DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

MSc Practising Sustainable Development
&
MSc Practising Sustainable Development (ICT4D)

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENT HANDBOOK

2016/2017
Disclaimer

This document was published in September 2016 and was correct at that time. The Department* reserves the right to modify any statement if necessary, make variations to the content or methods of delivery of programmes of study, to discontinue programmes, or merge or combine programmes if such actions are reasonably considered to be necessary by the College. Every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum, and to give as much notice as possible.

* Please note, the term ‘Department’ is used to refer to both ‘Departments’ ‘Centres’and ‘Schools’. Students on joint or combined degree programmes will need to use two departmental handbooks.

An electronic copy of this handbook can be found on your Departmental website (http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/currentstudents/home.aspx) where it will be possible to follow the hyperlinks to relevant webpages.
Contents

1.0 Introduction to Practicing Sustainable Development ................................................................. 4
1.1 Degree aims ........................................................................................................................................ 4
1.2 ICT4D ................................................................................................................................................ 4
1.3 Why is Practicing Sustainable Development so distinctive? ...................................................... 5
2.0 Degree Structure .............................................................................................................................. 6
3.0 Course outlines ................................................................................................................................. 10
4.0 Timetable ......................................................................................................................................... 12
5.0 Forms of assessment ......................................................................................................................... 12
5.1 Coursework details ........................................................................................................................... 12
5.2 Formative assessment ....................................................................................................................... 13

Appendix 1 General Reading List ........................................................................................................ 14

Figures

Figure 2.1 Degree programme structure. Practicing Sustainable Development 2015 -16 .................. 8
Figure 2.2 Degree programme structure. Practicing Sustainable Development (ICT4D) 2015 -16 ...... 9
1.0 Introduction to Practicing Sustainable Development

Interest in development, environment and issues of sustainable development has never been so intense. Current global debates include negotiations over Climate Change and on the development agenda from 2015 onwards, when there will be a move from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development goals. Stakeholders ranging from governments, NGOs, international agencies to, increasingly, business, are incorporating sustainability into their thinking. All sustainable development issues are a complex and dynamic web of natural, social, political and economic processes, and it is this unique interdisciplinary approach which continues to drive the MSc in Practising Sustainable Development. First introduced in 1990 as a pioneering degree in this field, this popular course has evolved and expanded in scope and appeal, and continues to attract students from a diverse range of backgrounds who work or are interested in development issues and the environment.

1.1 Degree aims

The aims of the MSc/PG Diploma Practising Sustainable Development are:

- To examine the ways in which environmental, social, political and economic factors interrelate at a range of scales to produce particular understandings of ‘sustainable development’ and associated policies and practices.
- To provide training in skills needed to research and assess sustainable development, such as research design, project development, environmental monitoring, geographic information systems, participatory methods, project analysis and evaluation.
- To provide students with key competencies including holistic thinking, ability to manage complexity, change and unpredictability, critical awareness, group working, communication, reflectiveness and empathy. In addition, we aim to develop students’ personal qualities, encompassing self-awareness regarding the student’s learning i.e. ‘learning how to learn’, and the capacity to reflect on, in and for action.
- To provide a rigorous programme of research training, in both qualitative and quantitative methods for the analysis of physical and human aspects of sustainable development.
- To enable students to carry out independent primary fieldwork and research-based dissertations on environment and development related topics and in cross-cultural situations, equip students to undertake further postgraduate study for a PhD, and equip students to fulfil professional research and leadership roles in sustainable development-related fields, including both governmental and non-governmental development agencies.

1.2 ICT4D

The ICT4D strand consists of four specified Modules taught in parallel to the MSc and a dissertation on an ICT4D related topic. It focuses on the interdisciplinary specialist area of ICT4D and offers perspectives from different disciplines, with an emphasis on the Social Sciences. The aim is to help students develop a theoretically informed and practically relevant understanding of policies, practices and scholarship in the field of ICT4D, and an understanding which is critical, constructive and context-aware.
1.3 Why is Practicing Sustainable Development so distinctive?

The MSc and PG Diploma in Practising Sustainable Development are distinctive in three ways:

1. Being within a Geography department, we are in a unique position to present not only a focus on the interactions between natural and human environments, and the physical and social sciences, but have access to a range of facilities within the department to give students practical experience. There are few programmes in the field of development and environment in the UK that allow students to develop hands-on practical skills in a range of techniques, from the social to the physical sciences.

2. We provide practical focussed research skills training and guidance in order to enable students to carry out and complete independent primary fieldwork and research-based dissertations on environment and development related topics and in cross-cultural situation.

3. The MSc is taught by members of the Politics, Development and Sustainability Research Group, a leading interdisciplinary research centre in the field of development, environment and sustainable development, linking natural and social science theories, policies, tools and methodologies. We are in a unique position to convey research knowledge, experience and skills that will have direct relevance to employability as well as research training for further education, namely doctoral research.

Past students of the course are now employed by international development and environment agencies, national policy making and implementing agencies, higher education institutions, private sector companies and NGOs, as environmental and development workers, activists, teachers and researchers. Many of our alumni are also currently undertaking doctoral programmes in the UK and abroad.

Learning outcomes

(ICT4D specialism is italicised)

Knowledge and Understanding

At the end of the programme, students should be able to:

- Understand at an advanced level, the relationships between, and complexities of, social, economic, political and environmental aspects of sustainable development.
- Understand at an advanced level, how the key issues in sustainable development theory influence policy and impact on practice.
- Critically analyse complex or contradictory areas of knowledge in aspects of sustainable development.
- **Have a critical understanding of key theoretical approaches to the field of ICT4D**
- **Have gained an overview of how ICT4D is situated in previous discourses around knowledge and development/environment, communication and development, and technology and development**
- **Have gained a critical awareness of how technology can play a role in both positive**
and negative outcomes

Skills and other attributes

- Synthesise information with an innovative manner and with critical awareness.
- Evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies, and argue alternative approaches.
- Demonstrate a high level of ability to exercise, adapt and develop ‘key competencies’, namely holistic thinking, ability to manage complexity, change and unpredictability, critical awareness, group working, communication, reflexivity and empathy.
- Demonstrate a high level of ability in subject specific skills including environmental monitoring, geographic information systems, participatory methods, research design, project development, and project analysis and evaluation.
- Critically evaluate and apply a range of qualitative and quantitative methods for sustainable development research.
- Understand how to apply the variety of practical techniques learned on the MSc to the field of ICT4D
- Basic understanding of how to plan, manage and evaluate an ICT4D initiative
- Select appropriate field research methods, plan and embark upon a research project in the global North or South, critically aware of the problems likely to be encountered during the research process.
- Independently plan and execute a research project to time
- Develop oral communication skills, through presentations, public speaking and communication with a non-academic audience
- Develop written communication skills, including the ability to author briefings, reports and produce research papers with a logical structure and in comprehensible and clear English
- Acquire, analyse and interpret data
- Present data in a clear and appropriate format
- Manage their time
- Further develop attributes such as self-motivation, ability to work in teams, flexibility, adaptability

2.0 Degree Structure

Full details about your programme of study, including, amongst others, the aims, learning outcomes to be achieved on completion, courses which make up the programme and any programme-specific regulations are set out in the programme specification available through http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/coursecatalogue/home.aspx or http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studyhere/progspecs/home.aspx

Attendance at all elements/modules is compulsory.

For PSD compulsory and elective courses see Figure 2.1 below.

For PSD (ICT4D) compulsory and elective courses see Figure 2.2 below.
Figure 2.1 Degree Programme Structure.

Practicing Sustainable Development 2016-17

Core Courses 80 units

- GG5307 Sustainability, Development and Governance
- GG5308 Sustainability, Development and Society (20 units)
- GG5404 Technology, Innovation and Development (20 units)
- GG5406 Participatory Methods (20 units)

Core Research Courses 80 units

- GG5304 Volunteer project (10 units)
- GG5402 Research Methods (10 units)
- GG5403 Dissertation (including dissertation training) (60 units)

Elective Courses 20 units
(students must choose 1 from the list or another 20 unit course)

- GG5405 ICT4D (20 units)
- MN 5571 Business Ethics and Entrepreneurship (20 units)
- MN5281 International Sustainability Management (20 units)
Figure 2.2 Degree Programme Structure.

Practicing Sustainable Development (ICT4D)
2016-17

Core Courses 80 units

- GG5307 Sustainability, Development and Governance
- GG5404 Technology, Innovation and Development (20 units)
- GG5405 ICT4D (20 units)
- GG5406 Participatory Methods (20 units)

Core Research Courses 80 units

- GG5304 Volunteer project (10 units)
- GG5402 Research Methods (10 units)
- GG5403 Dissertation (including dissertation training) (60 units)

Elective Courses 20 units
(students must choose 1 from the list or another 20 unit course)

- GG5308 Sustainability, Development and Society (20 units)
- MN 5571 Business Ethics and Entrepreneurship (20 units)
- MN5281 International Sustainability Management (20 units)
3.0 Course outlines.

**GG5304 Community Volunteer Project**

You will undertake an independent volunteer project which will give you practical experience in gaining sustainability related work experience. The project will enhance your employability and provide an opportunity to gain practical experience of organisational objectives, cultures and practices.

**GG5307 Sustainability, Development and Governance**

This course will equip students with a detailed understanding of the development of sustainable development as a discourse. Students will explore key sustainability issues such as climate change, globalisation, and human responses with an emphasis on the emergence of environmental governance as a means to pursue sustainability.

**GG5308 Sustainability, Development and Society**

You will develop a detailed understanding of key social / environmental relationships incorporating contemporary issues in the geographies of sustainability. These will include 'risk society', sustainable cities, and the impacts of corporate sector activities on the environment. You will also understand the challenges to sustainable development at household and community levels, with a focus on community-based approaches to sustainable development.

**GG5402 Dissertation Preparation and Research Methods**

The Research methods unit will help prepare you for your dissertation. You will recognise and critically evaluate approaches to management research and the assumptions upon which they are based. This will equip you to make justified choices as to appropriate quantitative/qualitative research methods for data collection and subsequent analysis. You will then be able to conduct research, and evaluate primary and secondary data sources in a systematic and critically reflective manner.

You will also evaluate potential limitations to research investigation and applications and develop a coherent and appropriate research proposal, recognising the ethical implications of research investigations and their impact upon findings.

**GG5403 Dissertation**

You will analyse a sustainability or CSR issue in depth. By the end of the dissertation, you will be able to plan and manage a project, define aims and objectives, identify appropriate data sources and collection methods, be aware of and deal with potential pitfalls, execute a dissertation plan, and construct an effective argument.
GG5404 Technology and Development

This course provides you with an introduction to the role of technology in development, focusing particularly on mobile phone and computer technologies. The course combines an understanding of key theoretical debates and how technologies have been applied in diverse sectors such as health and education. The course also includes training in the use of GIS (geographical information systems) within a development context.

GG5405 Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D)

ICT4D is a growing sub-field of development practice and scholarship. Fundamentally it is interested in how technologies such as the mobile phone, the internet, and indeed mobile internet (as well as more traditional technologies such as radio and television) can be used to support development efforts ranging from disaster relief to health and education, to economic development and greater state accountability. The course will equip students with the knowledge of the potential of these technologies while at the same time raising awareness about the related risks of techno-centric thinking, uneven inclusion, norms embedded in design, practical implementation challenges, e-waste, and the potential of project failure particularly if there is no local demand or the process was insufficiently participatory. Further, the course will help students develop an understanding of the multi-stakeholder nature of ICT4D work and instill in them knowledge and respect for the different forms of expertise required from different members of a project team.

GG5406 Participatory Methods

This course combines detailed understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of participatory research and methods with practical experience of using different participatory research techniques. These include participatory diagramming, participatory video and participatory environmental monitoring.

MN5281 International Sustainability Management

This course provides participants with an understanding of how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) informs sustainability management issues in large, transnational organisations. It will focus on issues such as consumption and sustainability as dichotomised between the apparently incompatible tensions of economic and environmental interests.

MN5571 Business Ethics and Entrepreneurship

The aim of the course is to equip students with the moral frameworks and critical abilities
necessary to understand the role of business in society from an ethical perspective. The course will cover different types of business including large publicly traded multinationals, small and medium sized enterprises, social enterprises and family firms. Students will be expected to understand the different issues in these organizational types and to articulate moral arguments from a range of different perspectives.

4.0 Timetable

Please see the separate Timetable document.

5.0 Forms of assessment

5.1 Coursework details.
Marks for assignments, tests, presentations, examinations, and the dissertation are weighted in each course as follows:

GG5304 Volunteer Project
Coursework 1 x 250 word project summary and risk assessment; 1 x Volunteer Project poster (25%); 1 x 2000 Volunteer Project report (75%)

GG5306 Dissertation
1 x 1000 word formative dissertation proposal, 1 x 2500 word extended dissertation research proposal (5%), an oral presentation (5%) and dissertation (90%)

GG5307 Sustainability, Development and Governance
1 x 3500 word report (100%)

GG5308 Sustainability, Development and Society
1 x 3500 word essay (100%)

GG5402 Research Methods
Formative exercises.

GG5404 Technology, Innovation and Development
1 x 3000 essay (75%) and 1 x 1000 word GIS report & map (25%)

GG5405 ICT4D
1 x 3500 word report (100%)

GG5406 Participatory Methods
1 x 3500 word report (100%)

MN5114 International Strategy
1 x ‘in class test’ (20%), 1 x 2 hour unseen paper examination (80%)
**MN5281 International Sustainability Management**  
1 x individual essay (50%), 1 x presentation (15%) and 1 x one hour in-class test (35%)

**MN 5571 Business Ethics and Entrepreneurship**  
1 x 3,000 word individual essay (40%) and 1 x three-hour individual examination (60%).

Note that marks communicated to students during the academic year are subject to change and will have no formal status until they have been considered and decided upon by the Board of Examiners. The final meeting of the Board of Examiners takes place in late September or early October. Further regulations for the award of Masters degree can be found at: https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx

### 5.2 Formative assessment

The formal assessed work will be in different forms, including written essays, reports and oral presentations. In order to get some feedback and enable you to improve your skills, students are also expected to take part in formative assessment. This will be in various forms. For example, you will be expected to lead discussions during formal sessions, or work on a topic as a group to be presented at the next session.
APPENDIX 1 GENERAL READING LIST

General Textbooks relevant to the course


Conway, G. and Waage, J. (2010) Science and Innovation for Development. London: UKCDS. [Focuses on innovation, the relevant MDGs, and climate change]


