

Royal Holloway, University of London
Programme specification for a postgraduate award
MSc Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies (3426)

Section 1 – Introduction to your programme

This programme specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your programme 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](#).

The MSc Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism programme is delivered in a single stage, equating to one year (52 weeks) of full-time study, or up to five years (260 weeks) of part-time study. The MSc programme consists of taught courses worth a total of 120 credits and a dissertation worth 60 credits. On successful completion of any of the programmes, you should have an understanding of the area of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies at a level appropriate for a postgraduate qualification. Whilst being a self-contained degree in its own right, each programme provides suitable and recognised qualifications that can facilitate entry to PhD study in the same or a closely related field.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, programmes and the availability of individual course units, especially optional course units 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 programme. 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 programme – Also referred to as 'degree course' or simply 'course', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.

Course unit – Also referred to as 'module', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree programme.

Section 2 – Programme details			
Date of specification update	May 2024	Location of study	Central London Campus
Programme award and title	MSc Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism Studies	Level of study	Postgraduate
Programme code	3426	Year of entry	2025/26
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	School of Law	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the programme	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time / Part-time	Duration of the programme	One year (52 weeks) full-time Two years (up to 260 weeks) part-time
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A	Mode of delivery	
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 programme structure

3.1 Mandatory course unit information
The following table summarises the mandatory courses which students must take in each year of study

Course code	Course title	Credits	FHEQ level	Course status (see section 6)
CR5113	Debates in Terrorism Studies	30	7	MNC
CR5112	Debates in Counter-Terrorism Studies	30	7	MNC
CR5117	Dissertation	60	7	MNC

This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory courses on your degree programme. These courses are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree programme will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these courses each year. Mandatory courses fall into two categories; 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.

In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) courses, you must pass the course to successfully graduate with a particular degree title, or before you can proceed to the next year of your programme where studying part-time. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) courses, 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 programme 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 programme 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.

*Contact hours come in various different 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. It is intended that these contact hours will face - to - face as far as possible, but in certain unavoidable situations, these may take place virtually.

**The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary, however, the assessments listed above are all 'summative', which means you will receive a mark for it 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. 'Coursework' might typically include a written assignment, like an essay. Coursework might also include a report, dissertation, or portfolio. 'Practical assessments' might include an oral assessment or presentation, or a demonstration of practical skills required for the particular module.

3.2 Optional course units

In addition to mandatory course units, there will be a number of optional course units available during the course of your degree. The following table lists a selection of optional course units that are likely to be available. However, not all may be available every year. 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 programme 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, so it is important that this specification is read alongside your department's Student Handbook, which you can normally access via their [webpage](#).

Course Code and Course Title	Credits	Course Code and Course Title	Credits
CR5107 Policing and Vulnerability	20	PR5450 The Israel Palestinian Conflict: A Global Perspective	20
CR5110 Terrorism, the Media and Communication	20	PR5907 Media, War and Conflict	20
CR5111 Contemporary Forms of Terrorism	20		
CR5114 History of Terrorism	20		
CR5115 Transnational Organised Crime	20		
CR5116 The Psychology of Terrorism	20		
PR5937 Understanding Defence	20		

3.3 Optional course unit requirements

The choice of courses a student can take is subject to the following rules:

- Optional courses are chosen from the list provided by the Department to a total of 60 credits.
- Please note that not all optional courses run each year. The full list of courses available for the current academic year can be obtained from <http://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/law>

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree programme

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 is offered full-time and part-time. For part-time students this can be for a duration of 2 years, or longer up to a maximum of 5 years. For the first year it is expected that 'Debates in Terrorism Studies' (30 credits) will be taken in Term 1 and that 'Debates in Counter-Terrorism Studies' (30 credits) will be taken in Term 2. Depending on the duration of the student's programme optional modules can be taken around and beyond these two core modules, with the dissertation taken in the summer of Year 2 for 'two year' students or in Year 3 for 'three year' students.

To pass the programme a student must pass the taught part and the dissertation, and achieve an overall weighted average of at least 50.00%:

- To **pass the taught-part**, a student must achieve in every taught course the aggregate mark of at least 50%. Failure marks between 40-49% can be condoned in courses which in total do not constitute more than 40 credits, provided that the overall weighted average is at least 50.00%.
- To **pass the Dissertation**, a student must achieve a mark of at least 50% in the dissertation A failure mark (i.e., below 50%) cannot be condoned.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the programme

The aims of this programme are to introduce students to the core concepts and debates in the student of terrorism and counter-terrorism. This will include critical reflection on these debates, as well as key theoretical and empirical literature in the area. The programme is designed so students can specialise in a subject area/areas of their choosing, through the elective modules. The programme is designed to prepare students for advanced research in terrorism and counter-terrorism studies, as well as for non-academic careers requiring in-depth knowledge of terrorism and/or counter-terrorism. These careers can include careers in intelligence agencies, police, journalism, civil service, and the public sector. As the educational aims of the programme are to prepare students for academic and non-academic careers the courses and assessments aim to develop a range of skills in the students. Therefore students will be examined through a range of assessment techniques. This includes, but not exclusively, essays, exams, threat assessment reports, presentations and podcasts.

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 (*)*)

Level 7

1. Knowledge of the major theoretical, academic and substantive debate in terrorism and counter-terrorism.
2. Ability to critically analyse theoretical and empirical research in terrorism and counter-terrorism studies.
3. Carry out independent qualitative and/or quantitative research and write a journal article on a topic of their choosing in terrorism and counter-terrorism studies.
4. Evaluating historical and contemporary terrorism threats, and their relationship with academic analysis.
5. Identifying and assessing key counter-terrorism strategies and policies.
6. Ability to present research and arguments in written, oral, audio, and audio-visual form.
7. Critique the central role of communication in terrorism and counter-terrorism and why people become involved, stay involved, and leave terrorist groups.
8. Develop, write and present succinct threat assessment reports.
9. Evaluate the relationship between terrorism and organised crime.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning in the programmes are closely informed by the active research of staff, particularly in the areas of: the psychology of terrorism, debates in terrorism and counterterrorism, history of terrorism, terrorist communication and contemporary forms of terrorism. In general terms, the programmes provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge of both core subject material and specialised research areas, and for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures, seminars, coursework assignments, presentations, exams, a supervised dissertation, and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by coursework assignments, presentations, examinations, and a dissertation.

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 programme.

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree programme 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 programme 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 programmes of study.</p>	
QAA Characteristics Statement (Master’s Degrees) – September 2015	https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master's-degree-characteristics-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=6ca2f981_10
<p>Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes 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 programme 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 course units, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online course 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 programme 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 programme 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 programme as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory course units, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.

Award	Criteria	Awarding body
PG Diploma	Passes in at least 120 credits, with fails of between 40% to 49% for up to 40 credits condonable (with the exception of any programme specific requirements).	Royal Holloway, University of London
PG Certificate	Passes in at least 60 credits with no condonable fails	Royal Holloway, University of London

Section 12 - Associated award(s) with Banner Programme Codes

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