DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

MSc Practising Sustainable Development
MSc Practising Sustainable Development (ICT4D)
MSc Sustainability and Management

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 (https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/geography/home.aspx) where it will be possible to follow the hyperlinks to relevant webpages.
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1. Introduction to the Department

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to the Department of Geography at Royal Holloway. We very much hope that your year with us will be enjoyable and stimulating, and we look forward to working with you on the programme. This handbook aims to give you all the basic information you will require for your academic studies. This includes information on the structure and organisation of the degree programme, teaching arrangements and assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of Department</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Katie Willis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<a href="mailto:katie.willis@rhul.ac.uk">katie.willis@rhul.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>01784 443653</td>
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<td>Q161</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Innes keighren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(<a href="mailto:innes.keighren@rhul.ac.uk">innes.keighren@rhul.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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<td>01784 443722</td>
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<p>| |
|                                               |
| Dr. Ian Candy                                 |
| (<a href="mailto:ian.candy@rhul.ac.uk">ian.candy@rhul.ac.uk</a>)                        |
| 01784 443649                                   |
| Q157                                           |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Mike Dolton</td>
<td>(<a href="mailto:m.dolton@rhul.ac.uk">m.dolton@rhul.ac.uk</a>)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Liz Hamilton</td>
<td>(<a href="mailto:liz.hamilton@rhul.ac.uk">liz.hamilton@rhul.ac.uk</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01784 443563</td>
<td>Q162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen Oliver</td>
<td>(<a href="mailto:Karen.oliver@rhul.ac.uk">Karen.oliver@rhul.ac.uk</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01784 443563</td>
<td>Q162</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Staff teaching on the MSc programmes:**

- Prof Peter Adey (Professor) X3640 Peter.Adey@rhul.ac.uk
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Ms Karen Oliver (Departmental Secretary and Postgraduate Administrator) X3563, QB162 Karen.Oliver@rhul.ac.uk
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There are also a number of research staff based in the department, as well as visiting and emeritus academics. You can find out much more about all the staff and their interests and activities on the Departmental web pages – www.rhul.ac.uk/geography.
2.0 How to find us: the Department

The Department of Geography is located in the Queens Building which can easily be found on the campus map. Details on how to contact the Department, including telephone numbers, maps of the campus and travel directions can all be found on the Departmental Contact Webpage (http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/contactdetails/home.aspx)

The School of Management is located in the Moore Building, Moore Annexe and Founders Building (east 1st floor)

Student parking is limited and a parking permit is required. This can be obtained via Security. You will need proof of insurance and ID before a permit will be issued.

2.1 How to find us: the Departmental office

The Departmental Office is located in Room 162 Queen’s Building, and the Postgraduate Departmental Administrators (Karen Oliver and Liz Hamilton) are usually able to answer questions concerning postgraduate courses.

2.2 The Department: practical information

Any official Departmental forms that you may need to obtain are normally available from the Postgraduate Administrators or the Departmental Administrator. If you want to leave messages for members of staff, these can be left in staff pigeonholes next to the Departmental Office. The Department has its own web-site at www.rhul.ac.uk/geography. This has a wealth of easily-accessible information about the Department, including pages solely dedicated to Postgraduate issues.

2.3 Staff research interests

Each member of staff has their own webpage detailing their research interests as well as recent publications and current projects. You can find all of them at www.rhul.ac.uk/geography and https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/management/staffdirectory/home.aspx - go to the staff directory.

There are also a number of research staff based in the department and visiting academics. You can find out more about all the staff and their interests and
activities on the Departmental web pages –
https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/geography/staffdirectory/home.aspx

3.0 Communication

It is vitally important that you keep in touch with us and we keep in touch with you. Members of staff will often need to be able to contact you to inform you about changes to teaching arrangements, special preparations you may have to do for a class or meetings you might be required to attend. You will need to be able to contact members of the Department for example, if you are unable to attend a class, or wish to arrange a meeting with a tutor.

Email to your College email address is routinely used and you should check regularly (at least daily) if any official communication has been sent to your email address. Do not ignore the email as it will be assumed that it will have been received by you within 48 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays. You should also make a habit of checking the student pigeon holes in the Department.

3.1 Email

Royal Holloway provides an email address for all students free of charge and stores the address in a Royal Holloway email directory (the Global Address List). Your account is easily accessed, both on and off campus, via the student portal https://campus-connect.rhul.ac.uk/cp/home/displaylogin (Campus Connect) or direct via Outlook.com http://outlook.com/ Email to this address will be used routinely for all communication with students. Email may be used for urgent communication and by course tutors to give or confirm instructions or information related to teaching so it is important that you build into your routine that you check your emails once a day. Email communications from staff and all the Faculty Administrators should be treated as important and read carefully.

The College provides a number of PC Labs around Campus for student use, and you can also use your own laptop/smart phone etc, so the Department expects you to check your email regularly. It is also important that you regularly clear your College account of unwanted messages or your in-box may become full and unable to accept messages. Just deleting messages is not sufficient; you must clear the ‘Sent Items’ and ‘Deleted Items’ folders regularly. It is your responsibility to make sure your College email account is kept in working order. If you have any problems contact the IT Service Desk http://itservicedesk.rhul.ac.uk/
The Geography Department will only use the address in the College Global Address List and **does not** use private or commercial email addresses, such as hotmail or Gmail. Students who prefer to use commercial email services are responsible for making sure that their College email is diverted to the appropriate commercial address. Detailed instructions on **how to forward mail** can be accessed by visiting [http://help.outlook.com/](http://help.outlook.com/) and searching for **forwarding.** This process is very easy, but you do have to maintain your College account. When you delete a forwarded message from, say, hotmail, it will not be deleted from the Royal Holloway account. **It is your responsibility** to log on to your College account occasionally and conduct some account maintenance or your account may become full and therefore will not forward messages.

If you send an email to a member of staff in the Department during term time you should normally receive a reply within 3-4 working days of its receipt. Please remember that there are times when members of staff are away from College at conferences or conducting research.

However, you should recognise that e-mail is not a substitute for face-to-face meetings in the Department, and that both academic and welfare issues are best dealt with in person.

Postgraduates should also recognise that it is impossible for staff to write detailed replies to academic queries via email due to the volume of student queries. Again, the appropriate way to discuss these issues is in person during office hours or formal classes. Therefore, unless staff have explicitly made other arrangements, postgraduates should normally restrict the use of e-mail to short queries and the arrangement of meetings with staff.

There is a mailing list for the **Politics, Development and Sustainability Group** (RHUL-PDS@JISCMAIL.AC.UK) to which all new MSc Sustainability & Management students will automatically be added unless they opt out by emailing (Katie.Willis@rhul.ac.uk).

### 3.2 Moodle

When you register you will be given information about Moodle ([http://moodle.rhul.ac.uk/](http://moodle.rhul.ac.uk/)), the online learning platform used within College. Moodle contain important information on courses outlines, assessed work, reading lists and general course information. Session leaders will frequently deposit reading or lecture materials on Moodle to share them with the class or initiate online discussions. You should familiarize yourself with the system early in the year to take full advantage of it.
3.3 Post

All post addressed to postgraduate students in Geography is delivered to the baskets on top of the cabinets in the Post/Copier Room. These baskets are cleared in regular intervals of accumulated mail which is then destroyed. Important information from Registry is often sent by internal post and tutors sometimes return work to you via the baskets so you are advised to check them regularly.

3.4 Telephone and postal address

It is **your responsibility** to ensure that your telephone number (mobile and landline) and postal address (term-time and forwarding) are kept up to date on the [student portal](https://campusconnect.rhul.ac.uk/). There are occasions when the Department needs to contact you urgently by telephone or send you a letter by post.

The Department does not disclose students' addresses and telephone numbers to anybody else (including relatives and fellow students) without the student’s specific permission to do so.

3.5 Notice boards

The official student notice boards are on the walls opposite the Departmental Office. Every effort is made to post notices relating to class times etc well in advance, but occasionally changes have to be made at short notice and in that case email will be used.

**It is your responsibility to check the times and venues of all class meetings and of any requirements (e.g. essay deadlines) relating to your courses**, so, if in doubt, please ask!

3.6 Questionnaires

It is important that we gain feedback from you on how the programme has been delivered and what your experience has been. At the end of each term you will be asked to complete a questionnaire on the course. All questionnaires are anonymous. Please take some time to give your response to the course - these questionnaires form an important part of the way we monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the Department. All questionnaires are seen by the Head of Department and Programme Director, and are analysed as part of the College’s Annual Monitoring process. Constructive criticism is always welcomed and plays an important role in course development. Deserved praise is also very welcome and can make a tremendous contribution to the job satisfaction of your lecturers! The Programme Director also reviews the whole programme by holding a meeting with all students at the end of the first and second terms.
Issues, comments, observations and key recommendations raised by the Visiting Examiner and minutes of the examination sub-board meeting are recorded and reviewed by the Programme Director at the end of each academic year and are discussed with the teaching staff for future development of the programme. Key summaries of these are submitted to the college for annual monitoring of postgraduate taught courses. Annual Review of the programme takes place at the end of the academic year to enable staff to identify points for action where necessary, and to plan programme developments from a sound knowledge base.

From time to time you may find another lecturer sitting in one of your classes. The Department operates a system of ‘peer-observation’ of teaching - members of the teaching staff observe and comment on each other’s teaching during the year.

3.7 Space

There are study spaces available in most of the libraries on campus. In the Department, PGT students can use the Reading Room (Q174) and Common Room (Q144) which also has eating/drinking/coffee making facilities.

4.0 Teaching

4.1 Term dates can be found on the College website http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/aboutus/collegecalendar/home.aspx

You are expected to be in the UK and engaging with your studies during term time. In the case of an emergency which requires you to leave the country and/ or miss lectures/ seminars/ practical’s etc., you are expected to keep your department informed and fill in a Notification of Absence Form (see 4.3 below). During the summer term, after the summer examination period, you are expected to attend all required academic activities organized by your department(s) and to be available should you be required to meet with College staff for any reason. Furthermore as Master’s programmes run for one calendar year from September to September you are also supposed to be available to meet with staff after the official end of term should this be required, that is, during the summer vacation period.

4.2 Reading weeks

There are no Reading Weeks in Geography – students are expected to accompany their studies with additional reading throughout the term.
4.3 Attending classes and engaging with your studies

The College has a responsibility to ensure that all students are attending regularly and progressing with their studies. While it is essential that you attend all the compulsory learning activities related to your programme of study, the College recognises that emergencies may occur at any time throughout the year. In light of this, the Geography Department has set a minimum attendance level at 80%. You should be aware that you may also study courses that have different and specific course attendance requirements, particularly if you are taking courses in another department, so it is essential that you check all programme and course handbooks to ensure you are fully aware of the requirements.

Your regular attendance in class and consistent engagement with your studies are fundamental requirements of your learning experience with the College. As such, failure to attend and/or absence without permission can result in serious consequences and may lead to disciplinary action, including the termination of your registration (see 5.0 below). Your ‘classes’ are any learning or teaching activity deemed essential to your programme of study. The term is used to encompass a variety of different activities, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, field work, laboratory work, and meetings your Personal Advisor.

It is vital that you manage your time effectively, so that any paid employment, voluntary work, extracurricular activities or social commitments do not interfere with periods where you are required to attend classes. With regard to paid employment during the course of your programme of study with the College, the Postgraduate Taught Regulations (http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx) stipulate that the amount of paid work undertaken by a student enrolled with the College on a full-time basis shall not exceed 20 hours per week during term time. No student may undertake paid work which may conflict with his/her responsibilities as a student of the College.

If you face difficulty in attending any classes or undertaking an assessment it is very important that you inform the department(s) in which you are studying as early as possible, citing the reasons for your non-attendance. The department will make a decision on whether or not to authorize your absence. If you are experiencing such difficulties on an ongoing basis, please contact your Personal Adviser or Year Tutor. In addition, an extensive range of additional support, guidance and advice is readily available from the College’s Student Advisory Service.
4.3.1 Your responsibilities in relation to attendance

Your responsibilities around attendance and engagement include:

- attending all classes necessary for the pursuit of your studies (including lectures, seminars, practicals and personal tutorials);
- undertaking all summative and formative assessment requirements for your courses;
- attending all meetings and other activities as required by the department(s) in which you are studying;
- where you experience any form of difficulty in attending classes, for whatever reason, contacting the department(s) in which you are studying to notify them of your circumstances at the earliest possibility.

You are expected to fully engage in your classes, undertaking any reading, research or further preparation identified between these sessions alongside punctual attendance. It is essential that you make suitable arrangements for travel to your classes and plan to arrive in good time, as teaching will start at five minutes past the hour and finish five minutes before the hour. You will normally be marked absent if you turn up late without good reason.

4.3.2 Departments’ responsibilities for monitoring attendance

The Geography Department will monitor your attendance at lectures and seminars. It is your responsibility to complete any attendance register that is circulated and to make sure that your attendance has been noted. The activities at which your attendance is monitored may vary depending upon the discipline in which you are studying or the department in which you are taking courses in the case of electives, for example.

It is important that you attend all the learning activities related to your programme of study. Whilst attendance is compulsory at all learning activities, it is recognised that emergencies may occur at any time throughout the year and therefore as indicated above a minimum attendance requirement has been set.

You will be contacted in the event that:
i. you fail to attend for **two weeks** without providing notification of your absence;

ii. you display a **pattern of absence** that the department feel is affecting or is likely to affect your work

iii. you display a pattern of absence that the department feel is a cause for **concern over your wellbeing or may point to a disability which you may not have disclosed.**

### 4.3.3 College’s responsibilities for monitoring attendance

The College has a number of important obligations in relation to monitoring your attendance and engagement, including legal responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010). As a result, the College may adjust the attendance requirement for your programme but will only do this when such adjustment does not compromise competence standards or your ability to reach the learning outcomes of your programme. Any need to adjust attendance requirements will be treated case by case and discussed by the department with the Disability and Dyslexia Services (DDS) and Academic Quality & Policy Office (AQPO).

The College also has obligations places on it by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) – see 3.3.7 below.

### 4.3.4 Missing classes

If you are unable to attend College for whatever reason you must advise the department in which you taking the course(s) in question and complete the relevant **Notification of Absence Form**, which is available online.

[https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/attendance/notificationofabsence.aspx](https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/attendance/notificationofabsence.aspx)
This must be submitted to the relevant department(s) together with the relevant supporting documentation either before your absence or within five working days of the end of the period of absence.

You should ensure:

a. that you advise the departments emailing the lecturer in charge of the session you will miss, cc’ing in the course director and Liz Hamilton and Karen Oliver in the Admin Office.

b. that you complete the Notification of Absence Form, copies of which are also available from the Health Centre.

c. that you submit the paperwork to your department(s) either before your absence or within FIVE working days of the end of the period of absence. Failure to do so may result in the absence being counted as unacceptable and counting against the minimum attendance level. The forms and evidence should be returned to the Departmental office.

d. that you meet any departmental requirements concerning notification of absence or request for leave of absence as you may be required to meet formally with an academic tutor.
This table shows the documentation that is required should you be absent for any reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for absence</th>
<th>Documentation required</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illness up to and including 5 consecutive term-time days (excluding Saturdays and Sundays)</td>
<td>Completed <strong>Notification of Absence Form – Self Certification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness for more than 5 consecutive term-time days (excluding Saturdays and Sundays)</td>
<td>Completed <strong>Notification of Absence Form - Self Certification</strong> plus Formal Medical Certification signed by the Health Centre, your GP or hospital consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrelated to sickness</td>
<td><strong>Notification of Absence Form</strong> plus supporting evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave of absence request</td>
<td><strong>Notification of Absence Form</strong> plus any departmental requirement must be met</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:

- If you are absent for a prolonged period it is essential that you keep in touch with the Department (e.g. through regular emails with your Personal Advisor).
- The Department will monitor the frequency of self-certified absences and the Head of Department may request a doctor’s medical certificate from you in the event of multiple and/or sustained instances of self-certified illness.
- The departments in which you are studying are responsible for monitoring your attendance and engagement, and deciding whether a period of absence is deemed acceptable or unacceptable (for further information please refer to the online guidance [http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/attendance/notificationofabsence.aspx](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/attendance/notificationofabsence.aspx) for details of what constitutes ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ circumstances relating to absence). If deemed unacceptable the absence will be recorded as such and will count against your minimum attendance level.
4.3.5 Missing an examination

In the event that you are unable to attend an exam (e.g. through reasons of sudden illness), it is essential that you notify Student Administration at the very earliest possibility. Wherever possible, please try to ensure you contact them via e-mail at student-administration@rhul.ac.uk before the scheduled start of the exam with your name, student ID and confirmation of the exam that you are unable to attend. Please include a brief explanation within the email outlining the reasons for the non-attendance.

This notification will then be forwarded by Student Administration to your department so that they are aware of your non-attendance.

Please note, this notification is not a substitute for formally notifying your department of Extenuating Circumstances. It is essential that you inform your department and Chair of the Sub-board of Examiners by completing the Extenuating Circumstances form. For further information, please refer to the website https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academiciansupport/examinations/extenuatingcircumstances.aspx.

In the event that you do not complete the Extenuating Circumstances form, your department will be unable to consider the reasons for your non-attendance at your departmental Sub-Board of Examiners.

4.4 Departmental and research group seminars

We encourage all students to be active members of the departmental community during their time at Royal Holloway. The research group seminars and workshops are given by a variety of speakers including practitioners, academics, PhD students and alumni.

In addition to these seminars, we strongly encourage all students to attend the Departmental Seminars, which normally take place on Thursdays at 1pm or 5pm. This provides an opportunity for students to have access to research occurring across the department and research groups, and to external speakers from other disciplines.

The Centre for Research into Sustainability (CRiS) and the School of Management also run seminars which you are encouraged to attend.
5. Consequences of failing to attend

As indicated in 4.3.2 above the Department may contact you if there are concerns about your attendance.

Should it become apparent that there are no acceptable reasons for your non-attendance and/or general lack of engagement with your studies, the Department may issue you with a formal warning which can escalate to the termination of your registration at the College. You are strongly advised to read the guidance on the formal warning process and the consequences of receiving such a warning on [http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/formalwarnings/formalwarnings.aspx](http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/formalwarnings/formalwarnings.aspx) and in the relevant regulations.

In situations where you are experiencing documented severe difficulties the Department and College will make every effort to support you and counsel you as to the best course of action. However, there may be cases where, although non-attendance is explained by an acceptable reason, your level of attendance falls to a level which compromises educational standards and/or your ability to reach the learning outcomes of the course. In such cases it will be necessary to implement disciplinary procedures as detailed above.

5.1 Withdrawal of visa

If you are in receipt of a Tier-4 (General) Student Visa sponsored by Royal Holloway, it is a requirement of your Visa that you attend classes and complete assessments. This is also a requirement of the College’s academic regulations. The College has a legal responsibility to report any student admitted to the College on a student visa who does not appear to be in attendance to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). Therefore if you fail to meet UKVI visa requirements and/or fail to respond to informal and formal warnings from the College in this regard you could have your sponsorship withdrawn, your Visa cancelled and your registration with the College terminated. The termination of registration due to a breach in Visa requirements is conducted independently of the College’s formal warning process and the decision is not open to appeal.
Please see the College Postgraduate Taught Regulations
(http://www.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx)

5.2 Meetings

You are likely to be invited to meet with a member of academic staff in your department:

- if you fail to attend all learning activities in two consecutive weeks without providing an explanation
- where your pattern of absences is:
- considered to be having an effect your work or causing concern for your well being
- pointing to a possible disability that you may not have disclosed
- where your attendance is approaching the minimum attendance level

You should take any meeting ‘invitation’ seriously. If you should have problems you are being offered an opportunity to seek advice and assistance. At the meeting the Department’s expectation of you will be made clear and the formal disciplinary process will be outlined to you.

5.3 Disciplinary action

Should you choose not to pay attention to your studies then formal disciplinary action may be implemented. You could be issued with a formal warning which can escalate to the termination of your registration at the College. You are strongly advised to read the guidance on the formal warning process and the consequences of receiving such a warning on http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/formalwarnings/formalwarnings.aspx and in the relevant regulations.


In situations where documented severe difficulties are experienced by a student the College will make every effort to support the student and counsel them as to the best course of action. However, there may be cases where, although non-attendance is explained by an acceptable reason the student’s level of attendance falls to a level which compromises educational standards or the ability of the student to reach the learning outcomes of the course. In such cases it will be necessary to implement disciplinary procedures as detailed above.
6.0 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

6.1 Course registrations

While you have the option of changing course unit registrations within the first two/three weeks after the start of teaching (excluding Welcome Week) subject to agreement from the department, once you have submitted assessment for the course, you may not replace it with another either in that term or in a subsequent term (e.g. Spring term). Any courses that you wish to take on an extracurricular basis (that is, as extra and not counting towards your degree) must be identified at the start of the academic year or before any assessment has been completed for the course.

7.0 Facilities

7.1 Libraries

There are 2 libraries on campus:

- **Founder’s Library**, located on the South Side of Founder’s Building, houses most language, literature, film, music and theatre material;
- **Bedford Library**, located up the hill from the Students’ Union next to the History Department, houses science, social science and history material;

Details, including further resources available, opening times and regulations, can be found online: http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/home.aspx

If you cannot find the specific items that you require in the libraries, it is possible to order items from other libraries by inter-library loan or to gain access to the Senate House Library or other university libraries. You can obtain further information on this by asking at the library helpdesks. The Information Consultant for Geography is Emma Burnett, who can be contacted at emma.burnett@rhul.ac.uk.
The Library provides a range of training sessions designed to enhance your existing library and research skills. These are available in both class-based and self-study formats. For information on available sessions and to book a place, go to:

http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/library/helpandsupport/findinginformation.aspx

Many of the books, journals, CD-ROMS and on-line resources that you will need to look at are held, or can be accessed from the Bedford Library. Students will also need to use the other College Libraries and to consult specialist libraries elsewhere within the University, e.g. Senate House Library, School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), Institute for the Study of the Americas, Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICS) and British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES) as appropriate. Information about access to these libraries is available from the Bedford Library.

You are strongly advised to familiarise yourself with the Bedford Library and its resources as early as possible in your degree – introductory tours will be arranged for the induction week.

In addition to the library facilities, the Department has its own Reading Room (Room 173), containing an extensive dissertation collection (of BA and MSc dissertations which were marked 65% and higher). The Reading Room offers a quiet place for students to work – food, drink and the use of mobile phones are not permitted.

7.2 Photocopying, printing and computing

PGT students are issued with 750 photocopying credits at the start of the year, 3p per copy thereafter. A photocopier for postgraduate use is located in the Post Room next to the Departmental Main Office.

The main facilities for postgraduate computing are the PC Computer Room (Room 146) in the Department and the PC laboratories run by the central Computer Centre. At College registration you will be given details of induction procedures, user accounts and password procedures. All students are expected to have basic information technology (IT) skills by the end of the first term (operation of Windows, word-processing, spreadsheet use and basic web skills). We expect you to have at least the basic competence in IT as provided by some of the IT Training sessions run by the Computer Centre.

Advice and Registration for appropriate courses will be available at the Computer Centre. Details of the location are given during the registration process. The Computer Centre provides a range of IT training sessions designed to enhance your current IT skills. These are available in both class-based and
self-study formats, and successful completion of the course is rewarded by a College IT Skills certificate. To participate in these sessions, go to:

http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/it/training/home.aspx

The Department has computing facilities which are available for postgraduate students in room 146. Some qualitative research projects may benefit from the specialist software in the Qualitative Methods Lab (QML). GIS and remote sensing facilities are available in the department, and further details may be obtained from our GIS lecturer, Dr. Gwilym Eades. Mr Ray Aung is the Computer Technician responsible for day-to-day running of the Departmental computing facilities. Room 146 is a working environment, and priority is given to formal classes and postgraduates. Eating, drinking and music are not permitted. All College regulations concerning the use of Computer facilities apply to Room 146.

Many of the PC labs are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Alternatively, there are computers available for your use in the libraries and Computer Centre.

Departmental staff are unable, in any circumstances, to print anything out on your behalf. Copier-printers (MFDs) are located across the campus in the PC labs, libraries and Computer Centre. Further information on printing is available online:

http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/it/printing/home.aspx

RHUL owns a house in Central London at 11 Bedford Square (behind the British Museum). Occasionally, talks and workshops may be held at this venue. There is also a computer room and printing facilities which postgraduate students can use – you will need your College swipe card to access the building.

8 Coursework Essays and Dissertation

8.1 Coursework assignments

See handbook Supplement for forms of assessment. For assessment regulations see https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx. The marking criteria and proformas for coursework assignments are given in the Appendices. Details of the module assessments are given on the Moodle pages of each module. Module leaders will also give additional guidance on assignments.
8.2 The dissertation

Students are required to prepare a dissertation of between 12,000 and 15,000 words on a topic approved by their Supervisor. The dissertation must be based on primary research; an extended literature review is inadequate. More detailed advice and instructions will be provided during the autumn and spring terms, while the Research Training component (GG5402) is designed to equip students with appropriate methods and techniques for undertaking this work. In the first term students should consider topics for possible dissertations and discuss these with appropriate members of staff. If you plan to work with a specific organisation, it is essential that you contact the appropriate organisation as early as possible so that dissertation research can agreed with them and potentially be developed in collaboration and for the needs of those organisations. Some students may already have contacts with particular organisations; however staff will be able to advise and give guidance to students needing help with this.

At the end of the first term, by Thursday 8th December 2016, the dissertation proposal form (given in Appendix 9) and a 1000-word dissertation research proposal, which should include a brief literature review, must be submitted to the director of the programme. Following this, each student will be allocated a supervisor for their dissertation who will advise students on the topic, research methodology and objectives of the dissertation.

An extended research proposal (2500 words) is to be submitted to the Departmental Office by Wednesday 26th April 2017 which will then be given to the designated supervisor. The extended research proposal should include the following:

- the specific title;
- academic context/literature review;
- aims/objectives of the research;
- research methodology;
- ethical issues relating to the research;
- proposed timetable for the research;
- full budget for the research;
- risk assessment for the research.

Each student will be expected to make an oral presentation outlining their research ideas and fieldwork plan in mid-May 2017 (exact date will be announced by the Programme Director in March 2017 and students cannot proceed with fieldwork until after this date). Please note that you should use your extended research proposal as the basis for the presentation and you should use the criteria set out in Appendix 3 for putting together the presentation. The marking criteria for the research presentation is given in Appendix 6. Students will be expected to talk for 10 minutes with another 10 minutes for questions and discussion.
Students who have not submitted their research proposal will not be allowed to proceed to do their fieldwork and dissertation. Two examiners will mark the extended research proposal, followed by a formal meeting with the supervisor. Together, the extended research proposal and the oral presentation will have a weighting of 10% towards the final grade (each worth 5%). This will be used as evidence of satisfactory preparation for fieldwork and data collection. Formal approval of the extended research proposal is required before candidates are permitted to proceed to do their fieldwork for the main research. The supervisor will then, together with the student, finalise the Departmental risk assessment forms and the ethical form (available from the programme Director) with the student as an approval to proceed for fieldwork during the summer term. Students will not be able to proceed with fieldwork unless they have satisfactorily completed risk assessment and ethical forms.

During the summer term, and the summer break, students should be aware that supervisors may sometimes be away for research or annual leave, and should arrange meetings well in advance. It is expected that students will consult supervisors as appropriate to discuss progress of their research and writing. If your supervisor is away for a part of this time, you should communicate with your advisor. During the writing stage, supervisors may be asked to comment on research quality, general structure, layout and style of presentation. Supervisors may be asked to comment on draft chapters, the exact date of submission to be negotiated with the supervisor, but at least one week prior to the submission deadline.

Two hard copies and one ecopy of the dissertation must be submitted for examination. Residential students must have both bound using the machine available in Q137, for which a nominal charge will be made. The dissertation must comply with conventional formatting requirements, including full contents pages, a clear chapter structure, an alphabetical bibliography and where appropriate, appendices. See below for further guidance on preparation. In addition, an electronic copy of the dissertation (figures and diagrams removed) should be submitted to the College plagiarism system, Turnitin. A receipt of submission of work to the Turnitin system should be handed into the Departmental office. Full guidance will be given by the programme Director for the latter. You must also complete a word count and plagiarism declaration form (Appendix 8) and hand it in to the Department. The completed dissertation should be submitted to the Departmental Secretaries on or before 4:00pm on Thursday 24th August 2017. You should obtain a receipt confirming submission. The dissertation marking criteria are given in Appendix 6.

On completion of the examination and the posting of the provisional results in late September or early October, one copy of the dissertation is returnable to candidates if it not required for the Departmental Library. Students should make their own arrangements to collect these, or should leave a stamped
addressed envelope with the Departmental Secretary so that they can be posted to them.

8.3 The dissertation supervisor

Your department will assign you a dissertation supervisor who will oversee your work. In most cases students are happy with the supervisory relationship. However, there are occasions where for some reason the supervisory relationship does not work and breaks down. If this happens, you should speak as soon as possible with the Programme Director or your Personal Advisor to see whether the problem can be resolved informally, e.g. through mediation, changing supervisor. You should not wait until after you have received your final degree results to raise the matter as it is very difficult for the College to resolve such matters or take remedial action at that point.

8.4 Guidelines for dissertation writing

The dissertation should be between 12,000 and 15,000 words (excluding bibliography, illustrative material (tables and diagrams) and appendices). The dissertation must be typed or word-processed in double spacing on A4-sized paper with at least 2.0 cm margins. Be sure that the printer is producing a dark, easily readable text. Examiners will give specific attention in deciding a recommended mark to the following points:

**The Structure of the Dissertation:** The dissertation must deal with, and set out clearly, the aims, methods and findings of the work. Page numbers, a list of contents (including tables, figures, photos and appendices), and text headings are essential. It is vital that you relate your work to a relevant body of existing literature and research. Use appropriate chapter titles and number them. The following structure is only a guideline. You may want to change chapter headings and include certain elements in different sections:

- Title of study
- Acknowledgements
- Table of contents
- List of figures
- List of tables
- List of plates (photographs)
- Glossary (if applicable)

[Word count begins here]
- Chapter 1 - Introduction – this should outline the aims and objectives of the research, and how the research came about and why it is relevant, giving some brief background information
• Chapter 2 - Academic context – this should include a review of relevant published academic and policy literature on the topic, making clear the relevance of this background material to the study.

• Chapter 3 - Methods – this should include the research design and methods. Justification of the methods used should be given. You may also want to include the ethical considerations, timetable, budget and risks involved in the fieldwork in this section. However, the latter information could also be included in an appendix. This chapter should be written in the past tense. Remember that you should include reference to appropriate methodology literature, and don’t forget to include a discussion of how you analysed the data. You also need to reflect on problems/limitations and how this may have affected your results.

• Chapters 4 (+5 & 6) – Results and Analysis – These may be written in separate sections, but often, particularly when using qualitative material, you should bring the two together. You may find it useful to write shorter themed chapters instead of one long one. This is the section which most students find difficult. You are analysing NOT describing. You also need to make sure that you only deal with material which is relevant to the research questions. Leaving out great material is part of the pain of doing research! When reporting findings, you should present numbers and quotes as appropriate, do not include raw data, such as interview transcripts or survey data, in the text. If they are relevant put them in an appendix. The analysis should be a critical discussion of the research findings in light of relevant published literature. You should also consider the limitations of the study here.

• Chapter 6 - Conclusions – this should summarise the findings of the research and look to the future indicating further research opportunities on the problem investigated.

[Word count ends here]

• Bibliography
• Appendix

Composition/Style: Dissertations should be modelled on the style of articles in the academic journal literature and should aim at appropriate objectivity, clarity and lack of ambiguity. Spelling and grammar should be correct.

Referencing: Sources of information must be clearly identified within the text. Unsupported assertions must be avoided. Full references must be listed in proper form in the bibliography at the end. See Section 8.4. for more guidance on referencing.

Illustrations: Figures and tables should be used to support the text. Maps and diagrams may be of any size, but preferably within A4 and should be produced using a computer graphics application. Photographic materials
should not exceed A4 size. Be sure that illustrations are adequately explained, e.g. include such essentials as scales, orientation, etc., as well as captions. You must not download figures from the Internet and use them where copyright is held on them. Similar constraints apply to figures and tables in academic journals, books or reports. To use them you must obtain permission from the authors and/or publishers. If you re-draw the figure or adapt a table, thus significantly altering them, you can use the caption ‘based on/modified from’ giving the author and reference.

**Appendices:** Appendices should only contain supporting material; all substantive material germane to the core discussion should be included in the main body of text. Where appropriate the following may be included within the appendices: illustrations of the tools used in the data collection process, correspondence items including letters, a sample of (blank) questionnaires, data collection proformas, summary data, information pamphlets. All other items to be considered for inclusion in the appendices should have the prior approval of the supervisor.

**Neatness:** This includes the layout of the text on the page, i.e. format; font; quality of captions, etc; lettering and the linework in figures; excessive or unsightly corrections. Pages must also be numbered.

The report must be spiral bound with a clear plastic front cover and a white card back cover. Binding is available in QB137. A declaration (Appendix 8) that the dissertation has been prepared on the basis of the candidate’s own work and that where other source materials have been used this has been acknowledged, should be completed and handed into the Departmental Office.

### 8.5 Referencing and bibliographies

You are expected to reference your sources in the text, and produce a bibliography (list of your sources) at the end of your work. All assessed coursework should be properly referenced and have a bibliography. There are a range of referencing and bibliographic conventions, examples of which may be seen in current academic journals (e.g. Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Progress in Development Studies). The most important rule is to be consistent.

The following is suggested as an appropriate standard format, based on the so-called ‘Harvard system’:-

1. References in the text should give the surname of the author and the year of publication in brackets, for example, Collins (1998) or (Smith & Jones, 2001), followed by a, b, etc when two or more references to work by one author are given for the same year - e.g. (Harris, 2008c).
2. Page numbers must be given for quotes, for example, (Collins, 1998: 42).
3. At the end of the text the references should be listed in a single bibliographical list, in alphabetical order of authors’ names and in chronological order for each author.
4. The format of references listed in the bibliography should be as follows. Please note that the bibliography should not be divided according to these categories (i.e. with sub-sections for journal articles, books, chapters etc). The following list merely indicates the appropriate format for each kind of reference.

**Example of a Journal Article (Single Author)**

**Example of a Journal Article (Multiple Authors)**

**Example of a Book (Single Author)**

**Example of a Book (Edited)**

**Example of a Chapter in Edited Book**

**Example of a Research Report**

**Or, without an author cited:**

**Example of an Article in an Online-Only Journal** (NOTE: This is different from a printed journal which is available electronically, which should follow the conventions of a journal article)
Example of an Unpublished Thesis

Example of an Official Publication

Example of an Unpublished Conference Paper

Example of a Published Conference Paper

Example of a Newspaper Article

Or, without an author cited:

Or, from an online edition:

Example of a WWW page with obvious author and clear date of last update
[Reference in text as (Haszeldine, 2011) where the date is the date of last update.]
Example of a WWW page from an organization

Example of a WWW page from an organisation, no clear date of last update

Example of an episode of a TV series

Secondary referencing
This is when you are unable to access the original source e.g. it is in a language you cannot read, it was a conference presentation that you did not hear, or you cannot access the book/ article. To acknowledge that your interpretation of the original material you need to show where you obtained the information from.

For example:
According to Jones (1980 cited in Smith, 2010: 135) development is a contested concept.
You would only but the Smith (2010) reference in the bibliography. You should use secondary referencing sparingly. Try to read as many primary sources as possible.

8.6 Marking schemes and academic feedback

The Table in Appendix 7 shows the assessment criteria that are used by examiners in marking work within the Department, and shows you the general criteria that are used to calculate grades and marks. They are general models of the characteristics that are expected of work being awarded particular grades. Written feedback on all assessed work is provided by a proforma completed by the markers of the assignment. An example shown in Appendix
9.0 Assessment Information

9.1 Illness or other extenuating circumstances

If you are taken ill or there are other extenuating circumstances that you believe have adversely affected your performance in relation to any aspect of your course/programme (for example, your attendance, submission of work, or examination performance) at any point during the academic year, you must inform your department(s)/school(s) in writing, and provide the appropriate evidence. Please read the “Instructions to Candidates” issued by the College. http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/examinations/home.aspx For full details on how and when to inform your department about such circumstances as well as the deadline for submission of such information.

Absence from an examination / failure to submit coursework

Please see the section on progression and award requirements for further details of the impact on course outcomes of failure to attend an examination or to submit required coursework.

If you miss an examination or fail to submit a piece of assessed coursework through illness, or other acceptable cause for which adequate documentation is provided in accordance with the section Illness or other extenuating circumstances in the Instructions to Candidates http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/examinations/home.aspx the Sub-board of Examiners may take this into account when considering your results.

Exam access arrangements for disabled students and those in need of support

For all such students there is a process to apply for access arrangements for your examinations and other forms of assessment. Such requests should be made to the Disability and Dyslexia Services (ESO) which will carry out an assessment of your needs. Please see the section Students in need of support (including disabled students) for further guidance about registering with the Disability and Dyslexia Services (ESO).

9.2 Submission of written work

It is normally expected that you will word-process all assessed work, unless a prior agreement has been made with the module leader.
All assessed work should be handed in at the Departmental Office in person by 4pm on the specified deadline for each module. Coursework receipts are issued by the Postgraduate Administrators, and you should retain these until the examination process is completed for the year in the following September.

Assessed work cannot be submitted to the office by email without a specific agreement of the MSc Director and office staff. In addition, an electronic copy of the work (figures and diagrams removed) should be submitted to the College plagiarism system, Turnitin, by the given deadline. A receipt of submission of work to the Turnitin system should be handed into the Departmental office. Full guidance will be given by the programme Director for the latter.

9.3 Extensions to deadlines

Any requests for extension of coursework and dissertation deadlines must normally be made in writing to the Programme Director at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline. Such extensions will only be granted on the grounds of illness or other personal hardship. You may be required to submit medical evidence as appropriate.

9.4 Penalties for late submission of work

Work submitted after the published deadline will be penalised in line with Section 13 (5) of the College’s Postgraduate Taught Regulations 2016-17 https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx

Please ensure that you are aware of the deadlines set by your department(s) and also the requirements to meet this deadline, e.g. whether you need to submit electronic and/or paper copies for your submission to be deemed complete (see 7.2 above).

Section 13 (5)

In the absence of acceptable extenuating cause, late submission of work will be penalised as follows:

- for work submitted up to 24 hours late, the mark will be reduced by ten percentage marks;*
- for work submitted more than 24 hours late, the mark will be zero.

*eg. an awarded mark of 65% would be reduced to 55% and a mark of 42% would be reduced to 32%.

If you have had extenuating circumstances which have affected your ability to submit work by the deadline these should be submitted in writing,
accompanied by any relevant documentary evidence, to your department(s). As with all extenuating circumstances it is the discretion of the examiners whether to accept these as a reason for having not submitted work on time. Please see the section on applying for an extension to the deadlines set, and the section for details on submitting requests for extenuating circumstances to be considered.

9.5 Anonymous marking and cover sheets

It is a College requirement that in respect to individual written coursework, all assignments remain anonymous until marking has been completed. You should only write your candidate numbers on individual written work, not your name. Candidate numbers will be issued to you in the first weeks of the degree programme.

9.6 Penalties for over-length work

Work which is longer than the stipulated length in the assessment brief will be penalised in line with Section 13 (6) of the College’s Postgraduate Taught Regulations 2016-17 (https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx)

Being able to express oneself within a given length of text is part of becoming proficient in academic writing. The different formats of academic work generally come with specific expectations on length, i.e. a set maximum number of words or characters which have to be respected.

The following College policy applies to all students on taught programmes of study:

Section 13 (6)

All over-length work submitted on undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes will be penalised as follows:

- For work which exceeds the upper word limit by at least 10% and by less than 20%, the mark will be reduced by ten percentage marks*, subject to a minimum mark of a minimum pass.

- For work which exceeds the upper word limit by 20% or more, the maximum mark will be zero.

*eg. an awarded mark of 65% would be reduced to 55%.
In addition to the text, the word count should include quotations and footnotes. Please note that the following are excluded from the word count: candidate number, title, course title, preliminary pages, bibliography and appendices.

9.7 Return of written coursework

The following College policy applies to the return of coursework:

Assessed work (other than formal examinations) should be returned within 4 weeks of the submission deadline, except in cases where it is not appropriate to do so for academic reasons. The deadline for the return of marked work should be made clear to students when they receive their assignments. In the event that the intended deadline cannot be met, the revised deadline must be communicated to students as soon as possible.

In the Geography department, the submitted copy of assessed written MSc coursework itself is not returned to students, but retained for reference (e.g. to be checked by the external examiner). Students receive feedback within 3-4 weeks of the date of submission (not including vacations). If staff are for good reason unable to meet these guidelines they must inform the students at the time of receipt of the work, and give a clear date for return. A comments proforma will be returned to students, including a provisional mark. You must note that this grade remains provisional until the final degree classification is confirmed and posted.

When looking at proformas you should keep the following points in mind:-
1) Many pieces of work will have characteristics that fall between two or more classes. Your examiners retain the ultimate decision as to the mark given to a particular piece of work, and your mark may be altered by second markers or external markers.
2) Look at the full range of assessment criteria, rather than just those that correspond to your own judgement of your abilities. When marking your work, examiners look at a range of different aspects of your work. For example, the proforma for comments on coursework shows the most important aspects of the work as a series of tick-boxes. Think about how you could improve each of these aspects of your work.
3) These criteria give general models of assessment criteria. Your module/element leaders will also discuss the specific assessments for their courses, particularly where these are not standard essays.

The Departmental grade system gives one letter to each of our degree classification divisions (A= High Distinction/Distinction, B= Pass (Good); C= Pass (Satisfactory); F = Fail.). The pass mark is 50%.
9.8 Assessment offences

The College has regulations governing assessment offences which can be found on the following webpage:

http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx

Assessment offences include, but are not limited to plagiarism (see below), duplication of work, that is, submitting work for assessment which has already been submitted for assessment in the same or another course, falsification, collusion, for example, group working would constitute collusion where the discipline or the method of assessment emphasises independent study and collective ideas are presented as uniquely those of the individual submitting the work, failure to comply with the rules governing assessment (including those set out in the 'Instructions to candidates'. The Regulations set out some of the types of assessment offences in more detail, the procedures for investigation into allegations of such offences and the penalties. Students are strongly encouraged to read these Regulations and to speak with their Personal Advisors or other members of staff in their department should they have any queries about what constitutes an assessment offence. The College treats assessment offences very seriously and misunderstanding about what constitutes an assessment offence will not be accepted as an excuse. Similarly extenuating circumstances cannot excuse an assessment offence. Students with extenuating circumstances which affect their ability to submit work should contact their departments about the possibility of an extension or other support.

9.9 Plagiarism

Definition of plagiarism

'Plagiarism' means the presentation of another person's work in any quantity without adequately identifying it and citing its source in a way which is consistent with good scholarly practice in the discipline and commensurate with the level of professional conduct expected from the student. The source which is plagiarised may take any form (including words, graphs and images, musical texts, data, source code, ideas or judgements) and may exist in any published or unpublished medium, including the internet.

Self-plagiarism, or duplication, is also an assessment offence. This is the unacknowledged replication of one’s own work in any quantity across
separate assessments without sufficient redevelopment to make it novel and appropriate to each assessment. This would include the replication of work which was previously submitted for assessment at another institution.

Plagiarism may occur in any piece of work presented by a student, including examination scripts, although standards for citation of sources may vary dependent on the method of assessment. Identifying plagiarism is a matter of expert academic judgement, based on a comparison across the student’s work and on knowledge of sources, practices and expectations for professional conduct in the discipline. Therefore it is possible to determine that an offence has occurred from an assessment of the student’s work alone, without reference to further evidence.

Further guidance and support are provided by the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS) through their online resources (see https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/cedas/onlineresources/home.aspx for guidance on what plagiarism is and how to avoid it). CeDAS can also give one-to-one advice if needed (see 10.3 for contact details).

9.10 Marking of illegible scripts

It is College policy not to mark scripts which are illegible. If you anticipate that you may have difficulty in handwriting scripts which would lead to your scripts being illegible you should contact the Disability and Dyslexia Services (ESO), http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/disabledstudents/home.aspx

9.11 Progression and award requirements

The Regulations governing progression and award requirements are set out in your Programme Specification (http://www.rhul.ac.uk/coursecatalogue/home.aspx) and also more generally in the Postgraduate Taught Regulations http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx

For details on the requirements governing the level of award please see the section on the Consideration and Classification of Candidates for the Award in the Postgraduate Taught Regulations.

http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx
From September 2013 departments were permitted to offer PGT student’s summer resits. If your department does this, you should stipulate this here.

9.12 Examination / assessment results

Please see the Examinations & Assessments website http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/home.aspx for details of how you will be issued with your results.
http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/examinations/results.aspx

The Examinations & Assessments website is the place where you can access the “Instructions to Candidates” and details of the examinations appeals procedures.
http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/academicappealsandcollegecomplaints.aspx

10.0 Student Support

10.1 Non-academic related enquires & support

The Student Services Centre is located in the Windsor Building and provides a single point of contact for all non-academic related queries including accommodation, fees and funding, enrolment and graduation. For further details please visit http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ssc

10.2 Students in need of support (including students with special needs)

Your first point of reference for advice within the Department is the Programme Director. Inevitably, problems will sometimes arise that the Programme Director is not qualified to deal with. The College offers a high level of student welfare support which includes a comprehensive Health Centre, a highly regarded Counselling Service, dedicated educational and disability support, as well as a wealth of financial, career and other advice. Further details of each service can be found on the College web on the Student Welfare page:
http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/home.aspx

If you have a disability or specific learning difficulty, it is important that you bring it to our attention as soon as possible. The Departmental Disability & Dyslexia Services (ESO) representative is Dr Mike Dolton. You must also contact
the Disability & Dyslexia Services (ESO) (Founders East 151; tel: +44 (0)1784 443966; email: educational-support@royalholloway.ac.uk) who will arrange for an assessment of needs to be carried out and will advise on appropriate sources of help. Further information is available on the College web on the Support, health and welfare page
https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/disabledstudents/home.aspx

10.3 Academic skills support

The Centre for the Development of Academic Skills (CeDAS) offers a variety of courses, workshops, 1:1 tutorials, online resources that aim to ensure all students at Royal Holloway reach their full academic potential in a range of areas, including academic writing, oral communication skills and maths and statistics.

Whatever your needs, CeDAS is there to ensure that you can perform to the best of your ability, whether it be through a workshop that introduces you to a crucial academic skill, a session within your department that focuses on writing in the discipline, a course that develops your confidence and competence in academic English language, or a 1:1 tutorial with a specialist to help you master a maths technique or sharpen your essay skills.

The Centre also oversees the Royal Holloway Proofreading Scheme, which enables students to pay for an approved third-party proofreader to identify surface error in final drafts. Please note that Royal Holloway does not permit the use of paid third-party proofreaders who are not part of this scheme.

The CeDAS Office can be found on the ground floor of the International Building, room IN002, and you can follow them on Twitter: @cedashul. Further details can be found on the CeDAS webpages: www.royalholloway.ac.uk/cedas.

10.4 Student-staff committee

There is a student-staff committee on which both taught and research students are represented. For constitution see committee’s handbook under Compliance/Governance
http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/iquad/collegepolicies/home.aspx

The Staff-Student Committee is a vital part of the feedback and quality assurance mechanisms in the Department. Issues raised by the staff-student committee are formally tabled and minuted at the Departmental Board
meeting and are taken very seriously. As with the Geographical Society (GeogSoc) committee, participation on the Staff-Student Committee is seen as an important service to the Department, and this can be reflected on CVs and in references. Even if you are not on the committee you should get to know who your representatives are.

The committee has two main functions:
- to provide a forum for the discussion of Departmental matters; and
- to provide a formal means of communication with the Departmental Board

Elections for the student representatives are held at the beginning of each session. Further elections are held for any vacancies that may occur. A chairperson and a secretary are elected to hold office for the year. Because of the importance of this Committee, the Head of Department will attend, by invitation, whenever possible.

Two meetings are held each term; further meetings may be held if called at the request of three or more members of the Committee. Major items to be discussed at meetings should be submitted to the secretary and chair at least one week before the published date of meetings. Minutes of meetings are circulated to members of the Committee and all members of staff. They are also posted in the Department.

10.5 Students’ Union

The Students’ Union offers a wide range of services and support, from entertainment and clubs/societies to advice on welfare and academic issues. The Advice and Support Centre, situated on the first floor of the Students’ Union, runs a confidential service that is independent from the College. Open 9.30am - 5pm, Monday – Friday, it operates an open door policy exclusively for students during term time. However, during vacation periods students should call to book an appointment. Full details can be found at www.su.rhul.ac.uk/support

10.6 Learning resources: library, IT, photocopying and printing

There are a number of libraries and computing facilities on campus where photocopying and printing can also take place. Details can be found on the Library (http://www.rhul.ac.uk/information-services/library/) and Computer Centre (http://www.rhul.ac.uk/Information-Services/Computer-Centre/index.asp) webpages.
10.7 Careers information

The College has a careers advisory service, housed in the Horton Building, which is open to any student during normal College hours.

http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/careers/home.aspx

The Department actively assists students to formulate their career objectives through a programme of focused activities co-ordinated with the College’s Careers’ Service but tailored to the needs of our postgraduate students. These include generic skills such as CV preparation, and advice on the job application process. The highlight of our provision is an annual Geography Careers’ Evening, at which a selection of our alumni from various courses and research degrees now working in diverse fields, speak to current students about their career choices and paths, and explain how to go about following in their footsteps.

The Departmental website also contains a regularly-updated series of alumni career profiles, several of which are directly relevant to students on this degree programme.

At appropriate stages of the year, our Director of Graduate Studies holds a meeting with students on all our Master’s programmes to discuss and provide guidance on possibilities for undertaking research degrees (MPhil/PhD) and how to apply for such funding.

Personal Development Planning

Personal Development Planning (PDP) is a means by which you can monitor, build and reflect upon your personal development. It gives you the opportunity to enhance your self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses and directions for change, and gives you a record of your learning experiences and achievement, personal reflections and plans for self-improvement. This can help you become a more effective, independent and confident self-directed learner; understand how you are learning and relate your learning to a wider context; improve your general skills for study and career management; and articulate personal goals and evaluate progress towards your achievement.

It is your own responsibility to use this opportunity. The PDP forms can be completed whenever you feel it appropriate, and their content can be discussed with your Personal Tutor, if you so wish.

10.8 Non-academic policies

Please see the Codes and Regulations webpage http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/onlinestudenthandbook.aspx which includes information on non-academic policies, regulations, and codes
of practice as well as the Student Charter, http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/aboutus/governancematters/studentcharter.aspx

10.9 Complaints and academic appeals procedure

If you have a complaint relating to any aspect of the Department or its staff or to any academic or College matter, you should first discuss it informally with your Personal Advisor or with another member of staff in the Department. We would hope that the majority of issues of this kind can be resolved by informal discussion. There are, however, procedures that can be invoked in serious cases. These are set out in the College Complaints Procedures for students http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/complaints/complaints.aspx. You should raise your complaint as soon as possible. If the complaint concerns an academic decision, there is an academic appeals process. Please note that an academic appeal can only be submitted once you have received your results via the College portal. Details of the appeals procedures and permitted grounds for appeal can be found on the following webpage http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/academicappealsandcollegecomplaints.aspx

11.0 Health and Safety Information

11.1 Code of practice on harassment for students

This can be found on the student home pages under codes and regulations http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/onlinestudenthandbook.aspx

11.2 Lone working policy and procedures

The College has a ‘Lone Working Policy and Procedure’ that can be found on the Health and Safety Web pages http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/iquad/services/healthandsafety/policiesandprocedures/loneworking.aspx

Lone working is defined as working during either normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace or when working outside of normal hours. The Department and the type of work conducted by students is classified as a low risk activity and as such the following advice is relevant. Working out of hours counts as lone working - and the rule is the usual "If you arrive and leave the department outside of 9-5 then you must call security on ext 3063 to let them know you are in the building and again to let them know
when you leave." There is an open access phone in the Queens foyer to use for this purpose.

Any health and safety concerns should be brought to the attention of the Departmental Health and Safety Co-ordinator or the College Health and Safety Office.

It is likely that most activities will take place on College premises. However, the principles contained in the above section will apply to students undertaking duties off campus.

11.3 Fieldwork

Students carry out fieldwork in relation to the dissertation. The procedure in terms of health and safety is that the supervisor and student discuss health and safety issues relating to the fieldwork and these are then formally recorded on the Departmental risk assessment forms (available from the programme Director). The risk assessment forms give a detailed account of all risks associated with fieldwork and measures put in place to mitigate/reduce risk. Students will not be able to proceed with fieldwork unless they have satisfactorily completed the risk assessment form.

12.0 Equal Opportunities Statement and College Codes of Practice

12.1 Equal opportunities statement

The University of London was established to provide education on the basis of merit above and without regard to race, creed or political belief and was the first university in the United Kingdom to admit women to its degrees.

Royal Holloway, University of London (hereafter ‘the College’) is proud to continue this tradition, and to commit itself to equality of opportunity in employment, admissions and in its teaching, learning and research activities.

The College is committed to ensure that;

- all staff, students, applicants for employment or study, visitors and other persons in contact with the College are treated fairly, have equality of opportunity and do not suffer disadvantage on the basis of race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, age, marital or parental status, dependants, disability, sexual orientation, religion, political belief or social origins

- both existing staff and students, as well as, applicants for employment or admission are treated fairly and individuals are judged solely on
merit and by reference to their skills, abilities qualifications, aptitude and potential

- it puts in place appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity

- teaching, learning and research are free from all forms of discrimination and continually provide equality of opportunity

- all staff, students and visitors are aware of the Equal Opportunities Statement through College publicity material

- it creates a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for diversity within the College

- it conforms to all provisions as laid out in legislation promoting equality of opportunity.

12.2 College codes of practice

Postgraduate codes of practice can be found in the Departmental Postgraduate Handbook.
APPENDIX 1 GG5304: INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER PROJECT DETAILS

Individual Community Volunteer Project Assessment:

Each student should identify an individual community volunteer project of personal interest with a non-governmental organisation (NGO). The organisation can be a third sector / charitable organisation or a For Profit organisation in a ‘sustainability’ related field. The aim of this assignment is to allow students to actively engage with an issue of sustainability in practice and to reflect on that involvement. Sustainability is broadly defined so the project can include social as well as environmentally themed projects – there are many organisations out there so select one that is of particular interest to you.

Each student needs to volunteer for a minimum of 24 hours on a project with an organisation of their individual choice. Please note that you may exceed this minimum requirement. Past years have shown that the more time you put into the volunteer project the more that you are likely to get out of it, improving the quality of your final report.

Students should keep a reflective journal (see also p.57 below) covering why you chose the organisation and including a brief recounting of what you did and your thoughts about your experiences. This will aid you when producing the final report and must be submitted with the final report (see details below).

Why is a community volunteer project a mandatory part of the course?

NGOs are a key stakeholder group that seeks to action positive change for issues of sustainability. Throughout this course we are exploring theory and practice of sustainability and this experience gives you the opportunity to be directly involved with an NGO of your choice and better understand operation, logistical and strategic challenges.

Beyond the learning benefits the project offers additional practical benefits to you. Many businesses (and also governments) are increasingly partnering with NGOs to further their CSR profile; if you have an understanding of how an NGO works you will be better positioned to establish such relationships in your future careers. The volunteering experience is a work related experience that can be added to your CV and help you stand out amongst other candidates for jobs. The volunteering experience also allows you to establish networks within an NGO community of interest to you, potentially opening up opportunities in the future.

Practicalities of the Assignment
Before volunteering you are required to complete a risk assessment, which is due November 1st with a 250 word summary of your project. You may complete and submit these earlier if you wish to begin your volunteering before October 27th.

Activities throughout the year are designed to support your work with the volunteer project:

- October 20th: In-class tutorial on how to properly complete risk assessment
- November 1st: Risk assessment and 250 word summary that details project due. Formative comments on 250 word summaries returned by November 21st
- For guidance and forms see: [http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/currentstudents/departmentalhfsforstudents/departmentalhfsforstudents.aspx](http://www.rhul.ac.uk/geography/currentstudents/departmentalhfsforstudents/departmentalhfsforstudents.aspx)
- Monday Feb 6th from 12:00-1:00 p.m. (Subject to confirmation) – Poster session. Malcolm Kelsey will go through how to construct a poster. This is an extremely useful session so make sure that you attend. Location to be confirmed.
- February 20th: – Posters due (A4 size poster print-out, turnitin text and pdf on CD of full size poster).
- March 9th: – Poster presentation + celebration of sustainability volunteering event. Please note that full size posters will be produced by the Dept. from your CD submitted on Feb 20th.
- April 26th: – 2000 word volunteer project report due (75% of the assignment mark).

You may ask the lecturers questions about your project during office hours. You should also use the Moodle Social Forum to share your questions, experiences etc.

Your poster (25% of assignment mark) will be graded based on how well you convey information about your project in a manner that is visually appealing to poster viewers. Your poster should contain information on your organisation, what you did, what you learned and how it relates to key themes from class and should include references.

Your individual project report of 2000 words (75% of assignment mark) will be graded based on:

1) Quality of your project report, which should:
   a. Provide a brief account of your work,
   b. Spend more space reflecting on your experiences, what you learned and how this volunteer work relates to wider debates such as governance for sustainability, social and environmental justice. Hence, you should engage with relevant literature to frame the relevance of your project;

2) Letter of reference from an individual at the organisation where you volunteered that confirms you volunteered for the minimum requirement;
3) Blue sheet that records dates and hours that you volunteered, signed by you and your supervisor;

4) You must also submit your volunteer journal (e.g. this should be reflexive and include details about what you did and your thoughts on your experiences). The journal will not be formally assessed but it is required for the assignment to be considered complete and for your project report to be graded.

This total assignment is 10% of your total mark for the MSc.
“Never doubt that a small group of committed individuals can change the world; in fact they are the only ones that ever have”. – Margaret Mead

**WHAT IS COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING?**

Service-learning is a method by which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized community involvement opportunities that are conducted in and meet the needs of communities and are coordinated with local community-based organizations.

Service-learning helps foster civic responsibility, enhances the academic curriculum by connecting academic theory with social experience; and includes structured academic time in which students reflect on the service experience. Your individual volunteer project is a great way to enhance your study of sustainability combining “real world” involvement and interaction with reflective learning. It is also a great way for you to couple your larger personal and career goals with a classroom experience.

You are receiving credit for the learning connected to your experience in the community. Hence, you are graded on your project report and volunteer log. Think of your experience as a type of text that you are learning from – instead of reading it you are living it. You need to articulate and connect your experiences from theories you have learned from your readings and classes to the individual project report, so be certain to select a project where you can articulate its relevance to issues of sustainability.

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1 Handout adapted from University of Minnesota’s Community Involvement and Service Learning Website. See: [http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/info/](http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/info/) [16 August 2016].
Getting Started

Your first task will be to think about the kind of organisation that you would like to work for. There are many sustainability-related third sector organisations with a wide range of missions, aims and practices. An obvious starting point is an internet search for charities / NGOs in your area if you wish to carry out your volunteering near where you live. Global and national charities such as Greenpeace, Oxfam, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, may have a branch near you.

You can pick any organisation provided that they are a non-profit making organisation and are involved in some form of sustainability such as social, environmental or economic sustainability. Previous students have chosen a wide range of organisations including:

Afrika Tikkun
Age UK
British Heart Foundation
British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Business in the Community
Cancer Research
Environmental Justice Foundation
FareShare
Friends of the Earth
Greenpeace Campaigns
Greenpeace local groups
Groundwork
Lattitude
MaidEnergy Cooperative
National Trust
Oxfam
Oxfam shops
People’s Supermarket
Prince’s Countryside Fund
Sue Ryder Foundation
Thames 21
The Conservation Volunteers

This is just a small selection and there are many organisations out there! For community near campus you can also contact the RHUL Community Action team who have a list of contacts for local community partners at http://www.rhul.ac.uk/volunteering/home.aspx.

Once you have identified an organisation, you should contact them via phone or email. In your communication, let them know why you are interested in volunteering there. When you call them, be certain to have your diary ready so you can arrange an initial meeting to get oriented to the organisation. Make sure you know where it is located and how to get there (nearest bus stop or tube station).

On your first visit to the organisation you should arrange a regular volunteer schedule and complete any paperwork required by the organisation. Let your supervisor know when you have course work essays due or when you will be away on holiday.

Remember to complete your risk assessment and submit it before beginning to volunteer!

Please remember that you will be expected to act in a professional manner while working with community leaders and fellow citizens. Based upon past service-learning experiences, students have found the following tips worth re-stating:

- Be on time to your schedules volunteer commitments. People are counting on you and it is disrespectful to be late.

- Be respectful of the people you are working with, regardless of differences in language, custom, religion, socioeconomic status, ability, etc. For many people, working in communities that they are unfamiliar with results in conscious or unconscious levels of anxiety or fear. Please do not ignore these feelings. Whether you realize it or not, this often surfaces in body language and actions you may not be conscious of doing, such as standing back and not jumping into the work being done. If you know yourself well enough to think this may be the case for you, find out if another person in the class is going to the site you want to work with and arrange to go together.

- Be courteous and treat your work at the organization as if it were a job. If you are sick, please call the organization to let them know that you will not be able to make your schedules meeting time.

- Be up-front about your concerns or problems you may be having with an organization. While it may be difficult to discuss these types of things with people you do not know well, confronting problems head on is often more beneficial than letting a situation get out of hand or impossible to live with. If you are uncomfortable addressing something alone, please speak to me.
• Please let organizations know when you have coursework assignments due, especially if these things infringe on your ability to make your prior commitments.

• Please do not just stop showing up at the project when your 24 hour minimum commitment is reached. You must arrange an end of your commitment and give them reasonable notice of your last day. Be mindful of the commitment you made to an organization and the person or people you are doing work with. Many hope you will continue working with them past the duration of the class – the 24 hours is a minimum. If you enjoy it you could volunteer more.

Questions to Ask Yourself Before Starting Community Work

Note, please take the time to complete these responses as this can be included in your notebook log and will be useful to get the most out of your volunteer experience. Looking back at these responses will also be useful towards your project write-up.

• What expectations do you have for your volunteer role? Are these reasonable?

• What are you looking to learn about at your organization or from the people you’ll be working with? Share this with your volunteer supervisor at the NGO so he or she can help you fulfil your learning goals.

• What do you think you will be doing and what impact do you think will you have? How likely do you think this will be given the amount of time you will be spending at the organization?

• What preconceptions do you have about the population or neighbourhood in which you will be working and the other volunteers that you will be working with? How have these preconceptions been formed? Note, when you are complete with your project, consider how these ideas have changed.

• What preconceptions do you have about the NGO you selected? How have you formed these preconceptions? Note, when you are complete with your project, consider how these ideas have changed.

Suggestions for Integrating Yourself into the Organisation

Open yourself to learning from the organisation in which you are working.

Orient yourself to the physical and social environments of the organization. It helps to know how the overall organization operates so you are able to understand how your role in the organization is contributing to larger organizational goals.
Get acquainted with as many people as possible, doing so will help you gain a broader perspective on how your organization operates.

Keep your ears and mind open. Be conscious of how you contribute. Listen and be sensitive to the reactions your ideas receive. Be positive; people want solution-givers, not problem-starters.

Observe others at work and offer to help out when you are able.

**Be Your Own Advocate – Ways to Solve and Overcome Frustrations**

**Ask Questions!** Talk to your site coordinator, and other students; ask them for suggestions on how to get to know the people at your organization better.

**Say hello first!** You may not realize it but people who are at the site may be just as hesitant to greet you not because they do not want to get to know you but rather because you are a new face.

**Learn people’s names!** Knowing a name can go a long way so make an effort to remember people’s names. It is the first step in getting to know people and make any environment more comfortable (for you and others).

**Show Interest!** Many people at various sites see people come and go regularly so truthfully if you are expecting to form a meaningful relationship with someone you need to prove that you care about who they are.

**Be Patient!** Remember that friendships or any relationship do not happen overnight, they take time. It is through constant effort and time that relationships are developed. Also do not expect that it is the organization’s responsibility to make you comfortable (they already are). It is also your responsibility to get to know the people you will be working with at your organization.

Knowledge of [another] culture should sharpen our ability to scrutinize more steadily, to appreciate more lovingly our own. – Margaret Mead

**Authentically Addressing Diversity and Multiculturalism in Service-Learning**

Multiculturalism in service-learning requires that we each look at our own privileged and marginalized identities and the ways in which these identities impact our participation in communities and in service-learning. According to Sweltzer and King (2009; 75), “everyone carries some stereotypes and prejudices, ... If you work at it, you can learn to see your prejudices and make progress in overcoming them. However, at the same time, you will surely discover other, more subtle ones. The first step, though, toward being a non-prejudiced person is to confront and accept the prejudices you have”. Understanding your culture is an intrinsic part of deciphering
your identity and how you perceive the world and the people around you. Culture refers to the shared values, norms, traditions, customs, art, history, folklore and institution of a group or people”. Each individual’s cultural self is a complex interplay among multiple identities constructed by sexual orientation, nationality, race, class, gender, religion, age, etc.

Wilson, Hants & Hanna (1998) identify several potential cross-cultural communication difficulties that may arise during your service-learning experience. Understanding these can help you avoid negative experiences and avoid offending other people while you are in the community:

- Ethnocentrism is the tendency to view people of other cultures through one’s own cultural perspective. We tend to view and judge people from our own view of how the world should operate.
- When another’s behaviour is not consistent with our expectations, we assume there is something wrong with that person. This perspective may be particularly true of individuals who have had limited exposure to people different from themselves.
- Rules and norms are different for different groups. Difficulties arise when people violate the expected cultural rules and customs. These rules or customs can include verbal and nonverbal communication differences.

Learning From Cross-Cultural Communication Differences

- Learn rules of culture or group.
- Show respect for traditions, avoid imposing your culture and value system on others.
- Observe carefully. There is no substitute for observing the culture you are attempting to understand.
- Tolerate differences. Each of us carries an image of the world in our heads, and an image of how we believe the world is supposed to be. Accept others and allow them to have their own views without judging those views as unacceptable.
- Develop flexibility. Don’t feel threatened by others and become defensive.
- Convey a genuine interest in understanding the other culture.

Developing Your Observation Skills

Learning how to “read” your community organization placement and the experiences you have while doing your community work is extremely important to the effectiveness academic community-based learning. “Reading” your community site means uncovering details about the organization you are working at to help make sense of that organization. By developing observations skills you will be able to make more sense of the theories learned from class. Often students try to take the theories learned from class and try to directly apply them to the organization, however, it is best to take your observations from the organization and see what you are able to apply to your class. The best service-learning experiences come when you work,
critically and objectively observe and then reflect on your experiences. Using all of these stages throughout your service-learning experience will increase the amount of information you learn and improve your class and community experience.

- Increase your patience in order to slow down and watch;
- Pay close attention to your physical surroundings: who, what, when, where & how;
- Be aware of people’s reactions, emotions & motivations;
- Ask questions that can be answered through observing;
- Be yourself;
- Observe with an optimistic curiosity; and
- Be ethical.

**Sample Observation Questions:**

**What** is the mission of the organization (e.g. the agency’s purpose)?

**How** does the organization fulfil its mission? Does it do what it attests to do?

**Who** make up the population the organization works with?

**What** are the characteristics of the client population?

**Where** is the organization located?

**What** does the neighbourhood look like? Smell like? Sound like?

**How** does the organization interact with the surrounding community?

**What** resources are in the community?

**What** is the proportion of paid staff to volunteers in the organization?

**What** is the structure of the organization?

**How** is the organization funded?

**How** dynamic and innovative is the organization? What evidence do you have to justify this statement?

**You are asked to reflect in your project report: What is reflection?**

When getting involved with a service-learning course, it is helpful to keep in mind one of the most important aspects of the learning process: analytic reflection. This reflection process can take many forms, including class presentations, volunteer log notebook, reflective project reports, and class discussions. The reflective process has the key guideline that you should link your experience to theories and issues of sustainability. Although the volunteer project is a valuable experience in itself,
reflecting upon and analysing your experiences can take your understanding to the next level, and can often provide unexpected realizations.

Use your volunteer journal.

Some students, for example, have discovered that the preconceptions they held about certain issues at their site changed drastically between the beginning of their volunteer project and the end. One student recognized a change in his beliefs in the thirteenth week of class, and then described his observation in a log entry:

“Before taking this class I had previous ideas on the reasons behind homelessness, poverty and illiteracy, which I will not mention here. Many of these ideas came from sources such as the news or television, and I have come to see that they are generally wrong”.

Looking back on what you have accomplished at your learning site and reflecting upon these service-learning experiences can give tremendous insight into any changes that may have occurred over time. And although such changes are not always immediately obvious, they can often be seen much more clearly by reviewing your past writings, and then making comparisons between specific issues. Maintaining a good volunteer journal will allow you to track your learning and change through the experience over time. It will help you to write a better report – indeed, you can quote yourself from your log notebook in your write-up to help illustrate your points.

Part of reflection is identifying challenges that you may encounter during your volunteering. It is important that you record these in your volunteer log as you can track your experiences and reflective learning over time.

Another important component of your reflection is to record things that you found surprising as it is through the unexpected that you can examine your preconceptions and demonstrate your learning process.

Yours responsibilities

Take your volunteer project seriously. Approach your position as you would any job – arrive on time and prepared to work. Never report to your organisation under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Expect uncertainty at first. Your level of comfort with the task and the organisation will increase over time. Maintain a positive attitude and keep things in perspective. Deal with concerns as they arise – seek guidance from the supervisor of your organisation.
Take care of your personal safety and health at all times. Do not allow yourself to be in compromising situations (e.g. avoid lifting something too heavy; working alone in a building or a task where you may require assistance; being asked to work in an unsafe location or late at night). If you have any concerns you should avoid the compromising situation – it is OK to say ‘no’ to something which you feel may compromise your health or safety. For example, you could say, “I’m sorry, I think that is too heavy for me to lift”, or “I’m sorry, I’m not comfortable to go canvassing on my own”. Explain to your supervisor your concerns. You can also contact your lecturer to discuss concerns if you feel you need outside intervention.

You will have completed a risk assessment before you begin volunteering so you shall have the opportunity to formally reflect on, be aware of and prepared for risks.

Urban Street Smarts

Stay alert at all times. Be aware of your surroundings and trust your instincts.

Appear confident and comfortable. Do not bring valuables or other items which make you appear like an outsider in the community. Give your schedule to a roommate or a friend and include the phone number of the organisation so that someone knows your location. Develop a community safety net – identify people, places and things that can be of assistance in a time of need (e.g. police station, phones, etc.).

Traveling to your organisation

Research your route ahead of time and get clear directions on how to find the organisation. Be sure to ask where to park or where to get off the bus/tube if you are taking public transport. Watch who gets on/off the bus with you – if you feel uneasy then walk directly to a place where there are other people. If you feel that someone is following you, do not go home. Go to the nearest police station or open business and ask for help. If you are uncomfortable going to your organisation alone, see if others in the class are also volunteering at the organisation and try to travel together.

Take precautions to avoid risks and uncomfortable situations

Avoid one-on-one situations – try to be part of a group. Respect people’s boundaries, including your own. For example, you do not need to tell the organisation if you live alone. Report any incidents, real or perceived, that make you feel uncomfortable. You can either report them to your supervisor at the organisation or your lecturer.

Mike Dolton

September 2016
APPENDIX 2 GENERAL READING LIST


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Examples of Journals

Students are encouraged to explore journals to extend your reading beyond assigned articles. These are just some of the key journals with relevant articles:

Annals of the Association of American Geographers
Area
Ecological Economics
Environment, Development and Sustainability.
Environment and Planning A,B,C,D
Environmental Management
International Social Science Journal
Journal of Information Technology for Development,
Local Environment (available via Senate House Library)
Political Geography
Sustainability
Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers
APPENDIX 3 GUIDELINES FOR WRITTEN COURSEWORK

All coursework must be typed or word-processed in double spacing. Be sure that the printer is producing a dark, easily readable text. Examiners will give specific attention to the following points:

**Structure:** Written work should have a clear structure, with an introduction, key elements of the work and a conclusion.

**Argument and evidence:** many written assignments are expected to develop a line of reasoning that is supported by appropriate evidence. You will be assessed on the extent to which you have used various sources of evidence to contribute to the overall argument and analysis. You are encouraged to include professional and personal experiences in your written work, but they must be reported as such and clearly be related to the arguments being made.

**Analysis, synthesis and evaluation:** You will be expected to be critical within the arguments you make, and be able to evaluate evidence and argue alternative approaches. Examiners are looking for signs of original thinking. This might entail the reappraisal of existing or presentation of new data to provide new insights into current ideas, understandings and debates.

**Referencing:** Sources of information must be clearly identified within the text. Unsupported assertions must be avoided. Full references must be listed in proper form in the bibliography at the end. See Section 8.4 for more guidance on referencing.

**Illustrations:** Figures and tables can be used to support the text. These may be original or may be taken or copied from existing sources, with due acknowledgement. Be sure that illustrations are adequately explained, e.g. include such essentials as scales, orientation, etc., as well as captions.

**Presentation:** This includes the general layout and style, as well as spelling and grammar.
APPENDIX 4 GUIDELINES FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Oral presentations will play an important part of your assessed work. Examiners will give specific attention to the following points:

**Content:** The content should be relevant and focused. Sufficient and appropriate material should be used to illustrate arguments and concepts. Use of experience and critical reflection on material is encouraged. Sources should be acknowledged in the presentation and/or handout.

**Argument:** The presentation should have a coherent argument, and material should be organised and structured to aid in the comprehension of the argument. Examiners will be looking for evidence of analysis and interpretation, not just description. The presentation should have a clear structure, with an introduction and conclusion.

**Presentation:** Examiners will be looking for clarity and audibility in the presentation. Pace should be appropriate for the allocated time, and there should be sufficient time for questions and interaction with the audience at the end. You are encouraged to use audio-visual aids but they need to be appropriate and well handled. You are also encouraged to extemporise rather than read direct from your notes.
APPENDIX 5 GUIDELINES FOR BOOK REVIEWS

What is a book review?
An analytic or critical review of a book or article is not primarily a summary, or a report of its content; rather it comments on and evaluates the work in the light of specific issues and theoretical concerns relevant to the topic addressed in the book.
Do NOT summarize the book at length; DO evaluate the book in terms of the validity of the author's thesis, the comprehensiveness, accuracy, and sensitivity with which s/he handles the evidence, and (if you can) the relationship of this work to that of others in the same field.

How to think and sketch a book review
Take notes on the book you're dissecting, and decide how you want to approach your review. Remember that things which may be clear with the book in front of you won’t necessarily be obvious to a reader who has only the review to go on. Here are some questions which you need to keep in mind as you read the book and make notes, which will ultimately help you, formulate a review:

- What is the book about? What is the scope? What is the specific topic of the book or article? What overall purpose does it seem to have? For what readership is it written? (The preface, acknowledgements, bibliography and index can be helpful in answering these questions).
- Don’t overlook facts about the author's background and the circumstances of the book’s creation and publication.
- Does the author state an explicit thesis? Does he or she noticeably have an axe to grind? What are the theoretical assumptions? Are they discussed explicitly? (Again, look for statements in the preface, etc. and follow them up in the rest of the work.)
- What exactly does the work contribute to the overall topic that’s researched in the book? What general problems and concepts in your discipline and course does it engage with?
- The literature review puts together a set of such commentaries to map out the current range of positions on a topic; then the writer can define his or her own position in the rest of the review.
- If reviewing an updated / revised book (and you have access to the previous edition), in what ways do the revisions add to or detract from the book?
- What kinds of material does the work present (e.g. primary documents or secondary material, literary analysis, personal observation, quantitative data, biographical or historical accounts)?
- How is this material used to demonstrate and argue the thesis? (As well as indicating the overall structure of the work, your review could quote or summarize specific passages to show the characteristics of the author's presentation, including writing style and tone.)
• Are there alternative ways of arguing from the same material? Does the author show awareness of them? In what respects does the author agree or disagree?
• What theoretical issues and topics for further discussion does the work raise?
• What are your own reactions and considered opinions regarding the work?

One of the best strategies for writing good reviews is reading a lot of good reviews. In preparing your review browse in published journals to get a sense of the ways reviews function in intellectual discourse. Look at some good examples found in the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) and in various development and environment journals in our own library. If you want to explore further see New York Times Book Review, the New York Review of Books, London Review of Books and the Times Literary Supplement.

Writing a book review:
Here are some notes to bear in mind -- this isn't as short a list as we'd like it to be, but reading these guidelines completely before you start writing will make it easier for you to outline and write the review.

To keep your focus, remind yourself that your assignment is primarily to discuss the book's treatment of its topic, not the topic itself. Your key sentences should therefore say "This book shows...the author argues" rather than "This happened...this is the case."

• Begin your essay with an introduction to the book, examining the author's thesis and the main conclusions s/he reaches.
• What kind of sources does the author use? (Are they adequate, comprehensive? How does the writer evaluate them? How do you evaluate them?) Does the author use primary as well as secondary sources?
• How effective is the writer's presentation? (Discuss the organization and use of evidence.)
• How adequate is the writer's coverage of the subject? (Is the writer fair? Is the treatment too narrow? Too broad? Do you detect personal biases implicit or explicit?)
• What are the writer's qualifications for dealing with this subject? (Has s/he written on this or related subjects? You can find out more about a particular writer.
• How successful is the writer in presenting his/her ideas?
• Comment on this book's contribution to your understanding of the topic. (You may, also, if you wish, talk about the book's implications for the field as a whole -- you will have to familiarize yourself with the literature of the subject.
- Is the title accurate? This is usually worth noting only if the title is for some reason not a good match for the text -- for instance, if it seriously under- or overstates the book's content.
- What level of experience is needed to well use the information in the book? Who will find it most useful? Is there an existing book or a journal article which already covers the same ground?
- Is the book readable? Are examples easy to follow?
- Is the book illustrated? Are the illustrations appropriate and well executed?
- Do any extras come with the book, like a CD-ROM of additional information? How helpful are they?
- What's missing from the book? Would it benefit from illustrations, a better index, a final chapter on practical applications?
- Did you like previous works from the same author, publisher, or series?
- Does the book remind you (or remind you too much) of others by the same author, or in the same genre?

Bring your review to a conclusion, don’t just stop. Your reader should have a sense of closure, and feel that all the threads of the discussion have been drawn together in a satisfying way.

Style of Writing a Book Review:
Once you’ve read the book and taken notes, writing a review may be the easiest part. Write conversationally but seriously, as you might in a topical letter to an acquaintance who’s asked you to send your impressions of a book.

At the same time, please be sure to write a review, not just a summary. Do explain the content of the book, but don't stop there: the whole point of a review is to offer insight on a book's worth. Compare it to other books, explain whether this one met your expectations or didn’t.

Some reviews summarize the book’s content and then evaluate it; others integrate these functions, commenting on the book and using summary only to give examples. Choose the method that seems most suitable for the book.

By the same token, don’t feel obligated to defend a poor book for its faultless page numbering and clean, unobstructed margins, or stretch to play up faults in a book you think is excellent in order to appear objective. A reader should know from your review your general impression of the book, and have an idea whether it's one they would benefit from reading.

In the end, the book you're reviewing needs to be the guide. Remember, most readers will have less knowledge than you do in your area of expertise -- take some time to bring them up to speed.

Write in complete sentences, and use logically connected paragraphs; avoid making your review a list of annotated chapter titles. Don’t feel obliged to give each chapter or section equal space in your review; group logically to avoid a
formulaic plodding-through ("Chapter 1 covers X, while chapter 2 delves into Z, followed the 3rd chapter on Q ... "). Address chapters in the way you feel most comfortable, but stepping duly through the Table of Contents is often not the best approach. Which chapters are most important? Are there chapters which are not adjacent but which cover similar topics?

Try not to sound like a marketing campaign. That means:

- Avoid clichés (this book, which is better than sliced bread, cuts through the clutter to break down to the nuts and bolts of the real brass tacks at the heart of the matter). Write plainly.
- Go easy on the exclamation marks and glib hyperbole (e.g. "This book belongs on every geographer's desk!"). Be cautious in general about superlatives and strong adjectives. Don't say a book is "unsurpassed" or "the best available" on a given topic without doing some actual comparisons to likely contenders. Some other words of praise or derision are often used with too little backing evidence: rather than just calling a book "excellent," "sloppy," "boring," etc., provide concrete examples from the text that demonstrate these qualities.
- Watch your background. Even if each one is sensible by itself, too many adjectives in a sentence (or a review) makes it look like adjective soup. In particular, intensifiers like "very" and "extremely" in most cases can be excised to everyone's benefit.
- Rhetorical questions are fine in small doses, but not large ones. More than a few rhetorical questions in a review can make it sound breathless and silly.
APPENDIX 6 GUIDELINES FOR POSTERS

General points
Ensure clarity of purpose
Appropriate use of figures and legends
Small amount of legible text

Make sure it is:
Readable – use clear language, good grammar in all poster text
Legible – all poster text should be readable from 5 feet away
Well-organized – group items logically, visually for maximum impact
Succinct – you have 10 seconds to grab your audience’s attention

Layout
Be consistent with your layout. you can use numbers and arrow to direct the reader but make sure the start point is obvious.

Use of colour, diagrams and fonts
Use colour, photos, diagrams, graphs to support your poster but try not to make it too fussy looking. stick to two or at most, three colours for text and graphical elements. some people are colour blind (red/green or totally) - e.g. for multiline graphs use different colours and different line styles.

Be careful on which colours use side by side as they can make information difficult to read - general text and background colours should contrast. dark backgrounds require good production, so be careful.
Blocks of text with all caps are hard to read, so avoid. try and use an easy to read font style and don’t mix fonts without good reason.

Criteria used for marking posters
1) focus - the topic is very clear when you first look at it; clarity of title
2) content - the main ideas are appropriate to the topic and presented correctly
3) supporting details - appropriate and accurate details support each main idea
4) effectiveness of text- clear; appropriate font size, terse but readable
5) drawings and illustrations - all illustrations, photographs and drawings add to the purpose and interest of the poster
6) standard of written English - spelling and grammar
7) layout and design - the overall organisation, design, use of colour and use of space help to make the poster interesting and to communicate the message
8) general presentation - the poster is well presented and clear
9) further information - appropriate references for further information are included.
### APPENDIX 7 Assessment Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree Class</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>%age</th>
<th>Grade Description for Written Papers</th>
<th>Grade Description for Oral Presentations</th>
<th>Grade Description for Dissertation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>85+</td>
<td>Exceptional degree of understanding of the issues, concepts and underlying principles; exceptional degree of creativity, originality and independence of thought; penetrating analysis and synthesis is demonstrated in the selection, interpretation and evaluation of source material; exceptionally presented; referencing and bibliography of exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style, with no or very minor errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit. Publishable quality.</td>
<td>Original and thought-provoking presentation, identifying subtleties in details of the assignment; clear and original structure of content and conclusions; ideas linked coherently and conducted with confidence; evidence of comprehensive research and original thought in analysis, synthesis and evaluation; pitch of voice, pace and audio-visual aids used to professional standard in presentational quality and mode of use; encouraged appropriate involvement and questioning, answering with authority and/or originality.</td>
<td>Exceptional degree of understanding of the subject area; exceptional degree of creativity, originality and independence of thought in the construction of research aims and questions, and in the analysis or interpretation; ability to plan, organise and execute research independently to the highest professional standards; ability to evaluate critically research design, methodology and published work; penetrating analysis of primary sources of literature and information; professionally presented, with referencing and bibliography of exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style; no errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar and within word limit. Publishable quality.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>Deep understanding of the issues, concepts and underlying principles; evidence of originality or imaginative insights; substantial evidence of ability to analyse and synthesise is demonstrated in the selection, interpretation and evaluation of source material; excellently presented; referencing and bibliography of near-exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style, with no significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
<td>Presentation addressed explicitly the topic, identifying subtleties in assignment details; evidence of original thought with respect to structure of content and conclusions; clear and appropriate structure of presentation ideas linked coherently; explicit and relevant synthesis, analysis and evaluation of a broad range of sources; clearly audible, appropriate pace and audio-visual aids used to a very high standard in presentational quality and mode of use; encouraged involvement and questioning, answering with knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>Deep understanding of the subject area; significant evidence of originality in the construction of the research aims and questions; analysis or interpretation shows sustained evidence of originality or imaginative insights; substantial independent research conducted at a very high level of professional competence; critical understanding of research design and methodology; in-depth reading; excellently presented, with referencing and bibliography of exemplary standard; incisive and fluent style; no significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit. A dissertation graded at distinction should contain work of publishable quality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>Clear understanding of the issues, concepts and underlying principles; source material is carefully selected, interpreted and evaluated; some evidence of ability to analyse and synthesise is demonstrated in the selection, interpretation and evaluation of source material; well-presented; detailed referencing; properly formatted bibliography; fluent style; few</td>
<td>Explicitly addressed set topic; structure evident, but could be more focused; evidence of coherent links between ideas, commenced and concluded appropriately; included relevant synthesis and analysis, and evidence of some evaluation; clearly audible, good pace and audio-visual aids used to increase effectiveness; encouraged appropriate</td>
<td>Good understanding of the subject area; some originality in the construction of its main research aims, questions and interpretations; substantial independent research conducted at a good level of professional competence; critical understanding of research design and methodology; coherent structure, in-depth reading; well-presented, with referencing in acceptable style and properly formatted bibliography;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<td>Grade</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Assessment Criteria</td>
<td>Example</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>involvement and questioning, demonstrating knowledge and understanding in answers.</td>
<td>Fluent style; few errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>The main issues and concepts are described coherently; limited synthesis and analysis of underlying principles; interpretation and evaluation of source material is attempted, though not pursued in depth; adequately presented; some referencing; short bibliography; straightforward style; some errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar, and within word limit.</td>
<td>Addressed the set topic; structure evident, but could be improved; evidence of coherent links between most ideas; included some synthesis and analysis, but could have been evaluated more effectively; audible for all the presentation, and audio-visual aids were used; pace not always appropriate and ran over/under time; audience needs not well gauged, and limited encouragement to participate/question, answering with basic understanding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of the main issues and concepts; serious weakness in coverage, content, internal consistency and organization; inadequate or uncritical use of source materials; little synthesis and analysis of underlying principles; limited interpretation and evaluation of source material, significant weaknesses in presentation; little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; simple style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of the subject area; confused or vague research aims and questions; interpretation of source material weak or uncritical; poor quality of independent research; significant weaknesses in coverage and organization; poor use of literature and inadequate wider reading; significant weaknesses in presentation; little or no referencing and an inadequate or absent bibliography; simple style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
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<td>F+</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>Insufficient understanding of the main issues and concepts; profound weakness in coverage, content, internal consistency, and organization; almost no evidence of independent or original thought; little evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented; little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; sketchy style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td>Very limited understanding of the subject area; no evident research aims or questions; very limited interpretation of source material; insufficient independent research; profound weaknesses in coverage and organization; poorly presented; little or no referencing and an inadequate or absent bibliography; sketchy style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very limited understanding of the main issues and concepts; profound weakness in coverage, content, internal consistency, and organization; almost no evidence of independent or original thought; little evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented; little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; sketchy style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
<td>Largely failed to address the set topic; rambling or unfocused, no real structure; included little or no analysis or evaluation; partially inaudible and audio-visual aids not used, or used ineffectively; presentation ran severely over/under time; no attempt to gauge audience needs in design of the presentation; no attempt to encourage audience participation and questioning, and answers largely erroneous or had little or not relevance to the topic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F-</td>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>F-</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the main issues and concept; confused and incoherent in coverage,</td>
<td>Almost no understanding of the subject area; confused and incoherent in coverage, content,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content, consistency, and organization; totally devoid of independent or original thought; no evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented; no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography; inadequate style; significant errors</td>
<td>Evaluation; presentation was fully or partially inaudible; equipment and/or audio-visual aids were not used, or used ineffectively; presentation ran severely over/under time; audience needs not taken into account in designing presentation; no attempt made to encourage appropriate audience involvement and questioning, and unable or unwilling to answer questions.</td>
<td>Consistency and organization; totally devoid of independent or original thought. Insufficient independent research; no evidence of engaging with source materials; poorly presented, with no referencing of sources and an inadequate or absent bibliography; no referencing and an inadequate or absent bibliography; inadequate style; significant errors of spelling, punctuation or grammar. Not within word limit.</td>
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<td>Class</td>
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<td>Grade Descriptors for Poster presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>High distinction</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>Approaching professional standards for a poster presentation. Aim of poster very apparent from immediate impressions. Exceptional degree of creativity, originality and independence of thought; excellent summary of main ideas; significant evidence of further reading, with excellent synthesis of supporting information; text excellently presented, quantity and font size extremely effective; clear, relevant illustrations that enhance purpose and interest of poster; no grammatical or spelling errors; innovative poster design, allows rapid communication of message; very neat and presentable; good source of further information and excellently presented bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>76-84</td>
<td>Aim of poster very apparent from immediate impressions; excellent summary of main ideas; significant evidence of further reading, with well synthesised supporting information; text excellently presented, quantity and font size extremely effective; clear, relevant illustrations that enhance purpose and interest of poster; no grammatical or spelling errors; innovative poster design, allows rapid communication of message; very neat and presentable; good source of further information and excellently presented bibliography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-75</td>
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<td>Pass (Merit)</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Aim of poster very clear; good summary of main ideas; evidence of further reading, with good supporting information given; text well presented, quantity and font size extremely effective; clear, relevant illustrations that add to purpose and interest of poster; few grammatical or spelling errors; very good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; good source of further information and excellently presented bibliography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass (satisfactory)</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>Aim of poster clear, main ideas appropriate to topic, and presented correctly; some evidence of further reading, with general supporting information given; text adequately presented, quantity and font size appropriate; some illustrations that add to purpose of poster; some grammatical or spelling errors; good poster design, allows communication of message; neat and presentable; some further information and adequate bibliography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>53-56</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
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<td>Passmark 50</td>
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<td>Title given, but unclear what the poster is about; main ideas appropriate to topic; little evidence of further reading, little supporting information given; text reasonably presented, quantity and font size adequate; few illustrations, some appropriate; many grammatical and/or spelling errors; reasonable poster design, allows communication of message; basically presentable; little further information and inadequate bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Main ideas inappropriate to topic with evidence of error and confusion; no evidence of further reading, little supporting information given; text may be ineffective, too small, unclear; few or no illustrations, uninformative or irrelevant; significant errors of spelling, punctuation and/or grammar; poor poster design, hinders communication of message; untidy, messy; no bibliography or further information included</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail (poor)</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>May lack title; main ideas inappropriate to topic; error and confusion throughout; no supporting information given; text ineffective, too small, unclear; few or no illustrations, uninformative or irrelevant; significant errors of spelling, punctuation and/or grammar; poor poster design, hinders communication of message; untidy, messy; no bibliography or further information included</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail (very poor)</td>
<td>F-</td>
<td>0-20</td>
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### GG5304 Volunteer project marking Guidelines

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<tr>
<th>Degree Class</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade description for Volunteer Project Report</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Distinction</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>85+</td>
<td>Clear, well-structured reports; evidence of exceptional awareness of research agenda in the given area; clear project context, comprehensive literature base and contextualisation of the study within the wider themes and debates identified in literature; detailed description; excellent structure, logical arguments presented; excellent reflexive discussion of the volunteer experience. Communication of results; excellent spelling, grammar and written style; clear, informative graphics / illustration which clearly enhance the project aims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>Clear, well-structured report; excellent summary of relevant literature; evidence of wider awareness of research agenda in the given area; clear project context, wide literature base and contextualisation of the study within the wider themes and debates identified in literature; detailed description; excellent structure, logical arguments presented; excellent reflexive discussion of the volunteer experience. Communication of results; excellent spelling, grammar and written style; clear, informative graphics / illustration which clearly enhance the project aims.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>Clear, well-structured report; good summary of relevant literature; shows awareness of relevant debates in the literature; clear description; clear conclusions with links made to wider debates; clear structure and progression of arguments; good reflexive discussion of the volunteer experience; well organised; good spelling, grammar and written style; illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) are clear, relevant, well-produced and a clear aid to understanding results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>Clear, well-structured report; good summary of relevant literature; shows awareness of relevant debates in the literature; clear description; clear conclusions with links made to wider debates; clear structure and progression of arguments; good reflexive discussion of the volunteer experience; well organised; good spelling, grammar and written style; illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) are clear, relevant, well-produced and a clear aid to understanding results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merit (Good)</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Clearly written report with reasonable scope, but could be better structured; reasonable awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials have reasonable descriptive and interpretative value; some reflexivity; reasonable progression of ideas and logical organisation; appropriate conclusions but may not sufficiently link to wider debates some errors in spelling, grammar or written style; relevant illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) cover essentials but could be clearer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>64-66</td>
<td>Clearly written report with reasonable scope, but could be better structured; reasonable awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials have reasonable descriptive and interpretative value; some reflexivity; reasonable progression of ideas and logical organisation; appropriate conclusions but may not sufficiently link to wider debates some errors in spelling, grammar or written style; relevant illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) cover essentials but could be clearer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
<td>Clearly written report with reasonable scope, but could be better structured; reasonable awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials have reasonable descriptive and interpretative value; some reflexivity; reasonable progression of ideas and logical organisation; appropriate conclusions but may not sufficiently link to wider debates some errors in spelling, grammar or written style; relevant illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) cover essentials but could be clearer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass (Satisfactory)</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>Clearly written report with reasonable scope, but could be better structured; reasonable awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials have reasonable descriptive and interpretative value; some reflexivity; reasonable progression of ideas and logical organisation; appropriate conclusions but may not sufficiently link to wider debates some errors in spelling, grammar or written style; relevant illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) cover essentials but could be clearer.</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>54-56</td>
<td>Clearly written report with reasonable scope, but could be better structured; reasonable awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials have reasonable descriptive and interpretative value; some reflexivity; reasonable progression of ideas and logical organisation; appropriate conclusions but may not sufficiently link to wider debates some errors in spelling, grammar or written style; relevant illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) cover essentials but could be clearer.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>50-53</td>
<td>Clearly written report with reasonable scope, but could be better structured; reasonable awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials have reasonable descriptive and interpretative value; some reflexivity; reasonable progression of ideas and logical organisation; appropriate conclusions but may not sufficiently link to wider debates some errors in spelling, grammar or written style; relevant illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) cover essentials but could be clearer.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pass mark 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>F+</td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Poorly written report which lacks scope; weak structure; serious weakness in coverage of the topic; lacks clarity on relevant debates in the literature; data/materials have weak descriptive and interpretative value; lacks reflexivity; weak progression of ideas and logical organisation; poor conclusions; numerous errors in spelling, grammar or written style; lacks illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate). A basic report.</td>
</tr>
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| Fail (Poor)    | F     | 20-39      | Very poor standard of writing which lacks scope; lacks structure; very little coverage of the topic; lacks clarity on relevant debates in the literature; data/materials have weak
<table>
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<th>Fail (Very Poor)</th>
<th>F-</th>
<th>0-19</th>
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<tr>
<td>descriptive and interpretative value; lacks reflexivity; very weak progression of ideas and logical organisation; poor conclusions; numerous errors in spelling, grammar or written style; lacks illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate). A very basic report.</td>
<td>Very poor standard of writing; confused and incoherent with little structure; no awareness of literature on the topic; data/materials lack descriptive and interpretative value; no reflexivity; lacks any progression of ideas and logical organisation; numerous errors in spelling, grammar or written style; lacks illustrations, maps and diagrams (where appropriate) inadequate or absent bibliography; significant errors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class</td>
<td>Grade Descriptors for Policy Briefings</td>
<td>Grade</td>
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<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Deep understanding; near-comprehensive knowledge; significant originality in interpretation or analysis. Intensive, detailed and critical use of literature and data with independent reading beyond reading lists. Deep awareness of all key debates in the literature and policy context. High levels of ability in effective communication with excellent use of language, structure and design; incisive and fluent style. Excellently presented (may show significant innovation in presentation); excellent choice of figures/tables that clearly strengthen the communication of the briefing; excellent spelling and grammar. Referencing and bibliography usually of exemplary standard.</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>Deep understanding; detailed knowledge; may show some originality in interpretation or analysis. In-depth reading (with either independent reading beyond reading lists or intensive, detailed and critical reading of suggested material). Clear awareness of most key debates in the literature and policy context. High levels of ability in effective communication with good use of language, structure and design; incisive and fluent style. Excellently presented (may show some innovation in presentation); good choice of figures/tables that strengthen the communication of the briefing; excellent spelling and grammar. Referencing and bibliography of near-exemplary standard.</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>Merit (Good)</td>
<td>Clear understanding; wide-ranging knowledge; direct focus on assignment. In-depth reading; evidence of critical thought in the analysis of literature and data. Clear awareness of some key debates in the literature and policy context. Generally effective communication with effective use of language, structure and design; fluent style. Well-presented; figures/tables are relevant to the topic and strengthen the communication of the briefing; good spelling and grammar. Detailed referencing; properly formatted bibliography.</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>Grade</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Criteria 2-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pass (Satisfactory)</td>
<td>Demonstrates a general understanding and knowledge, with a focus on the assignment, but is mainly descriptive with insufficient critical insight or depth for a 2:1. May be some further reading and referencing but likely to draw heavily on lectures or other direct teaching. Limited awareness of wider debates and policy context. Familiarity with correct strategies for effective communication but possibly with errors in the use of language, structure and design; straightforward style. Adequate presentation; figures/tables are not the most relevant; some errors in spelling and grammar. Short bibliography for the level.</td>
<td>C+ 57-59</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some understanding and knowledge of the topic but likely to lack detail and clear focus on the assignment; may show misunderstanding of lecture material. No or very limited further reading, usually drawing exclusively on lectures or other direct teaching. Limited awareness of wider debates and policy context. Familiarity with correct strategies for effective communication but poorly executed with significant errors in the use of language, structure and design of briefing; simple style. Significant weaknesses in presentation; irrelevant figures/tables used; numerous errors in spelling or grammar. Little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography.</td>
<td>C 54-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak understanding; lack of focus on the assignment; sketchy coverage, with some significant errors in factual details. No further reading, drawing exclusively on lectures or other direct teaching, but with significant weaknesses. Lack of awareness of wider debates and policy context. Bare familiarity with correct strategies for effective communication, with substantial errors in use of language, structure and design of briefing; sketchy style. Poorly presented; numerous errors in spelling or grammar. Little or no referencing; inadequate or absent bibliography.</td>
<td>C- 50-53</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Pass mark 50**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Criteria 2-5</th>
<th>Criteria 1-4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>V limited understanding of the topic; limited or no focus on the assignment (there may be sections with no relevance to the topic). There may be brief signs of understanding and some basic knowledge but likely to contain serious errors and lack of awareness of wider policy context. There could be referencing and evidence of further reading but the student has completely misunderstood the assignment. Ineffective communication, inappropriate use of language, structure or design of briefing. Poorly presented; significant errors in spelling or grammar. Likely to be no referencing.</td>
<td>F+ 40-49</td>
<td>Criteria 1-4 not addressed to a satisfactory level. Some elements of criteria 5-7 may be ok.</td>
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<td>Poor performance in most criteria.</td>
<td>F 30-39</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Work is unacceptable for the level. May be some vague knowledge of subject and policy context but likely to be irrelevant or confused. The examiner will have to search for material that is relevant to the</td>
<td>F- 20-29</td>
<td>V poor performance in most criteria. May have inadequate structure; or work is too short</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marking criteria

1. Focus on the assignment
2. Level of critical understanding of the topic
3. Effective communication including clarity, succinctness and appropriateness of language
4. Extent to which information is supported by understanding of the literature and data
5. Awareness of wider debates and the policy context
6. Effective presentation and design of briefing
7. Appropriate referencing and bibliography style

APPENDIX 8: EXAMPLE OF A COURSEWORK FEEDBACK FORM

Candidate no.
First examiner’s comments:

Part A: Marking Criteria (see MSc Handbook)

Feedback:

1st Examiner’s mark:  
2nd Examiner’s mark:

Agreed mark:
APPENDIX 9: DISSERTATION WORD COUNT AND PLAGIARISM DECLARATION FORM

ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

MSC SUSTAINABILITY AND MANAGEMENT - DISSERTATION

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this independent dissertation entitled:

..........................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................

has been composed by myself from my own work and that where other source material has been used, this has been acknowledged.

This Dissertation comprises between 12,000 and 15,000 words (including text boxes and footnotes, but excluding appendices and illustrative material), and complies with the relevant regulations in respect of length.

Signed ..............................................................................

Name (block capitals) ...........................................................

Date ..............................................................................

On completion of this declaration, it must be handed in separately to the Departmental Office

APPENDIX 10 MSc DISSERTATION PROPOSAL FORM

(1) Name ..............................................................................

(2) Provisional Title of Dissertation ............................................
(3) Aims of the investigation, with particular reference to hypotheses to be tested or issues to be examined.

(4) Data Sources to be employed (e.g. census data, published statistics, field surveys, laboratory data, questionnaires, etc)

(5) Methods to be used, including analysis and presentation of data

(6) Equipment required (give full details)

Date equipment required

Date equipment to be returned

Approved ..........................  Date..........................  
( Supervisor)

APPENDIX 11 DISSERTATION MARKING PROFORMA

Candidate no:

Title:
If you supervised this dissertation, please give an indication of the approximate wordage of draft material read:

*Please comment under the following headings:*

**Research aims and scope**

**Context of research and literature review**

**Methodology and data collection**

**Analysis and interpretation**

**Presentation and use of visual material/illustrations/maps/other**

**OVERALL IMPRESSION:**

**Mark/Grade Awarded:**
Please note: this grade is indicative of the assessment of the first examiner. The final mark awarded is subject to revision by either the second internal examiner or the external examiners.