

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 polices 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.

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 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.

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	2025/26
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department/ School	Department of Geography School of Life Sciences and the Environment	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full time or Part time	Duration of the course	1 year (52 weeks) full time 2-5 years (104-260 weeks) part time
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A	For queries on admissions:	study@royalholloway.ac.uk
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/		

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 (see section 6)
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. Mandatory modules fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module to successfully graduate with a particular degree title, or before you can proceed to the next year of your course where studying part-time. 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 (see [Academic Regulations](#) on condonable fails). 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

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](#).

Please note: 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.

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. 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.

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 [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	7
<p>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.</p>	
QAA Characteristics Statement (Master's Degrees) – September 2015	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/supporting-resources
<p>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.</p>	

Section 10 – Further information

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate when taking full advantage of the learning opportunities that are available. More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the [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.

Your course will be reviewed regularly, both by the university as part of its cyclical quality enhancement processes, and/or by your department or school, who may wish to make improvements to the curriculum, or in response to resource planning. As such, your course may be revised during the course of your study at Royal Holloway. However, your department or school will take reasonable steps to consult with students via appropriate channels when considering changes. All continuing students will be routinely informed of any significant changes.

Section 11 – 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