ROYAL HOLLOWAY
University of London

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Honours Degree programmes in Politics and International Relations**. For Joint and Combined Honours Degree programmes, please also refer to the equivalent document(s) for the other subject(s). This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2010**.

The principal aim of all programmes is to allow students to pursue the study of International Relations alongside that of Politics. For Joint Honours students this includes relating politics at the domestic level with that at the international level and vice versa. In meeting this principal aim the programmes also:

- Provides a systematic understanding and knowledge of political theory and institutions in both a domestic and international context.
- Encourages critical awareness of current political problems at national and international levels.
- Provides theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the development and interpretation of knowledge in Politics and International Relations and to the evaluation of current research and scholarship in the field.
- Fosters an independent learning ability for continued intellectual development.

Programmes are normally delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which the student must follow courses to the value of four units (one unit is equivalent to 30 national credits). The programme comprises 'core' disciplinary courses and 'optional' specialist courses, with an extended essay in the final stage. Whilst the development of disciplinary-specific skills are emphasised in the 'core' courses, the specialist options provide focused opportunities to examine the application of these skills. Moreover, the multi-disciplinary common first year, and the opportunity to take courses offered in complementary disciplines, gives a heightened appreciation of disciplinary distinctiveness.

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This document provides a summary of the main features of the programme(s), and of the outcomes which a student might reasonably be expected to achieve if full advantage is taken of the learning opportunities provided. Further information is contained in the College prospectus, the College Regulations and in various handbooks issued to students upon arrival. Whilst Royal Holloway keeps all its information for prospective applicants and students under review, programmes and the availability of individual courses are necessarily subject to change at any time, and prospective applicants are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect their decision to follow a specific programme. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform applicants and students as soon as is practicable of any substantial changes which might affect their studies.

Learning outcomes

Teaching and learning on the programmes are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Knowledge and understanding

The programmes are designed to enable students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the following aspects of the discipline:

- Extensive knowledge and critical understanding of recent and current developments in the field of political science and international relations, and of the issues and controversies associated with these developments.
- A sound basic understanding of social science and international relations methodology.
- A critical understanding of result and data relating to the field of political science.
- Familiarity with a broad selection of the principal classic and contemporary texts in the fields of politics and international relations.
- A sound knowledge of the theories, techniques and concepts used to further our understanding of the issues, processes and phenomena associated with the field of politics and international relations.
- A sound understanding of the principal approaches and current issues in a range of options taught during the second and third years of the programme.

Skills and other attributes

The programme fosters the development of a range of personal skills and attributes that will strengthen a student's abilities to engage in continuing professional development, engage in further academic research and contribute to the wider academic community. It is also designed to allow students to acquire competence in the following range of discipline-specific and transferable (denoted with an asterisk*) skills:

- Assess the merits of theories, models and explanations in political science, and situate them in a wider disciplinary context.
- Apply the concepts and methods used in political science and international relations to the analysis of political theories and institutions within the international system.
- Analyse qualitative and quantitative data relating to the field of politics and international relations.
- Evaluate current research and scholarship in the field, and evaluate and, where appropriate, develop critiques of the methodologies employed by political scientists.
- Gather, organise and deploy evidence, data and information from a variety of sources, and assess their nature and value.
- Carry out an independent investigation of a political topic or issue and produce a coherent written account.
- Communicate complex ideas and present arguments and complex information in a clear and concise manner in writing.*
- Analyse and interpret complex issues, and develop reasoned arguments and make sound, critical judgements in the absence of complete data.*
- Use literature, internet and database searches to gain necessary information.*
- Develop the intellectual autonomy and self-direction needed for independent investigation of intellectual problems, taking responsibility for one's learning, and developing habits of reflection on that learning.*
- Exercise of initiative and personal responsibility.*
- Ability to take decisions in complex and uncertain situations.*
- The ability to work autonomously and collaboratively with others.*
- Self-awareness and self-management of research.*
- Awareness of one's responsibility as a local, national and international citizen.*
- Ability to learn independently and to take advantage of life-learning.*
- Skills of oral presentation.*

* transferable skills

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Teaching, learning and assessment
Teaching and learning on the programmes draw on the methods and concepts used to investigate political phenomena at both national and international levels. It is also strongly informed by the current research interests of the core teaching team within the Department. The main methods used to develop knowledge and understanding are formal lectures by academic staff within the Department, tutorials and seminar discussions based on a combination of staff led sessions and student presentations.

Assessment will be by a combination of assessed coursework and examination, as indicated in individual course specifications. The aim through the programme is to use a variety of different assessments (essays, examinations, other set coursework, presentations) to gauge the performance of students in as comprehensive a way as possible. For students studying Politics and International Relations, the assessment process culminates in guided independent research/study with the production of an extended essay, which is a compulsory course in the final year. Throughout the duration of the programme the required word lengths for coursework are gradually increased. This allows for student development and for their increased ability to articulate their knowledge, understanding of text and their arguments at a more advanced level.

Full details of the assessments for individual courses can be obtained from the Department of Politics and International Relations.

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Details of the programme structure(s)
The programmes are designed to be completed in three stages, each stage comprising one year of full-time study. Students are to complete a total of twelve full course units. In the Stage one all courses are compulsory. In stages two and three students choose from the available course options. The only stipulations are that options must be chosen in equal measure from both 'sides' (Politics and International Relations) of the programme and all students must complete PR3000 (Extended Essay) during their final year.
Please note that not all courses run each year. A full list of courses including optional courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the Department of Politics and International Relations

Joint Honours Degree in Politics and International Relations

Stage One

Students must pass the following compulsory courses:
PR1400 Introduction to Politics and Government (1 unit)
PR1500 Introduction to International Relations (1 unit)
Students must also take:
PR1520 Classic and Contemporary Reading in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)
PR1600 Introduction to Research Methods in Politics and International Relations (1 unit)

Stage Two

Students must take

PR2440 Introduction to International Relations (1 unit)

In addition, students must take one further unit of option courses designated as international relations courses, and two units of option courses designated as politics courses.

Stage Three

Students must take:
PR3000 Extended Essay in either Politics or International Relations (1 unit)

Plus, depending on what topic is selected for PR3000, students must then choose THREE further units from available options in order to ensure that these equal TWO units in Politics and TWO units in International Relations.

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Progression and award requirements
The progression and award requirements are essentially the same across all Honours Degree programmes at Royal Holloway. Students must pass units to the value of at least three units on each stage of the programme. On some programmes there may be a requirement to pass specific courses in order to progress to the next stage, or to qualify for a particular degree title. Progression through the programme is monitored through attendance and performance in coursework assignments and the completion and passing of courses each year. Students are considered for the award and classified on the basis of a weighted average. This is calculated from marks gained in courses taken in stages two and three, and gives twice the weighting to marks gained in stage three. In order to qualify for the award, students must gain a weighted average of at least 35%.

To be awarded the degree of Politics and International Relations, students must complete all their stage one courses and they must pass both PR1400 Introduction to Politics and Government and PR1500 Introduction to International Relations to progress to stage two. In the final year all students must complete PR3000 Dissertation in Politics and/or International Relations.

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Student support and guidance
- Personal Advisers: All students are allocated a personal adviser who meets with them in the induction week and then regularly through the programme. The tutor's role is to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues.
- All tutors and academic staff, including the Head of Department, are available for consultation at advertised office hours.
- The Departmental Academic Coordinator provides guidance and advice on a range of academic, administrative, pastoral and welfare matters.
- The Department operates an 'open door' policy such that any member of staff may be consulted by students.
- A Departmental common room and a study room are available to all students.
- Induction programme to the Department and College for orientation at the start of the first year.
- Detailed and comprehensive Departmental Student Handbook.
- The Departmental Staff/Student Committee acts as a channel of communication between staff and students.
- Extensive supporting material and learning resources available from the College libraries. In addition students also have access to a wide range of resources available through other University of London libraries.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service liaison officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre and the Education Support Office for students with special needs.

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Admission requirements
The Department's standard conditional offer is available on the Course Catalogue web page. However, the Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers policy and strongly encourages applications from non-standard applicants. Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. It may also be helpful to

contact the Admissions Office for specific guidance on the entrance requirements for particular programmes.

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Further learning and career opportunities

The programmes provide a firm foundation for postgraduate study and research, and some of the more successful graduates can expect to go on to postgraduate programmes in both Royal Holloway and elsewhere. The programmes also provide graduates with a range of intellectual, personal and social skills that are transferable to a wide variety of employment opportunities. Careers which will especially suit International Relations graduates include work in the civil service, local government, public and private sector management, political research and lobbying, teaching, and journalism and the media. Students on the programmes are able to take full advantage of the resources available at the College Careers Service.

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Indicators of quality and standards

Royal Holloway's position as one of the UK's leading research-intensive institutions was confirmed by the results of the most recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE 2008) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The new scoring system for the RAE 2008 measures research quality in four categories, with the top score of 4* indicating quality that is world-leading and of the highest standards in terms of originality, significance and rigour. 60% of the College's research profile is rated as world-leading or internationally excellent outperforming the national average of 50%. The College is ranked 16th in the UK for research of 4* standard and 18th for 3* and 4* research.

In the 2008 RAE, 70% of the Politics and International Relations Department's research publications were judged to be in the top three categories, from 'internationally excellent' to 'world leading'. These results ranked the Department in ninth place among departments of politics and international relations with fewer than 20 staff and second place among departments with fewer than 15 staff.

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List of programmes

All the programmes are taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and lead to awards of the University of London. Programmes in Politics and International Relations are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The QAA subject benchmark statements in Politics and International Relations describe the general features which one might expect from Honours Degree programmes in these subjects, and can therefore be used as a point of reference when reading this document (see www.qaa.ac.uk). UCAS codes are given in parentheses (see www.ucas.ac.uk).

Joint Honours Degree programmes in Politics and International Relations, taught entirely within the Department

BA Politics and International Relations (L290)

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