Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BSc Social Science with a Placement Year

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 BSc Social Science with a Placement Year is delivered over four years of full-time study. The BSc Social Science aims to enable students to develop a broad understanding of current social issues and explore them from a range of different perspectives. The course takes a broad approach to understanding society and people in society, not only from sociological and social policy perspectives, but also from socio-legal and applied ethical viewpoints. Your degree courses at Royal Holloway, University of London, will be delivered over four years, each of which, apart from the placement year, normally involves modules to the value of 120 credits (which is equivalent to 60 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 – 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.

[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	October 2026	**Location of study**	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BSc Social Science with a Placement Year	**Level of study**	Undergraduate
Course code	3871	**UCAS code**	
Year of entry	2027/28	**Language(s) of Tuition**	English
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department	Royal Holloway Law School	**Other departments involved in teaching the course**	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time	**Duration of the course**	4 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	SW1010	Regulating Society: Law, Policy and Values	30	4	MC
1	SW1020	Social Division and Complexity in Contemporary Life: Poverty and Affluence, Identities and Cultures	30	4	MC
1	SW1030	Understanding Society	30	4	MC
1	SW1040	Applied Ethics and Social Issues	30	4	MC
2	SW2010	The Welfare State and its Context: Past, Present and Future?	15	5	MC
2	SW2020	The Legal System in its Social Context	15	5	MC
2	CR2011	Research Methods for Social Scientists	30	5	MNC
3	LL3000P	Law OPY Study Abroad	30	6	MNC
4	SW3010	Comparative Welfare Societies	15	6	MC
4	SW3020	Critical Skills in Social Inquiry: Exploring Aspects of Marginalisation in Society	15	6	MC
4	SW3030	Research Project	30	6	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.

*Contact hours come in various different 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. It is intended that these contact hours will face-to-face as far as possible, but in certain unavoidable situations, these may take place virtually.

**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.

3.2 Optional modules

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; please contact the Department for further information.

In stage two, you will take 60 credits of optional modules from the list of stage two electives offered by the Royal Holloway Law School.

In stage four, you will take 60 credits of optional modules. These may be selected entirely from the list of final year options offered by the Royal Holloway Law School, or you may substitute up to a maximum of 30 credits with appropriate modules in other departments. Students wishing to take an option (s) from another department (s) must check firstly with their personal adviser that the option (s) is suitable and then with the other department (s) that there is space available.

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 University'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 University.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are to:

1. Explore the relationship between individuals and society with a view to identify ways in which you can make contributions to social issues such as through employment, research and debate.
2. Recognise the different perspectives exploring the factors that influence the organisation of society and engage in addressing social issues
3. Enable you to assess contrasting theories, explanations, research, policies and perspective applied to social issues
4. Engage you in the exploration of social issues and to reflect critically on your role in society and how this links with broader questions about how society is organised and regulated
5. Encourage you to appreciate broader theoretical and comparative perspectives of social issues, including recognising questions of social justice
6. Develop creative problem-solving skills and key transferable intellectual skills as the basis for future employment
7. Develop active listening and communication skills
8. Develop skills in accessing and evaluating different sources of evidence including e-resource search and IT techniques
9. Develop a reflexive approach to own learning through monitoring and improve future learning
10. Foster a capacity to work collaboratively to negotiate, undertake and complete joint task or goal.

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	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
1. Access, organise and evaluate a range of sources of information, including making use of relevant information technology, and consider and analyse problems, including complex problems to which there is no single solution, modifying your viewpoint in light of new information. 2. Assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations, research, policies and procedures and use the information to develop and sustain reasoned arguments. 3. Think creatively and make connections between ideas and information in different fields of study, recognising and working with ambiguity and areas of uncertainty. 4. Recognise the strengths and weaknesses of own intellectual frameworks, identify gaps in knowledge and make use of feedback to reflect on your own learning. 5. Exercise independent and critical judgement. 6. Understand the importance of research findings and develop the ability to research independently and identify different approaches to	4.1 Employ imagination and flexibility in seeking and evaluating alternative solutions. 4.2 Identify gaps in their own knowledge and acquire new knowledge. 4.3 Develop research skills to analyse complex problems. 4.4 Acquire time management and self-directed study skills through undertaking an independent research project. 4.5 Make use of feedback to reflect on own learning.	5.1 Present conclusions in a structured form, appropriate to the audience for which these have been prepared. 5.2 Recognise questions of social justice. 5.3 Develop communication and presentation skills. 5.4 Work collaboratively with others to achieve a collective goal.	6.1 Analyse social issues from a range of perspectives and identify underlying issues of power and key ethical questions. 6.2Assess, summarise and interpret research procedures, theoretical debates and academic arguments in constructing an original argument. 6.3 Understand the factors that influence the organisation of society and engage in addressing social issues.

research and assess their strengths and weaknesses in answering different forms of research questions. 7. Analyse social issues from a range of perspectives and identify underlying issues of power, key ethical questions and sensitivity to social context, difference and diversity. 8. Communicate ideas and arguments in a variety of formats with clarity in a range of media including orally and in writing, considering diverse opinions and the social, cultural and ideological positions from which they arise. 9. Employ imagination and flexibility in seeking and evaluating alternative solutions.			

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning in the course are facilitated by lectures, seminars, coursework, oral presentations and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal examinations, coursework, examined essays, oral presentations and the optional dissertation. In addition, students may be involved in workshops and may produce various forms of creative work. The course design reflects good practice across the higher educational sector. It includes elements of problem-based learning and encourages students to develop their own independent learning skills and reflective learning practice.

You are expected to be an active partner in your studies with shared responsibilities for your learning and achievement. The course is designed to meet the academic needs of the students, and to produce students who engage fully with the intellectual challenges of undertaking a degree in Social Science. The course focuses on developing key (transferable) skills outcomes relevant both to the specific modules and to the course as a whole, encompassing both classroom-based teaching methods such as traditional seminars and lectures, and also directed independent study.

The BSc Social Science with a Placement Year has a strong strand of contemporary vocational skills running throughout the course. The four 'Cs' (critical thinking, communication, creativity and collaboration), central to success in the 21st century, underpin learning and skills development on this programme (see sections 5 and 6). The subject matter of the programme is also a good basis for future professional training at post graduate level in social work and the law (which are also provided by RHUL**).** This degree course will also be of particular interest to people who are interested in working in human services and social enterprises with the opportunity to undertake an assessed module working in a community/volunteer role. The degree provides opportunities for you to undertake assessed work with individuals and communities, and an optional Placement Year. You will participate and engage with numerous opportunities provided by the Careers team as an integral part of your overall educational experience, including developing a professional portfolio and developing their CV.

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. Full details of the course and assessments for individual modules can be obtained on the Department website and more specific information is listed in the Departmental student handbook.

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
Some of the mandatory modules on this course include external visits, which may incur a travel cost. However, as students are permitted to arrange the visit, this means you will be able to choose a venue close to either the University or your base to minimise travel 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