

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BSc ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE (F66o)

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 Environment and Social Change provides progressive structures in which you will be able to gain ever-wider knowledge and understanding, and appropriate skills. Your course contains a combination of mandatory modules to introduce you to fundamental theoretical concepts and debates in social psychology, an understanding of key environmental and social processes, and research and communication skills, with a range of stage two and three specialist options. In stage two and three, you are encouraged to develop your own interests through informed choice among specialist options. In stage three, you are also required to conduct an independent research project in the field of environment and social change and communicate your findings to a range of audiences. This course aims to equip you with a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond higher education (HE), allowing you to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, to contribute to the wider community and enact social change around environmental issues. Your degree courses at Royal Holloway, University of London, will be delivered over three years, each of which normally involves modules to the value of 120 credits.

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.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	April 2024	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BSc Environment and Social Change	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	3507	UCAS code	F66o
Year of entry	2025/26		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	Department of Geography School of Life Sciences and the Environment	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	Psychology, Earth Sciences, Biological Sciences
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time Part-time	Duration of the course	3 years (Full-time) 6 years (Part-time)
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	None		
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	GG1040	Contested Politics of Climate Change	15	4	MC
1	GG1001	Physical Geography 1: Atmosphere, Oceans and Geosphere	15	4	MC
1	GG1002	Physical Geography 2: Biogeography, Ecology and Scales of Change	15	4	MC
1	GG1003	Human Geography 1: Cultures, Economies, Histories	15	4	MC
1	GG1004	Human Geography 2: Politics, Society, Development and Environment	15	4	MC
1	GL1350	Introduction to Environmental and Climate Change	15	4	MC
1	PS1030	Understanding Individuals and Groups	15	4	MC
1	PS1222	Communicating for Social Change	15	4	MC
2	GG2080	Social Change Toolkit	30	5	MC
2	GG2082	Applied Methodologies	15	5	MNC
2	PS2030	Social Psychology	15	5	MC
3	GG3008	Independent Project in Environment and Social Change	30	6	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 will 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.

In year 2, you must choose options to the value of 60 credits of FHEQ Level 5 modules.

In year 3, you must choose options to the value of 90 credits of FHEQ Level 6 modules.

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 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 [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study.

You may apply to take a placement year between stages 2 and 3 of your course (available to full time students only). Students can do their placement with a business, spend time volunteering, or studying abroad. The study abroad process is a competitive application process and if your application is successful, you must take modules at an overseas university nominated through the Turing or Student Exchange Programmes. The placement year is assessed through a mandatory module (GG3502 for the optional placement year in business or

volunteering; GG3504 for the optional placement year studying abroad). This module will contribute 20% to the final stage three marks. GG3502 or GG3504 are non-condonable for the degree title 'with a Placement Year'. In your final year on campus, you will take the stage 3 modules as listed above. These modules will contribute 80% to the final stage three marks. Please note that students who go out on a placement year course will not normally be permitted to transfer back to BSc Environment and Social Change, however consideration will be given in the case of extreme hardship, documented by extenuating circumstances and supporting material, as it normally would, should a student not be able to complete their placement year.

The BSc Environment and Social Change is available in part-mode.

Part time students must take the following **mandatory** modules:

Stage one (a):

GG1040 Contested Politics of Climate Change (15 credits)

and

PS1222 Communicating for Social Change (15 credits)

and

GG1001 Physical Geography I: Atmosphere, Oceans and the Geosphere (15 credits)

or

GG1003 Human Geography I: Cultures, Economies, History (15 credits)

and

GG1002 Physical Geography II: Biogeography, Ecology and Scales of Change (15 credits)

or

GG1004 Human Geography II: Politics, Society, Development & Environment (15 credits)

Stage one (b):

GL1350 Introduction to Environmental and Climate Change (15 credits)

and

PS1030 Understanding Individuals and Groups (15 credits)

and whichever of the two 15 credit Geography modules which were not taken in the previous year.

Stage two (a):

GG2080 Social Change Toolkit (30 credits)

And choose options equal to the value of 30 credits from the list of Stage two modules offered for this degree

Stage two (b):

GG2082 Applied Methodologies

and choose options equal to the value of 45 credits from a list of Stage two modules offered for this degree.

Stage three (a):

GG3008 Independent Research Project in Environment and Social Change

And choose optional modules to the value of 30 credits from the list of Stage three modules offered for this degree.

Stage three (b):

Choose options equal to the value of 60 credits from a list of Stage three modules offered for this degree

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

- to provide a sound and extensive basis for the study of Environment and Social Change, by developing relevant knowledge, understanding, geographical and transferable skills;
- to provide a flexible and progressive structure in which you are able to gain knowledge, understanding and appropriate skills relating to distinctive research specialisms;
- to provide you with a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond Higher Education, to enable you to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, to contribute to the wider community and to enact social change around environmental challenges.

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) To evaluate the importance of key debates in a range of disciplines relevant to the understanding of environment and societal change in the 21st century.	1) To identify the range of physical and human processes that operate in the world and to describe how they interact.	1) To define and evaluate key debates in subjects relevant to our understanding of environment and society.	1) To evaluate the importance of key debates in a range of disciplines relevant to the understanding of environment and societal change in the 21st century.
2) To synthesise knowledge and debates from across a range of relevant disciplines to inform the analysis and interpretation of data in the field of environment and social change for an independent research project.	2) To recognise the spatial and temporal variations of these physical and human processes.	2) To assess the differences, complementarities and contentions around policy relating to society and environment.	2) To synthesise knowledge and debates from across a range of relevant disciplines to inform the analysis and interpretation of data in the field of environment and social change for an independent research project.
3) To plan, design and execute a piece of rigorous and safe independent research.	3) To evaluate key debates in social psychology and assess how these ideas are used to understand human behaviour.	3) To evaluate key debates in social psychology and assess how these ideas are used to understand human behaviour.	3) To plan, design and execute a piece of rigorous and safe independent research.
4) To communicate research findings to a variety of audiences using appropriate methods.	4) To plan and design a piece of rigorous, ethical and safe research or enquiry.	4) To plan and design a piece of rigorous, ethical and safe research or enquiry.	4) To communicate research findings to a variety of audiences using appropriate methods.
5) To identify real world implications of independently conducted research for promoting social change around environmental issues	5) To plan and evaluate communication campaigns aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours of different publics.	5) To plan and evaluate communication campaigns aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours of different publics.	5) To identify real world implications of independently conducted research for promoting social change around environmental issues.
6) To plan and evaluate communication campaigns aimed at changing attitudes and behaviours of different publics	6) To apply and evaluate techniques adopted to understand environmental and societal change.	6) To apply and evaluate techniques adopted to understand environmental and societal change.	
7) To apply and evaluate techniques adopted to understand environmental and societal change.			

8) To describe the physical science basis of climate change and summarise the viewpoints of different stakeholders in the climate change debate.			
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Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning on your course is closely informed by the active research of staff. In general terms, the course provides an opportunity for you to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed herein.

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures; seminars; practical workshops; tutorials; oral presentations and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal unseen examinations, take home examinations, coursework essays, online tests and exercises, oral presentations, posters, online output, and independent research projects. A breakdown of assessment types for individual modules is shown in section 3.

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 [Module 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	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