

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BA Liberal Arts (Y000), BA Liberal Arts with an International Year (Y002)

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 University prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the University's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the University's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

Your degree course in Liberal Arts 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 course provides progressive structures in which you are able to gain ever-wider knowledge, understanding, and appropriate skills. The course contains a combination of mandatory non-condonable modules (in years one and two), a mandatory condonable module in a foreign language (in year one), and a very wide range of options (in years one, two and three). At each stage you develop your own interests through informed choice of options drawn from different disciplines. In stage three you are required to write a dissertation. The course aims to produce graduates with a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond higher education, who are able to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, and to contribute to the wider community.

If you are registered on the BA Liberal Arts **with an International Year** you must take modules at an overseas university nominated through the Erasmus or Student Exchange Courses. The language of instruction may be English. The equivalent of a full academic load at the overseas university must be taken. The modules to be taken overseas are to be agreed with the Course Director. The marks achieved are converted into equivalent University marks and will count as a thirteenth module contributing 20% to the final stage three marks.

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	March 2026	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BA Liberal Arts, BA Liberal Arts with an International Year	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	2849 2857	UCAS code	Y000, Y002
Year of entry	2026/27		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time	Duration of the course	Three or four years
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	LA1000	Liberal Arts: Critical and Cultural Encounters	30	4	MNC
2	LA2000	Liberal Arts: Power, Society and Cultural Practice	30	5	MNC

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.

Liberal Arts is a truly interdisciplinary subject and the flexible structure of the degree course reflects this. In the first year, you will take 30 credits from a selection of modules offered in your home Department (covering EITHER modern foreign languages OR ‘cultural fluency’ topics) and one compulsory 30-credit module, alongside optional modules chosen from an extensive and varied list. In the second year, you will take one compulsory module alongside further optional modules. In the final year, you will undertake an independent research project and dissertation, alongside optional modules. Students on this course can choose optional modules from a number of different academic departments such as English, Modern Languages (including Comparative Literature and Culture), History, Classics, Drama, Psychology and Mathematics.

At Stage One, you must take a Language Module at a level suitable to the student (FR1601, FR1602, FR1701, FR1702, GM1601, GM1602, GM1701, GM1702, IT1601, IT1602, IT1701, IT1702, SN1601, SN1602, SN1701, SN1702), equivalent to 30 credits **and** choose options equal to the value of **two** 30 credit modules from the list of Stage One modules from at least two academic disciplines.

At Stage Two, you must choose options equal to the value of **three** 30 credit modules for the list of Stage Two modules from at least **two** academic disciplines.

At Stage Three (or Four if you have completed the International Year), you must choose one of the Liberal Arts Project modules (30 credits) and options equal to the value of **three** 30 credit modules from a list of Stage Three modules.

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](#).

If you wish to specify a specialisation in your degree title—e.g. Liberal Arts (History) — you must complete at least 90 credits in your chosen area. 30 of these credits may derive from the Dissertation, so long as it falls within the area of specialisation. You will be advised about specialisation pathways at every stage of your degree but do not need to change degree course. The specialisation will be awarded, once agreed, as an 'exit award' at the end of the course.

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 students on single, joint or combined honours courses offered all or in part by the School of Humanities, School of Performing and Digital Arts, or department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are:

- to engage students imaginatively in the process of reading and analysing different types of texts;
- to develop knowledge and understanding relevant to the chosen fields of study;
- to provide theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the creation, interpretation, and critical evaluation of knowledge in a range of disciplines;
- to enable students to develop independent critical thinking and judgement;
- to prepare students to undertake their own research under appropriate levels of supervision;
- to foster competence in at least one foreign language;
- to explore the delineation of disciplines as well as the value of interdisciplinary work;
- to encourage students to take progressive responsibility for their own study through negotiating subject areas of specialism with each other in seminars, through the informed choice of options, and through an extended piece of writing in the final year.
- to support the development of a range of transferable skills suitable both for further academic study and for a range of future careers.

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes				
In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (<i>Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*)</i>)				
Theme	Course learning outcome	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
K1		Identify the distinctiveness and purpose of Liberal Arts, and interrogate notions of culture and identity from an interdisciplinary perspective, broadening international and intercultural understanding	Interrogate global issues using an interdisciplinary framework, multimedia perspectives and practice-based approaches, working collaboratively and engaging creatively with fundamental ideas about culture and society.	Demonstrate breadth of interdisciplinary knowledge and skills by planning, managing, and delivering an independent research project.
K2		Articulate how ideas emerge collaboratively through a diverse range of interdisciplinary "encounters", employing critical, comparative and/or theoretical approaches, developing awareness of continuities and commonalities between subjects/disciplines.	Explore communicative strategies in areas such as arts and culture, media, and politics, tackling questions of individual and global responsibility in relation to contemporary real-world issues.	Apply critical, creative and/or innovative techniques, drawing from influences and ideas across subjects/disciplines, and applying analytical, interpretative, and methodological tools.
K	Engaged Humanities (JH) K6 Undertake multi-disciplinary [and/or interdisciplinary study] in two or more subject areas and engage with developing subject conversations and their currency in cultural discourse now.	Recall foundational knowledge of two or more subject areas and use core subject skills [with opportunity to bring the fields of study into conversation].	Build wide-ranging subject learning and knowledge [with opportunity to consider interdisciplinary interrelations in theory, history or practice of the disciplines].	Select and apply specific debates/theories/conceptual frameworks within specialist areas of the subject field and critically identify the potential for new ideas and subject directions [with an ability to critically understand and interrogate the intersections of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary practice and engage with its capacity for generating unique meaning, knowledge, value].
S	Applied Humanities S1 Understand the relevance of subject skills to professional and applied contexts, and	Recognise and identify subject skills as transferable to work-based situations and competencies.	Generate outputs in a variety of formats which have application to work-based	Plan and manage an extended project/essay, using ADAPTIVE skills,

	how to apply that knowledge in the future.		uses and/or particular audiences and/or functions.	INITIATIVE and SELF-MANAGEMENT to ensure successful task completion.
S	Global Humanities S2 Understand and enact intercultural awareness and competencies.	Identify and respond to diverse cultural contexts and viewpoints	Understand and differentiate the circumstances and contexts that give rise to diverse viewpoints and world views.	Reflect on bias including one's own: operate within, appreciate, and evaluate different cultural context.
S	Critical S3	FOCUS in detail to FILTER, summarise and classify a range of information (issues, texts, contexts.)	Objectively evaluate information (issues, texts, contexts) demonstrating INTEGRITY and evidence-based reasoning.	Synthesise and evaluate information from disparate and potentially conflicting sources to reach INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT with the capacity to deconstruct the conditions pertaining to the construction of knowledge.
S	Collaborative S4	Reflect on current experience and identify the potential to ADAPT and modify in response to that experience.	Carry out collaborative activity with RESILIENCE and provide an individual contribution to a collective goal/task.	Co-work and/or co-create in partnership with others in achievement of collective goals and recognise acknowledge the importance of collaborative practice in knowledge production.
S	Communicative S5	Recall basic subject vocabulary and present information with FOCUS and ACCURACY.	Structure and organise the presentation of information in a variety of communicative modes with RELEVANCE, LOGIC and COHERENCE.	Design a presentation of information that can argue, influence or persuade, and/or can deploy a specialised vocabulary or creative/compositional technique.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, seminars, workshops, essay consultations, and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal examinations, coursework, examined essays, translation exercises, oral presentations (both individual and group), exhibits/posters, and the dissertation or long essay. In addition, students may produce various forms of creative work, both individually and in groups. Full details of the assessments for individual modules can be obtained from the Departments.

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. Assessments designated as 'summative' will receive a mark 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.

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Royal Holloway Curriculum 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.

Section 8 – Additional costs

Liberal Arts: There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this course.

Liberal Arts with an International Year: The cost of your year of international study will vary by country. Typical living costs to consider will be accommodation, food and household items, entertainment, travel, books and bills (including your mobile phone). You'll also need to budget for travel to and from your country of study. Additional costs compared to studying in the UK will also depend on personal choices, and it is important to research the cost of living before the year commences.

The fee for your year abroad will be 15% of the tuition fee for that academic year if you study at an International University (including Europe) as part of the Study Abroad Scheme, or if you complete an international work-based placement.

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