Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for a postgraduate award
MASTER OF RESEARCH (MRES) IN GEOPOLITICS, DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY AND JUSTICE (3494)

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.

This course is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or up to five years of part-time study (260 weeks). On successful completion of the course a student should have a critical understanding of the area of Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the course provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to PhD-level study in the same or a closely-related field.

Your degree courses at Royal Holloway, University of London, will be delivered over one year, which normally involves modules to the value of 180 credits (which is equivalent to 90 ECTS credits[1]).

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 – Also referred to as 'programme', this term refers to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies. 'Courses' were formerly known as 'programmes' at Royal Holloway.
Module – This refers to the credits you will study each year to complete your degree course. Postgraduate taught degrees at Royal Holloway comprise 180 credits. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title. 'Modules' were formerly known as 'course units' at Royal Holloway.

[1] The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer. ECTS credits reflect the total workload required to achieve defined learning outcomes and their associated workload, including teaching hours and guided independent study. 15 UK credits is equivalent to 7.5 ECTS. 30 UK credits is equivalent to 15 ECTS. Further details on ECTS can be found within the ECTS User Guide 2015.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	May 2024	**Location of study**	Egham
Course award and title	Master of Research (MRes) in Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice	**Level of study**	Postgraduate
Course code	3494	**Year of entry**	2027/28
Language(s) of Tuition	English		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department	Geography and Sociology	**Other departments involved in teaching the course**	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full time and part time	**Duration of the course**	One year (52 weeks) full-time Two to five years (104 - 260 weeks) 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

Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC
GG5020	Research Methods for Social Science	15	7	MC
GG5021	Advanced Research Methods for Global Futures	15	7	MC
GG5041	Longer Form Dissertation	120	7	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 may 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.

You must choose a 30-credit optional module in Key Concepts. You will have the choice of either GG5011 Key Concepts in Geopolitics & Security or GG5012 Key Concepts in Justice, Development and Sustainability. The choice of Key Concept module is determined by your dissertation topic.

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 postgraduate taught students are required to take and pass the non-credit bearing Moodle-based Academic Integrity module SS1001 in order 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.

The course can be taken part-time over two to five years beginning in September of year one but will normally be over two years. Students taking the course over two years will normally complete the taught modules in their first year, and the dissertation in their second year. Students taking the course over a longer period are advised to negotiate their module choices for each year with the course director.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are to:

- Equip students with intricate knowledge and skills needed to understand contemporary issues within the human geographical sub-fields of geopolitics, development, security and justice
- Teach students in-depth research social scientific research skills
- Give students transferable skills for careers in research in academia and beyond.

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 define and evaluate key concepts and theoretical debates in the field of Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice.
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 key agendas in the field of Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice in the 21st century.
3. To apply and evaluate, to a professional level, advanced social-science research methods relevant to the field of Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice.
4. To demonstrate a critical awareness of the advanced scholarship in the field of Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice.
5. To express detailed and insightful knowledge of advanced scholarship through the construction of an original and significant research question in the field of Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice.
6. To plan, design and execute a rigorous and safe piece of independent research in the field of Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mainly by seminars, group working, practical classes, completion of coursework and private study for the taught modules and departmental /University research training; and for the dissertation by independent research and private study, supported by research supervision.

Assessment is by various forms of coursework for the taught modules, a range of tasks and a research proposal for the research training module and the dissertation.

Students receive regular, scheduled, feedback on

- their performance in taught modules;
- their dissertation plan and draft proposal (spring term);
- their detailed research proposal and oral presentation (summer term);
- and part of the draft dissertation write up (spring and summer term).

Completion of tasks is monitored centrally to ensure students experiencing difficulty can be identified and provided with appropriate support.

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 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 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**
PG Certificate	Passes in at least 60 credits of taught modules with no condonable fails	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College