

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Science** and **PGDip in Geopolitics and Security**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2012**.

The aims of the programme are:

- to provide a systematic understanding and knowledge of theories, institutions, and practices across the fields of Geography and International Relations more generally and in specific sub-disciplines related to Geopolitics and Security;
- to encourage a critical awareness of current problems and developments in Geopolitics and Security;
- to provide theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the creation and interpretation of knowledge in Geopolitics and Security and to the critical evaluation of current research and advanced scholarship in that field;
- to provide training in research techniques in the field of study;
- to foster an independent learning ability required for continuing professional development;
- to develop key communications, IT and management skills relevant for postgraduate work;
- to develop critical employability and transferable skills relevant for further study and future careers.

The programme is delivered over one year of full-time study (52 weeks) or two years of part-time study (104 weeks). Teaching takes place during the day over two terms from September to April. The dissertation is submitted the following September. On successful completion of the programme a student should have a critical understanding of the area of the MSc and Geopolitics and Security. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, the programme provides suitable and recognised qualifications for entry to PhD-level 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

- an advanced knowledge and critical understanding of key concepts, theoretical debates, and developments applicable to Geopolitics and Security;

- a sound knowledge of the texts, theories and methods used to enhance understanding of the issues, processes and phenomena associated with Geopolitics and Security;
- an advanced knowledge and critical understanding of research methods within Geopolitics and Security;
- knowledge of advanced scholarship in the chosen area of the discipline to a level appropriate for an MSc degree.

Skills and other attributes

- the ability to evaluate relevant critical, theoretical and contextual research at the forefront of the field;
- the ability to articulate knowledge and the understanding of texts, concepts and theories at an advanced level, demonstrating self-direction and originality;
- the ability to assess the nature and value of a wide variety of source materials – including, where appropriate, academic commentaries, research-based literature, official publications and statistics, journalistic sources, political biographies – and make effective use of such materials;
- the ability to develop their own lines of criticism and argument;*
- the ability to conduct research independently at an advanced level using traditional and electronic resources;*
- the ability to assess the merits of contrasting theories, explanations and policies;*
- the ability to manipulate precise and intricate ideas, construct logical arguments and use technical terminology correctly;*
- the ability to deal with complex issues, both systematically and creatively, and make sound judgments;*
- the ability to identify, investigate, analyze, formulate and advocate solutions to problems;*
- the ability to communicate complex information and ideas effectively, both orally and in writing;*
- the ability to write up a substantial dissertation project, using the appropriate methodological and bibliographical skills.*

* transferable skills

In addition, the programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes that are important in the world of work, and that strengthens our postgraduates' abilities to engage in lifelong learning and contribute to the wider community. These include personal motivation; the ability to work autonomously and with others; self-awareness and self-management; empathy and insight; intellectual integrity; awareness of responsibility as a local, national and international citizen; interest in lifelong learning; flexibility and adaptability; creativity.

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Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning is delivered primarily by means of seminar discussions, informal lectures, oral presentations, guided independent research, and guided independent study. Assessment takes the form of various formative and summative assignments, including verbal presentations, press and policy briefings, scenario construction and essay writing, and, in a handful of courses, a final written exam. The final assignment for the programme is a dissertation on a topic developed in consultation with an assigned supervisor. It is expected that the dissertation will be researched and written primarily in the summer months, although supervision and dissertation training will begin earlier in the academic year. Full details of assessments, including submission schedules and marking criteria, can be found in the Programme Handbook. Particular teaching and learning methods and specific assignments for each course are written into the various course outlines. Full details of individual Geography [Department](#) and specific PIR courses from the [Department of Politics and International Relations](#).

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Details of the programme structure(s)

The full-time programme is one year (52 weeks) in duration and begins in September. The programme is intended to integrate core courses offered in the Department of Geography with options and research training offered by the MSc programmes offered in Politics and International Relations. Geopolitics and Security has particular required courses and options with free options available from the wider PIR list.

The programme consists of a total of four units, which are comprised of a one unit core course, stream specific core and option courses, free option courses, and the dissertation. The dissertation is weighted as one full unit.

The brief outline of the programme is shown below; however students can obtain further details from the Programme Handbook. Full details of individual Geography courses can be obtained from the Geography [Department](#) and specific PIR courses from the [Department of Politics and International Relations](#).

Please note that the list of available courses offered is subject to change and not all option courses run each year.

Programme Structure

Core and Free Option courses allow the programme to be tailored to specific interests. The degree will provide students with both a firm academic foundation in the Geopolitics and Security studies areas as well as a base of knowledge for careers in fields of policymaking, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and more.

All courses are worth 12.5% except for the Dissertation (25%). Your units must add up to 100%. This equates to 6 courses over the Autumn and Spring terms, with the Dissertation over the Summer. (note: the Core course you don't select in the Spring term is also available as a free option).

Compulsory	Theory and Methods	Core	Free Options	Dissertation. 25%
	Choose one	Choose one	Choose one for each term.	Dissertation on an aspect of Geopolitics and Security
Autumn	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	
Principles of Geopolitics and Security	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods in Politics and IR	Contemporary Geopolitics of the Polar Regions	Resilience and the Governing of Emergency	
Spring	Introduction to Qualitative Methods in Politics and IR	Geopolitics of Media and Communications	Transnational Security and Targeting Law	
Research Design in Geopolitics and Security	Foundations of Contemporary Political Theory	(Note: the course you don't select here is also available as a Free option)	Spring	
			Biopolitics and Security	
			The Critical Study of Global Environmental Politics	
			Political Violence	
			Remaining Core course.	

Part-time programme structure

Part time MSc students will normally complete the first term compulsory course, theory and methods course, and core course in their first year. They will complete the second term compulsory research design course, free optional courses and the dissertation in their second year. Part-time Diploma students will normally have the same distribution of courses but without the dissertation.

Postgraduate Diploma

The streams are also offered at Postgraduate Diploma level (full- and part-time), whose structure is identical except that students do not write a dissertation. Students who are successful on the Diploma may transfer to the MSc subject to academic approval; alternatively, the Diploma may be awarded to MSc students who choose not to do the dissertation or who fail that component of the programme.

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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. To pass the programme a student must achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%, with no overall mark in any element counting towards the final assessment falling below 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which do not constitute more than 25% of the final assessment, 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 MSc degree with Merit may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 60.00% or above, with no mark in any element which counts towards the final assessment falling below 50%.

The MSc degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above, with no mark in any element 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 element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

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 element 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 25% of the final assessment.

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 element 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 element 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 element of the programme. In exceptional circumstances a viva may be held for a student at the request of the Examiners.

To be awarded the degree of Postgraduate Diploma in Geopolitics and Security MSc, students must complete and pass their one unit of core courses. To be awarded the degree of MSc in Geopolitics and Security students must also complete and pass the dissertation unit.

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Student support and guidance

- The Programme Director Dr Peter Adey 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. ****, deputy director

of the programme will act as a point of contact within PIR.

- Course coordinators, tutors and dissertation supervisors provide a back-up system of academic, pastoral and welfare advice.
- Students can meet, as required, the programme director who will discuss all matters relating to the programme and for pastoral support.
- Induction programmes for orientation and introduction to the Department and College.
- All staff available and accessible through an office-hour system.
- Representation on the Geography Student-Staff Committee Through a dedicated MSc representative.
- Detailed MSc handbook and course booklets.
- Extensive supporting materials and learning resources in College and University libraries, as well as the Computer Centre.
- Dedicated Departmental computing facilities.
- College Careers Service and Departmental Careers Service liaison officer.
- Access to all College and University support services, including Student Counselling Service, Health Centre, Students' Union and the Educational Support Office for students with special needs.

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Admission requirements

Candidates may apply at any stage of the academic year, though they are strongly encouraged to apply no later than June 1st for entry in September. The standard entrance requirement is a first or upper second class degree (or its foreign equivalent) in geography, politics, international relations or a related social sciences or humanities subject. Strong lower second class results or equivalents will also be considered, but in all cases admissions decisions are based on a complete application that includes a personal statement from the applicant, transcripts, reference letters, and additional supporting documents as appropriate. Related social science/humanities subjects include, but are not restricted to: sociology, history, communication, European studies, economics, management, social policy, social anthropology, media and cultural studies, and psychology. The Department also has considerable flexibility in its admissions and offers. Both departments have considerable flexibility in their admissions and offers, and strongly encourage applications from non-standard applicants (such as those with degrees in other subjects and/or those with appropriate work/professional experience and relevant publications). Students whose first language is not English may also be asked for a qualification in English Language at an appropriate level. For further details please refer to the [Prospective Students](#) web page. 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 MSc provides a firm foundation for further postgraduate study and research. There are PhD opportunities in both departments, which have vibrant and growing research student communities. The MSc and Postgraduate Diploma 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 Geopolitics and Security graduates include work in the civil service, local government, public and private sector management, political research and lobbying, teaching, and journalism and the media. 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 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.

The Department of Geography at Royal Holloway is a vibrant hub of world class research and researchers. The RAE 2008 identified our research environment as world class. The Department was awarded the highest grade of 5* in the previous Research Assessment Exercise, and was one of only 4 Departments whose grades were later enhanced to the top rating (referred to as 5** or 6*). We have some of the most modern research facilities of any Department in the country, and have received substantial new investment through SRIF and other HEFCE programmes.

In the RAE 2008, 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'. This was the Department's first submission to the national research exercise, as it was established only in 2004, yet its results ranked it 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. Since that time the Department has consolidated its four main research units and expanded its teaching and research base with a number of new appointments that have added to its strengths, particularly in the areas of transnational security, critical security studies, and post-conflict democratization.

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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 MSc leads to an award of the University of London. The Postgraduate Diploma leads to an award of Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. Programmes in Geopolitics and Security are not subject to accreditation by a professional body. The Banner programme codes are given in parentheses.

Master of Science Programme in Geopolitics and Security

MSc in Geopolitics and Security (2535)

Postgraduate Diploma in Geopolitics and Security

PG Diploma in Geopolitics and Security (BANNER CODE)

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