



DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

**RESEARCH DEGREE
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2018/19

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Disclaimer

This document was published in September 2018 and was correct at that time. The department* reserves the right to modify any statement if necessary, make variations to the content or methods of delivery of programmes of study, to discontinue programmes, or merge or combine programmes if such actions are reasonably considered to be necessary by the College. Every effort will be made to keep disruption to a minimum, and to give as much notice as possible.

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1. Introduction to the College and your department

1.1 Welcome

Welcome to Royal Holloway. Royal Holloway, University of London (hereafter 'the College') is one of the UK's leading research-intensive universities, with nineteen academic departments spanning the arts and humanities, social sciences and sciences.

Sitting within the top 25 per cent of universities in the UK for research rated 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent' by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014, the College combines world-class research with a truly global perspective while at the same time offering a campus and community with an intimate human scale. As a student studying toward a research degree with the College, you will have the opportunity to learn from internationally renowned academics and researchers.

During the course of your time with the College, you will pursue independent research in your academic department. The College offers a number of research degree programmes: Master of Arts by Research, Master of Science by Research, Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy), Doctorate in Professional Studies (DPS) and Doctorate of Medicine (Research) (MD (Research)). Your successful progress will depend primarily on your own efforts, supported by your supervisors, but also on the research environment in your department and the quality of the research training you receive.

1.2 Doctoral School

The Royal Holloway Doctoral School, established in September 2014, brings together key aspects of research student life, aiming to ensure that research students are fully integrated as members of the College's research community and to provide you with opportunities to meet and share ideas and experiences across our three Faculties. The Doctoral School will support you throughout your progress, ensuring availability of relevant contemporary research skills and employment training alongside the highest standards of administrative and pastoral support.

The Doctoral School organizes a number of events throughout the year for postgraduate research students culminating in the annual Doctoral School Interdisciplinary Conference in June.

The Doctoral School microsite will keep you informed of news and events which may be of interest to you as a research degree student. It is also a key repository of information and advice on subjects such as funding, changes to your registration status and the examination process. It provides you with easy access to a variety of documentation and guides that you may need during your studies.

Doctoral School microsite: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/home.aspx>

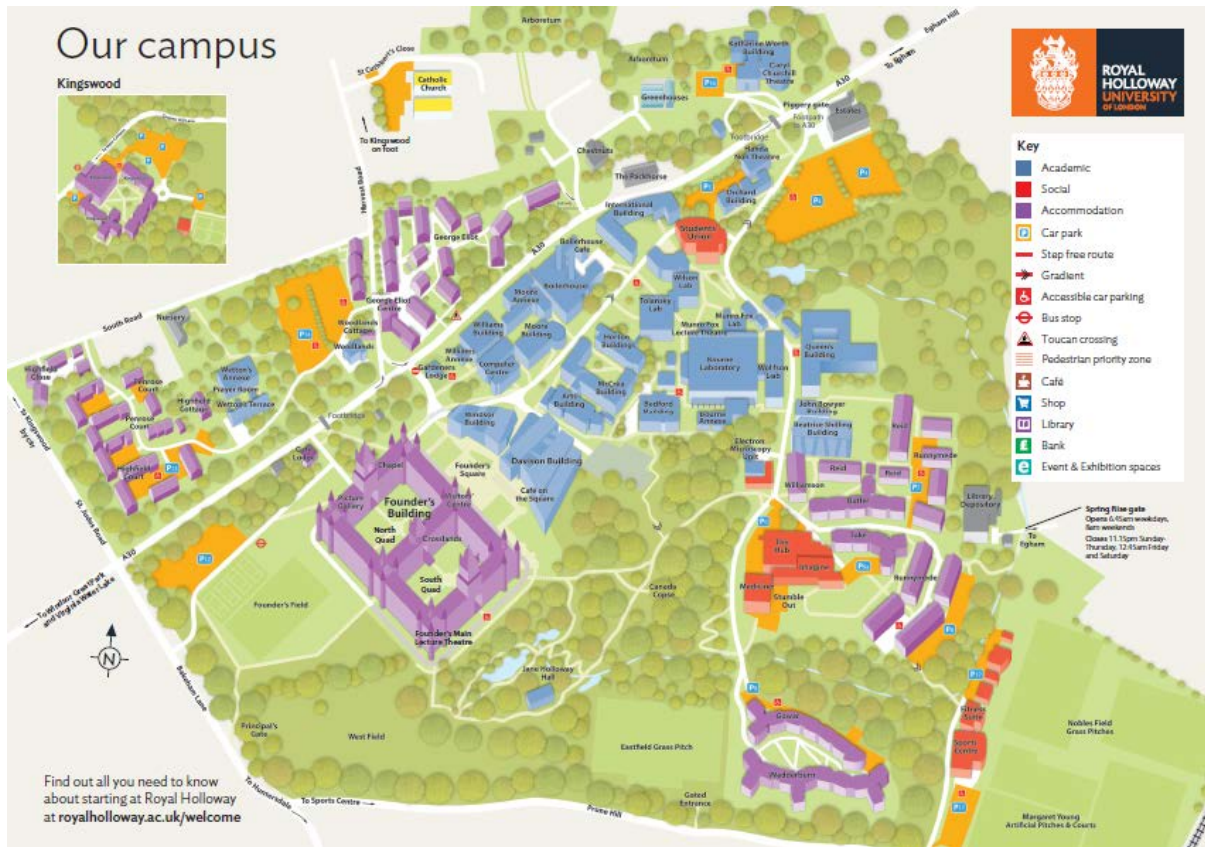
Doctoral School mission statement: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/news-events/news-articles/mission-statement-for-doctoral-school.aspx>

1.3 How to find the Geography Department

The Geography Department is the Queen's Building and is represented on the map below as building 35.

1.4 Map of the Egham campus

Please note that student parking is very limited and a parking permit is required, which can be obtained via Security. You will need proof of insurance and a suitable form of photographic ID before a permit will be issued.



1.5 How to contact us

CONTACT DETAILS

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Please note: Liz works Monday & Tuesday & Karen works Wednesday to Friday

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1.6 Geography department

Welcome to our Department. The Department of Geography at Royal Holloway, University of London is one of the UK's top Geography departments in terms of both research and student experience. We hope you will enjoy your time here as a key part of our community.

This handbook provides you with as much information as possible to help you during your time as a postgraduate in the Department. It should be used with the *College Code of Practice for the Welfare of Postgraduate Students* and the *Research Degree Regulations* (and for MA/MSc students your course handbook) as a guide to resources and procedures.

If you have any questions, please contact Ian Candy (Room 157) or Innes Keighren (Room 180) who are the Directors of Graduate Studies. The Department Manager Moya Watson (Room 160) or Liz Hamilton and Karen Oliver, the Postgraduate

Administrators/Departmental Secretaries (Room 162), will also be able to answer general queries. Please also regularly check the main postgraduate notice board for new information about events, conferences and jobs. Incoming mail for you will be placed in the postgraduate post baskets in the post room (Room 163).

To help us contact you please let Liz or Karen know of any changes of address and please set up and use your college e-mail account as e-mail is our primary way of circulating information and getting in touch with you. Contact the Computer Centre to set this up and, if necessary, to arrange e-mail to be forwarded automatically from your college account to another e-mail address.

1.7 Research areas within your department

The department is ranked joint 2nd in the UK (REF 2014) for research. The research in the department is focussed on the activity of three key research groups:

Centre for Quaternary Research

The CQR was established in 1990 and has grown to become one of the leading international research centres in Quaternary science. The aim of the CQR is to promote interdisciplinary research based on three themes of major importance for understanding Quaternary environmental change: 1) the dynamics of global change; 2) the human dimension of environmental change, and 3) advances in geochronology. Since its inception the CQR has attracted funding from an increasingly diverse range of sources (NERC, AHRC, ESRC, Leverhulme Trust, EC Framework Programs, British Academy). Major research partnerships and initiatives have been forged in the UK and overseas, which are fostering important advances in understanding Quaternary landscape evolution, abrupt climate change, quantitative palaeoclimate reconstruction, geochronology, biostratigraphy, Palaeolithic and environmental archaeology. The CQR has also benefited from recent £1.5M SRIF investment in laboratory refurbishment that has enhanced the centre's research capabilities in: OSL dating, tephrochronology, analytical chemistry, soil micromorphology and the analysis of varved sediments.

Geopolitics, Development, Security and Justice Group

GDSJ works on a range of vitally important issues across political, development and social geography and has interdisciplinary reach in its connections to international relations, development studies, anthropology, sociology, disaster studies; health and gerontology. We have also built interdisciplinary links across RHUL with the Information Security Group (ISG), Centre for Research into Sustainability (CRIS), the Centre for the GeoHumanities, and The ICT4D Collective. GDSJ's 20 academic researchers and 25+ PhD students are committed to research both in and across the Global North and Global South including the UK and Overseas Territories, the Arctic and Antarctica, South and Southeast Asia, and Latin America. GDJS organises a range of events including research theme and praxis workshops, 'brown bag' lunches and seminars. The group runs two MSc programmes; the MSc Geopolitics and Security and MSc Practising Sustainable Development.

Social & Cultural Geography Group

The Social & Cultural Geography Group (SCG) is an influential centre of research with 11 staff, 40 PhD students and 10 Masters students. We have a distinctive record of supporting innovative research in the humanities and the creative arts as well as the social sciences. The Group has pioneered collaborations with a variety of leading cultural institutions and provides a home for a vibrant postgraduate community. The research group organizes a lively programme of events, including seminars, workshops and field visits. The Group runs a well-established postgraduate workshop series, Landscape Surgery at Royal Holloway's centre in Bloomsbury. SCG has supported influential research projects on place, landscape and mobility, creative and collaborative geographies, transnational material cultures, visual cultures of exploration, print culture and travel, sacred spaces, multiculturalism and urban modernities. This group is home to a large and intellectually vibrant postgraduate community including 40-50 PhD students, many funded by national and international scholarships. In the period 2008-2013, 30 PhD theses were completed on a wide variety of topics. The Group also runs the successful MA in Cultural Geography (Research).

SCG has developed collaborations with a variety of cultural and heritage sector institutions, including the Science Museum, V&A Museum, National Maritime Museum, Museum of London, British Library, British Museum, Natural History Museum, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and the RGS-

IBG. Furthermore, the SCG has pioneered collaborations with creative practitioners, as artists in residence, postgraduate researchers, research fellows and participants in AHRC-funded research projects.

2 Support and advice

2.1 Research Degree regulations and Code of Practice

The **Research Degree regulations** set out the various standards that shape the regulatory framework of your research degree with the College. This contains a variety of essential information, ranging from admissions to academic progression and examination.

The Code of Practice for Research Degree students and supervisors

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/regulations/pgrcodeofpractice.pdf>

sets out good practice alongside additional information on the policies and procedures that support the standards and expectations of the College.

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/our-college-regulations.aspx>

2.2 Support within your department

Your supervisor or a member of your supervisory team should always be the first point of contact for any questions or concerns you may have about your programme of study or your research. In addition, the Director of Graduate Studies (DoGS) exercises overall

responsibility for the welfare and academic progress of the research students within your department.

2.3 **Student Services Centre**

The Student Services Centre is located in the Davison Building and provides a single point of contact for all non-academic related queries including accommodation, fees, enrolment and graduation.

Phone: 01784 27 6641
Email: studentservices@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about the Student Services Centre:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/news-events/news-articles/september-2017/meet-the-team-student-services-centre.aspx>

2.4 **Research Degrees team**

The Research Degrees team within Student Administration maintains research degree students' central records, manages the administration for all research degree examinations within the College and is the first point of contact for scholarship queries. If you have a research degree query but are unsure whom to ask, contact Research Degrees and they will point you in the right direction.

Email: researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk

Visit the Doctoral School microsite for more details:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/home.aspx>

2.5 **Support Advisory & Wellbeing**

The College offers a high level of student wellbeing support which includes triage and support through Student Wellbeing, a BACP accredited Counselling Service, dedicated disability & dyslexia support, financial and budgeting advice and support for international students. There is also access to an NHS-run Health Centre on campus.

Phone: 01784 44 3394
Email: wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about Support Advisory & Wellbeing:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/help-and-support/help-and-support.aspx>

2.5.1 **Student Wellbeing**

Student Wellbeing provides advice and guidance to all students on personal and emotional

wellbeing, to assist them in maintaining a healthy balanced lifestyle and to support them from transition to university and then in the continuation of their studies towards graduation. The Student Wellbeing team actively encourages all members of the campus community to alert them to concerns or signs of vulnerability to enable proactive engagement with intervention.

Phone: 01784 44 3395 / 44 3132 / 27 6757
Email: wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about Student Wellbeing:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/welfare/wellbeing/wellbeinghome.aspx>

2.5.2 **Disability & Dyslexia Services (DDS)**

If you have a disability, long standing medical condition or specific learning difficulty, it is important that you bring it to the College's attention as soon as possible.

The College Disability & Dyslexia Services support dyslexic and disabled students and those with mental health or chronic medical conditions to demonstrate their academic abilities by arranging support packages, dyslexia assessments and study skills sessions.

Phone: 01784 27 6473
Email: disability-dyslexia@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about Disability & Dyslexia Services:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/disabilities-and-dyslexia/home.aspx>

Your first point of contact for advice and guidance is your Disability & Dyslexia Services Network Member in your department:

Name: Dr. Mike Dolton
Phone: 01784 443575
Email: M.Dolton@rhul.ac.uk

2.5.3 **International Student Support Office (ISSO)**

The International Student Support Office offers advice to international students on visa queries, working in the UK, opening a bank account, processing federal loans and police registration.

Phone: 01784 27 6168
Email: internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about the International Student Support Office:

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/international-students/visas-and-immigration/>

2.6 Students' Union Royal Holloway University of London (SURHUL) Advice and Support Centre

The Students' Union Royal Holloway University of London (SURHUL) is a registered charity and actively represents the students of Royal Holloway University of London. SURHUL promotes your needs and interests by offering employment, participation, entertainment, support and advice, your clubs and societies, catering, transport, volunteering, campaigning and advocacy.

Phone: 01784 24 6700
Email: helpdesk@su.rhul.ac.uk

Find out more about the Students' Union: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/student-life/being-a-student/students-union/>

2.7 IT Service Desk

The College IT Service Desk offers a range of support covering all aspects of IT services, such as email access, connecting to the College's wireless network, connecting devices such as iPads and making use of College printing facilities. The IT Service Desk will also be able to provide expert advice and guidance on a range of more specific IT issues, should you experience any problems. They offer a range of free software, including Microsoft Office 365, Sofos Antivirus, NVivo and SPSS.

Phone: 01784 41 4321
Email: itservicedesk@royalholloway.ac.uk
In person: Visit the IT support office in the Davison Library (ground floor)

Find out more about IT services: royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/it-services/home.aspx

3 Communication

3.1 Your College email account

The College provides an email address for you free of charge and stores the address in a College email directory. Your account is easily accessible, both on and off campus, via **CampusNet** (royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/it-services/getting-started/get-connected/campusnet.aspx) or direct via **Outlook.com** (royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/it-services/getting-started/email.aspx). It is essential to note that this email account will be used for all routine correspondence and news from the College. Your College email will very likely also be used for urgent communication, including correspondence from your supervisors so it is vital that you check your emails regularly.

In the event that you would prefer to use a commercial email service, you are able to connect your College email account so that it automatically forwards any messages you receive.

Instructions how to forward mail: <https://support.office.com/>

3.2 Internal post

All post addressed to you in your department will be delivered to student pigeonholes (alphabetical by surname) in the Post Room (QB163). At the end of each term student pigeonholes are cleared of accumulated mail so please try to ensure you check it at regular intervals. Please also note that Professional Services within the College will often send correspondence by internal post and your supervisor(s) may also return work to you via the pigeonholes.

3.3 Your contact information

It is imperative that the College has the most up-to-date contact details for you. As such, please ensure that you update the following via the [Campus Connect student portal \(cas.royalholloway.ac.uk/cas/login\)](#) as quickly as possible once they are changed: your telephone number (mobile and landline), postal address (term-time and forwarding), email address and emergency contact details.

You can find out about how the College processes your personal data by reading the [Student Data Collection notice: https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/codesandregulations/useofdata.pdf](#)

3.4 Dates for the Diary

The Research Degrees team will send a Doctoral School 'Dates for the Diary' email to your Royal Holloway email address at the end of each month, which provides details of events and opportunities for postgraduate research students which are coming up in the following month.

4 Facilities and resources

4.1 Facilities and resources within your department

There is a Geospatial & Visual Methods Lab (GVML) in the Geography department QB146. The GVML is a post-graduate human and physical geography research space and facility. It provides hardware and software for: Geographic information Systems (GIS), including ArcGIS and QGIS; digital earth and geospatial analysis; qualitative research (video and audio editing); illustration; cartography; and quantitative data analysis.

There is a PG photocopier in the post room (QB163). It has the facility to copy and print. The annual allocation for copies is 1500 pages for full time students and 750 pages for part time or joint department students. Please request your photocopying code from Liz Hamilton or Karen Oliver (QB162).

All Full-time PhD students are eligible for £150 free printing credit in each academic year and part time or joint department students are eligible for £75. This credit is only for use in

the Geography department and cannot be transferred to another student account. If the credit is used up before the end of the academic year students can pay to top it up. Any remaining balance from the top up can be transferred to the next academic year. The credit is applied to all accounts in September at the beginning of the academic year.

PG students can use the facilities in the geography common room (QB144) which consists of a small kitchen and seating area.

4.2 Computers

There are ten open access PC Labs available on campus which you can use, including three in the Computer Centre. For security reasons access to these PC Labs is restricted at night and at weekends by a door entry system operated via your College card.

How to find an available PC: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/it-services/find-a-pc/home.aspx>

4.3 Library

The College library, housed in the Emily Wilding Davison Building, is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It provides more than 450,000 books and 36,000 journals in both print and digital format and a dedicated postgraduate room on the 2nd floor. The library contains a large number of PCs and provides laptops to borrow.

Phone: 01784 44 3823
Email: library@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about the library: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/about-us/the-library/>

4.3.1 Research Support

The **Research Support team** <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/campus-life/library/postgraduate/meet-the-research-support-team.aspx> in the library provides support on research information including copyright, Open Access publishing and developing your research information. The team can also provide advice for meeting research funders' requirements regarding Open Access. The team works with the Information Consultants to provide support throughout the research information cycle, from researching bids through to searching and accessing information for articles, books and other outputs through to submission of the PhD thesis and future career plans.

For training sessions and subject specific support, contact your Information Consultant who will be able to help you. Their details will be on the relevant **Subject Guide** (libguides.rhul.ac.uk), where you can also find details of resources available to you at Royal Holloway.

4.3.2 Access to other libraries

If you cannot find the specific items that you require in the College library, you also have access to the following:

- **Senate House Library**

This is the central library of the University of London, where you can borrow up to twelve books with a library ticket which you can obtain using your Royal Holloway College ID card

Address: Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU

Phone: 020 7862 8461

Senate House Library website: <https://www.senatehouselibrary.ac.uk/>

- **The British Library**

The British Library is the national collection and holds copies of all books published in the UK and Ireland, alongside an extensive collection from other countries. A Reader Pass will be issued subject to your need to see specific items in the collections. Royal Holloway theses are available via **Ethos** (ethos.bl.uk), the British Library's electronic theses service which contains approximately 400 000 records of UK theses including 160,000 available for immediate download of the full text.

-

Address: 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB

Phone: 020 7412 7000

British Library website: <https://www.bl.uk/>

- **SCONUL access scheme**

Royal Holloway participates in this national university access scheme which allows student to use other university libraries in the UK.

SCONUL website: <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sconul-access>

4.4 Postgraduate research spaces

The EMU building, located within close proximity to Queen's building, provides use of a desk and storage space for Geography PGR students. Please contact Karen Oliver or Liz Hamilton (GeogPGadmin@rhul.ac.uk) to request desk space.

The College offers a number of areas specifically for postgraduate students outside of your department.

- **Research Postgraduate room in the library** (Davison Building)

The second floor of the new library building contains a **dedicated study area** (libguides.rhul.ac.uk/pgr/LibrarySpace) for postgraduate students.

- **Doctoral Hub** (International Building INo30)

The **Doctoral Hub** (royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/study/doctoral-hub-ino30.aspx) provides study and social space specifically for postgraduate research students.

- **Arts Building - room AS17** (2nd floor)

The room contains fifteen PCs. It is open to all students (PG and UG) during normal office hours and to postgraduates and staff between 7pm and 7am (code obtainable from the Computer Centre).

- **Highfield Common Room**

The room is for those living in postgraduate accommodation on the Highfield site. It can be booked through the reception at Highfield. The room offers easy chairs, TV and video, and food- and drink-vending machines. The room must be vacated by 11pm.

4.5 Careers & Employability Service

The College's Careers & Employability Service, based in the Davison Building, runs a number of industry themed weeks and a range of standalone events during the academic year including a careers fair in October.

One to one appointments are available all through the year, where you can talk over your career ideas or get your CV, cover letter or application checked. You can also book a practice, in person or video interview.

The Careers & Employability Service holds six workshops over the academic year as part of the **Researcher Development Programme**. The workshops deal with finding academic and non-academic roles and making relevant applications and interview skills.

Phone: 01784 44 3073

Email: careers@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about the Careers & Employability Service:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/jobs-careers/home.aspx>

5 Research skills and teaching

You should discuss your research skills training needs with your supervisor and adviser soon after you start your research degree and fill out the Research Student Training Log with details of courses that you should attend during the year.

5.1 Researcher Development Programme

The College's Researcher Development Programme is series of transferable skills courses designed for research students to help you to develop your skills alongside your research. Some of these courses are specifically designed to help students complete their research degree, while others help develop more general skills and enhance your employability.

Email: pgrtraining@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about the Researcher Development Programme:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/researcher-development/educational-development/researcher-development-programme.aspx>

5.2 Teaching experience and training

Your department may be in a position to offer you opportunities to undertake teaching and/or demonstrating opportunities. In the event that you are employed in a lead teaching role, you are required to register for the College's inSTIL programme (Programme in Skills of Teaching to Inspire Learning). If you are teaching as part of a team, you may choose to do this programme but are not required to do so. You must be engaged in teaching at the same time as participating in inSTIL, as teaching observations are an intrinsic element of the programme. The inSTIL programme is worth 15 M level credits and counts as seven days towards your skills training objectives.

Phone: 01784 41 6337

Email: edc@royalholloway.ac.uk

Find out more about the inSTIL programme:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/teaching/professional-development/capital-instil-and-talent.aspx>

6 Your registration status

Further details regarding the areas outlined in this section can be found in the [Research Degree Regulations](#).

6.1 Study timelines

In order to retain your registration status as a postgraduate research student at Royal Holloway, you should be aware of the following timelines (if you are studying part-time, double the period). Please note that all PhD students start on the MPhil must successfully complete their upgrade review in order to be eligible to submit for the PhD:

Level of programme	Deadline for upgrade to PhD	Deadline for submission of thesis
Masters by Research		1 year (FT)
MPhil		3 years (FT)
PhD	1 st attempt within 20 months (FT) 2 nd attempt (if required) within 24 months (FT)	4 years (FT)

As these deadlines are based on the start date on your student record, it is very important that this start date is recorded correctly. If your start date has been postponed, make sure you submit a [Change of start date](#) form <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/changes-that-affect-your-registration-status/home.aspx>

within the first 6 months of your study. If you are sponsored on a Tier 4 (General) student visa, you are not permitted to change your start date in our records once you have used your CAS in a visa application.

These deadlines will be affected if you interrupt or change mode of attendance during your studies e.g. if you formally interrupt for 6 months, your submission deadline will extend by 6 months.

If you would like confirmation of your official start date or any of your deadlines, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk. If there are extenuating circumstances which make it unlikely that you will be able to meet these deadlines, it is essential that you raise this with your supervisor / supervisory team as soon as possible.

6.2 Interrupting your studies

The [Research Degree Regulations](#) permit you to interrupt your studies for up to twenty-four months (whether consecutively or otherwise) on financial, medical or personal grounds on the recommendation of your supervisor and Director of Graduate Studies. Any period of interruption will only normally be permitted on exceptional grounds and must be approved by the Vice Principal on behalf of the College Board of Examiners Executive Committee (CBEEC). Students are also entitled to request an interruption of studies for reasons of [maternity, paternity or adoption leave](#) <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/changes-that-affect-your-registration-status/maternity-paternity-or-adoption-leave.aspx>

Find out more on how to interrupt your studies:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/changes-that-affect-your-registration-status/interruption-of-study.aspx>

It is essential that you contact your supervisor or department at the very earliest possibility, should you find that you require a period of interruption to your studies. Please note, a back-dated (or retrospective) interruption will only be considered on the most exceptional grounds and in cases where the interruption sought is for a very limited period.

It is also essential that adequate supporting evidence is submitted with the request. See appendix B of the College's [Extenuating Circumstances guidance notes](#) royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/exams/extenuatingcircumstances-guidanceforstudents.pdf for advice on this. If you are still uncertain what evidence is suitable, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk. Where applications are submitted that lack adequate supporting evidence, it is very likely that they will be denied or subject to significant delays.

During the course of your interruption of studies, you remain a registered student with the College and are subject to College Regulations. Unless you are interrupting your studies on the grounds of maternity, paternity or adoption, or in exceptional circumstances relating to mental health conditions, you do not have the right to use College facilities or receive supervision during the period of interruption, other than occasional access to your supervisor by arrangement.

6.2.1 ***Interrupting if you are sponsored by the College on a Tier 4 (General) student visa***

If you interrupt your studies and you are in receipt of a Tier 4 (General) student visa sponsored by Royal Holloway, the College will withdraw its sponsorship for the duration of your interruption and you are obliged by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) to leave the UK for this period.

Find out more on how to renew your visa: royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/international-students/visas-and-immigration/during-your-studies/extending-your-tier-4-general-visa/

In exceptional circumstances, you may be permitted an authorised absence for a period less than sixty days. Under this type of authorised absence you are permitted to remain in the UK for the duration but this will impact the amount of leave remaining on your visa to complete your studies. Authorised absence must be approved in the same way as an interruption. To discuss the authorised absence process please contact student-administration@royalholloway.ac.uk.

6.2.2 ***Interrupting if you are funded by a Research Council or College scholarship***

It is essential that, prior to requesting the interruption, you check with your funding body whether the conditions of your scholarship permit you to interrupt your studies. For advice about this, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk.

If you are funded by a Research Council, please be aware of the following:

- Although the thesis submission deadline set by the College may be extended due to the interruption, it may not be extended by your Research Council. In such cases, the earlier Research Council deadline takes precedence. If you have queries regarding this, please contact researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk.
- If you have requested up to 13 weeks sick leave, your thesis submission deadline will not normally be affected by this period of leave.

Find out more about interrupting when you are funded: royalholloway.ac.uk/doctorsal-school/scholarships-and-finance/update-my-study-details-as-a-scholarship-recipient.aspx

6.3 **Changing your mode of attendance**

The **Research Degree Regulations** permit you to change your mode of study from full-time to part-time within the first 2 years of your study and from part-time to full-time at any point.

If you are sponsored on a Tier 4 visa, you will not be permitted to change to part-time, under the restrictions of our sponsorship.

Find out more about changing your mode of attendance: royalholloway.ac.uk/doctorsal-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/changes-that-affect-your-registration-status/changes-of-mode-of-study.aspx

6.4 Engagement with studies

According to the [Research Degree Regulations](#), if your attendance, academic performance or productivity is unsatisfactory, the termination of registration may be requested following a formal warning process. It is therefore essential that you alert your supervisor / supervisory team as soon as possible if you are experiencing difficulties with engaging with your studies so that the appropriate support and advice can be provided.

6.4.1 *Withdrawal of Tier 4 (General) student visa for non-engagement with studies*

If you are in receipt of a Tier 4 (General) student visa sponsored by Royal Holloway, it is a requirement of your visa that you attend classes and supervisory sessions, and complete assessments (see section 5 of the [Code of Practice for Research Degree students](#) for more details).

The College has a legal responsibility to report any student admitted to the College on a student visa who does not appear to be meeting the attendance requirements to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). Therefore, if you fail to meet UKVI visa requirements and/or fail to respond to informal and formal warnings from the College in this regard, you could have your sponsorship withdrawn, your visa cancelled and your registration with the College terminated. The termination of registration due to a breach in visa requirements is conducted independently of the College's formal warning process and the decision is not open to appeal.

Find out more about visas and immigration: <https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/international-students/visas-and-immigration/>

6.4.2 *Holiday*

You are entitled to up to eight weeks holiday within a 12 month period of registration. You should notify your supervisor in writing of any holidays taken.

7 Annual review and upgrade

Although you will meet with your supervisor regularly during the academic year, your academic progress is formally reviewed at least once every twelve months, unless you have interrupted your studies, in which case the review will take place not more than two months after you have formally resumed your studies.

Annual reviews, and upgrades for students registered for an MPhil/ PhD, are conducted in a face-to face meeting between you and a panel. As a minimum the panel must consist of:

Annual review panel: At least one member of your supervisory team plus one member of staff completely independent of your supervisory team

Upgrade to PhD panel: Three members, with at least one member of your supervisory team and one member of staff who is completely independent of

your supervisory team

It is important to remember that the upgrade from MPhil to PhD is not an automatic right. In the majority of cases, a panel will indicate that they are satisfied with a student's progress. In some cases, however, the panel may feel that the work presented does not meet the required standard for doctoral research. In such cases, your panel may permit you to have a second and final attempt.

See [section 6.1](#) for the deadlines by which the 1st and 2nd attempts at upgrade must take place.

At the end of your annual review/ upgrade meeting, your panel will fill in a form detailing the outcome of your review/upgrade, which provides you with an opportunity to add your own comments.

Find out more about the annual review and upgrade process; <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/annual-review-and-upgrade/annual-review-and-upgrade.aspx>

7.1 Your department's annual review and upgrade process

College has a number of requirements in its regulations about what documentation should be supplied prior to an Annual Review or Upgrade meeting but also places the onus on the department in question to publish its own guidelines. With regard to the upgrade meeting we follow college's suggestions that this should include, at a minimum:

- (i) A substantial piece of written work, fully referenced with a bibliography
- (ii) A report of work done up to that point
- (iii) A plan of work for the next 12 months (or to completion)
- (iv) A copy of the students annual training log
- (v) A copy of a completed supervisory meeting log

The Annual Review meeting should see the submission of similar documents but the nature of the "substantial" piece of work is at the discretion of the supervisors and planned in conjunction with the student if required (for example the 2nd year annual review may occur only 4 months after the upgrade, in which case there may not be time to generate a new "substantial" piece of written work, particularly if the student's time has focused on data collection/generation). Consequently, our guidelines are:

- (i) A report of work done over the preceding 12 months
- (ii) A plan of work for the next 12 months (or to completion)
- (iii) A copy of the students annual training log
- (iv) A copy of a completed supervisory meeting log

Annual reviews and upgrades in Geography:

- (i) Normally all postgraduate research students are required initially to register for the degree of MPhil, even if it is their intention to aim for the award of PhD. Before a student's registration can be transferred from MPhil to PhD, a review

must be carried out to ensure satisfactory progress

- (ii) The review will be a face to face meeting conducted by a panel, comprising the supervisor(s) and adviser and another member of staff as observer. If the adviser is unavailable for the meeting, the Director of Graduate Studies will attend instead.
- (iii) The first attempt at an upgrade must be within the first 20 months for full time students, or 40 months for part-time students. University of London Regulations prohibit the transfer of registration to PhD after a student has already submitted an entry form for the MPhil examination.
- (iv) In order to be considered for upgrading, the student must attend a formal meeting with the review panel, and submit work specified by the supervisor (this may vary depending on the nature of the research and the requirements of the supervisor but see above) at least two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- (v) The student must be issued with a written invitation to the review meeting that states the work that the student is required to present and the deadline by when it must be submitted. Students are urged to contact immediately their supervisors in person if they require further clarification about the nature and purpose of the upgrade procedure.
- (vi) The Department will keep a written record of the meeting that will include:
 - (a) a copy of the work submitted by the student;
 - (b) a record of the student's completion of, or exemption from, the College Research Skills Programme;
 - (c) a copy of the notification form, together with any further written reports on the outcome of the meeting.

Full details of the regulations for the annual review/upgrade process are outlined in Section 9 of the Research Degree Regulations:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/documents/pdf/regulations/researchdegree regulations.pdf>

At the end of the annual review/ upgrade meeting the panel will fill in a **Research Degree Student Review - Annual Review Form or Research Degree Student Review - Upgrade Form**, which will be signed by panel members present at the review/upgrade, and will provide details of the outcome of this meeting You will be given an opportunity to fill in comments at the end of the form, should you so wish (forms can be downloaded from this link <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctorsal-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/annual-review-and-upgrade/annual-review-and-upgrade.aspx>).

In most cases the panel will indicate that they are satisfied with a student's progress and may also confirm that the student has successfully upgraded from MPhil to PhD, where

relevant. However, in some cases the panel may feel that the work presented is not of the required standard. In the case of an upgrade, the panel may decide not to permit the student to upgrade at that time. Where work presented is unsatisfactory, details of the problems and the course of action to be taken will be noted in the **Research Degree Student Review Form**. Additionally, the panel may decide that it is necessary to issue a formal warning. Details of the formal warning process, which could lead to termination of registration, are outlined in the **Research Degree Regulations** in the section regarding Termination of registration

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx>

Further guidance is available on

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/formalwarnings/formalwarnings.aspx>

If you fail to upgrade from MPhil to PhD on the first attempt, the panel may permit you to have a second and final attempt, which must take place before the end of 24 months for full-time study or 48 months of part-time study.

Full details of the regulations governing the annual review and upgrade process are outlined in the **Research Degree Regulations** in the section on Reviews of academic progress

<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/ecampus/academicsupport/regulations/home.aspx>

7.2 Special arrangements

If you have a disability, specific learning difficulty or impairment and wish to ask for reasonable adjustments to be made to the conduct of the viva, please discuss these with your supervisor ahead of the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

7.3 Extenuating circumstances

If you want the annual review or upgrade panel to be made aware of extenuating circumstances that have affected your study, you should submit your statement and supporting evidence to the panel Chair within the deadline set by the department/school for the submission of material for the upgrade or review. This is normally the same as the deadline for the submission of upgrade documents.

In the case of circumstances relating only to your performance at the upgrade or review meeting, you should inform the panel members and submit the statement and supporting evidence within seven days of the meeting to your department.

8 Research degree exam process

Overview of Masters by Research exam process:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/research-degree-examinations/masters-by-research-examination-process.aspx>

Overview of MPhil / PhD exam process: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral->

[school/pgr-student-lifecycle/phdmphil-exam-process/exam-entry.aspx](https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/phdmphil-exam-process/exam-entry.aspx)

8.1 Submission of thesis

At least two months prior to submitting your thesis (or dissertation for Masters by Research candidates), you should submit an exam entry form:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/phdmphil-exam-process/exam-entry.aspx>

to researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk, so that your examiners can be approved and be invited in good time before you submit. If there is a delay in submitting the entry form, this does not affect your submission deadline but does mean that there may be a delay in the exam process once you have submitted the thesis.

The Research Degree Regulations stipulate that you must submit two bound copies of your thesis (via the Student Services Centre or by post) to the Research Degrees team and one electronic copy of your thesis to researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk by your thesis submission deadline.

See [section 6.1](#) for thesis submission deadline information.

Please refer to the [Research Degree Regulations](#) and the Instructions and notes on submission for the requirements of the thesis:

[royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/phdmphil-exam-process/thesis-submission.aspx](https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/phdmphil-exam-process/thesis-submission.aspx)

Find out more about the research degree submission process:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/doctoral-school/pgr-student-lifecycle/phdmphil-exam-process/home.aspx>

The nature of research within the discipline of geography varies greatly and college regulations take this variability into account (i.e. practice-based PhD projects), please speak to your supervisor or the Director of Graduate studies for advice.

8.1.1 *Departmental guidance on your thesis*

Both the production of the thesis and the format of the viva will be carried out in accordance with college regulations as above. The nature of research within the discipline of geography varies greatly and college regulations take this variability into account (i.e. practice-based PhD projects), please speak to your supervisor or the Director of Graduate studies for advice.

8.1.2 *Royal Holloway proofreading scheme*

CeDAS oversees the [Royal Holloway proofreading scheme](#)

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/academic-skills/cedas/academic-writing-and-communication/proofreading.aspx>

which enables students to pay for an approved third-party proofreader to identify surface error in final drafts. Please note, the College does not permit the use of paid third-party proofreaders who are not part of this scheme.

8.1.3 *Random submission of thesis to Turnitin*

To help deter plagiarism, it is College policy to select a random sample of final research degree theses for submission to the plagiarism detection software, Turnitin, before the examination process is initiated. Exemptions are in place for theses covered by commercial confidentiality agreements. Turnitin reports are reviewed by the Director of Graduate Studies in your department. Should concerns be raised, you will be notified by the department.

8.1.4 *Plagiarism*

The College takes the issue of plagiarism and other academic misconduct extremely seriously. Please refer to the College's [Regulations on Academic Misconduct](http://royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/attendance-and-academic-regulations.aspx) royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/attendance-and-academic-regulations.aspx for what constitutes academic misconduct, as well as the procedures to be followed for the investigation of alleged academic misconduct and possible outcomes

8.2 *Viva*

If you are submitting for a Masters by Research, the default is that you will be assessed on the dissertation alone and will not be required to have an oral examination (viva) on your dissertation. Please note however that the examiners do have the discretion to request a viva once they have read the dissertation.

If you are submitting for an MPhil or PhD, however, you will be required to participate in a viva to defend your thesis. The viva should be organised by your supervisor.

8.2.1 *Viva training*

The College offers viva training for research student's final oral examination via the [Researcher Development Programme](#).

8.2.2 *Departmental viva preparation*

The Geography Department does not hold any specific training courses on viva preparation, but practice sessions can be arranged with PGR student supervisors, or with the Directors of Graduate Studies.

8.2.3 *Special arrangements*

If you have a disability, specific learning difficulty or impairment and wish to ask for reasonable adjustments to be made to the conduct of the viva, please indicate this on your exam entry form. Should you need similar adjustments for your annual review/ upgrade meeting, these should be discussed with your supervisor ahead of the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

For further details, see section 16 of the [Research Degree Regulations](#)

8.2.4 *Extenuating circumstances*

In the case of extenuating circumstances relating to your performance at your viva, you should inform researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk prior to the viva, so that they can advise the examiners as appropriate and a decision can be made whether the viva should go ahead. If the viva does go ahead, you must submit an official request for the extenuating circumstances to be taken into account. This should be in writing and accompanied by supporting evidence and sent to researchdegrees@royalholloway.ac.uk within seven days of the viva.

8.2.5 *Audio recording of viva*

It is College policy that an audio recording will be made of all vivas.

- The recording will only be made during the viva between you and the examiners. No recording will be made of any discussion held before or after the viva when you are not present
- The recording will only be listened to in the event of an appeal made against the viva outcome and then only by a small number of staff who are involved in the investigation into the appeal
- The recording will be kept securely for 6 months after you have been informed of the outcome, after which time it will be destroyed

8.2.6 *Viva outcomes*

Please refer to the [Research Degree Regulations](#) for the range of outcomes available to your examiners.

8.3 **Award process**

8.3.1 *Approval process*

Once your examiners have confirmed to the Research Degrees team that you have satisfied the criteria to be awarded your Masters by Research, MPhil or PhD, the outcome and examiners' reports will be sent to your Director of Graduate Studies for initial approval and then the Faculty Dean to approve on behalf of the CBEEC (College Board of Examiners' Executive Committee). The date of your award will be the 1st of the month following the Dean's approval.

If you have been awarded a Masters by Research, there are no further requirements before your award can be processed.

8.3.2 *Electronic submission of the final MPhil or PhD thesis*

If you have been awarded an MPhil or PhD, you need to upload an electronic version of the finalised thesis on to the College's research information system, Pure, before the award can be processed.

The College strongly recommends that you check the details of these requirements well in advance of submission as they contain important information on copyright and Open Access.

Find out more about Pure: <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-links/library/research-support/open-access/pure-support/submitting-an-e-thesis-in-pure.aspx>

8.3.3 *Documentation*

Once your award has been processed by the Research Degrees team, you will be sent an award letter on College headed paper which includes the date of your award and your thesis title. Your degree certificate will be sent to you by the Diploma Production Office in central London within 3 – 6 months of the award letter.

8.3.4 *Graduation*

As a postgraduate research student, you can attend either the Summer or the Winter Graduation ceremony.

To be eligible to attend the summer ceremony:

- Your award date must be no later than 1 June of that year
- You must have submitted your finalized thesis to Pure by 30 June at the very latest

To be eligible to attend the winter ceremony:

- Your award date must be no later than 1 November of that year
- You must have submitted your finalized thesis to Pure by 30 November at the very latest

Find out more about the Graduation ceremonies:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/graduation/home.aspx>

9 Appeals and Complaints

9.1 Appeals

By submitting an academic appeal, you are making a request for a decision made by the College relating to your academic studies or academic progress to be reconsidered. This must be done within 15 working days of the date on which you were formally informed about the decision.

Sections 21 and 22 of the [Research Degree Regulations](#) set out the grounds on which you can appeal and the process to be followed.

If you have also submitted a complaint and your grounds for an academic appeal are effectively dependent on the outcome of the complaint, the College may determine that the complaint should be investigated first under the Complaints Procedure. The complaint

investigation will be carried out by the College Secretary's Office and your appeal investigation will be delayed until the complaint investigation is complete. The College will endeavour to complete these processes as quickly as possible. However, a thorough investigation takes time, so the College strongly advises that you continue to make plans on the basis of the decision as it currently stands.

Find out more about academic appeals:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/academic-appeals/make-an-academic-appeal-or-complaint.aspx>

9.2 Complaints

A complaint is where, as a result of your experience at the College, you feel dissatisfied about the provision of services or facilities and would like your concerns to be investigated. Your concerns may be investigated under the **Complaints procedure** but normally only within three months of the incident or action being complained about.

If you have a complaint relating to any aspect of the department, or its staff, or to any academic or College matter, it is recommended that you first discuss it informally with your supervisor(s), advisor, Director of Graduate Studies or another member of staff in the department as soon as possible. In the majority of cases complaints can be resolved through such an informal route.

In those cases where the complaint cannot be resolved in this way, you may want to submit a formal complaint.

Find out more about complaints:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/academic-appeals/complaints/complaints.aspx>

10 Student charter

The College aims to bring all students into a close, harmonious relationship with each other and with the wider community. The **Student charter** <https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/your-responsibilities-as-a-student.aspx> outlines how you can support the College in achieving these goals and also seeks to encourage you to act as an effective ambassador for the College, during your time as a student and later as part of the College's alumni

This charter is not intended to constitute a binding agreement but is offered as a framework of aspirations, designed to be of benefit primarily to you as a student and to underpin the College's aim of ensuring that you have a highly enjoyable and rewarding experience during the course of your research degree.

11 Feedback

11.1 Your department's PGR student-staff committee

We want to hear your views on the way the department operates. There is a student-staff committee on which both taught and research students are represented. Course representatives are elected by you to represent your views and ultimately, to help improve the quality of education provided by the College.

The Students' Unions take the lead in training and supporting course representatives, working with the department and professional services to help you make as many positive changes as possible.

For constitution see committee's handbook under Compliance/Governance

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/iquad/collegepolicies/home.aspx>

The Committee meets four times each year and plays an important role in the Department as a forum for airing student views.

You can use the Committee to raise any issues which concern students. Notices will appear by E-Mail giving details of forthcoming elections or the names of current representatives and their contact details.

11.2 Surveys

As a research degree student, you will be asked to complete an online survey to feedback on your experience each year. This anonymous survey is really important and helps us make improvements around the College and tells us how well we're doing. It's a chance for us to gain valuable data to inform enhancements to the experience of postgraduate research students.

12 Paid work

According to the [Code of Practice for Research Degree students](#), any paid work you undertake to support your studies should not exceed 20 hours per week if you are registered as a full-time student. If you are a part-time student, there is no limit.

If you are an international student, you must also ensure that any working restrictions, as stated on your visa, are also adhered to.

13 Research abroad

If you are undertaking research abroad, please ensure that you agree this with your supervisor and ensure that details of the location and dates have been approved prior to undertaking the research.

If you are sponsored by the College for a Tier 4 (General) student visa, please ensure that you receive approval from your supervisor prior to undertaking the research so that the College can update details of your study location with the UKVI, as required by the UKVI. If you do

not do this you will be risking the continuation of your Tier 4 sponsorship with the College.

14 Health and Safety Information

General health and safety policies:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/iquad/collegepolicies/home.aspx>

14.1 Code of practice on harassment for students

The College is committed to upholding the dignity of the individual and recognises that harassment can be a source of great stress to an individual. Personal harassment can seriously harm working, learning and social conditions and will be regarded and treated seriously. This could include grounds for disciplinary action, and possibly the termination of registration as a student.

The College's [Code of Practice on personal harassment for students](#) should be read in conjunction with the [Student Disciplinary regulations](#) and the [Complaints procedure](#).

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/study/our-college-regulations/your-responsibilities-as-a-student.aspx>

14.2 Lone working policy and procedures

The principles and guidance around lone working are often highly applicable to the nature of postgraduate research and the variety of activities this might involve. As such, awareness and planning around any lone working you may be required to undertake are essential.

Any health and safety concerns should be brought to the attention of the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator Claire Mayers or the College Health and Safety Office. It is likely that most activities will take place on College premises. However, the principles also apply to students undertaking duties off campus. No student will be permitted to carry out any laboratory work until they have undertaken a lab induction delivered by a member of technical staff.

Find out more about the College's Lone working policy and procedure:

royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/tools-and-links/health-and-safety/policies-and-procedures/lone-working.aspx

15 Equal opportunities statement and College Codes of Practice

15.1 Equal opportunities statement

The College values diversity and promotes equality of opportunity for all, both in its employment practices and admissions decisions, and in its teaching, learning and research activities.

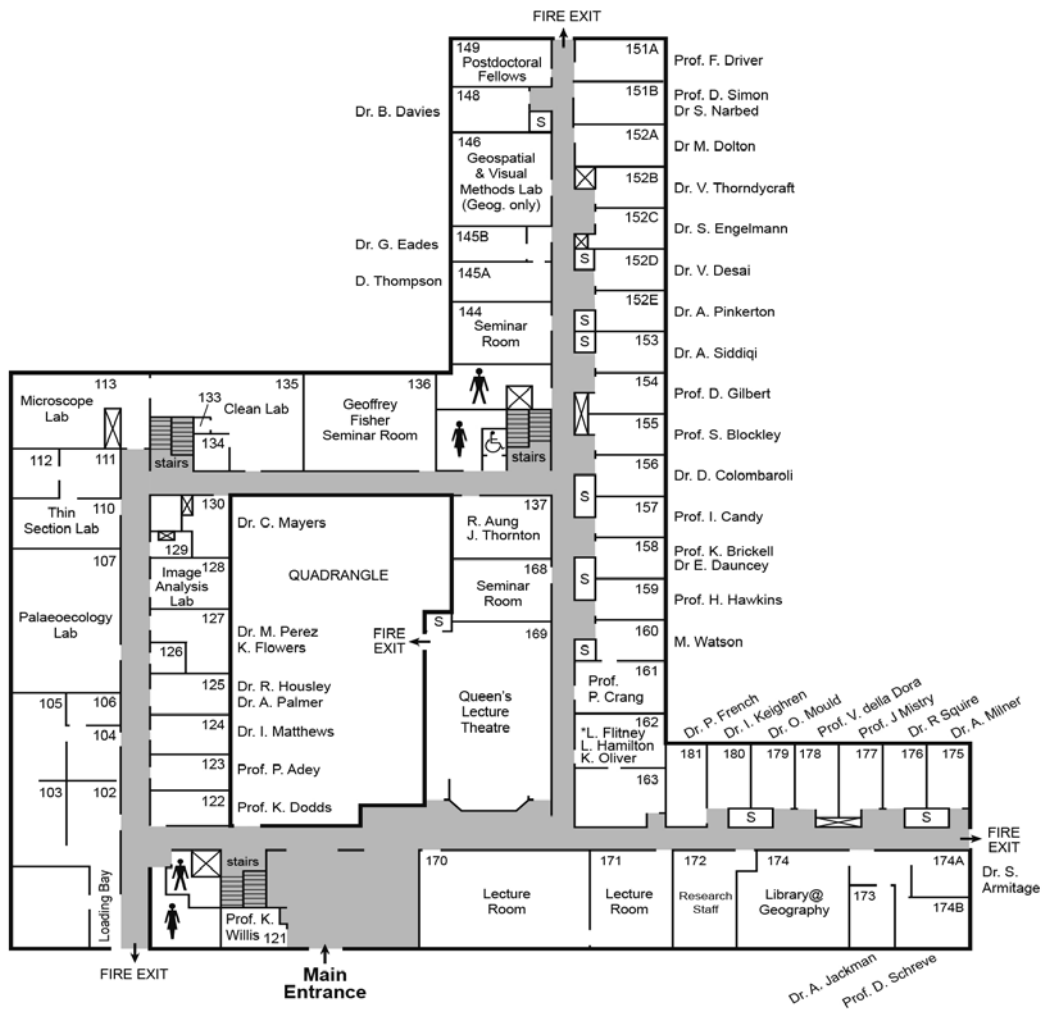
Royal Holloway's equal opportunities statement:

<https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/staff/your-employment/human-resources/equality-and-diversity/home.aspx>

15.2 Map of Department

Department of Geography - Queen's Building - Level 1

Room	Room
Director of Undergraduate Programmes..... 181	Departmental Office..... 162
Director of Graduate Studies..... 157 & 180	GIS..... 145B
Departmental Education Support Officer..... 152A	IT Support & AV..... 137
Technical Operations Manager and	Cartography & Printing..... 137
Health & Safety Co-ordinator..... 130	



*C. Woodland until end of October 2018

September 2018