



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

APPENDIX TO THE MPhil/PHD DEGREE STUDENT HANDBOOK 2024/25

This appendix should be read in conjunction with the [core MPhil/PhD student handbook](#)

The Department of Economics sits within the School of Law and Social Sciences which covers the following disciplines: Economics, Law, Criminology and Social Work and Politics, International Relations and Philosophy (PIRP).

Welcome to your School

We would like to welcome you to the School of Law and Social Sciences at Royal Holloway, University of London. Our school includes: [Department of Economics](#), [Department of Law, Criminology and Social Work](#), [Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy](#). All three departments are highly regarded for their research and teaching and have an active and vibrant research culture. We strive for excellence in research and generating real-world impact beyond academia.

Being a postgraduate research student in our School, you become an integral part of our research community. We offer a stimulating research environment and advanced training in both research-specific and transferable skills. Our MPhil and PhD student community is relatively small, thereby ensuring a consistently high level of interaction between the students and academics. Across the School, we have over ninety research students representing more than 20 different countries, bringing diverse perspectives, experience and skills to our departments.

You will find support in your studies not only from your immediate supervisory team but also from the PGR contact in your home department:

- Economics: Professor Manolis Galenianos (Manolis.Galenianos@royalholloway.ac.uk)
- Law, Criminology and Social Work: Dr Jane Marriott (jane.marriott@rhul.ac.uk)
- PIRP: Professor Jennifer Piscopo (Jennifer.Piscopo@royalholloway.ac.uk)

Dr Emily Glorney
School Director of PGR Education

Welcome to your department

Welcome to the MPhil/PhD programme in Politics and International Relations, and Philosophy at Royal Holloway. This appendix, in conjunction with the main [Research Degree Student Handbook](#), contains as much information as possible to guide you through the core aspects of the postgraduate research programme. You should also refer to the University's formal [regulations and Code of Practice](#). If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact your supervisors, the Departmental PGR Lead (Jennifer Piscopo), or the [Doctoral School](#).

The Department of Politics and International Relations (PIR) was founded in 2004 and became the Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy in 2017. It has rapidly developed an outstanding reputation for teaching and research in a number of areas within this field. It has grown substantially with a number of new appointments since 2006 that have brought it to over 30 permanent academic members of staff in size. Much of our research activities fall within one of our research units: the Gender Institute, the Global Politics and Development Centre (GPDC), the Democracy and Elections Centre (DEC), the Centre for International Security (RHISC), the Centre for Islamic and West Asian Studies (CIWAS), the New Political Communication Unit, the Contemporary Political Theory Research Group and the Centre for Continental Philosophy.

We view postgraduate research students as an integral part of the department's intellectual identity and environment, and our dynamic faculty is constantly seeking out promising research students. We are an ambitious research department, and we aim to recruit outstanding graduate students who can participate in and help build our research programmes.

We are very pleased to welcome you to the department and look forward to working with you.

Professor Jennifer Piscopo
Department PGR Lead

Key contacts

Role	Name	Email	Phone	Room
Executive Dean	Professor Matthew Humphreys	Matthew.Humphreys@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276482	McCrea 1-04
Head of Department	Professor Laura Sjoberg	Laura.Sjoberg@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276802	McCrea 1-05
Deputy Head of Department	Dr Kaat Smets	Kaat.Smets@rhul.ac.uk		McCrea 1-08
School Director of PGR Education	Dr Emily Glorney	Emily.Glorney@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276283	ABF23
Departmental PGR Lead	Professor Jennifer Piscopo	jennifer.piscopo@rhul.ac.uk		McCrea 1-22
School helpdesk*		LSS-school@rhul.ac.uk	01784 276883	McCrea 1-01

* For the majority of your non-academic related issues, please contact the [Doctoral School](#).

However, for queries about teaching contracts, expenses and study space within the school, please

contact the School of Law and Social Sciences helpdesk.

Staff

Read the list of staff within the Department of [Politics, International Relations](#) and [Philosophy](#)

Research areas

Find out more about the research areas within the Department of [Politics, International Relations](#) and [Philosophy](#)

[Find out more about individual members of staff's research areas](#)

Staff-Student Action Meeting

The purpose of the PGR Staff-Student Action Meeting is to maintain and foster communication within the School. The meeting is a platform to receive and to discuss matters of concern to both students and staff. As such, it provides a formal means of communication between students and the School Board.

The PGR Staff-Student Action Meeting meets at least once every term. You can use the Meeting to raise any issues by either attending one of the meetings or passing the information to the current student representatives. Course representatives are there to represent your views and ultimately, to help improve the quality of education provided by the University.

Annual reviews and upgrades

Although you will meet with your supervisor regularly during the academic year, your academic progress is formally reviewed at least once every twelve months, regardless of whether you are studying full or part time.

- [Core annual review details](#)
- [Annual reviews in the Department of Politics International Relations and Philosophy](#)

All MPhil / PhD students start their programme on the MPhil and have to pass the upgrade review meeting in order to be eligible to submit for the PhD.

- [Core upgrade details](#)
 - [Upgrades in the Department of Politics International Relations and Philosophy](#)
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Preparing for your Viva

School students are expected to sit a mock viva conducted by their MPhil/PhD panel before the submission of the final thesis. This is designed to provide the student with practical experience in a

viva setting, and an opportunity for advice and feedback from the panel in advance of final submission. The mock viva is organised by the supervisor(s).

Students will be expected to send their thesis to their panel at least three months before their submission date. A mock viva will be held four weeks after the submission of the draft thesis. The main reason for this requirement is to provide you with robust and critical feedback on your thesis in advance of your final submission, and to allow you to improve and correct any weaknesses which may be apparent in your work. This feedback should enable you to submit a stronger thesis and greatly improve your chances in the viva.

For those of you submitting this academic year, please talk to your supervisors now about the mock viva and factor the mock viva into your work schedule. It will be important that you submit your draft to your panel in good time, in order for the panel to have the time to read and comment on your work. For example, for those of you submitting in September, you will need to send your draft thesis May in order to have the mock viva in June and leave you sufficient time over the summer to refine your work.