Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art & Design

RCA Pre-Sessional Course Terms and Conditions 2026/27

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR APPLICANTS: *These Terms and Conditions set out the legal agreement between you and the Royal College of Art ('RCA') regarding your registration on the Pre-Sessional course. Please read this document carefully before submitting your application for the course. By completing your booking and paying your course fee, you agree to be bound by the terms contained herein.*

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1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

1.1. These terms and conditions govern the contractual relationship between 'you' (the applicant) and the Royal College of Art's ('RCA') 10-week and 6-week Pre-Sessional courses for the 2026/27 academic year.

1.2. These terms apply exclusively to applicants who have received a conditional or unconditional offer for a postgraduate taught (MA, MRes, MFA, MDes), postgraduate research (MPhil, PhD) programme at the RCA and who meet the academic and English language requirements for joining the Pre-Sessional course of their choice.

1.3. The Pre-Sessional courses run for either 10 weeks or 6 weeks. Key course details, entry requirements, and dates are available on the RCA website at: https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/international-students/english-for-academic-purposes-eap/

1.4. By accepting a place on a Pre-Sessional course, you agree to be bound by these Terms and Conditions. Failure to comply with these terms may result in the termination of your Pre-Sessional course registration and the potential revocation of your main programme offer.

2. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

In these Terms and Conditions, the following expressions have the following meanings:

‘Pre-sessional Course’	The Pre-sessional English 10- or 6-week course you and we agree that you will undertake.
'Academic Regulations':	The RCA's academic rules, codes of practice, and regulations governing student progression, assessment, and conduct.
'Contract':	A legally binding contract is formed between you and the RCA when you submit your application for the Pre-sessional course of your choice.

'Course Information':	Summary details of the Pre-Sessional course, including syllabus, contact hours, and assessment components.
'Data Protection Legislation':	The Data Protection Act 2018 (c. 12), the UK GDPR, the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, and all related privacy regulations.
'Destination Programme':	The RCA programme of study that you have enrolled in.
'Event Outside Our Control':	Any act, event, or circumstance beyond the RCA's reasonable control (Force Majeure), including cyber-attacks, national infrastructure failure, industrial action, epidemic, or extreme weather.
'Fees':	The tuition fees payable for your Pre-Sessional course in British Pounds Sterling (GBP).
'Offer Holder Hub':	The official RCA portal located at https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/apply-to-study/information-for-offer-holders/.
'VLE / Zoom':	The Virtual Learning Environment and web conferencing software used to deliver the online Pre-sessional course.

3. ACCURACY OF INFORMATION AND APPLICATION PROCEDURE

3.1. It is your responsibility to ensure that all information, language test certificates, and documentation provided to the RCA during the application process are true, accurate, and complete.

3.2. If the RCA discovers that your application contains false, inaccurate, fraudulent, or unauthorised AI-generated material information, or that significant material facts have been omitted, the RCA reserves the right to withdraw your offer or terminate your Pre-Sessional registration without returning any fees paid.

3.3. You are required to provide satisfactory evidence of your English language qualifications (e.g., IELTS Academic, PTE Academic, or equivalent approved tests) prior to enrolment. Failure to meet the verification requirements by the specified deadline will result in cancellation of your place.

4. APPLICATION, OFFER ACCEPTANCE AND BOOKING PROCEDURE

4.1. Registration for a Pre-Sessional course is conducted as part of the RCA admissions process. The Admissions team must verify your English language test scores and confirm your eligibility for either the 6-week or 10-week course option.

4.2. After paying your RCA destination programme deposit, you will receive an email inviting you to submit a Pre-sessional course application. You should access the Pre-Sessional Course Application form via your invitation email link.

4.3. Upon successful verification of eligibility and receipt of your application, the RCA Admissions team will issue a formal 'Confirmation of Joining the Pre-Sessional Course' notification email containing payment instructions.

4.4. Applicants must pay their Pre-Sessional course fees in full within 14 working days of receiving confirmation of their place on the course, or by the week before the start of the course, whichever date comes first.

4.5. If you fail to complete payment within the strict deadline set out in clause 4.4, the RCA reserves the right to cancel your booking and re-allocate the place. Applicants who miss this payment window may be offered a place on a subsequent Pre-Sessional intake (if available).

5. THE LEGAL CONTRACT AND ORDER OF PRECEDENCE

5.1. A legally binding contract is formed between you and the RCA when you submit your application for the Pre-sessional course of your choice.

5.2. The Contract consists of these Pre-Sessional Terms and Conditions, your formal 'Confirmation of Joining the Pre-Sessional Course' notification, the Pre-Sessional Course Information, the Academic Regulations, and RCA Policies and Procedures.

5.3. In the event of any clash, conflict, or inconsistency between a provision in these Pre-Sessional Terms and Conditions and any other document forming part of the Contract, these Pre-Sessional Terms and Conditions shall take priority and govern all aspects of the Pre-Sessional course.

6. PRE-SESSIONAL COURSE OFFERINGS, ONLINE DELIVERY AND ZOOM REGULATIONS

6.1. All Pre-Sessional courses are delivered entirely online using Zoom and the RCA Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). There is no on-campus teaching option for Pre-sessional courses.

6.2. Teaching sessions, synchronous workshops, and assessments are scheduled strictly in accordance with UK local time (Greenwich Mean Time / British Summer Time). You are responsible for ensuring your availability during UK normal class hours.

6.3. Active visual and verbal participation is an integral component of learning on the Pre-sessional course. You are required to keep your web camera turned on during live Zoom sessions, seminars, and group discussions unless explicit prior exemption has been granted by the Course Coordinators.

6.4. You are strictly prohibited from recording, downloading, capturing, re-publishing, or distributing any live Zoom sessions, recorded lectures, tutor slides, or peer contributions. Unauthorised recording or sharing of online classroom content constitutes a breach of copyright and intellectual property laws and will be investigated under the RCA Student Misconduct and Disciplinary Policy.

7. TECHNICAL, SYSTEM AND HARDWARE SPECIFICATIONS

7.1. As the course is delivered entirely online, you are required to equip yourself with appropriate computer hardware, software, and high-speed internet prior to the start of the course.

7.2. Your computer system must meet or exceed the following hardware standards:
• Processor: Intel Core i5/i7 (8th Gen+) or AMD Ryzen 5/7 (3000 series+).
• Memory (RAM): Minimum 4GB RAM (8GB RAM highly recommended).
• Operating System: Windows 10/11 (64-bit) or macOS 11 (Big Sur) or newer.
• Camera & Audio: Built-in or USB external HD webcam (720p/1080p) and dedicated audio headset with microphone.

7.3. You must have access to a reliable, stable, high-speed broadband internet connection (minimum download speed of 4 Mbps, recommended 10 Mbps download / 5 Mbps upload).

7.4. The RCA recommends using Google Chrome as your primary web browser for accessing the VLE, Zoom integration, and online course materials. While other modern browsers (e.g., Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, Microsoft Edge) may work, optimal functionality and technical support are calibrated for Google Chrome.

7.5. The RCA is not responsible for technical failures, hardware incompatibility, power outages, or internet service provider disruptions occurring at your location.

8. ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC PROGRESS AND COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS

8.1. You are expected to attend a minimum of 95% of all scheduled online classes, seminars, workshops, and individual tutorials throughout the duration of the course. Failure to do so might result in the cancellation of your place on the course, and as a result might affect your ability to join your destination programme.

i. Absences due to short-term illness or unforeseen personal circumstances must be reported promptly to your course tutor and the course coordinators by emailing both your course tutor and presessional@rca.ac.uk.

ii. Where an absence is covered by an approved Exceptional Circumstances (EC) application or an arranged Reasonable Adjustment plan put in place through Student Support, it will be formally recorded as an authorised absence and will not count towards attendance sanctions, provided you engage with catch-up materials.

iii. Occasional technical or broadband disruptions experienced during live sessions will not be penalised as unauthorised absences provided you notify your course tutor and the course coordinators by emailing both your course tutor and presessional@rca.ac.uk.

8.2. To successfully complete the Pre-Sessional course, you must complete and submit 100% of the required coursework, assessments, and independent study tasks by the published academic deadlines. This requirement is subject to any approved deadline extensions, Exceptional Circumstances (EC) outcomes, or agreed Reasonable Adjustments granted under RCA Academic Regulations.

8.3. The Pre-Sessional course is an intensive full-time course of study. You are expected to dedicate your full time and attention to the course for its entire duration. It is your responsibility to ensure that any personal, work, or external commitments do not conflict with required live teaching sessions, assessment deadlines,or active participation expectations as outlined in this document.

8.4. If you fail to meet the 95% minimum attendance requirement, fail to dedicate a full-time commitment, or fail to complete required coursework without approved Exceptional Circumstances, agreed Reasonable Adjustments, or formal extension the Pre-sessional Coordinators will inform the RCA Admissions team. Failure to satisfy academic progress criteria without valid, approved grounds may result in the immediate revocation of your place on the Pre-sessional course, which may affect your eligibility to join your RCA destination programme.

8.5. The Pre-Sessional course is delivered entirely online. Consequently, the RCA does not issue Student Visa sponsorship (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies / CAS) for attendance on the Pre-sessional course. Students who require a

Student Visa for their RCA destination programme will receive CAS processing only upon successful completion of the Pre-sessional course and fulfilment of all main offer conditions.

9. TUITION FEES AND PAYMENT TERMS

9.1. All tuition fees for the Pre-Sessional course are set and payable in British Pounds Sterling (GBP).

9.2. Fees must be paid in full in a single upfront instalment upon completing your booking form, in accordance with the 14-working-day payment window set out in clause 4.4.

9.3. All pre-sessional course bookings are processed on a direct self-funded basis. Third-party or corporate sponsor invoicing is not available for pre-sessional study.

9.4. You must pay your fees directly to the RCA using approved online payment gateways. Beware of fraud and financial scams; the RCA will never ask you to pay fees through unauthorised third-party agents or unverified money transfer apps.

9.5. Failure to pay tuition fees in full by the required deadline will result in the immediate cancellation of your booking, suspension of VLE access, and withdrawal of your pre-sessional place.

10. CANCELLATION RIGHTS AND STATUTORY COOLING-OFF PERIOD

10.1. You have the statutory right to cancel this Contract within a 14-day cooling-off period, or up until the course starts, whichever comes first, without giving any reason. This period is referred to as the “statutory cooling-off period”.

10.2. The statutory cooling-off period begins on the day after you receive formal confirmation of your pre-sessional place.

10.3. To exercise your statutory right to cancel, you must notify the RCA Admissions team by submitting a clear written statement of cancellation via the applicant portal within the statutory cooling-off period.

10.4. If you cancel within the statutory cooling-off period, the RCA will reimburse all tuition fee payments received from you without undue delay and no later than 14 days after receiving your cancellation notice. Reimbursement will be made using the same payment method used for the initial transaction.

10.5. Once the statutory cooling-off period has expired (after 14 days, or once the course has begun, whichever comes first), tuition fees are non-refundable, except where otherwise provided in these Terms and Conditions or required by law. If you withdraw, cancel after 14 days or fail to attend the course (if you registered for the course within 14 days of the course start) no fee refund or credit will be granted.

10.6. Because the Pre-Sessional course is delivered 100% online and does not require UK Student Visa sponsorship, visa refusal refund exceptions do not apply. All fee refunds are governed strictly by the 14-day statutory cooling-off rule in clause 10.1.

11. DEFERRALS AND COURSE TRANSFERS

11.1. There is no automatic contractual right to defer a place on a Pre-Sessional course. However, if the RCA approves a deferral of your destination programme offer, or agrees in writing to defer your pre-sessional place to a subsequent intake or academic year:

Any pre-Sessional tuition fees already paid will be held on account by the RCA and applied towards your deferred Pre-sessional course

You will be required to pay the tuition fee rate applicable to the Pre-Sessional course for the new academic year or intake in which you enrol, and any difference in fees must be paid prior to enrolment

Requests to defer must be submitted in writing to Admissions (admissions@rca.ac.uk) prior to the published start date of your original course

11.2. If you are unable to start your allocated course or miss an acceptance/payment window, the RCA may, at its discretion, offer you a place on a subsequent pre-sessional intake within the same academic year (for example, transferring from the 10-week course to the 6-week course), subject to meeting language entry requirements and place availability.

11.3. Once a Pre-Sessional course has commenced, transfers onto alternative courses or future intakes are not permitted, except in exceptional circumstances agreed by the Academic Registrar.

11.4. If exceptional circumstances beyond your control prevent you from studying or deferring your place to a future intake, you may submit a written request to Registry (admissions@rca.ac.uk) for a fee refund or pro-rata recalculation. Requests must include verifiable medical or official documentation and will be considered on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Academic Registrar.

12. IMMIGRATION AND RIGHT TO STUDY VERIFICATION

12.1. As the Pre-Sessional course is delivered entirely online via distance learning, international students do not require a UK Student Visa or CAS sponsorship to complete the Pre-sessional course from their home country.

12.2. Successful completion of the Pre-Sessional course satisfies the English language condition of your RCA destination programme offer as per UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Student Visa requirements.

13. REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND DISABILITY SUPPORT

13.1. The RCA is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and supporting disabled students under the Equality Act 2010. If you have a disability, medical condition, or specific learning difficulty, you are strongly encouraged to disclose this during the booking process by emailing student-support@rca.ac.uk so that appropriate online reasonable adjustments can be discussed and implemented prior to course commencement.

13.2. The RCA will never require a disabled student to pay any costs associated with making reasonable adjustments for their course.

14. CHANGES TO COURSE AND COURSE CLOSURE

14.1. The RCA reserves the right to make reasonable minor changes to teaching schedules, VLE platforms, tutor allocations, or delivery tools where necessary to deliver effective online teaching.

14.2. In the rare event that the RCA is forced to make a material alteration to or close a Pre-sessional course prior to commencement, the RCA will notify affected students immediately and offer a full refund of tuition fees paid or transfer to an alternative pre-sessional track.

15. EVENTS OUTSIDE OUR CONTROL (FORCE MAJEURE)

15.1. An 'Event Outside Our Control' includes cyber-attacks, national power grid failure, telecommunication infrastructure failure, industrial action, pandemic, epidemic, or government restrictions.

15.2. The RCA shall not be liable or responsible for any failure to perform, or delay in performance of, any of its obligations under this Contract caused by an Event Outside Our Control.

15.3. Nothing in Sections 14 and 15 limits, excludes, or overrides your statutory consumer rights under applicable UK consumer protection legislation (including the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and the Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013).

16. RCA TERMINATION RIGHTS

16.1. The RCA reserves the right to terminate your Contract and cancel your registration on the Pre-Sessional course with immediate effect if:

i. You fail to pay tuition fees in full by the required deadline;
ii. You fail to satisfy the 95% minimum attendance requirement or full-time study commitment;
iii. You engage in serious student misconduct, academic dishonesty, unauthorised recording, or breach the Online Code of Conduct;
iv. It is discovered that you submitted false or fraudulent information in your application.

16.2. Termination of your pre-sessional contract will result in immediate loss of VLE/Zoom access and notification to RCA Admissions, which may lead to the revocation of your main degree offer.

17. LIMITATION OF LIABILITY

17.1. The total liability of the RCA to you arising under or in connection with the Contract shall under no circumstances exceed the total tuition fees actually paid by you for the Pre-Sessional course.

17.2. The RCA accepts no liability for indirect, incidental, or consequential losses, including loss of profits, loss of opportunity, travel costs, or personal IT equipment damage.

18. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

18.1. All intellectual property rights in course materials, VLE content, Zoom lectures, and teaching resources remain the exclusive property of the RCA or its licensors.

18.2. You grant the RCA a royalty-free, non-exclusive license to use coursework and digital uploads created during the course for non-commercial academic, educational, quality assurance, and archival purposes. The RCA may also feature anonymised or attributed student work in digital marketing materials promoting the Pre-sessional course, provided that:

- you are credited wherever applicable;
- you have not exercised your right to opt out of promotional usage by notifying the pre-sessional team in writing (presessional@rca.ac.uk) prior to or during the course.

19. PERSONAL DATA AND PRIVACY

19.1. The RCA processes personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the UK GDPR, and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025.

19.2. Your personal data is processed for the purposes of managing your booking, delivering online instruction, evaluating academic progress, verifying identity, and processing progression to destination programmes.

20. STUDENT MISCONDUCT, DISCIPLINE AND SAFEGUARDING

20.1. As a condition of enrolment and as a term of the contract between you and the RCA, you are required to abide by, and adhere to, the RCA's Regulations, Rules, Codes, Policies and Procedures that apply to enrolled students. These include provisions relating to student conduct and discipline, complaints, safeguarding and other matters relevant to your participation in the Pre-Sessional course. These Regulations are available on the RCA's website at: https://www.rca.ac.uk/study/student-policies-procedures-and-regulations/

20.2. The RCA reserves the right to update or amend its rules, regulations, and policies from time to time where reasonable and necessary (for example, to comply with changes in UK law, statutory guidance, safety standards, or operational best practice).

- Minor & Operational Changes: Routine, minor, or administrative updates will take effect upon publication on the RCA website or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

- Material Policy Amendments: Where the RCA makes a significant or material change to a policy that directly impacts your studies, rights, or obligations, the RCA will provide you with reasonable advance written notice (via email or VLE notification) prior to implementation.

20.3. No amendment made to RCA policies or regulations under Clause 20.2 shall unilaterally alter the fundamental terms of this Contract, reduce your statutory consumer rights, or impose disproportionate new obligations beyond what was reasonably foreseeable at the time of contract formation.

20.4. Concerns about student conduct, including inappropriate online behaviour, harassment and cyberbullying, will be considered in accordance with the RCA Student Misconduct and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Where appropriate, disciplinary action may result in the termination of your participation in the Pre-Sessional course.

20.5. Any concerns about academic misconduct, including plagiarism, will be considered in accordance with the RCA Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

21. COMPLAINTS AND OIA ESCALATION

21.1. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of the Pre-Sessional course or your experience as a Pre-Sessional student, you may submit a formal complaint under the RCA Student Complaints Policy.

21.2. If you remain dissatisfied after exhausting the RCA internal complaints procedure, you may be entitled to refer your complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) under its student complaints scheme. Further information about the OIA and its eligibility requirements is available on the OIA's website.

22. GENERAL LEGAL PROVISIONS AND GOVERNING LAW

22.1. If any provision of these Terms and Conditions is held to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

22.2. This Contract, and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it, shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales. Both parties submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.