

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

This document describes the **Master of Science, Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Geopolitics and Security**. This specification is valid for new entrants from **September 2019**.

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 five years of part-time study (206 weeks). Teaching takes place during the day over two terms from September to April. The dissertation is submitted the following August. 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

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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 courses can be obtained from the 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 (mandatory) courses and options with free options available from the wider PIR list.

The MSc programme consists of a total of six 20 credit taught courses, three of which are mandatory, and the remaining three are optional, plus the 60-credit dissertation which is also mandatory.

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.

Mandatory and optional 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 20 credits except for the Dissertation which is worth 60 credits. Credits must add up to 180 for the MSc, 120 for the PG Diploma and 60 for the PG Certificate.

Autumn Term

Students must take the following *mandatory courses*

- (i) GG5601: Principles of Geopolitics and Security (20 credits) non-condonable
- (ii) GG5608 Social Science Methods for Political Geography (20 credits) condonable

Students must take one optional course (20 credits), the below are indicative of around 10 optional courses available:

- (i) GG5605: Resilience and the Governing of Emergency (20 credits) condonable
- (ii) PR5908: US Foreign Policy (20 credits) condonable

Please note that the list of available courses offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the Departments of Geography and Politics and International Relations.

Spring Term

Students must take the following *mandatory course*

- (i) GG5602: Research Design in Geopolitics and Security (20 credits) non-condonable

Students must take two optional courses (40 credits), the below are indicative of around 10 optional courses available:

- (i) GG5407: Climate Change, Governance and the Seas (20 credits)
- (ii) GG5606: Media and the Military (20 credits)
- (iii) PR5939: Non-State Violence as a Challenge to Security (20 credits)

Please note that the list of available courses offered is subject to change and not all courses run each year. A full list of courses for the current academic year can be obtained from the Departments of Geography and Politics and International Relations

Summer Term

Students must take the following *mandatory courses*

- (i) GG5600: Geopolitics and Security Dissertation (60 credits) non-condonable

Part-time programme structure

Part-time MSc students will normally complete the programme within two years**. Students take the autumn term mandatory course, theory and methods course, and an optional course in their first year. In their second year, they will complete the spring term mandatory research design course, optional courses and the dissertation. Part-time Diploma students will normally have the same distribution of courses but without the dissertation.

** 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.

Postgraduate Diploma

The streams are also offered at Postgraduate Diploma level (full- and part-time). The 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 write the dissertation or who have failed to pass the full 180 credits required for the MSc but have passed at least 120 credits.

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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 a student holds a Tier 4 (General) Student Visa and they 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%. 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.

The Master's degree with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above.

The **Postgraduate Diploma** may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of at least 50.00% *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.

The Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction may be awarded if a student achieves an overall weighted average of 70.00% or above.

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% will not be 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%.

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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. The Director of PGT programmes will act as a point of contact within PIR.
- All students are allocated a personal tutor, 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.
- 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 Staff-Student Committee.
- Detailed PG 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.
- Royal Holloway 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 (DDS)

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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 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 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 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 is ranked 1st in the UK for research for 3* and 4* research and is ranked within the top 5 departments for their subject in the UK.

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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 (3075)

Postgraduate Certificate in Geopolitics and Security

PG Certificate in Geopolitics and Security (3076)

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