

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for a postgraduate award
MSc GLOBAL FUTURES (3489)

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](#).

The new MSc in Global Futures course is designed to teach students how to use cutting-edge human geographical knowledge, research skills and public engagement techniques to tackle key global challenges of our time such as climate change, global terror, political turbulence, and others. Students will be taught how to think critically, research thoroughly and disseminate knowledge widely. The modules use a range of traditional and innovative assessments that will test key learning outcomes and give students valuable transferable skills in research and public engagement.

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 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. 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	May 2024	Location of study	Egham, and Central London campuses
Course award and title	MSc Global Futures	Level of study	Postgraduate
Course code	3489	Year of entry	2026/27
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department/ School	Department of Geography School of Life Sciences and the Environment	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	
Mode(s) of attendance	Full time or part time	Duration of the course	1 year (52 weeks) full time 2-5 years (104-260 weeks) part time
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A	For queries on admissions:	study@royalholloway.ac.uk .
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/postgraduate/geography/global-futures-culture-and-creativity/ https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/postgraduate/geography/global-futures-geopolitics-and-security/ https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/postgraduate/geography/global-futures-justice-development-and-sustainability/		

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				
Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (see section 6)
GG5020	Research Methods for Social Science	15	7	MC
GG5013	Global Futures	30	7	MC
GG5021	Advanced Research Methods for Global Futures	15	7	MC
GG5035	Social Media & Audiencing	15	7	MC
GG5036	Public Engagement	15	7	MC
<p>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. Mandatory modules fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.</p> <p>In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module to successfully graduate with a particular degree title, or before you can proceed to the next year of your course where studying part-time. 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 (see Academic Regulations on condonable fails). 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.</p>				
3.2 Optional modules				
<p>In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. The following table lists a selection of optional modules that are likely to be available. However, not all may be available every year. 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, so it is important that this specification is read alongside your department's Student Handbook, which you can normally access via Moodle.</p>				

3.3 Optional module requirements

The choice of modules a student can take is subject to the following rules:

Students must take a 30-credit module in core concepts. The core concepts module you choose will determine your degree title.

Students wishing to exit with MSc Global Futures: Culture and Creativity (Banner code 3490) must take GG5010 Key Concepts in Cultural and Creative Geographies (30 credits)

Students wishing to exit with MSc Global Futures: Geopolitics and Security must take GG5011 Principles in Geopolitics and Security (30 credits)

Students wishing to exit with MSc Global Futures: Justice, Development and Sustainability must take GG5012 Justice, Development and Sustainability (30 credits)

You must take and pass a dissertation module to be eligible for the MSc award. You can choose from either GG5040 Dissertation (60 credits) or GG5042 Practice-based Dissertation (60 credits).

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 Tier 4 (General) 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.

Students must take and pass a dissertation module to be eligible for an MSc award.

All postgraduate taught students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 to be awarded. 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 otherwise meet the requirements for award as stipulated in the [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be awarded.

Part time MSc students will normally complete the course within two years. In their first year, they will take the 'core concepts' module of their pathway (so either GG5010, GG5011 or GG5012), GG5035 and GG5013 in Term 2. In their second year they could do GG5020 in Term 1 and GG5021 and GG5036 in Term 2. Their dissertation (GG5040 or GG5042) would also be handed in at the end of year 2. Part time students are permitted under University regulations to complete their course of study over a period of up to 5 years. Students who are unable to complete the course within the standard 2 year timeframe should liaise with the course director to agree a time frame for completion.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are to:

- Equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to understand contemporary global issues from a geographical perspective, such as the threat of environmental catastrophe and resource shortages, the rise of extremist ideologies, housing shortages in the global north and south, infrastructural and economic failure, ill-health epidemics and global terror.
- Explore future ways to mitigate the impact of these potential crises and foster critical reflections on the strategies that are being employed against them.
- Envision new ways of tackling real global issues, using the cutting-edge knowledge and research skills from the geographical thinking on culture, creativity, geopolitics, security, justice, development and sustainability.
- Enable students to undertake cutting edge research using advanced qualitative methodological skills, and to apply that knowledge 'outside' the academic arena.

Ultimately, this course is geared toward teaching students how to use critical academic skills and apply them in making real changes in the world around them.

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 (*)*)

Course learning outcome

1. To evaluate the importance of key human geographical concepts, theoretical debates and developments as they related to the key global challenges of the 21st century (either through the pathways of Culture & Creativity, Geopolitics & Security or Development & Sustainability)
2. To define and critique the relevant texts, theories and social-scientific methods used to enhance our awareness of the issues, processes and phenomena associated with the pressing global agendas of the 21st century.
3. To apply and evaluate, to a professional level, advanced social-science research methods relevant to the field of human geography.
4. To demonstrate a critical awareness of advanced scholarship in a chosen area of the discipline (either through the pathways of Culture & Creativity, Geopolitics & Security or Development & Sustainability)
5. To demonstrate a practical ability in the dissemination of academic knowledge to a professional and/or broader public audience via written, online, visual and audio material.
6. To plan, design and execute a rigorous and safe piece of independent research in the field of human geography.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

The curriculum for the MSc in Global Futures will provide a diverse range of viewpoints as it will be taught by a broad range of staff across human geography. We have a vast array human geographers in the department, and all will – at some point across the whole course – have teaching input. They will be able to draw upon their own viewpoints and research expertise that covers all parts of the world. In fact, the thematic modules are designed specifically to reflect this and will use examples from the South East Asia, parts of Africa, the Arctic, China, Latin America and closer to home in Europe, the UK and London.

Every student on the course will undertake a range of coursework – assessed and non-assessed. They will be doing more traditional academic projects such as essays and dissertations, but also more innovative work such as manifestos, social media suites, specialised presentations, placements and scenario planning. The ‘themes’ of these projects are a mix of staff-set proposals, but also specific ideas and aims conjured up by the students’ interests. The assessments have been designed to get students to research, but also to present complex geographical themes in a coherent but also diverse way. The learning outcomes of the new modules are all geared toward setting a curriculum that challenges the student, equips them with relevant research and analytical skills, and the ability to present solutions to big problems that are concise and accessible. Hence, the assessments – of essays, presentations, manifestos and social media output – reflect just that.

This new course has an explicit commitment to skill development and employability, and this is integrated across the curriculum for all students on all three pathways. The course brings award winning social media teaching (the MA in Cultural Geography won the best postgraduate award for engagement in 2013) and scenario planning), as well as the volunteering and placement opportunities afforded by the Department’s excellent links with major cultural, creative, political and non-governmental organisations nationally.

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

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

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	7
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 programmes of study.	
QAA Characteristics Statement (Master's Degrees) – September 2015	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/supporting-resources
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 – Further information

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate when taking full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. 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.

Your course will be reviewed regularly, both by the university as part of its cyclical quality enhancement processes, and/or by your department or school, who may wish to make improvements to the curriculum, or in response to resource planning. As such, your course may be revised during your study at Royal Holloway. However, your department or school will take reasonable steps to consult with students via appropriate channels when considering changes. All continuing students will be routinely informed of any significant changes.

Section 11 – 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
PG Diploma	Passes in at least 120 credits, with fails of between 40% to 49% for up to 40 credits condonable (except for any course specific requirements).	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
PG Certificate	Passes in at least 60 credits with no condonable fails	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College