

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Arts, and Postgraduate Certificate in Cultural Geography (Research)**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2015**.

The aims of the programme are:

- to develop advanced understanding of the state of knowledge and current research questions in contemporary Cultural Geography;
- to develop knowledge and expertise in appropriate humanities and social science research methodologies for tackling these questions;
- to provide experience of independent research in Cultural Geography.

This programme is delivered in a single stage, equating to either one-year of full-time study or up to five years of part-time study and is specifically designed to provide research training and practice at Masters Level in Human Geography, with a particular emphasis on Cultural Geography. It prepares students for independent research at doctoral level and develops specialized knowledge and understanding of research, particularly involving cultural analysis, interpretation and explanation.

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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 & understanding

- advanced knowledge and expertise in the field of Cultural Geography and its current research questions;
- advanced knowledge in the ideas, approaches and substantive themes of contemporary Cultural Geographies;
- advanced knowledge of methods and techniques of Cultural Geography;
- knowledge of the culture of research.

Skills and other attributes

- advanced level critical reading;*
- advanced research writing skills;*
- advanced level proficiency in selected research techniques;
- extensive experience in drafting a research proposal;*
- advance communication and research presentation skills;*
- generic quantitative data analysis skills, as expected of social science post-graduates;
- experience of social media development*
- effective teamwork and task management;*
- research network development;*
- enhanced research management and design skills;*
- ability to conduct a substantial piece of independent research.

**transferable skills*

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is mainly by seminars, workshops, problem solving, group working, practical classes, completion of coursework and private study for the taught modules and departmental /college 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 (summer term). Completion of tasks is monitored centrally to ensure students experiencing difficulty can be identified and provided with appropriate support. Full details of assessments for the individual courses can be obtained from the [Department](#).

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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.

Students must take the following mandatory courses

- (i) GG5010: Contemporary Cultural Geographies (40 credits) (condonable)
- (ii) GG5020: Methods and Techniques in Cultural Geography (40 credits) (condonable)
- (iii) GG5030: Research Training: Public Engagements (10 credits) (condonable)
- (iv) GG5040: MA Cultural Geography Dissertation (90 credits) (non-condonable)

Part-time students** are normally expected to attend and complete all the assessments relating to courses 1, 2 and 3 in their first year, and complete course 4, the dissertation 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.

Further details of individual courses are given in the Programme Handbook.

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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. The pass mark for each assessed course is 50%. Courses 1 & 2 and 3 will together account for 50% of the overall assessment; while course 4 will account for the remaining 50% of the overall assessment. Students may not normally submit the dissertation before satisfactory completion of courses 1-3.

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 **Master's** 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 Master's 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 Master's 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 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.

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Student support and guidance

- Personal Tutor: All students are allocated a tutor, with whom they meet regularly to discuss all matters relating to their programme and for pastoral support.
- Personal Supervisor: All students are allocated a supervisor, with whom they meet regularly to discuss all matters relating to their dissertation.
- Personal Adviser: Students also have an advisor, who deputises for the supervisor in his/her absence, and who can provide additional support and guidance. Students are free to meet their advisors as and when necessary.
- Induction sessions and termly meetings with the Programme Director.
- Membership of a research group.

- Representation on the Staff-Student Committee.
- All staff available and accessible through an open-door policy or by operating an office-hours system.
- Detailed PG handbook and course booklets.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in the College and University libraries, as well as the Computer Centre.
- Dedicated Departmental teaching rooms and computer suite.
- A Geography Special Needs Officer.
- College Careers and Employability 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

The MA in Cultural Geography (Research) was specifically designed to allow students to progress to doctoral research in Human Geography. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) recognises the programme as a year one pathway in its 1+3 postgraduate research training programme. Approximately half of the graduates from the programme have progressed to doctoral research, many funded by AHRC and ESRC studentships. The programme also provides an advanced qualification suitable for a range of careers in which advanced skills in cultural and social scientific research are of advantage. Graduates of the programme are employed in university and government research posts, in teaching, in major archives, in advertising, and in the museums sector. Course 3 includes a series of employability focused seminars and associated formative assessments. For further 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. 81% of the College's research profile was deemed to be within the 4* or 3* categories, an increase of over 20% since 2008. These results for the quality of our research outputs placed Royal Holloway 15th in the UK based on an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) score and 20th in the UK for 4* and 3* research. The Department of Geography was ranked 1st in the UK for research of 3* and 4* standard and it is ranked in the top 5 departments for their subject in the UK.

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) recognises the MA in Cultural Geography (Research) as a year one pathway in its 1+3 postgraduate research training programme and is periodically re-evaluated as part of the ESRC's regular post graduate training recognition exercises, most recently in 2005. The Department currently has 2 ESRC 1+3 quota awards and is eligible to submit applications for competition awards.

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List of programmes

The programme is taught entirely by staff at Royal Holloway, University of London and leads to an award of the University of London. Programmes in Cultural Geography are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme code is given in parentheses.

Master of Arts Programme in Cultural Geography

MA in Cultural Geography (Research) (1074)

Postgraduate Certificate in Cultural Geography (Research) (3003)

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