

RCASU Exhibitions: Application Pack Information

for Applicants:

So, you want to be part of the **RCASU Exhibitions**? Now is your chance to apply!

To see past examples, which we hope will spark your imagination and show you the possibilities for using these spaces, please visit the RCASU Exhibitions page on our website.



ID: Photograph of three paintings on canvas hanging from fishing line in front of a brick wall, in the Hangar Gallery at the RCA. The paintings are in pale pinks, yellows, and blues, and depict doorways or openings in or between buildings.

Spaces

Choice of Space: There are three gallery spaces on campus where students can hold RCASU Exhibitions:

Battersea: Hangar Gallery (not currently available for '26/27)

Kensington: Hockney Gallery

There are also limited opportunities to showcase work as part of the SU's 'pop-up activations', where we utilize empty space in the College.

While you are welcome to tailor your proposal to a specific space, please note that applications with flexibility in location are more likely to be successful.

Dates

The Students' Union and the College have agreed on the following dates for RCASU Exhibitions. Due to limited availability and priority given to academic teaching/exhibitions, these slots are fixed and cannot be changed. Unfortunately, the Upper Gulbankien is **closed** for the foreseeable future whilst the building is undergoing renovations.

Term 1 dates:

- ○ Hockney Gallery: 9th-13th November 2026 ○
Hockney Gallery: 16th-20th November 2026
- Hockney Gallery: 30th November- 4th December 2026

Term 2 dates:

- ○ Hockney Gallery: 1st-5th March 2027 ○
Hockney Gallery: 8th-12th March 2027 ○
Hockney Gallery: 5th-9th April

Term 3 dates: TBC (not yet set)

Use of Space

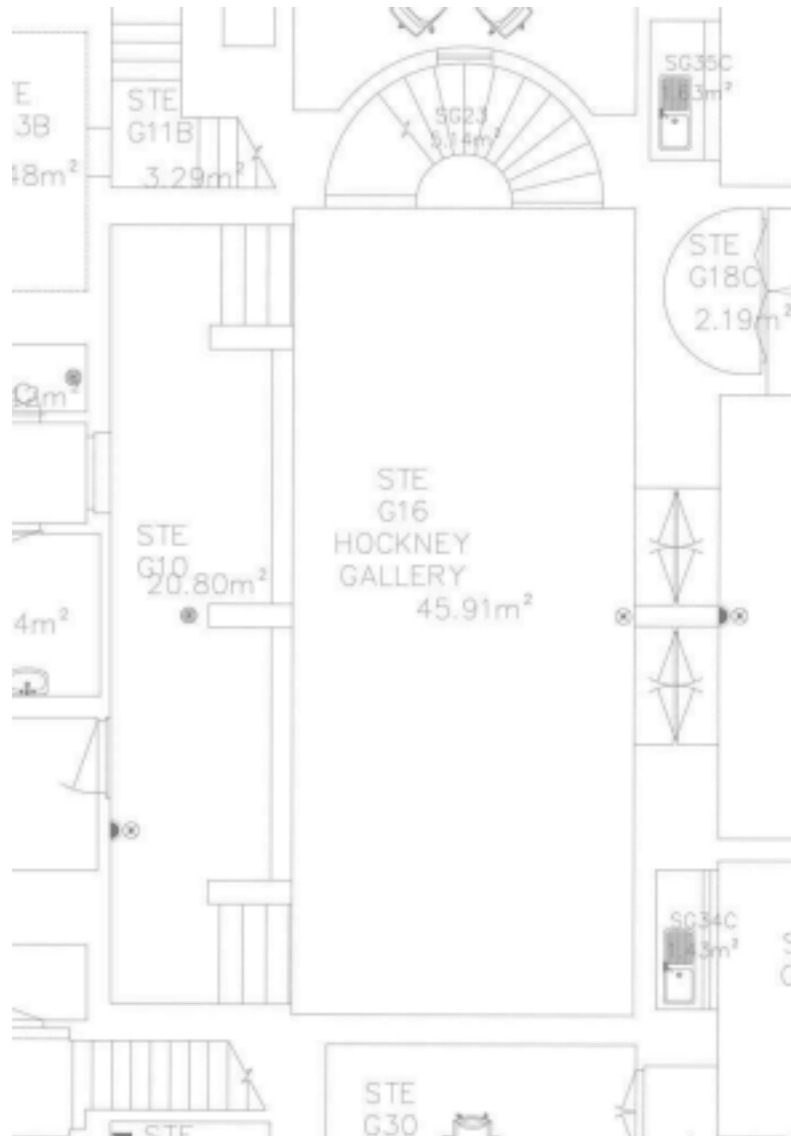
Below is a summary of what is allowed in each space. All plans are subject to final approval from **Mike Alexander**, RCA's Health and Safety manager, whose decisions and suggestions take precedence. Previous successful applicants included a floor plan, **please do so if you can**.

Hockney Gallery	
Can	Cannot

- Lightly drill into walls (make good afterwards) - Hang anything on walls with tape, glue, command strips or white or blue tack (make good afterwards) - Hang things from the ceiling with supervision from M.A or a technician, if agreed in advance. - Exhibit freestanding sculptures, or sculptures on floor (so long as they do not pose a trip hazard, or block the fire escape routes).	- Paint walls, or otherwise stain them.
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- Exhibit sculptures on plinths (you must source your own plinths).

Images:



Expectations

What You Can Expect from Us (The SU):

RCASU Exhibitions are open primarily to the RCA community. If you want to open the exhibition to the public, we can offer a one-time, 8-hour public opening to coincide with the PV and bar service. The public view and the private view must be **on the same day**. This must be approved by the Lead Curator and the SU, with at least four weeks' notice. The SU will provide security and a pop-up bar (subject to approval).

The management of the public opening must be agreed upon with the SU and the Lead Curator.

The only scenario where any costs may arise for you is if **college property is damaged**. Minor issues can often be repaired by the student, but for significant damage, you may be responsible for the repair costs.

Security of Work:

- **Daytime:** Campus security will be present, and only RCA staff, students, and their accompanied guests have access to the exhibition area.
- **Public Opening:** Two security guards will be present to ensure safety.
- **Night-time:** The campus is closed, but CCTV cameras are in place in the Hangar, Hockney, and Upper Gulbenkian.

The SU and the College are not responsible for any artwork that is damaged or stolen, so we recommend getting your own insurance.

What We Expect from You (The Student):

We expect professional, respectful behaviour towards students, staff, and visitors throughout the exhibition process. As RCA students, you are expected to comply with the College's Terms & Conditions for Students. Breaching the Policy on Public Exhibition of Work or the Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech may result in the postponement or cancellation of your exhibition.

We also expect you to de-install and fully clear the space on the day the exhibition booking is finished.

Damage to College Spaces:

You may be liable for at least 50% of the cost of repairs for any damage caused. The College reserves the right to discontinue these exhibitions if the damage is significant, affecting future opportunities for students. To participate, you will be asked to sign a form acknowledging this.

Invigilation:

If you're concerned about the safety of your work or wish to provide more information to visitors, you can organise invigilators. This responsibility falls on the exhibitors, as the SU will not assist with invigilation.

Application

All applications submitted before the deadline will be judged by a panel of three of four SU staff. This group will meet after the application period closes, review the applications based on the below criteria, and select their top three Exhibitions. **If you are selected, any significant changes to your proposal must be approved by the SU.**

Applications must be submitted via the Google Form (linked on the [website page](#)). All proposals must include alt text if they contain images.

Criteria:

Conceptual rigour and appropriateness for the space: Is this Exhibition interesting? Is it relevant in some way to the experiences of RCA students? Does it enrich the space? We are looking for Exhibitions that make students feel welcome and excited to be in.

Representation of students: We value diversity in all forms. This includes diversity of discipline/media, theme and artists, as well as diversity of identities. Does this Exhibition feel inclusive of a diversity of perspectives? We aim to support group

exhibitions and encourage students from multiple programmes to be included when possible and appropriate. Our goal is to get as many students into the space as possible. **Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that solo exhibition proposals will be accepted.**

Feasibility of installation: How challenging will it be to hang this exhibition? Was it proposed with the space and constraints of the respective gallery spaces in mind? We strive to accommodate any work that we feel is worth showing, but there are space requirements we must adhere to. We will negotiate with you where possible

Detailed plan: Have you managed to put together a proper proposal? We are looking for applications with a detailed plan, preferably with a floor plan and specifications regarding installation in the space. Please feel free to use the floor plan listed in this document to give us an idea of your proposed exhibition. You will also need to list the students who will be taking part, as **we do not accept proposals that rely on open calls.**

Non-academic proposals only: These exhibitions are for groups of students wishing to exhibit for non-academic purposes, **so we will not be accepting proposals linked to your academic programme.** If you wish to exhibit your work with your AcrossRCA group or peers from your programme, we will not be able to support your proposal. You should contact your HoP/Tutor/Programme administrator to see how they can support you in putting together an academic exhibition.

Content and Impact checklist for exhibiting groups: As part of the RCA's exhibition practice, and ahead of your upcoming exhibition, we ask that the group leader ensure all participating artists read and agree to the terms of this document. By ensuring that participants reflect on the environmental, ethical, and social implications of their work, you help the SU Exhibitions initiative remain an inclusive and welcoming space for both artists and audience. This checklist was adapted from one created for a mini festival by the Information Experience Design academic team. **These questions are not intended to restrict creativity**, but to support responsible, professional practice. They encourage you to think critically about impact — on materials, audiences, collaborators, and communities.

Each exhibiting artist is required to fill out this checklist, and if the number of checklists attached to your group's proposal does not match the number of exhibiting artists, your application may be delayed or rejected. You can find the [Content and Impact checklist here](#), and it is compulsory for each exhibiting artist.

FAQs

Q. Does the SU help promote the Exhibition through its official channels and communications?

A. Yes. The SU promotes RCASU Exhibitions through our Instagram, the newsletter and uploading to our website. It is the responsibility of the participating students to create any promotional material such as a poster, graphic or exhibition text, and provide this material in due time to the SU. It is the responsibility of the student to distribute any posters/printed materials.

Q. Does the SU provide funding for materials used for the creation of artwork and/or for exhibition materials?

A. The SU cannot provide funding for such materials. It is up to students to source materials required for their exhibition. We recommend consulting what is available in the RCA resource store and the RCA Shop in the first instance. The SU will not make these enquiries for you.

The RCA does offer a Materials Fund which offers support for materials costs for students facing financial difficulty. More information can be found here:

<https://intranet.rca.ac.uk/financial-assistance-funds>. It must be noted that, although this support does exist, it is not guaranteed and ultimately it is the decision of the College whether they can support you with costs for this context.

Q. Can alumni take part in exhibitions?

A. Alumni are allowed to take part in RCASU Exhibitions. However, RCASU Exhibitions are designed primarily for current students, and are therefore given priority.

Q. What is required for the public opening/private view night?

A. The SU will provide a pop-up bar for your private view guests to purchase drinks and nibbles. Due to our licensing agreement, you will not be able to source your own caterers or bar. If you have any specific asks for bar stock (within reason), please be sure to ask us as far in advance as possible.

B. The SU will cover the cost of security guards for your public and private view, which are required. In order to ensure that we are adhering to the spacing regulations, we ask that you provide (free) tickets for your private view so that we can keep track of attendance. Security have the right to refuse entry once the galleries hit capacity, so please be mindful of this when inviting your guests, as we want to make sure everything runs smoothly!

Q. Does the SU offer technical support for RCASU Exhibitions?

A. The SU does not provide technical support for Exhibitions. It is the responsibility of students to handle the technical element of installing their exhibition. Students can also seek support and guidance from relevant people if they choose to do so.

However, the SU does consult with the College's Technical Services to seek guidance and approval for Exhibitions, in conversation with RCASU Exhibitions Leads. It is up to the College to determine what level of technical guidance and support is appropriate.

The SU will introduce the Lead Curator to a representative from both Estates and Technical Services, but must keep the SU in the loop with all communications and updates.

Q. What should be included in the proposal?

A. There is no set format for what the proposal should look like. It is up to the students to design a proposal that suits their needs. However, the proposal should, throughout, be tailored toward the specific criteria listed in this application pack. Proposals that clearly and effectively communicate how the exhibition meets the criteria tend to be the strongest applications.

In order to meet the criteria, we suggest the following elements could be included in the proposal:

- A clear outline of the central theme/concept of the exhibition and how the included artworks link together.

- A provisional list and images of the proposed artworks with as much detail about them as possible (materials, dimensions, artist statement, etc.), emphasizing how each artwork relates to each other and fits within the curatorial framework. If the exhibition consists/contains elements of live performances the same applies: a list of what the performances entail in as much detail as possible.

- A provisional installation plan, taking into account the requirements of each Gallery space. You may use the images of the space included earlier in this document.

Cue Art Foundation provides some useful tips on how to write compelling exhibition proposals, which can be found [here](#).

Best of luck preparing your RCASU Exhibitions proposal! If you have any questions about submitting your application, please contact su-exhibitions@rca.ac.uk

All best,
RCASU.

*If your application is unsuccessful and wish to receive feedback, please email su-exhibitions@rca.ac.uk