

## PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Science, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Practising Sustainable Development**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2017**.

The aims of the programme are:

- To examine the ways in which environmental, social, politics and economic factors interrelate at a range of scales to produce particular understandings of 'sustainable development' and associated policies and practices.
- To provide training in qualitative and quantitative skills needed to research and assess sustainable development, with a particular focus on participatory approaches.
- To enable students to carry out independent fieldwork and research-based dissertations in the field of sustainable development.
- To equip students to fulfil professional research roles in sustainable development-related fields, including both governmental and non-governmental development agencies.
- To provide students with key competencies including holistic thinking, ability to manage complexity, change and unpredictability, critical awareness, group working, communication, reflexivity and empathy. In addition, we aim to develop students' personal qualities, encompassing self-awareness regarding the student's learning i.e. 'learning how to learn'. And the capacity to reflect on, in and for action.

The Master's programme 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 programme a student should have an understanding of the area of the MSc at a level appropriate for a postgraduate qualification. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the programme provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to PhD study in the same or a closely related field.

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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 in the programme are closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

### *Knowledge and understanding of:*

- the relationships between, and complexities of, social, economic, political and environmental aspects of sustainable development;
- how the key issues in sustainable development theory influence policy and have an impact on practice;
- participatory approaches to sustainable development practice and research and the critiques of these approaches;

### *Skills and other attributes:*

- cognitive skills of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis, including the capacity to identify assumptions, evaluate statements in terms of evidence, to detect false logic or reasoning, to identify implicit values, to define terms adequately and generalise appropriately;\*
- ability to evaluate research, advanced scholarship and methodologies, and argue alternative approaches;\*
- holistic thinking;\*
- subject-specific skills including environmental monitoring, geographic information systems and participatory methods;
- ability to evaluate and apply a range of qualitative and quantitative methods for sustainable development research;
- independently plan and execute a research project in an ethical manner and to time;
- effective oral and written communication using a range of media;\*
- numeracy and quantitative skills including data analysis, interpretation and extrapolation;\*
- self-management in terms of time, planning and behaviour, motivation, self-starting, individual initiative and enterprise;\*
- learning to learn and developing an appetite for learning; reflective, adaptive and collaborative learning;\*
- self-awareness, openness and sensitivity to diversity in terms of people, cultures and environments;\*
- effective performance within a team environment including leadership, team building, influencing and project management skills;\*
- interpersonal skills of effective listening, negotiation and persuasion;\*

\* transferable skills

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### **Teaching, learning and assessment**

Teaching and learning methods mainly comprise lectures, seminars and workshops but will vary according to the intended outcomes of the particular course or session. Lectures provide coverage of the essential subject matter, literature review, and summaries of the key debates, as well as supplying guidance for further study or library work. Each course provides guided reading and indicative bibliography, and throughout the programme, considerable emphasis is placed on independent study and library work, often in preparation for seminars, workshops and lectures. In addition to consolidating and supplementing lectures, seminars or workshops enable students to practise and develop their analytical, problem-solving and research skills. They employ a range of approaches, including case studies, discussion, role-plays, one-to-one interactions, question and answer sessions, or computer-based training. Research skills are further developed to a professional level through the design and production of an independent research dissertation, which involves quantitative and/or qualitative techniques and also serves to integrate knowledge and skills acquired throughout the programme. The Volunteer Project provides students with an opportunity to gain real-world experience of the challenges of implementing sustainable development policies in a corporate, public or voluntary sector organisation.

Assessment methods vary, in accordance with the skills and knowledge being tested for a specific topic or course. Assignments may involve group work, where assessment is of the work of the group as a whole. Individual projects, in-course tests, group presentations, individual presentations, reports, quantitative analysis, and essays are all used at some point in the assessment of the programme. Full details of the assessments of individual courses can be obtained from the [Department of Geography](#).

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## Details of the programme structure(s)

The full-time programme lasts 52 weeks, beginning in September.

The brief outline of the programme is shown below; however students can obtain further details from the Programme Handbook. **Credits are indicated in brackets, and indicate proportional weighting towards the MSc, PGDip and PGCert classification grade.** The programme structure for the PGDip is as below, with the exception that students will not undertake the dissertation, while that for the PG Cert is that students are required to take courses worth only 60 credits.

Students must take the following:

- (i) GG5304: Community Volunteer Project (10 credits) condonable
- (ii) GG5307: Sustainability, Development & Governance (20 credits) condonable
- (iii) GG5308: Sustainability, Development and Society (20 credits) condonable
- (iv) GG5402: Research Training (10 credits) condonable
- (v) GG5403: Dissertation (60 credits) non-condonable
- (vi) GG5406: Participatory Methods (20 credits) condonable
- (vii) GG5404: Technologies, Innovation and Development (20 credits) condonable

and choose one option course (each 20 credits and condonable) from;

- (i) GG5407 Climate Change, Governance and the Seas (20 credits) condonable
- (ii) MN5337: Project Work for Managers (I): Sustainability and Societies (20 credits) condonable
- (iii) Or other options courses offered by the MSc Geopolitics & Security and MSc Politics of Development degrees as approved by the MSc Director.

### Part-time programme structure

The programme is normally taken part-time over two years beginning in September of year one\*\*. Part-time students studying over two years normally take compulsory elements (ii), (iii), (vi) and (vii) in their first year, and elements (i), (iv), (v) and the option course in their second year.

\*\* part time students are permitted under College regulations to complete their programme of study over a period of up to 5 years. Students who are unable to complete the programme within the standard 2 year timeframe should liaise with the programme director to agree a time frame for completion.

Please note that not all optional courses run each year. A full list of optional courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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### **Progression and award requirements**

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in oral presentations, contributions to seminar discussion and coursework.

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.

To pass the **Masters** programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which constitute up to a maximum of 40 credits, provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%, but a failure mark (i.e. below 50%) in the dissertation cannot be condoned.

The Masters degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Merit will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course of the programme.

The Masters degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course of the programme.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50% *and* has either chosen not to proceed to the dissertation, or has failed the dissertation on either the first or second attempt. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, but if they are, such condoned fails would be in courses which do not constitute more than 40 credits.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

The **Postgraduate Certificate** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no mark in any taught course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks in the region 40-49% are not usually condoned for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The Postgraduate Certificate with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any course which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%. A Distinction will not normally be awarded if a student re-sits or re-takes any course. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

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### **Student support and guidance**

- The Programme Director meets with the students on a regular basis to advise on academic, pastoral and welfare issues. The Programme Director acts as a point of contact for pastoral support and any questions about the programme throughout the year.
- Course coordinators, tutors and dissertation supervisors provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- All students are allocated a personal adviser, with whom they meet at least once a term, and more regularly if required, to discuss all matters relating to their programme and for pastoral support.
- Induction programmes for orientation and introduction to the Department and College are organised by the Director of Graduate Studies.
- All staff are available and accessible through an office-hour system.
- The MSc programme has a representative on the Department's Postgraduate Student-Staff Committee.
- Detailed PG handbook and course booklets.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College and University libraries, as well as the Computer Centre.
- Computing equipment and resources in the Department of Geography, including the Geospatial and Visual Methods Laboratory (GVML).
- College Careers Service and Departmental Employability Lead officer.

- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, Students' Union and students with additional learning needs also have access to Disability and Dyslexia Services (ESO).

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### **Admission requirements**

For details of admissions requirements please refer to the [Course Finder](#).

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### **Further learning and career opportunities**

As well as providing a firm foundation for further postgraduate study and research, the programme trains students for a wide range of positions in the field of sustainable development and ICT4D. Past students of the course are now employed by international development and environment agencies, national policy-making and implementing organisations, private sector natural resource companies and NGOs, as technology, environment and development workers, activists, teachers and researchers. For more details on further learning and career opportunities please refer to the [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 Excellence Framework (REF 2014) conducted by the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE). The scoring system for the REF 2014 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 and 3\* indicating research that is internationally excellent. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4\* or 3\* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. This result placed Royal Holloway 31st overall in the UK for 4\* and 3\* research and 33rd based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score.

The Department of Geography is ranked 2nd in the UK for research of 3\* and 4\* research and is ranked within the top 5 departments for their subject in the UK. The Department of Geography is also ranked 1st in England for research of 4\* and 3\*.

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### **List of programmes with details of awards, teaching arrangements and accreditation**

The programme is taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London, and the Masters leads to an award of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate lead to awards of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in Practising Sustainable Development are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

#### **Master of Science Programmes in Practising Sustainable Development**

MSc Practising Sustainable Development (1499)

#### **Postgraduate Diplomas in Practising Sustainable Development**

PG Diploma Practising Sustainable Development (1500)

#### **Postgraduate Certificates in Practising Sustainable Development**

PG Certificate in Practising Sustainable Development (1501)

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