Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BSC GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE (F810)

Section 1 – Introduction to your course

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the College's academic regulations and polices can be found here. Further information on the College's Admissions Policy can be found here.

Your degree course in BSc Geography, Environment and Climate is delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which you must follow modules to the value of 120 credits. The degree 'with a placement year' comprises an extra-curricular year between the second and third stages which contributes to your final marks on the four year course. The curriculum is based on a strong foundation in stage one, providing a broadly-based introduction to Geography on which is built an increasing specialisation in stages two and three. Stage two provides integrated modules in substantial areas of Geography relating to environment and climate, which take you beyond the introductions provided in the stage one and provide a basis for the research-led specialist options in the stage three. In stage three, a wide range of options are offered, and students also complete an independent research dissertation. This is seen as the culmination of training in research design, research techniques, analysis, and presentation.

You take mandatory modules in research methods and design, which culminate in a specialist field module in both Stage one and Stage two (current residential field destinations are Spain, Malawi and Sicily, while there are local non-residential destinations).

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is a brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree course – May also be referred to as 'degree programme' or simply 'programme', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.
Module – May also be referred to as 'course', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree course. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of modules in multiples of 15 credits to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	November 2023	**Location of study**	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BSc Geography, Environment and Climate	**Level of study**	Undergraduate
Course code	3660	**UCAS code**	F810
Year of entry	2024/25		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	Department of Geography School of Life Sciences and the Environment	**Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course**	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time or Part-time	**Duration of the course**	Three years full-time or six years part-time
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	**For queries on admissions:**	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery

Section 3 – Degree course structure

3.1 Mandatory module information
The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study

Year	Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC
1	GG1001	Physical Geography I: Atmosphere, Oceans and the Geosphere	15	4	MC
1	GG1002	Physical Geography II: Biogeography, Ecology and Scales of Change	15	4	MC
1	GG1003	Human Geography I: Cultures, Economies, Histories	15	4	MC
1	GG1004	Human Geography II: Politics, Society, Development and Environment	15	4	MC
1	GG1011	Geographical Techniques	30	4	MC
1	GG1032	Geographical Research and Field Training I	15	4	MC
1	GG1015	Digital Geographies: Introduction to Remote Sensing and GIS	15	4	MC
2	GG2001	Geographical Techniques II	15	5	MC
2	GG2007	Field Training in Geography, Environment and Climate	15	5	MC

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories: 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example: where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.

3.2 Optional modules

In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example, where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection; please contact the Department for further information.

In stage 2, students following BSc Geography, Environment and Climate must take 2 of their 3 options (60 credits) as Physical Geography modules (GG2013; GG2021; GG2041; GG2043).

In stage 3 you must choose from either GG3004 Geography, Environment and Climate Dissertation (30 credits) **OR** GG3005 Independent Placement-Linked Dissertation (30 credits). **Only one Dissertation is permitted.** Additionally, in stage 3 students following BSc Geography, Environment and Climate must select 4 of their 6 options (60 credits) from Physical Geography modules.

With the agreement of the Undergraduate Education Lead, students may choose to substitute up to 30 credits in Stage two and Stage three for modules from another department.

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's Academic Regulations.

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

All first year undergraduate students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order to progress into the second year of study (unless their course includes the alternative mandatory SS1000 module). The pass mark for the module assessment is stated in the on-line Academic Integrity Moodle module. Students may attempt the assessment as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the College's Undergraduate Regulations (Section: Conditions for progression to the next stage) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study at the College.

You may apply to take a placement year between stages 2 and 3 of your course (available to full time students only). Students can do their placement with a business, spend time volunteering, or studying abroad. The study abroad process is a competitive application process and if your application is successful you must take modules at an overseas university nominated through the Erasmus or Student Exchange Programmes. The placement year is assessed through a mandatory module (GG3502 for the optional placement year in business or volunteering; GG3504 for the optional placement year studying abroad). This module will contribute 20% to the final stage three marks. GG3502 or GG3504 are non-condonable for the degree title 'with a Placement Year'. In your final year on campus you will take the stage 3 modules as listed above. These modules will contribute 80% to the final stage three marks. Please note that students who go out on a placement year course will not normally be permitted to transfer back to BSC Geography, Environment and Climate, however consideration will be given in the case of extreme hardship, documented by extenuating circumstances and supporting material, as it normally would, should a student not be able to complete their placement year.

The BSc Geography, Environment and Climate is available in part-mode.
Part time students must take the following **mandatory** modules:

Stage one (a):

GG1011 Geographical Techniques I (30 credits)
and
GG1001 Physical Geography I: Atmosphere, Oceans and the Geosphere (15 credits)
or
GG1003 Human Geography I: Cultures, Economies, History (15 credits)
and
GG1002 Physical Geography II: Biogeography, Ecology and Scales of Change (15 credits)
or
GG1004 Human Geography II: Politics, Society, Development & Environment (15 credits)

Stage one (b):

GG1032 Geographical Research & Field Training I (15 credits)
and
GG1015 Digital Geographies: Introduction to Remote Sensing and GIS (15 credits) and whichever of the two 15 credit modules which were not taken in the previous year.

Stage two (a):

Choose options equal to the value of 60 credits from:
GG2013 Environmental Systems (30 credits)
GG2021 Earth Surface Processes & Hazards (30 credits)
GG2041 Environmental Change (30 credits)
GG2043 Biogeography (30 credits)

Stage two (b):
GG2001 Geographical Techniques II (15 credits) and GG2007 Field Training in Geography, Environment and Climate (15 credits) and choose options equal to the value of 30 credits from a list of Stage two modules offered by the Department or relevant modules in other departments.

Stage three (a):
You must choose optional modules to the value of 60 credits from the list of Stage three modules offered by the Department. **It is a requirement that one of these modules is GG3004 Geography, Environment and Climate Dissertation (30 credits) or GG3005 Independent Placement-Linked Dissertation (30 credits). Only one Dissertation is permitted.**

Stage three (b):
Choose options equal to the value of 60 credits from a list of relevant Stage three modules offered by the Department

With the agreement of the Undergraduate Education Lead, students may choose to substitute up to 30 credits in Stage two and Stage three for modules from another department.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

- to provide a sound and extensive basis for the study of Geography, by developing relevant knowledge, understanding, geographical and transferable skills;
- to provide a flexible and progressive structure in which students are able to gain knowledge, understanding and appropriate skills relating to distinctive research specialism's;
- to provide students with a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond Higher Education, to enable them to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, and to contribute to the wider community.

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes

In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (*Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*)*)

1. the range of different geographical interpretations of the concepts of environment and landscape **(K)**
2. the concept of spatial variation **(K)**
3. the constitution and construction of the distinctiveness of particular places;
4. the operation of physical systems **(K)**
5. the significance of spatial and temporal scale for physical processes, human processes and their interactions **(K)**
6. the significance of historical change in the human and physical worlds **(K)**;
7. difference and inequality within the human world **(K)**
8. the contribution made by Geography to the development of knowledge **(K)**
9. the diverse forms of representation of the human and physical worlds **(K)**
10. the main methodological strategies used in the analysis and interpretation of geographical information **(K)**
11. the bases for informed concern about the Earth and its people **(K)**
12. a number of specialised areas in Geography and associated disciplines **(K)**
13. planning, designing and executing a piece of rigorous research or enquiry, including the production of a final report **(S)***
14. undertaking effective field and laboratory studies (with due regard for safety and risk assessment) **(S)***
15. working safely in a scientific laboratory, with awareness of standard procedures **(S)***
16. preparing effective maps and diagrams using a range of appropriate technologies **(S)***
17. taking responsibility for own learning, and developing habits of reflection on that learning **(S)***
18. employing a variety of technical and laboratory-based methods for the collection and analysis of spatial and environmental information (such as environmental sampling, dating techniques, statistical analysis, GIS) **(S)**
19. collecting, interpreting and combining different types of geographical evidence (such as texts, imagery, maps, digital and laboratory data) **(S)**
20. recognising the moral and ethical issues involved in debates and enquiries **(S)***
21. critically judging and evaluating evidence, and assessing the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and policies **(S)***
22. problem-solving, decision-making, numeracy, computation, spatial awareness and observation **(S)***
23. critically analysing and interpreting data and text, abstracting and synthesising information **(S)***
24. developing a reasoned argument, and expressing this verbally in presentations or in writing **(S)***
25. information technology (including spreadsheets, databases, word processing, e-mail and the world-wide web) **(S)***
26. information handling and retrieval (including the use of on-line computer searches); identifying, retrieving, sorting and exchanging information; investigating a wide range of sources **(S)***
27. working with groups/teams and recognising and respecting the viewpoints of others **(S)***
28. in addition, these courses foster the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthens the graduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include: personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; empathy and insight; intellectual integrity; awareness of responsibility as a local, national and international citizen; interest in lifelong learning; flexibility and adaptability; creativity **(S)*.**

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, seminars, small-group tutorials, field and laboratory work, designated reading, guided independent study and research, practicals and problem-solving workshops; the latter generally providing a forum for you, the student, with the support of your instructors, to work through problem sets and applications in a smaller and more interactive setting. Particular training in geographical skills is given in the skills and research training 'spine' to the degree courses; other modules in the courses also develop and assess these skills in specialist contexts. You complete a month-long introductory course in study skills with your personal tutor. You are expected to meet basic standards in information technology, for which training is provided by the College Computer Centre. Assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills is typically by formal unseen written examination, practical exercises including laboratory work, coursework essays and other exercises, problem-solving workshops, fieldwork exercises and reports, oral and poster presentations and the independent dissertation. Full details of the assessments for individual modules can be obtained from the Department.

Contact hours come in various forms and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or, studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff.

The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary, however, the assessments listed above are all 'summative', which means you will receive a mark for it which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed. 'Coursework' might typically include a written assignment, like an essay. Coursework might also include a report, dissertation or portfolio. 'Practical assessments' might include an oral assessment or presentation, or a demonstration of practical skills required for the particular module

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online Module Catalogue. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

Section 8 – Additional costs

Up to £750-£2000 (The mandatory stage 1 GG1032 field course is currently based in Southern Spain. The cost of this trip is covered by student fees. In stages 2 and 3 students may choose to participate in fieldwork abroad that would occur additional costs. However, it is possible to complete the degree course with no additional fieldwork costs.)

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards	
QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	4-6
Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.	
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.	

Section 10– Intermediate exit awards (where available)		
You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.		
Award	**Criteria**	**Awarding body**
Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)	Pass in 210 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4 and at least 120 of which must be at or above FHEQ Level 5	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)	Pass in 120 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College