

The Royal College of Defence Studies

The Royal College of Defence Studies, formerly the Imperial Defence College, owes its origins to the recommendation of a Cabinet Committee in 1922 presided over by Winston Churchill, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. The College was founded in 1927, so in 2017 we will be celebrating our 90th anniversary. The College was originally located at 9 Buckingham Gate until 1939. Its work in those days was chiefly concerned with governance of the Empire, with a student population of 25 drawn from UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.



Seaford House

The experience of the Second World War proved the benefits of such an institution for training senior Service officers and Government officials. There was unanimous support from the Governments and Services of the Commonwealth for the College to resume its work. In 1946 the College re-opened at its present site at Seaford House, Belgrave Square, with the Course including Members from the United States for the first time.



Lecture on India and the Indian Ocean

The College was re-named The Royal College of Defence Studies in 1970. The Course composition has been progressively widened to include members from over 50 different countries, such as in recent years *inter alia*: China, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Afghanistan, Vietnam and Colombia, to name just a few.



Winston Churchill



Armorial Bearings



College Insignia

Today the College focuses its academic syllabus on the global levers of security, stability and prosperity set in a strategic context. The course consists of lectures, seminars, written analyses and other learning interventions, as well as a series of international and UK-based study tours. In parallel with the main Course RCDS offers a MA in Strategic Studies in concert with its academic partner: King's College, London.

A major element of the experience that the College offers is the opportunity for senior officers and officials from across the world to share experiences; to understand other cultures; and to learn from each other. At the completion of their studies it is our intent that each RCDS graduate:

Understands the international strategic context, is skilled in analysis and able to work intuitively across national, cultural and ideological boundaries to lead or to contribute to developing and executing strategy at the highest level.



King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan visit to the College

The History of Seaford House

Seaford House was built in 1842 by Philip Hardwick (1792-1870) and leased by its owner, the Marquess of Westminster, to Charles William Molyneux, 3rd Earl of Sefton. The house was originally called Sefton House. Both the 3rd and 4th Earls used it as a town residence until 1897 when the 4th Earl died. The 5th Earl inherited the lease and he died unmarried in 1901. Lord Howard de Walden, who was also Baron Seaford, leased the house in 1902 and redesigned much of the interior. The work included the installation of the present staircase and the ornate ceilings and friezes. The panelling in the dining room, now the Lecture Hall, was also installed at that time. The marble for the impressive staircase is thought to have been imported from South America. After the redesign the house was renamed Seaford House.



Marble Staircase

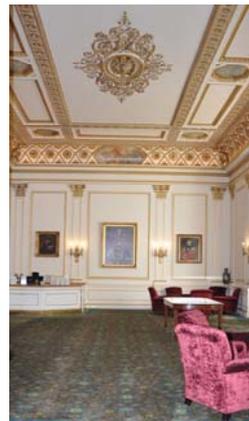


Lecture Hall



Seminar Room

Seaford House was requisitioned by the Government in June 1940. It suffered some damage from bombing and remained unoccupied until November 1942. It was assigned to the Imperial Defence College in March 1946, and the Government subsequently purchased the leasehold. Seaford House is listed under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947 as a building of special architectural and historical interest.



Ante Room



First Floor