



ROYAL AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY
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Postgraduate Research degrees offer guide for international applicants 2015-2016



“Established in 1845, we are recognised nationally and internationally as a leader in the delivery of education, research and consultancy, in and relating to, agriculture and the rural environment”.



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Welcome to the RAU

Congratulations on receiving an offer to conduct your research project here at the Royal Agricultural University, established in 1845, we are recognised nationally and internationally as a leader in the delivery of education, research and consultancy, in and relating to, agriculture and the rural environment.



Our research degree programmes help our students to work under the supervision of experienced academics actively researching in agriculture, land, business management, food, equine and real estate.

We hope you find this guide to aspects of life at the RAU varied and exciting. We pride ourselves on being large enough that many facilities are on-site; yet small enough to create a friendly atmosphere. I do hope that you choose to come and join us at the Royal Agricultural University.

John Conway
Director of Research



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Academic Year dates

Research degrees start on either 1 October or 1 February each year.

You may apply at any time for a research degree but we only register people either at the beginning of October or February.

To meet those start dates you will need to apply well in advance in order for us to judge the suitability of your research proposal and whether we are prepared to supervise it. This may take a few weeks.

Once we are ready to offer you a place, you will need to obtain a visa which can take 10-12 weeks.

Useful web and e-mail addresses

If you have questions about your offer please feel free to contact admissions at any time.

Tel: +44 (0) 1285 889912

Email: admissions@rau.ac.uk

Postgraduate Applications

<http://www.rau.ac.uk/study/fees-how-to-apply/postgraduate-admissions>

<http://www.rau.ac.uk/student-life/living/accommodation>

E-mail: accommodation@rau.ac.uk

Fees

<http://www.rau.ac.uk/study/fees-how-to-apply/paying-fees>

E-mail: studentfinance@rau.ac.uk

Student Union

<http://www.rau.ac.uk/student-life/leisure/student-union>

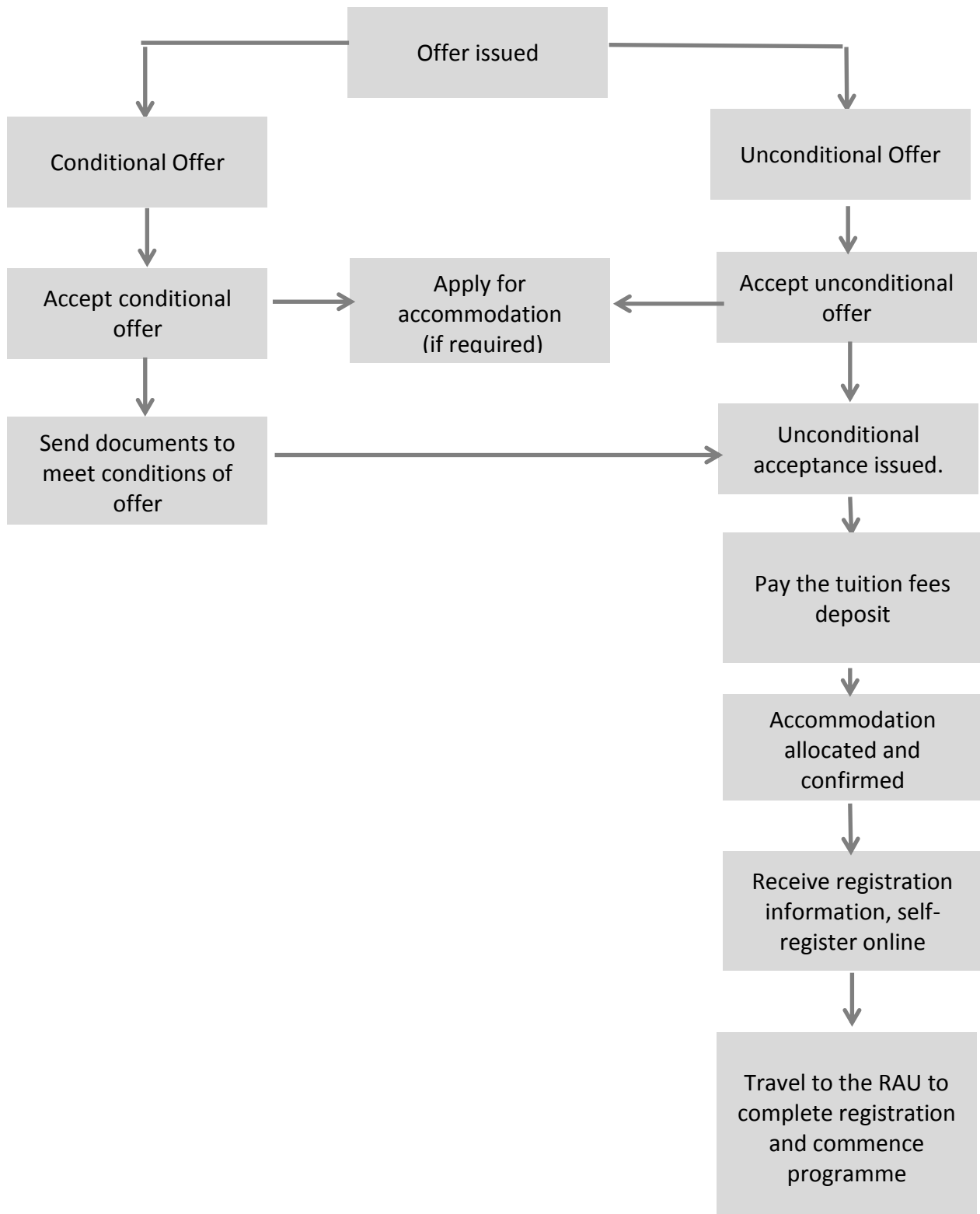
UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

<http://www.ukcisa.org.uk/>

Accommodation



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Your personal information

Name*

RAU student number
(found on your offer letter)

Programme for
which you hold an offer

*(You will need to have this information to hand when you contact RAU's Admissions Office)





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Post-confirmation checklist

Things to do between September 2015 and your October Registration at the RAU

September	Get vaccinated. All students – British, european or overseas – admitted to UK universities are advised to be vaccinated against Meningitis C and to ensure all their vaccinations are up-to-date.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Before you arrive in the UK(overseas students)	Ensure that you pay your fees or that you have a payment plan organised. You cannot complete your registration unless this is completed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Obtain sufficient UK currency or an international credit/debit card to cover you until you open a UK bank account	<input type="checkbox"/>
14 September - 25 September 2015	(Optional) International Orientation events offered to taught students	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 October 2015	Registration Update your UK term time address on the RAU Student portal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Within 7 days of your arrival in the UK	Nationals of certain countries will need to register with the police. RAU also arranges dedicated dates for students to do so.	<input type="checkbox"/>





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Your offer

You will be receiving an offer letter outlining the conditions of your offer

- If you accept a conditional offer it will remain at this stage until all of the respective conditions have been met.
- Applicants with an unconditional offer will have met all conditions required for the course.

“My RAU”

Once you receive an offer from the RAU you will be able to log into the university’s applicant portal. “My RAU” can be found [here](#), your username will be your eight digit student number which is printed at the top of your offer letter. Your password will be your date of birth in the format ddmmyyyy. You will be invited to change your password on your first visit.

English Language Requirements

If your Bachelor’s degree is not from a UK HEI or a majority English speaking country

HEI (excluding Canada) and you are not a national of a majority English speaking country then you will need to provide evidence of your English proficiency.

International postgraduate students must provide evidence of English language competence as follows:

- IELTS 7 overall (with no less than 7 in any of the elements) or equivalent.

If there is an English proficiency condition in your offer, it will be stated in your offer conditions on the offer letter you have received from RAU.

Booking an IELTS test

If you are planning to take an IELTS test we recommend you plan to take it early and in time to meet the 1 August deadline. Test dates in the summer are often full so plan and book your test early. More information can be found at ielts.org.

We are also pleased to be able to refund the cost of the IELTS tests for overseas students who choose to study at the Royal Agricultural University (RAU).



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Providing verification of your qualifications

The University will request to receive officially verified copies of your qualifications. If you are taking an overseas or European qualification you will need to provide us with certified copies of your results.



Alternatively, we can accept a reference sent directly from your referee's academic e-mail address.

You should submit any certified official documents as soon as they become available. For applicants requiring a study visa these should not be received later than 3 August 2015. Documents can be e-mailed to admissions@rau.ac.uk (only pdf files in colour and good definition will be accepted). The originals must be submitted on the day of your registration.

If you are an international student you should send us your documents as soon as possible as we cannot issue a CAS until you receive an unconditional offer.

If the University finds that the examinations/qualifications/results you have declared on your application are inaccurate or you are unable to verify them, the University reserves the right to withdraw the offer or cancel your application.

How to ensure that copies of your qualifications are correctly certified

Photocopies will need to be verified by your University. Photocopies of your certificates & transcripts must meet the following conditions:

1. The document must be signed and stamped by your institution
2. The signatory must also print their name and job title
3. If the qualifications/results are in a language other than English then a certified official translation¹ of the original document must also be submitted at the same time.
4. References must be provided on ¹the official headed paper of your institution and signed.



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Visa advice for international students

Overseas (non-EU//EEA nationals) applicants who hold offers of a place at the Royal Agricultural University are advised to allow plenty of time to apply for and obtain their student visa. You can apply for your visa up to three months before the start of your course. To apply you will need a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) number from us so that you can complete your Tier 4 student visa application.



Background Information Pro Forma(BIPF)

Starting in early May, all overseas offer holders who have accepted their offer will receive an e-mail with instructions on how to submit this important form.

- The BIPF form is mandatory for those overseas students who require a CAS number, which is used to apply for a student visa. The BIPF form must be completed and returned within 2 weeks of the receipt of the e-mail and no later than Friday 7 August 2015.
- Confirm your passport details to us
- Return the financial document to be used in support of your visa application



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Overseas students who require a student visa will not be issued a CAS number until the form has been completed and returned to us.

Visa Support Team

We have a Visa Support Team, who are immigration/visa specialists with extensive experience. The Visa Support Team provides you with a one-to-one personalised service covering every aspect of the visa application process and is always available to give you whatever advice you need in relation to your UK Study visa.

This specialist service is provided to you free of charge. When you have been given an unconditional offer by the RAU, the Visa Support Team will be in contact to guide you through the visa application process.

Please note the free visa support is only for student visas of students, who are studying with the RAU. The Visa Support Team can provide help with other visas, such as for dependents, but there would be a charge for those services.

The Royal Agricultural University has Highly Trusted Sponsorship (HTS) and is on the Home Office's Register of Sponsors. For all visa enquiries please contact visa.support@rau.ac.uk.

Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies-CAS

The CAS is a unique reference number issued to the RAU by the Home Office after we supply them with details regarding your programme of study, admissions and personal details. A CAS can be issued to you only once you have met the conditions below:

- Firmly accepted your unconditional offer
- Paid the required deposit for your course(or provided evidence of your financial sponsorship/student loan)
- Completed the BIPF form
- Confirmed your passport details to us
- Returned the financial document to be used in support of your visa application

Once you receive your pre-CAS statement e-mail you should check that the information it contains is correct paying special attention to your name, nationality, passport details and qualifications listed. If you notice an error you should immediately contact

visa.support@rau.ac.uk



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Once the CAS number has been assigned by the Home Office, the Admissions Office will e-mail you to let you know and we will provide your CAS statement and number to the Visa Support Team. The CAS statement lists the evidence we used to assess your application when making a decision to offer you a place. You will need to submit evidence of these qualifications (in the form of original certificate/transcript) along with your visa application.

Important:

Please keep the Visa Support Team and Admissions up-to-date with any changes to the information contained in the CAS statement (e.g. passport number) so that we can update the Home Office and avoid your visa application being rejected.



Newsflash April 2015: A new Immigration Health

Surcharge(IHS) was introduced on 6 April 2015. Payment is separate to the Tier 4 application and you must obtain an IHS number before submitting your application for a Tier 4 visa.

The IHS costs £150 per year for a student. It is calculated on the basis of the length of the visa you will be granted. For example a 12 month Masters student will be granted a visa

for 17 months, so they will have to pay £225. The IHS is mandatory and failure to pay the correct amount could lead to a refusal of your visa. Some people are exempt, but they will still need to obtain an IHS number to include in their Tier 4 application

To pay for the IHS please follow the steps below:

1. Read the [UKVI web pages](#) for the up-to-date information on the IHS;
2. Find out [when you need to pay](#) the surcharge or if you are exempt from payment;
3. Calculate how much your surcharge will be using the [Home Office Calculator](#). You should refer to your course dates as stated on your CAS.
4. [Create an account](#) and pay for your IHS. (N.B. If you have dependants, you can add their details at the same time you make your payment. There are various ways you can pay, but you should be aware the cost may be higher depending on the exchange rate).
5. Keep a copy of the email you are sent by the Home Office with your IHS number for reference. You will be required to write the number on your Tier 4 application form.



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When to apply for your visa

Our Visa Support Team will help you with your Tier 4 application. Please note that you cannot start a Tier 4 application until a CAS has been assigned by the RAU. If you apply without a CAS your application will be refused.

A CAS number is valid for 6 months and can only be used once. You can apply for a visa from up to 3 months before the sponsorship start date stated on your CAS. We strongly advise you to apply as early as possible in the 3 month window.

If you are already studying in the UK at a different institution you will have to apply for a Tier 4 visa for the RAU before you can register and start your course. You cannot start your programme at the RAU if you hold a Tier 4 visa for a different institution.

You will need to submit your passport as part of your application and attend a biometrics appointment. We strongly advise you not to arrange any other travel until your visa is granted.

Maintenance costs and financial requirements

If you are coming to study in the UK you will need to prove that you have enough money to pay for our course fees and your living costs while you are studying here. The Home Office refers to these as the maintenance (funds) requirements. You will need to prove that you have:

- Tuition fees for the first year of your programme or for the entire course if it is less than a year long
- Maintenance for up to 9 months of your programme (for students studying outside London in 2015 the maintenance level was set at: £820 per month. i.e. you will need to show 9monthsX £820= **£7,380**).

If you have studied in the UK recently, you may be able to show just two months' funds (2 X £820= £1,640). To see if you have an "*established presence*" read the paragraph further below.

Important: You must show that you have held the required money for a consecutive 28 day period (finishing on the date of the closing balance) ending no more than 31 days before your application.

The Home Office will accept only specific documentation and it is essential that you follow the guidance given by our Visa Support Team and the Home Office policy [guidance](#) to ensure that you can use and obtain these documents in time to apply for your visa.



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Monies paid towards tuition costs

We will update the Home Office CAS database with details of any tuition fee payments you make. This enables them to take such payments into account when calculating your ability to finance your studies in the UK.

Your CAS statement will list any accommodation deposits paid in advance. We advise that you pay a maximum of £1,020 for RAU accommodation before you apply for your Tier 4 visa.

If you make a payment towards your fees we will make updates to the Home Office database approximately within 48 hours after the money has cleared with our bank. Please ensure that you also write to the Visa support Team to inform us of any payments/additional tuition fee payments you have made. You must wait for an updated CAS statement from us before applying for your visa if you need to show that you have paid money to the RAU.

Important: It can take up to two weeks for monies to clear, so, you will need to plan for this when preparing your visa application.

You should not make payments if you have a visa appointment within the next fortnight as it is likely that we may be unable to issue you with an updated CAS statement before your appointment.

“Established presence”

The UKVI guidance states that an applicant is considered to have an established presence if you have:

current entry clearance, leave to enter or leave to remain as a Tier 4 migrant, as a student, or as a Post-graduate Doctor or Dentist, and on the date of your application:

- you have finished a single course that was at least six months long within your last period of entry clearance, leave to enter or leave to remain, or
- you are applying for a continued study on a single course where you have completed at least six months of that course; or
- you are applying for leave to remain as a Tier 4 (General) Student on the Doctorate Extension Scheme.



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You can qualify for the reduced maintenance levels whether you are applying from inside the UK or from overseas. You cannot amalgamate two or more courses to make up the six months study.

If you have an established presence studying in the UK, you must show that you have money for your course fees plus:

- **Outer London or anywhere else in the UK** £820 for living costs for each month of your course up to a maximum of 2 months.



What to pack if you are travelling from outside the UK

Documentation

Carry the below in your hand luggage in case hold luggage is late or lost:

- Passport
- Visa & entry clearance documents
- Your offer letter
- Proof of degree(final transcript, certificate)
- Scholarship/funding information documents
- Travel and health insurance documents
- Cash-Travellers cheques-credit cards
- Contact details and directions for your accommodation
-



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Clothing

The weather in the UK is changeable. Temperatures may go down as low as minus 3 degrees Celsius during the winter (Dec-March) and as high as 32 degrees during the summer (June-Aug). Rainfall is common throughout the year but most of the time is light.

If you arrive in September we suggest you bring a sweater and a light (waterproof) jacket or a small umbrella for the journey. A pair of comfortable waterproof shoes is also recommended. For country walking or field work you are advised to have a pair of Wellington boots.

There is no particular dress code. In general students tend to dress informally (jeans, T-shirt, trainers) whilst on campus. Smart clothes are occasionally worn either for recruitment events with employers or on social events such as the Freshers, the Christmas and the May ball.

Electrical appliances

Electricity in the UK operates on 220-240 volts. You should check your appliance manual to ensure it will work in the UK. You will also require a three pin plug adaptor which is available in most shops.

Mobile phone

Check with your home service provider before you travel to the UK. It may be expensive to make calls in the UK and back home from your current phone. Pay as you go phones can be bought for as little as £5 although individual call and text charges may be comparatively higher. Pre-pay phones do not require a UK bank account or address so they may be easier to buy if you are waiting to open a bank account. Do shop around to get the best deal before you decide!



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International Orientation

The RAU International orientation is a 2 week programme that includes a variety of formal and social activities to introduce you to the University, your School and to help you settle in to your studies.

During this time you are invited to attend events run by the University, your School and by the Student's Union.

International Orientation events begin on Monday 14 September 2015.

Detailed information can be found here: <http://www.rau.ac.uk/study/international-orientation>.

To book your place on the International Orientation, please use the form [here](#).

Registration

To complete your formal enrolment at the RAU you must register in person with the central administration. Registration is a straight forward process which involves you providing proof of your identity and eligibility to study in the UK.

During registration you will be issued with your student card which will confirm your status as a registered RAU student and allow you to use restricted access buildings, such as the Library. **Registration is scheduled for 1 October 2015.**



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Documents to bring with you to Registration

For EEA nationals

Photographic identification that verifies your EEA nationality, such as your passport or national identity card. Please note that the University is required to take a copy of your documents at registration.

For non- EEA nationals entering the UK with a student visa

Your passport showing evidence of your right to study at the RAU and the period for which you have permission to remain in the UK. Please note that the University is required to take a copy of your documents at registration.

Fees 2015-16

PhD UK/EU students

£4000 Full Time per year, minimum 3 years registration

£3000 Part Time per year, minimum 4 years registration

PhD International Students

£12,000 per year minimum, 3 years registration [part time not available]

Further information on fees (incl. part time study), financial support and how to pay can be found on our [website](#).



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Cost of living

On Campus accommodation costs

Self-Catered

Room Type	Annual Rate
En-Suite Single	£4,826

Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

Room Type	Annual Rate
Large En-Suite Single	£6,768
En-Suite Single	£6,581
Small En-Suite Single	£6,408
Standard Single	£5,292
Large Standard Single	£5,508
En-Suite Twin	£3,780

Fully Catered

Room Type	Annual Rate
Large En-Suite Single	£7,768
En-Suite Single	£7,581
Small En-Suite Single	£7,408
Standard Single	£6,292
Large Standard Single	£6,508
En-Suite Twin	£4,780



Please note that charges for electricity are in addition to these costs, but your internet and water costs are included.

Off Campus Living Costs

Off-campus accommodation charges vary depending on the type of room or house rented. Charges for a one-bedroom flat or room in a shared house range from £350 - £450 per month. Utilities such as gas, water and electricity may be an additional cost.

The table below gives an estimate on other living costs in addition to accommodation costs that you may occur while at university. Remember that costs vary depending on your lifestyle and you should also take into account flights or transportation to and from the UK.



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	<u>Monthly Cost</u>	<u>Academic Year</u> <u>Cost</u>
Gas / Electricity	£50	£450
Water	£45	£405
Internet	£20	£180
Mobile Phone	£25	£225
Laundry / Household Items	£35	£315
Leisure (meals out, cinema, bars, etc)	£135	£1215
Photocopying / Printing	£18	£162
Food	£200	£1800
Course Books / Materials	£75	£675
Insurance	£5	£45
TV Licence	£16	£144
<u>Total</u>	<u>£674.00</u>	<u>£5616.00</u>

You may want to use the [International Student Calculator](#) to help with your budgeting before you come to the UK.



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Choosing your accommodation



Student Accommodation at the RAU

At the RAU we have 320 student bedrooms that we offer to First Year Undergraduates, but we also offer a limited number of rooms to postgraduate students. We have a mixture of Catered and Self-Catered accommodation with the Dinner Bed and Breakfast option as standard, however, you have the opportunity to upgrade to a fully catered package. We also offer “quiet bedrooms” for students who prefer the more tranquil environment. The bedrooms are a mixture of standard rooms with shared bathroom facilities, en-suite rooms and twins

Accommodation Guide

If you'd like to read more about the Halls of Residence available for both Undergraduate and Postgraduate students, please download our [Accommodation Guide](#).

FAQs

If you have a question, please visit our [frequently asked questions section](#). If you still can't find what you're looking for, please contact the Accommodation Office:

E-mail accommodation@rau.ac.uk or telephone 01285 889896.



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Visiting the University



The best way to find out what the student experience is like at the Royal Agricultural University is to visit, explore, ask questions and meet current students and staff. Postgraduate Open Days are advertised on our website, or you are welcome to contact the Director of Research or your allocated supervisor to arrange a visit.



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The Student Union

The Student Union (SU) team are always busy developing fantastic activities, clubs, societies and some of the country's finest event weeks and balls. You'll be able to meet the SU team at the applicant day and find out what they can offer you. You can also view the list of societies and clubs at the RAU [here](#).





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FAQs

When do I need to send your proof of my qualifications?

If you are taking qualifications that are required for you to complete your conditions, it is your responsibility to ensure that your results reach us. You should send them to admissions@rau.ac.uk as soon as you receive them; and by 31 August 2015 at the very latest.

Overseas applicants who require a study visa will need to send in their results by the end of July 2015 the latest to allow sufficient time to apply for their visa application.

I have changed my postal and/or email address. What should I do?

Please notify the Admissions Office of your new address in writing as soon as possible.

I no longer want to start my postgraduate course, who do I tell?

It's important to contact the admissions team as soon as possible if you intend to withdraw your application.

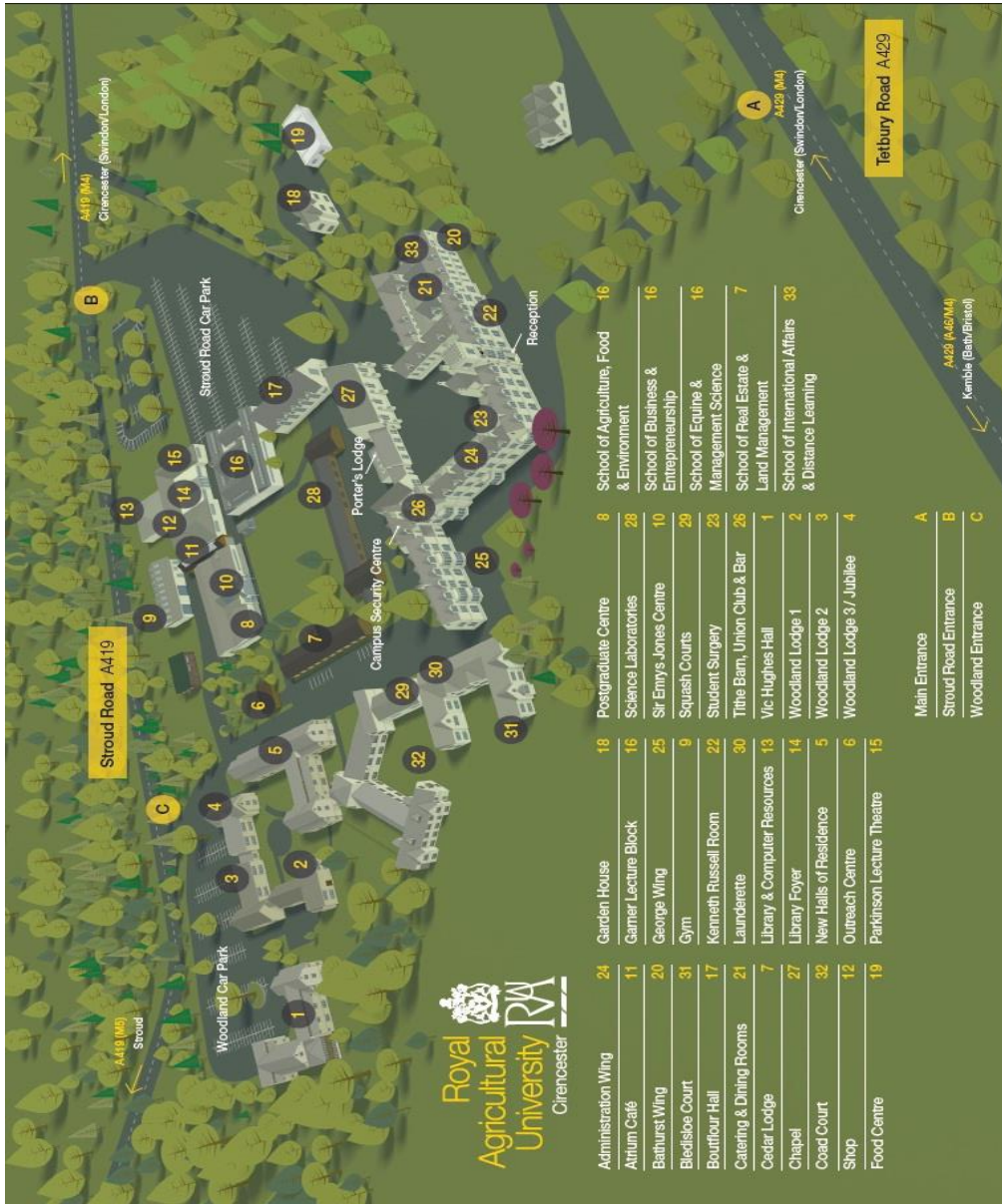
Who do I need to contact if I would like to talk to someone about special support arrangements?

The university Disability Officer Dr John Conway provides a range of services for students who have special needs, disabilities or medical conditions. If you would like to talk to John you can contact him at john.conway@rau.ac.uk or phone 01285652531 Ext. 2234



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Campus Map



ⁱ The translation must include: a) details of the translator’s credentials, confirmation that it is an accurate translation of the original document and the translator’s contact details. It must also be dated and include the original signature of the translator.