Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art & Design

Tuition Fee Policy 2027/28

Academic Year	2027/28
Approval date	November 2026
Approved by	Senate
Owner	Academic Registrar
Next Review	March 2027

1. Introduction and scope 1
2. Currency 2
3. Assessment of fee status 2
4. Student tuition fee liability 3
5. Tuition fee increases 3
6. Payment of fees 4
7. Funding 4
8. Discounts 5
9. Deposits 6
10. Cancellation rights for offer holders 6
11. Other fees 7
12. Withdrawals 7
13. Authorised Leave of Absence 8
14. Refunds 9
15. Processing of refunds 10
16. Outstanding payments 11
17. Queries and Complaints 12
Appendix A: Withdrawal and SLC Tuition Fee Loans 13
Appendix B: Authorised Leave of Absence and SLC Tuition Fee Loan 14
Appendix C: Authorised Leave of Absence (except for Home MArch Architecture students) 15

1. Introduction and scope

1.1. This Tuition Fee Policy (Policy) sets out the Royal College of Art's (RCA) policy and procedures in relation to the payment and refunds of tuition fees, deposits and other charges.

1.2. This Policy applies to all students studying at the RCA, and students who are enrolled with the RCA but studying on a programme delivered jointly by the RCA and another institution, and any student or applicant who has a tuition fee liability to the RCA.

1.3. Students enrolled on the MA/MSc Information Experience Design should be aware that the tuition fees for Year 2 of that programme are set by Imperial College London, and are subject to the terms and conditions of that institution. Individuals are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these.

1.4. By accepting an offer of a place or enrolling on a programme at the RCA, you agree to abide by the terms of this Policy.

1.5. Please read this Policy alongside the student Terms and Conditions document. If you would like further information or advice on this Policy or tuition fees in general, please contact student-support@rca.ac.uk.

1.6. Details of tuition fee amounts can be found under the relevant programme page on the RCA website.

1.7. Information on how to pay tuition fees can be found on RCA website 'Paying your Fees' page.

2. Currency

2.1. All fees and charges published by the RCA are in Pounds Sterling (GBP) unless stated otherwise.

2.2. Fees are payable in British Pounds Sterling. You will be responsible for paying any bank, card or transfer fees that are incurred when paying your programme fees.

3. Assessment of fee status

3.1. Tuition fees vary by programme of study. They also vary according to whether a student is liable to pay the 'Home' or 'Overseas' rate of tuition fee.

3.2. Tuition fee status is determined by government regulations and depends on factors which can include, but are not limited to, your nationality, where you live and how long you have lived there, your immigration status, and the nationality of relevant family members. The decision made by RCA in respect of your fee status is subject to the relevant legislation in place at the time of your enrolment, therefore it usually remains the same for the duration of the programme.

3.3. The RCA will make a preliminary assessment of your fee status in accordance with the information provided by you during the application process. You will receive your preliminary assessment together with details of your tuition fee amount in your offer letter. There may be

circumstances in which we require further information to enable us to assess your fee status. Where we require further information, we will ask you to complete and submit a fee status questionnaire along with any documentation.

3.4. If you do not provide the evidence requested by the RCA for the purposes of determining your fee status, you will be classed as an "Overseas" student and charged the corresponding programme fees until the requested evidence has been provided.

3.5. If you wish the RCA to reconsider the preliminary assessment of your fee status you can also request a fee status questionnaire via the applicant portal on the RCA website. The RCA will then write to you to confirm your fee status.

3.6. If you have been given a fee status that you wish to appeal, you should request this via the applicant portal. Appeals will only be considered on the basis that the appropriate process has not been followed, or the decision contravenes the relevant regulations setting out the categories of fee status as set by the government. The Academic Registrar's decision is the final decision on behalf of the RCA.

3.7. Your fee status will normally remain the same throughout your programme. There are only very limited circumstances in which fee status can change during a programme. More information can be found in the UKCISA guidance. Where your fee status changes during your programme, it will only take effect from the next academic year and will not be backdated.

3.8. Information regarding fees and funding is available on our website.

4. Student tuition fee liability

4.1. You are personally liable for payment of your tuition fees throughout your programme of study, even where an external sponsorship arrangement is in place or you have arranged for the RCA to receive payment on your behalf from the Student Loans Company ("SLC") or a loan scheme administered by your home government. If that third party fails to pay your tuition fees, you remain liable to the RCA for payment of any outstanding fees due.

4.2. You should note that postgraduate and doctoral loans from the SLC are paid directly to you and not to the RCA. You are therefore responsible for paying your tuition fees directly to the RCA yourself. Payment methods are explained on the RCA website.

5. Tuition fee increases

5.1. The RCA reserves the right to increase tuition fees in the second and subsequent years of your programme. Fees for PhD/MPhil students will increase each year.

5.2. Any increase in fees will be in line with inflation as measured by the CPI or (if applicable) the maximum government fee cap. Any increase will be noted on an invoice from the College before the start of the new academic year.

5.3. If you are dissatisfied with the proposed increase, you have the right to terminate your contract with the RCA.

6. Payment of fees

6.1. **For Graduate Diploma Architecture and Spatial Practice, MA, MArch, MRes, programmes**: If your fee status is classed as 'Home' and you are self-funding your studies, or your fee status is classed as 'Overseas', a minimum of 50% of your tuition fee is payable in advance of enrolment or within 3 weeks of the invoice date. The second half is payable before the first day of the January term. This option is not available to Graduate Diploma Art & Design students.

6.2. **For MDes, MFA, MPhil, and PhD programmes**: If your fee status is classed as 'Home' and you are self-funding your studies, or your fee status is classed as 'Overseas', a minimum of 50% of your tuition fee for Year 1 is payable in advance of enrolment or within 3 weeks of the invoice date. The second half is payable before the first day of the January term. The same process applies for Year 2 and subsequent years.

6.3. **Graduate Diploma Art & Design** students are liable to pay 100% of the tuition fee in advance of enrolment.

6.4. **MArch Architecture students only:** If your fee status is classed by the RCA as 'Home' and you are taking out the undergraduate tuition fee loan in full from the SLC, you will not be required to make any fee payments and can enrol once your loan has been approved, subject to meeting all other conditions of enrolment. If your loan is not approved by the end of August, please email student-support@rca.ac.uk confirming on what date you applied for your loan.

6.5. In order to re-enrol for the second or subsequent year of your programme, you must have paid all tuition fees due to the RCA from the previous academic year(s).

6.6. **For grant-funded MPhil/PhD students**: if you continue to be registered after your funding end date, you are liable for the related fees from that date.

6.7. The fee rate for **Part Time Postgraduate Research students** is 65% of the Full Time, low residency fee. Only Full-Time students may choose between high or low residency status.

6.8. Research students who move into **Continuation status** will be charged a specific Continuation status tuition fee per term (Continuation status should always begin from the start of a new term). You can find more information regarding the fees here.

7. Funding

7.1. **RCA scholarships:** If you have been awarded an RCA scholarship in support of tuition fees, any fee amounts covered will be reflected on the RCA portal as soon after awarding as possible. For partial RCA tuition fee scholarships, until the portal is updated, please deduct any amount

awarded from the total invoice amount owing when making your payment. Please be aware that if your RCA scholarship does not cover your full tuition fees you will be responsible for making up any shortfall.

7.2. **External sponsors:** If an external sponsor has agreed to pay all or part of your tuition fees you will need to provide a valid sponsor letter before enrolment.

7.3. **International government loans:** If you are funded by a government loan from your home country, the RCA will need to see proof of that funding. In the case of US Loans, the RCA can check this via the US Loans website. For all other countries, you must provide written confirmation of the funding before you can enrol. Fee payment schedules in line with loan disbursement dates are only granted by request, and at the discretion of the RCA.

7.4. **Masters or Doctoral Loans:** If your fee status is classed by the RCA as 'Home' and you are taking out a Postgraduate Loan or Doctoral Loan, you can pay your tuition fees in three equal instalments in line with your loan payments each year (September, January and May). These payments must be made no more than 21 days after the receipt of your instalment, or you risk suspension and/or withdrawal for non-payment of tuition fees.

You can enrol once your loan has been approved, subject to meeting all other conditions of enrolment, and we will confirm your enrolment with the SLC in order to release the first instalment payment to you.

You must be enrolled a minimum of five working days before the start of term to facilitate SLC paying you your first loan instalment as close to the start of term as possible. If your loan is not approved by this date please email student-support@rca.ac.uk. Those enrolling later should allow up to an additional ten working days to receive the first instalment.

Please be aware that you are responsible for paying the difference between the amount of your Postgraduate or Doctoral loan and the full cost of your tuition fees.

7.5. **Studentship Funding for Postgraduate Research Students (Training Grants):** If you are in receipt of a studentship via a Doctoral Training Partnership, Collaborative Doctoral Partnership, Doctoral Landscape or Focal Award, your fees will be paid directly by the Research Office. You will still receive an invoice for your records. If a student continues to be registered after their funding end date, they are liable for the related fee charges from that date.

8. Discounts

The RCA offers some tuition fee discounts for students progressing between certain RCA programmes. These may change year-to-year. Details can be found on the website.

9. Deposits

9.1. You are required to pay a fee deposit within 3 weeks of receiving your offer in order to secure your place at the RCA. The amount of your deposit payment and the deadline for payment will be set out in your offer letter. If your deposit is not paid by the deadline as set out in your offer letter, your offer may be withdrawn.

Please note that unless you have been granted a temporary deposit exemption while awaiting the outcome of a scholarship application, or you are exempt because you have an approved Studentship (Training Grant for a Doctoral Programme), your offer may be withdrawn if your deposit is not paid by the deadline.

9.2. There are a limited number of circumstances where you will be exempted from paying your deposit:

9.2.1. Where you have been granted a temporary deposit exemption while awaiting the outcome of a scholarship application;

9.2.2. If you are a PGR student who has an approved Studentship (Training Grant for a Doctoral Programme);

9.2.3. If you are applying to the MArch Architecture programme, have a 'Home' fee status, and intend to take out a tuition fee loan from Student Finance.

9.3. Any deposit payment will be used as part payment of the first instalment of your tuition fees only, and not as payment for any additional services e.g. English language tuition.

9.4. If you are permitted to transfer to a different RCA programme to the one you originally applied for; your deposit may be put towards your new programme.

10. Cancellation rights for offer holders

10.1. Please note that, as stated in the student Terms and Conditions document, you have a statutory right to cancel your contract with the RCA for any reason within 14 days from the date you accept your offer of place on a programme.

10.2. To cancel the contract, you must inform us by clear statement of your decision to cancel by completing our Cancellation Form before the 14-day "cooling off" period has expired. Please raise an enquiry through the Applicant Portal to state your decision to cancel and attach a copy of the Cancellation Form.

10.3. If you cancel your contract with the RCA during the 'cooling off' period, any deposit you have paid will be refunded to you via the original payment method. Refunds will normally be paid within six weeks.

10.4. If the original payment method is not available then the College, in order to comply with UK Anti-Money Laundering legislation, may require some additional ID verification before being able to process the refund. This may delay the process beyond the timeframes mentioned.

11. Other fees

11.1. There are some circumstances in which you may be charged additional mandatory charges on top of your tuition fees. The RCA will provide details of any additional mandatory charges as part of the programme information made available on the programme pages on our website, and in your offer letter. Examples of additional mandatory charges include:

11.1.1. Mandatory equipment and materials.

11.1.2. Travel and accommodation costs for compulsory field trips and residencies.

You will be responsible for paying any such additional mandatory charges.

11.2. There may also be optional costs that fall outside of your tuition fees such as optional trips, events and programme-related materials that we make available for purchase (sometimes at discounted rates).

11.3. **Postgraduate Research students** who transfer to the RCA from another institution partway through their studies will be charged fees on a pro-rata basis.

12. Withdrawals

12.1. If you decide to leave your studies (**withdraw**) you need to complete the withdrawal request form on the RCA intranet page. You should do this as soon as possible in order to minimise the amount of tuition fees you are required to pay. If you withdraw and apply for the same or a different programme you will be classed as a new student for fees purposes, and will be liable for the full fee amount for the new programme.

12.2. If you wish to withdraw from your programme within 14-days of the official programme start date (the first day of term in your first year of study), the RCA will refund any fees already paid. You will not normally be eligible for a deposit refund (please see section 13.1).

12.3. **If you wish to withdraw more than 14-days after the official start date of your programme, your tuition fee liability will depend on the date of your withdrawal:**

12.3.1. For **all students** except those on the MArch Architecture programme; if you withdraw more than 14-days after the first day of term 1, you will be charged pro-rata, per term.

12.3.2. For students with **Home fee status, and in receipt of an SLC Tuition Fee Loan (MArch Architecture):** if you have a fee status of Home and are in receipt of a SLC

Tuition Fee Loan which covers your full fees, and you withdraw, you will be charged tuition based on your last date of attendance as per the table in Appendix A.

12.3.3. Graduate Diploma: Art & Design students are required to pay 100% of their tuition fees upon enrolment. If you withdraw more than 14-days after the first day of term 1, you will be charged pro-rata, per term.

12.4. If we withdraw you for **non-attendance** you will be expected to pay tuition fees for studies undertaken up until your last recorded date of attendance or engagement at the RCA. This may also include the costs of administering your withdrawal if you have provided fraudulent or misleading information relating to your studies.

12.5. If we withdraw you for **academic or other reasons** (e.g. disciplinary) you will be charged tuition fees for the full academic year.

13. Authorised Leave of Absence

13.1. If you are considering taking an authorised leave of absence (time out of your programme) you should follow the RCA's Leave of Absence Policy.

13.2. If you are permitted to take a leave of absence, and the first day of your authorised period of leave is beyond the 14-day cooling off period at the start of the academic year, you will be required to pay the fees for any terms commenced, plus a nominal fee of £500 for any term, or part of term, you retake upon your return. See Appendix C for examples.

13.3. For students with **Home fee status, and in receipt of an SLC Tuition Fee Loan (MA Architecture)**: if you have a fee status of Home and are in receipt of a SLC tuition fee loan which covers your full fees, and you take an authorised leave of absence, you will be liable for tuition fees based on your last date of attendance as per the table in Appendix B.

13.4. If you take an authorised leave of absence from your studies, when you return to study you will pay tuition fees at the rate for the academic year that you return in. For example, if you take an authorised leave of absence in the 2025/26 academic year and return in the 2026/27 academic year, you will pay fees at the rate applicable in the 2026/27 year which may be higher.

13.5. If you are in receipt of an RCA tuition fee scholarship and you take an authorised leave of absence, the RCA will endeavour to hold the scholarship support for a period of up to one year only. Please contact scholarships@rca.ac.uk to check the terms and conditions which apply to that funding before deciding to take a leave of absence.

13.6. If you are receiving funding from a sponsor or your studies are funded by an external scholarship or through a government loan scheme in your home country, you should check the terms and conditions that apply to that funding before deciding whether or not to apply for a leave of absence.

13.7. Where you owe tuition fees for the period of study taking place *before* the beginning of the leave of absence, the RCA will require payment in full before you are permitted to return.

14. Refunds

14.1. **Deposit Refunds**

14.1.1. If you cancel your contract with the RCA during the 'cooling off' period, any deposit you have paid will be refunded to you via the original payment method. Refunds will normally be paid within six weeks.

14.1.2. In certain other, limited, circumstances you may be eligible to request a refund for any deposit paid. You may request a deposit refund due to one of the following reasons:

i) If your visa application is refused through no fault of your own. A copy of the refusal letter must be sent alongside your refund request.
ii) If you do not enrol or have withdrawn from your programme because you are prevented from continuing due to serious illness or other exceptional circumstance outside of your reasonable control.
iii) You have been informed of your eligibility for a deposit refund following an unsuccessful Temporary Deposit Exemption application.

14.1.3. Any such refund request must be supported by evidence and the RCA will decide each case based on your individual circumstances. The Academic Registrar's decision on eligibility will be final.

14.1.4. Failure to meet the conditions of your offer within your control (e.g. successful achievement of any English Language requirements) will not constitute eligibility for a deposit refund. This includes failure to complete an English language or academic skills programme at the RCA.

14.2. **Tuition Fee Refunds**

14.2.1. In certain limited circumstances you may be eligible to request a refund for any tuition fees paid.

14.2.2. If you choose to withdraw from your programme and you are eligible for a refund, the refund amount will be determined at the point at which you withdraw, in accordance with 11.3.

14.2.3. All tuition fee refunds are paid to whoever originally paid the fees, using the same payment method, normally within 6 weeks of the refund being approved and receipt of all the required information. If the original payment method is not available then the College, in order to comply with UK Anti-Money Laundering

legislation, may require some additional ID verification before being able to process the refund. This may delay the process beyond the timeframes mentioned.

14.2.4. You will normally only be eligible for an **automatic refund** of any tuition fees paid, including any deposits already paid, if:

i) You have made an overpayment;
ii) A sponsor, or the SLC has agreed to pay your fees after you have already paid your fees;
iii) You are in receipt of a RCA fee scholarship for either the full fee amount, or where the scholarship amount and the amount already paid by you constitute an overpayment.

14.2.5. You may also be eligible to request a refund of any tuition fees paid, prior to enrolment, due to one of the following reasons:

i) If your visa application is refused through no fault of your own. A copy of the refusal letter must be sent alongside your refund request.
ii) If you do not enrol or have withdrawn from your programme because you are prevented from continuing due to serious illness or other exceptional circumstance outside of your reasonable control.

Any such refund request must be supported by evidence and the RCA will decide each case based on your individual circumstances.

14.2.6. If you meet the above conditions, any agreed refund will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. In exceptional circumstances as set out in the Terms and Conditions, the RCA may be unable to deliver a programme which it has advertised, offered places on or enrolled students on. In such circumstances the RCA will make every reasonable effort to avoid disruption and offer reasonable alternatives as set out in more detail in the Terms and Conditions.

14.3. In the event of **programme closure** you may be entitled to a fee refund or compensation if satisfactory alternative arrangements cannot be made for you on an alternative programme within the College.

14.4. Where your deposit and/or tuition fees have been paid directly to the RCA by a sponsor then any refund will be paid directly to that sponsor.

14.5. If your **contract with the RCA is terminated** by the RCA for academic, disciplinary or other reasons, the RCA reserves the right not to refund any fees, any deposit, and/or any additional costs associated with your programme that you may have paid to the RCA or third parties.

14.6. If you have any outstanding debts to the RCA, the RCA will deduct any amount owed from your refund.

15. Processing of refunds

15.1. Offer holders can request a refund via the Applicant Portal. Enrolled students should email registry@rca.ac.uk

15.2. Refund requests made under paragraph 13.1 and 13.2 above must be accompanied by documentary evidence such as a medical letter, or a refusal notice issued by the UK immigration authorities.

15.3. Subject to compliance with the RCA's policy on anti-money laundering, fraud and international sanctions, any written agreement entered into by the RCA and a third-party sponsor for the payment of fees (in full or in part) will take precedence over this Policy if the agreement sets out how refunds are handled.

15.4. Bank charges may be deducted by the RCA if the refund is made by electronic transfer. These charges are set by banks and will not be waived or covered by the RCA.

15.5. Refunds processed to an overseas bank will be subject to a local administration charge. These are set by the banks and outside of the RCA's control.

15.6. Refunds will not be made in cash or by banker's draft.

16. Outstanding payments

16.1. To progress and complete your programme, you must pay all of your tuition fees and other academic-related charges for your programme in full. Any outstanding tuition fees or other academic-related charges may affect your ability to progress to the next year of your studies or graduation.

16.2. Students with outstanding debts to the College will be contacted regularly by the Finance team to organise payments. Failure to respond or mutually agree an instalment plan more than three weeks after Term 2 and/or subsequent terms will lead to the Registry team placing a suspension status on the student account.

16.3. During suspension, access to the RCA's resources and IT facilities may be revoked until all tuition fee payments have been settled. RCA inboxes will still be accessible for students to seek support from relevant teams. If payment plans have not been confirmed within two weeks of the suspension status, students will normally be withdrawn from the College. Students should therefore ensure that they have adequate funds in place to meet their tuition fee liability.

16.4. If you are experiencing financial difficulties:

16.4.1. If your funding is unexpectedly delayed and you cannot meet an instalment deadline, contact Finance (accounts-receivable@rca.ac.uk) as soon as possible.

16.4.2. If you encounter unexpected financial difficulties and can no longer meet agreed tuition fee payments, it is very unlikely that the RCA has available funding to cover this cost. Students can contact student-support@rca.ac.uk for practical and wellbeing advice.

16.5. Failure to pay your fees in line with stated deadlines will result in the suspension of your student account and may result in the RCA withdrawing you from your studies.

17. Queries and Complaints

17.1. If you have questions regarding the content or application of this policy, or if you are not satisfied with a decision taken regarding the fees you have been charged, the arrangements for payment, refunds or any sanctions imposed for non-payment, enrolled students can email registry@rca.ac.uk and offer holders can contact us via the Applicant Portal.

17.2. If you are not satisfied with our response under 19.1, enrolled students can submit a formal complaint via the Student Complaints Policy, and offer holders can contact us via the Applicant Portal.

Appendix A: Withdrawal and SLC Tuition Fee Loans

If you have a fee status of Home and are in receipt of a SLC tuition fee loan which covers your full fees, and you withdraw, you will be charged tuition fees based on your last date of attendance as per the table below:

Last Date of Attendance in an academic year:	**Percentage of Tuition Fee Charged**
Term 1 (but more than 14 days after the first day of term)	25% (of total fee amount)
Term 2	50% (of total fee amount)
Term 3	100%

If you are receiving an SLC loan and you choose to withdraw from your programme, we will report your withdrawal to the SLC who will make the necessary adjustments to your funding payments. If you require any further information on how your withdrawal will affect your SLC loan, please email student-support@rca.ac.uk, and the Student Loans Officer will be in contact with you.

It is also important that you individually contact your student finance provider and inform them of your withdrawal as soon as possible. You will be liable to repay any loan amount the SLC has overpaid you by as a result of your withdrawal. Please refer to SLC guidance for further information. If the student finance provider has additional requirements of you in relation to your engagement with your programme and your loan payments, it is your responsibility to ensure that you act in accordance with these.

Appendix B: Authorised Leave of Absence and SLC Tuition Fee Loan

If you have a fee status of Home and **are in receipt of a SLC tuition fee loan** which covers your full tuition fees, and you take a leave of absence you will be charged tuition fees based on your last date of attendance as per the table below:

Last Date of Attendance in an academic year:	**Percentage of tuition fee charged in year where LoA is taken**	**Resumption of study point**	**Percentage of tuition fee charged in year of resumption**
Term 1 (within the cooling off period)	0%	Term 1	100%
Term 1 (more than 14 days after the start of term)	25%	Term 1	75% + £500
Term 2	50%	Term 1	50% + £1,000
Term 2	50%	Term 2	50% + £500
Term 3	100%	Term 1	£1,500
Term 3	100%	Term 2	£1,000
Term 3	100%	Term 3	£500

If you are receiving an SLC loan and you choose to take a Leave of Absence from your programme, we will report this to the SLC who will make the necessary adjustments to your funding payments. If you require any further information on how your Leave of Absence will affect your SLC loan, please email student-support@rca.ac.uk, and the Student Loans Officer will be in contact with you.

Appendix C: Authorised Leave of Absence (except for Home MArch Architecture students)

If you are permitted to take a leave of absence, and the first day of your authorised period of leave is beyond the 14-day cooling off period at the start of the academic year, you will be required to pay the fees for any terms commenced, plus a nominal fee of £500 for any term, or part of term, you retake upon your return.

Please see examples below:

Last Date of Attendance in an academic year	**Percentage of tuition fee charged in year where LoA is taken**	**Resumption of study point**	**Percentage of tuition fee charged in year of resumption**
Term 1 (within the cooling off period)	0%	Term 1	100%
Term 1 (more than 14 days after the start of term)	One third	Term 1	Two thirds + £500
Term 2	Two thirds	Term 1	One third + £1,000
Term 2	Two thirds	Term 2	One third + £500
Term 3	100%	Term 1	£1,500
Term 3	100%	Term 2	£1,000
Term 3	100%	Term 3	£500

Version	Summary of Changes	Approval Date
001	Fee increase for subsequent noted via invoice; Payment terms - updated awards to include 2-year programmes and GD Architecture; Refund terms - updated for GD Art&Design to reflect current practice; Outstanding payments - clear timeline added for chasing and suspension status. Clarified that inboxes are accessible during suspension.	November 2026