applications from all backgrounds

There is no written component during the Drawing Year. While there is a critical studies component to the course, which takes the form of a short research project delivered orally by students in seminars, students are not required to produce any written work. This allows students to focus on developing their visual literacy through skills based artistic practice and tuition.

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9. Contextualised Admissions

Contextualised admissions is defined as information and data used by educational establishments, to assess an applicant's prior attainment and potential, in the context of their individual circumstances. The aim is to form a more complete picture of the applicant. Contextual data includes educational, geo-demographic and socio-economic background data, such as historic data about an applicant's school or college. Contextual information relates to individual applicant circumstances.

The Royal Drawing School recognises that Academic and socio-demographic inequalities mean that some students may not have benefitted from the same level of opportunities, qualifications and support during their education and while preparing of their application. The Royal Drawing School is committed to widening access and participation for applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

9.2 Meeting the needs of applicants with a disability or with additional support needs

The Royal Drawing School welcomes applications from candidates with a disability or additional support needs. Such applicants will be considered against the same criteria as all other candidates following the process outlined in this policy.

Applicants are invited to disclose their access needs at all stages of the application process (initial application, portfolio review/interview/offer etc). They are encouraged to do so as early as possible in the application process to ensure that necessary support arrangements can be put in place to support them during the admissions procedure.

In the event that a candidate with a disability or additional support needs is deemed eligible for an offer of a place, staff will contact the applicant to discuss the additional support the applicant is likely to require in order to manage their circumstances.

As a small institution we are able to respond to individual needs on a case-by-case basis and we endeavour to make reasonable adjustments where possible in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

10. Right to study in the UK: documentation requirements

All new students are required to produce their original passport or an original Biometric Residence Permit before beginning the programme. This documentation will be verified, scanned and retained in your student file. Documentation which cannot be verified may result in you being refused permission to continue on your programme.

For students of UK or Irish nationality, students will be asked to provide their British or Irish Citizen passport

For international students:

- Students with settled or pre-settled status in the UK, we will need to check it via a new UK government online checking system.
- Students who do not have settled or pre-settled status in the UK will need another form of immigration permission to study with us. i.e Graduate visa

Read more about requirements for international students in the section below.

11. Information for non-UK passport holders:

As an independent school, we do not have a UK Border Agency Tier 4 License for this course and are unable to sponsor Student visas. Regrettably, we cannot consider applications from international and EU students who are not eligible for a UK visa, Graduate visa or already have settled/pre-settled status.

EU/EEA and international students wishing to study on the Drawing Year will require either:

- A valid UK passport
- Settled or pre-settled status in the UK
- A Graduate visa
- Another form of valid visa for the duration of your studies

EU/EEA Nationals with Settled or Pre-settled status

After Brexit, all EU/EEA students require pre-settled or settled status in order to study on the Drawing Year. If you are originally from a country in the European Union (EU), European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland, you will need to have either:

- Settled status. Granted if you've lived in the UK for 5 years or more. Once you have settled status, you can stay as long as you like.
- Pre-settled status. If you've lived here for fewer than 5 years. This allows you to stay in the UK for up to 5 years and then you can apply for 'settled status.'

You will not be eligible to apply for the EU Settlement Scheme unless you were living in the UK before 31 December 2020. For more information please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/applying-for-settled-status>

Before starting study, Royal Drawing School would require evidence of your settled status and evidence of your identity.

Graduate Visa

The Graduate Immigration Route launched on 1 July 2021. A Graduate visa gives you permission to stay in the UK for at least 2 years after successfully completing a course of study (such as a BA/MA). Your current visa must be a Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa and you must apply before it is due to expire.

You can apply for a Graduate visa if all of the following are true:

- You are currently in the UK
- You studied a UK BA degree, postgraduate degree or other eligible course for a minimum period of time with your Student visa or Tier 4 (General) student visa
- Your education provider (such as your university or college) has confirmed you've successfully completed your course

A Graduate visa lasts for 2 years, beginning from the day the application is approved, and would give you sufficient time to complete the Drawing Year course (15 months).

Students wishing to apply for a Graduate visa would need to do so upon receiving a confirmed offer to study on the Drawing Year.

For more information please see [Graduate visa - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/graduate-visa).

DISCLOSURE OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

We appreciate the important role that education can play in the rehabilitation process. A criminal record will not automatically prevent admission to the Royal Drawing School. We aim to ensure that individuals with criminal convictions/cautions receive fair treatment, in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

First and foremost an offer will be made based on your ability to meet our application process. Upon receipt of the offer, and if you have any relevant unspent Criminal Convictions, you must contact the Admissions Team using the information provided in your offer letter.

If you then declare a Criminal Conviction we will write to you via email requesting further information. Further information could be in the form of a written personal statement from you explaining the details of the offence(s) and the circumstances around them, consent from you to contact your Probation or Support Officer (if applicable) for a detailed report or risk assessment and a relevant character reference.

We are conscious of our responsibility both to consider the needs of each applicant, ensuring they receive the support required, whilst also safeguarding the public and the RDS community.

The specific details of each case will be considered on an individual basis, including the impact of your criminal record upon the needs of the course and the wider Royal Drawing School community.

When an applicant's criminal records checks have been cleared by the RDS and therefore accepted for entry onto the course, they would be expected to self-declare any new cautions/convictions for review.

The relationship between an applicant/student, the RDS and any third parties is based on trust, confidence and professionalism. Failure to declare a relevant criminal conviction/caution and provide the requested information therefore means a risk assessment cannot be made. This could result in your application being withdrawn or becoming subject to student disciplinary procedures after enrolment.

If an applicant is yet to enrol, they would need to inform the Admissions team at the earliest opportunity to ensure continuation with the course. Or if after enrolment, then they would need to inform their dedicated Student Liaison Officer or Programme Leader. Any new information will need to be reconsidered under the same procedures as described above and could affect an applicant's/student's place on the course.

The Royal Drawing School will treat your information confidentially.

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