



SCHOOL OF POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS AND PHILOSOPHY

# POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENT HANDBOOK

2018/2019

Telephone +44 (0)1784 44 3687

School of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy  
Royal Holloway, University of London  
Egham Hill, Egham  
Surrey TW20 0EX

### Disclaimer

This document was published in September 2018 and was correct at that time. The School\* 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.

\* Please note, the term 'department' is used to refer to 'departments', 'Centres and 'Schools'. Students on joint or combined degree programmes will receive two departmental handbooks.

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## 1 Introduction to 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.

Welcome to the School of Politics and International Relations. If you are new to Royal Holloway we hope that you enjoy what will be a fruitful, enjoyable and challenging period of study. If you are returning to the College after having previously studied here, we hope that you have come back refreshed for the new academic year.

This handbook contains information you will need throughout your course. It gives details about your course and the members of staff who will teach you. It also provides information about how the Department and the College can support you academically and personally. We encourage you to read the handbook thoroughly in the first week of term.

We realise that you will have questions about your course which are not answered in this handbook. This handbook is not your only source of information. The best way of getting to know the Department and how we can help you is through personal contact with members of staff, both academic and administrative. Your personal advisor (an academic member of staff assigned to each staff who can provide academic and welfare advice) will be particularly important in helping you. We have listed other members of staff in order that you can find out the different things that they teach, research and administer.

The Department offers seven different post-graduate taught programmes. Further details specific to these programmes are featured later in the handbook. All programmes offer a mixture of mandatory courses, programme-specific options, and free options chosen from a broad range of options shared across multiple courses. These programmes are alike in that they aim:

- to provide a systematic understanding and knowledge of theories, institutions, and practices in the disciplines of politics and international relations generally and more specifically in sub-disciplines related to individual programme streams;
- to encourage a critical awareness of current problems and developments in political science and international relations generally and in specific sub-disciplines related to individual programmes
- to provide theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the creation and interpretation of knowledge in politics and international relations 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; and
- to develop key communications, IT and management skills relevant for postgraduate work.

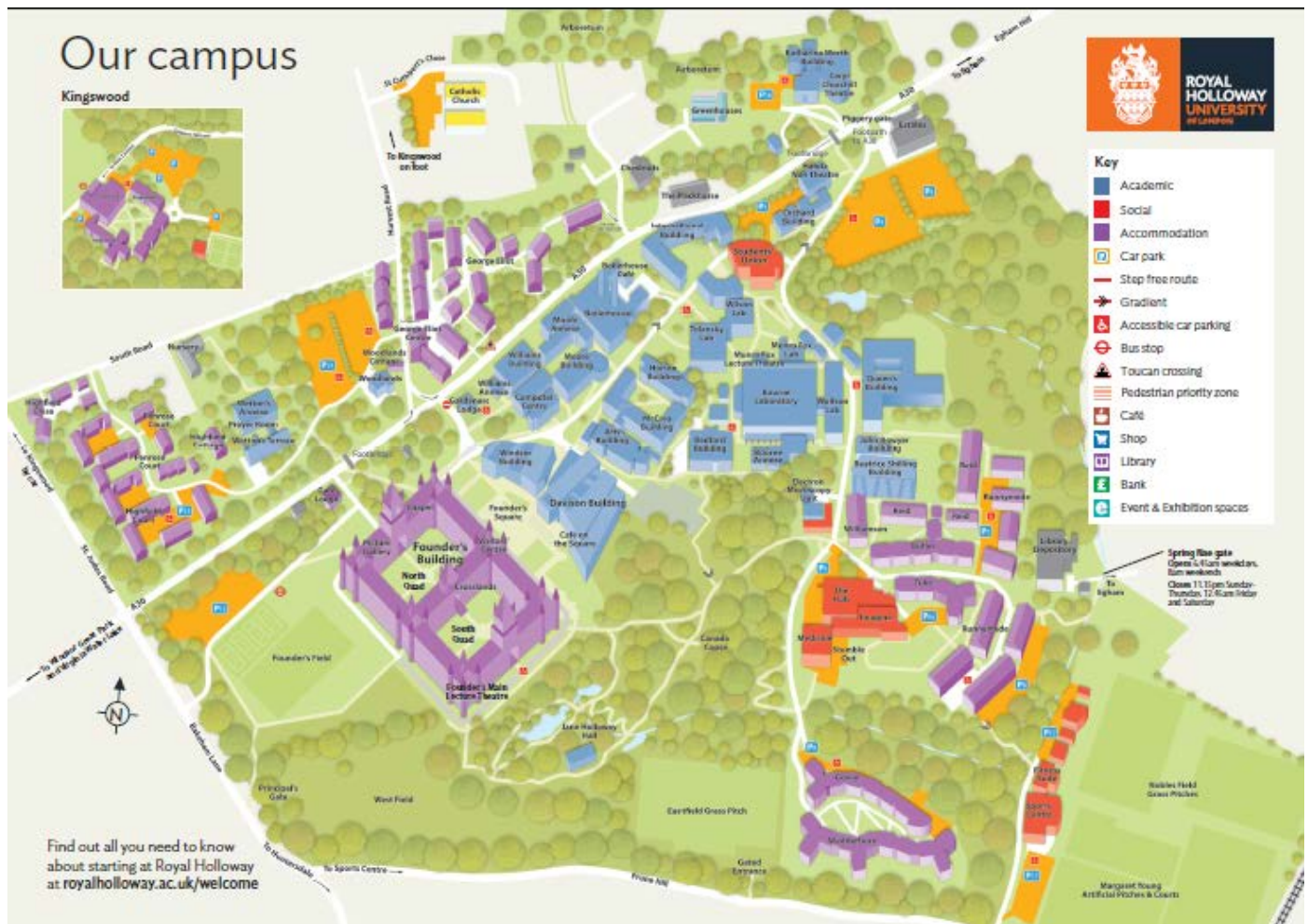
In this way, our programmes contribute to the mission of the Department:

“to conduct and publish research of a high quality, both pure and applied, in the fields of Politics and International Relations, to teach undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to high levels of scholarship, to supervise and encourage research students in areas of the Department's expertise, and to develop international collaboration in research and teaching”

We hope that you will find this Handbook useful. We look forward to meeting you over the coming weeks and months, and to answering any questions you may have.

Dr Tom Dyson, Director, Post-graduate taught programmes, School of Politics and IR, September 2018

## 1.2 Map of the Egham campus



Please note, student parking is very limited and is not available if you live in Halls or within 1.5 miles of campus. If you do live more than 1.5 miles away or have a particular reason why you need to come to campus by car, you must apply for a parking permit. If you have a motorbike or scooter you must also register the vehicle with College. Find more information about the Parking Permit portal [here](#).

### 1.3 How to find us: the staff

#### CONTACT DETAILS

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	TEL EXT	ROOM NO.	E-MAIL
HANRETTY, Chris	(44) 3961	FW116	<a href="mailto:Chris.Hanretty@rhul.ac.uk">Chris.Hanretty@rhul.ac.uk</a>

ACADEMIC STAFF	TEL EXT	ROOM No.	EMAIL
ALLEN, Nicholas	(44) 3150	FW133	<a href="mailto:Nicholas.Allen@rhul.ac.uk">Nicholas.Allen@rhul.ac.uk</a>
ARRONDELLE, Donna	<b>TBC</b>	FW147	<a href="mailto:Donna.Arrondelle@rhul.ac.uk">Donna.Arrondelle@rhul.ac.uk</a>
BACON, Michael	(44) 3465	FW111	<a href="mailto:Michael.Bacon@rhul.ac.uk">Michael.Bacon@rhul.ac.uk</a>
BENEDETTO, Giacomo	(44) 3686	FW112	<a href="mailto:Giacomo.Benedetto@rhul.ac.uk">Giacomo.Benedetto@rhul.ac.uk</a>
BENTLEY, Michelle	(27) 6386	FW129	<a href="mailto:Michelle.Bentley@rhul.ac.uk">Michelle.Bentley@rhul.ac.uk</a>
BRUNO, G. Anthony	<b>TBC</b>	FW036	<a href="mailto:G.Anthony.Bruno@rhul.ac.uk">G.Anthony.Bruno@rhul.ac.uk</a>
CIANETTI, Licia	(44) 3965	FW034	<a href="mailto:Licia.Cianetti@rhul.ac.uk">Licia.Cianetti@rhul.ac.uk</a>
COLLIGNON, Sofia	(41) 4403	FW115	<a href="mailto:Sofia.Collignon@rhul.ac.uk">Sofia.Collignon@rhul.ac.uk</a>
DYSON, Tom	(41) 4157	FW134	<a href="mailto:Tom.Dyson@rhul.ac.uk">Tom.Dyson@rhul.ac.uk</a>
GALAI, Yoav	(44) 3961	FW116	<a href="mailto:Yoav.Galai@rhul.ac.uk">Yoav.Galai@rhul.ac.uk</a>
GASCOIGNE, Neil	(27) 6451	FW136	<a href="mailto:Neil.Gascoigne@rhul.ac.uk">Neil.Gascoigne@rhul.ac.uk</a>
GOLDTHAU, Andreas	(41) 4133	FW128	<a href="mailto:Andreas.Goldthau@rhul.ac.uk">Andreas.Goldthau@rhul.ac.uk</a>
HACKETT, Ursula	(44) 3369	FW118	<a href="mailto:Ursula.Hackett@rhul.ac.uk">Ursula.Hackett@rhul.ac.uk</a>
HALAWI, Ibrahim	(41) 4255	FW120	<a href="mailto:Ibrahim.Halawi@rhul.ac.uk">Ibrahim.Halawi@rhul.ac.uk</a>
HALPERIN, Sandra ( <b>SABB</b> )	(44) 3148	FW119	<a href="mailto:Sandra.Halperin@rhul.ac.uk">Sandra.Halperin@rhul.ac.uk</a>
HANRETTY, Chris	(41) 4130	FW113	<a href="mailto:Chris.Hanretty@rhul.ac.uk">Chris.Hanretty@rhul.ac.uk</a>
HEATH, Oliver ( <b>SABB</b> )	(27) 6407	FW126	<a href="mailto:Oliver.Heath@rhul.ac.uk">Oliver.Heath@rhul.ac.uk</a>
JOHNSTONE, Lyn	(27) 6372	FW127	<a href="mailto:Lyn.Johnstone@rhul.ac.uk">Lyn.Johnstone@rhul.ac.uk</a>
JONES, Will	(41) 4077	FW148	<a href="mailto:Will.Jones@rhul.ac.uk">Will.Jones@rhul.ac.uk</a>
KALANTARI, Mohammad	<b>TBC</b>	FW033	<a href="mailto:Mohammadreza.Kalantari@rhul.ac.uk">Mohammadreza.Kalantari@rhul.ac.uk</a>
LAKER, Frederick	(44) 3292	FW110	<b>TBC</b>
MATTAUSCH, John	<b>TBC</b>	FW027	<a href="mailto:J.Mattausch@rhul.ac.uk">J.Mattausch@rhul.ac.uk</a>
O'LOUGHLIN, Ben	(44) 3153	FW114	<a href="mailto:Ben.OLoughlin@rhul.ac.uk">Ben.OLoughlin@rhul.ac.uk</a>
PETRIKOVA, Ivica	(44) 3021	FW145	<a href="mailto:Ivica.Petrikova@rhul.ac.uk">Ivica.Petrikova@rhul.ac.uk</a>
PRESTON, Dave	(41) 4133	FW128	<a href="mailto:David.Preston.2012@rhul.ac.uk">David.Preston.2012@rhul.ac.uk</a>

ROACHE, Rebecca (SABB)	(27) 6372	FW127	<a href="mailto:Rebecca.Roache@rhul.ac.uk">Rebecca.Roache@rhul.ac.uk</a>
RUTHERFORD, Nat	TBC	FW147	<a href="mailto:nathaniel.rutherford@rhul.ac.uk">nathaniel.rutherford@rhul.ac.uk</a>
SCHWARTZ, Cassilde	(44) 3380	FW107	<a href="mailto:Cassilde.Schwartz@rhul.ac.uk">Cassilde.Schwartz@rhul.ac.uk</a>
SEGLOW, Jonathan (SABB)	(44) 3155	FW109	<a href="mailto:J.Seglow@rhul.ac.uk">J.Seglow@rhul.ac.uk</a>
SELLARS, John	TBC	FW029	<a href="mailto:John.Sellars@rhul.ac.uk">John.Sellars@rhul.ac.uk</a>
SLOAM, James	(41) 4987	FW117	<a href="mailto:James.Sloam@rhul.ac.uk">James.Sloam@rhul.ac.uk</a>
SMETS, Kaat	(41) 4255	FW120	<a href="mailto:Kaat.Smets@rhul.ac.uk">Kaat.Smets@rhul.ac.uk</a>
SMITH, Alison	TBC	FW034	<a href="mailto:Alison.Smith@rhul.ac.uk">Alison.Smith@rhul.ac.uk</a>
SOMERS-HALL, Henry	(27) 6382	FW131	<a href="mailto:Henry.Somers-Hall@rhul.ac.uk">Henry.Somers-Hall@rhul.ac.uk</a>
STUBBS, Thomas	(44) 3143	FW130	<a href="mailto:Thomas.Stubbs@rhul.ac.uk">Thomas.Stubbs@rhul.ac.uk</a>
THORNTON, Edward	(44) 3155	FW109	<a href="mailto:Edward.Thornton.2014@live.rhul.ac.uk">Edward.Thornton.2014@live.rhul.ac.uk</a>
WATTS, Ellen	(27) 6407	FW126	<a href="mailto:Ellen.Watts.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk">Ellen.Watts.2012@live.rhul.ac.uk</a>
WATTS, Tom	TBC	FW034	<a href="mailto:Thomas.Watts@rhul.ac.uk">Thomas.Watts@rhul.ac.uk</a>
WEARING, David	TBC	FW027	<a href="mailto:David.Wearing@rhul.ac.uk">David.Wearing@rhul.ac.uk</a>
WHISTLER, Dan	(27) 6238	FW135	<a href="mailto:Daniel.Whistler@rhul.ac.uk">Daniel.Whistler@rhul.ac.uk</a>
WIDDER, Nathan	(41) 4127	FW132	<a href="mailto:N.E.Widder@rhul.ac.uk">N.E.Widder@rhul.ac.uk</a>
ZENG, Jinghan	(27) 6217	FW125	<a href="mailto:Jinghan.Zeng@rhul.ac.uk">Jinghan.Zeng@rhul.ac.uk</a>

Please note that the following members of academic staff are on research sabbaticals during 2021/22, and will not be teaching:

- Sandra Halperin
- Jonathan Seglow
- Rebecca Roache
- Oliver Heath

DEPARTMENT MANAGER	TEL EXT	ROOM NO.	E-MAIL
SCHROEDER, Viviane	(27) 6315	FW137	<a href="mailto:Viviane.Schroeder@rhul.ac.uk">Viviane.Schroeder@rhul.ac.uk</a>

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF	TEL EXT	ROOM NO.	E-MAIL
DAVE, Jayshree Faculty Administrator Undergraduate Philosophy	(44) 3149	FW139	<a href="mailto:Jayshree.Dave@royalholloway.ac.uk">Jayshree.Dave@royalholloway.ac.uk</a>
HEATH, James Faculty Administrator Undergraduate PIR	(44) 3680	FW139	<a href="mailto:James.Heath@royalholloway.ac.uk">James.Heath@royalholloway.ac.uk</a>
TURNER, Laura Faculty Administrator Undergraduate PIR	(44) 3242	FW139	<a href="mailto:Laura.Turner@rhul.ac.uk">Laura.Turner@rhul.ac.uk</a>
LANGSTON, Charlotte Faculty Administrator Postgraduate	(44) 3687	FW141	<a href="mailto:Charlotte.Langston@royalholloway.ac.uk">Charlotte.Langston@royalholloway.ac.uk</a>



## 1.4 How to find us: the Department

The School is located on the west side of the Founder's Building, the College's historic main building. The school is on the first floor with its administration offices in FW139 and FW141. Founders can be found on the College campus map as Building 1.

The School office will be open from 9am-5pm Monday to Friday. The office will not be open on Bank Holidays, or on days when the College is closed.

The noticeboards outside of the office will list the office hours of academic staff, and will also list the personal tutor assigned to each student. This information will also appear on the PIR Information for Current Students web page.

## 1.5 Staff research interests

**Nicholas Allen:** British elections and democracy, parliamentary misconduct, political ethics and integrity, the British prime ministership and political executive.

**Donna Arrondelle:** international development policy, government communications campaigns.

**Michael Bacon:** Contemporary political theory, in particular pluralism, pragmatism, and theories of democracy.

**Giacomo Benedetto:** European Union, the effect of Brexit on the EU; European Parliament, Parliaments, Political Parties (particularly socialist and social democratic parties), and public spending and budgets, the EU's budget.

**Michelle Bentley:** US foreign policy, mass destruction, terrorism, strategic narratives, and political taboos.

**G. Anthony Bruno:** Kant, German idealism, phenomenology, early modern philosophy.

**Licia Cianetti:** Comparative Politics, Minority Politics (including minorities and socio-economic inequality), Democratic Representation, Quality of Democracy, Post-communist Europe.

**Sofia Collignon:** the study of candidates, elections and parties; harassment and intimidation of candidates; the role of political communication in the formation and successful implementation of policies.

**Tom Dyson:** Neoclassical realist international relations theory, European defence and security, military alliances and cross-national defence capability in and the Euro-Atlantic security area.

**Yoav Galai:** narrative politics, visual politics and Israel Palestine.

**Neil Gascoigne:** Pragmatism, Epistemology, Metaphilosophy. Philosophy and Literature.

**Andreas Goldthau:** EU energy security, Eurasian energy geopolitics, global energy governance and global public policy.

**Ursula Hackett:** Domestic politics of the United States; public policymaking - particularly education policy; religion and politics; federalism and intergovernmental relations.

**Sandra Halperin:** Global development, the causes and conditions of war and peace, Middle East politics.

**Chris Hanretty:** election forecasting; public opinion; constituency representation; judicial politics; West

European politics; quantitative methods.

**Oliver Heath:** Political choice and party system change in second wave democracies, turnout and political participation in Britain, quantitative methods.

**Lyn Johnstone:** the politics of Africa, postcolonial studies and normative international relations theory.

**Will Jones:** Refugee politics, politics of Africa (particularly Rwanda), diasporas, mobilisation, authoritarianism, conflict and fragile states, refugee resettlement and relocation policy.

**Mohammad Kalantari:** International Relations of the Middle East with particular focus on interaction of regional doctrines, elite ideologies, and political Islam.

**Freddie Laker:** internally displaced people, human security and conflict in Africa.

**John Mattausch:** Ethnicity, the relations between different ethnic groups, British/Gujarati history, the British in India. Explanatory social theory, societal change and the role of chance.

**Ben O'Loughlin:** International political communication, visual politics, discourse and narrative in politics.

**Ivica Petrikova:** aid effectiveness, food security, EU development policy and donor coordination, agricultural policies, social movements, social capital, inequality, and the links between religion, politics, and development.

**Dave Preston:** Ancient Philosophy - especially its relation to more modern theories. Plato. Epistemology. Philosophy of Mind.

**Rebecca Roache:** Metaphysics (especially philosophy of time, free will, personal identity), philosophy of mind, philosophy of psychiatry, applied ethics, philosophy of technology.

**Nat Rutherford:** disagreement over values; Marx and Marxist thought.

**Cassilde Schwartz:** Comparative politics, Latin American and Caribbean politics, migration, protest, political participation, public opinion, quantitative methods, experimental methods

**Jonathan Seglow:** Contemporary political theory, especially toleration, free speech, citizenship and cultural diversity.

**John Sellars:** Ancient philosophy (especially Hellenistic and Roman) and its later reception.

**James Sloam:** Young people's politics, political participation, social movements, political parties (social democracy), and German politics.

**Kaat Smets:** Political behaviour, elections, public opinion, political sociology, comparative politics and research methods.

**Alison Smith:** parties and party systems, with particular reference to party system finance and party institutionalisation.

**Henry Somers-Hall:** Nineteenth and twentieth century German and French philosophy, and in particular Kant, Hegel, Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre.

**Thomas Stubbs:** Development studies, global and public health, political economy, urban studies, quantitative methods, East African politics.

**Ed Thornton:** 20th century European philosophy, political philosophy, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, and institutional psychotherapy.

**Ellen Watts:** political communication, with particular reference to the power of celebrity and other informal ways of understanding politics

**Tom Watts:** counter-terrorism and security policy, with particular reference to the use of drones

**David Wearing:** UK foreign policy in relation to the Global South, with particular reference to the geopolitics of oil and gas, trade and investment, arms sales and military cooperation

**Nathan Widder:** History of Western political thought, contemporary Continental philosophy, questions of difference, pluralism, power, identity and time.

**Jinghan Zeng:** China's authoritarian system, elite politics of contemporary China, Chinese foreign policy and research methods.

## 2 Support and advice

### 2.1 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](#) 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 degree.

### 2.2 PGT Degree Regulations

The [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#) set out the various standards that shape the regulatory framework of your Postgraduate Taught degree with the College. These include a variety of essential information, ranging from admissions to academic progression and examination. Some frequently used elements of the regulations are covered in this handbook.

### 2.3 Support within your department

Should you have any concerns (academic or personal) you should communicate these with department as soon as you feel able to do so. The sooner we find out about any issues you are having the sooner we can put supportive measures in place.

At the start of the year you will be allocated a personal tutor who you will meet regularly throughout the year. They can help support you with any personal or academic queries you may have. In addition to this, you can also speak with the department manager or admin team. You can find our contact details and office locations in sections 1.4 - 1.6.

For academic queries, it's best to speak directly with your course convenor or personal tutor.

### 2.4 Students' Union Royal Holloway University of London (SURHUL)

The Students' Union Royal Holloway University of London (SURHUL) is a registered charity (Registered No: 1141998) 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.

The [SU Advice and Support Centre](#), situated on the first floor of the Students' Union, is a free service that offers you the opportunity to discuss any concerns you may have and receive impartial advice and information from the team of experienced and professional advisers. Open 9.30am - 5pm, Monday – Friday, it operates an open door policy exclusively for students during term time. However, during vacation periods students should call to book an appointment.

Phone: 01784 24 6700  
Email: [helpdesk@su.rhul.ac.uk](mailto:helpdesk@su.rhul.ac.uk)

[Find out more about the Students' Union](#)

## 2.5 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.

The Student- Staff Committee meets at least once a term and plays an important role in the department as a forum for airing student views. For more information see the [Course Reps](#) page on the SURHUL website.

You can use the Committee to raise any issues which concern students. Notices will appear on departmental notice boards giving details of forthcoming elections or the names of current representatives.

## 2.6 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](mailto:studentservices@royalholloway.ac.uk)

[Find out more about the Student Services Centre](#)

## 2.7 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](mailto:wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk)

[Find out more about Support Advisory & Wellbeing](#)

## 2.8 Student Wellbeing

Student Wellbeing provides advice and guidance to all students on personal and emotional wellbeing, to assist you in maintaining a healthy balanced lifestyle and to support you from transition to university and then in the continuation of your 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](mailto:wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk)

[Find out more about Student Wellbeing](#)

## 2.9 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](mailto:disability-dyslexia@royalholloway.ac.uk)

[Find out more about Disability & Dyslexia Services](#)

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

Name: James Heath  
Phone: (44) 3680  
Email: [James.Heath@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:James.Heath@rhul.ac.uk)

## 2.10 International Student Support Office (ISSO)

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

Phone: 01784 27 6168  
Email: [internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk](mailto:internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk)

[Find out more about the International Student Support Office](#)

## 2.11 Academic Skills Support

The Centre for the Development of Academic Skills, **CeDAS**, offers a variety of courses, workshops, 1:1 tutorials, online resources that aim to ensure all students at Royal Holloway reach their full academic potential in a range of areas, including academic writing, oral communication skills and maths and statistics.

Whatever your needs, CeDAS is there to ensure that you can perform to the best of your ability, whether it be through a workshop that introduces you to a crucial academic skill, a session within your department that focuses on writing in the discipline, a course that develops your confidence and competence in academic English language, or a 1:1 tutorial with a specialist to help you master a maths technique or sharpen your essay skills.

The Centre also oversees the Royal Holloway Proofreading Scheme, which enables postgraduate students to pay for an approved third-party proof-reader to identify surface error in final drafts. Please note that Royal Holloway does not permit the use of paid third-party proof-readers who are not part of this scheme.

The CeDAS Office can be found on the ground floor of the International Building, room INoo2, and you can follow them on Twitter: [@cedasrhul](https://twitter.com/cedasrhul).

## 2.12 IT Services 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 also offer a range of free software, including Microsoft Office 365, Sofos Antivirus, NVivo and SPSS.

Phone: 01784 41 4321

Email: [itservicedesk@royalholloway.ac.uk](mailto:itservicedesk@royalholloway.ac.uk)

In person: Visit the IT support office in the Davison Library (ground floor)

[Find out more about IT Services](#)

### 3 Communication

It is vitally important that you keep in touch with us and we keep in touch with you. Members of staff will often need to contact you to inform you of changes to teaching arrangements, special preparations you may have to make for a class, or meetings you might be required to attend. You will need to contact members of the Department if, for example, you are unable to attend a class, or you wish to arrange a meeting with your Personal Tutor.

#### 3.1 Email

The College gives all students an email address. This address is stored in a College email directory (the Global Address List). You can access your account on and off campus via the campus-wide portal, [CampusNet](#) or direct via [Outlook.com](#).

We will routinely email you at your College address and you should **therefore check your College email regularly** (at least daily). We will not email you at a private or commercial address. Do not ignore emails from us. We will assume you have received an email within 48 hours, excluding Saturdays and Sundays.

If you send an email to a staff member in the School during term time you should normally receive a reply within 2-3 working days. Please remember that there are times when members of staff are away from College at conferences or undertaking research.

#### 3.2 Post

Students should not use the College address for private mail. Administrative staff will alert you via email to any internal mail received.

#### 3.3 Your Contact Information

There can be occasions when the Department needs to contact you urgently by telephone or send you a letter by post. It is your responsibility to ensure that your telephone number (mobile and landline) and postal address (term-time and forwarding) are kept up to date. Further information about maintaining your contact information is available [here](#).

You can find out about how the College processes your personal data by reading the [Student Data Collection notice](#).

#### 3.4 Moodle

Moodle is Royal Holloway's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) providing online learning resources. You can log into Moodle at [moodle.rhul.ac.uk](http://moodle.rhul.ac.uk) using your College username and password. Each course you take will have its own Moodle page. You will also have access to the PIRP Student Information page on Moodle, which contains information which applies across the School.

#### 3.5 Notice boards

Outside the School office you will find several notice boards. These notice boards will give useful information about the location of teaching events, the names and contact addresses for personal tutors, and the deadlines for courses.

All information posted on the notice boards will also be posted to the PIRP Student Information Page on



Moodle.

### 3.6 Personal Tutors

Each student will be assigned an academic member of staff as a Personal Tutor. Personal Tutors oversee the pastoral care of students, and provide academic and welfare advice. Incoming students will meet their advisers during Welcome Week or the first week of term and returning students should arrange to meet their supervisors early in the academic year.

Students are encouraged to keep in touch with their personal tutors. Students who are experiencing difficulties should consider their personal tutors to be their first point of contact, though course conveners, tutors, and department administrative staff should also be treated as contacts where appropriate.

### 3.7 Feedback from you

We welcome student feedback at any time during the academic year. The Staff/Student Committee (see section 2.5) provides an important forum for in-year feedback, but students should feel free also to contact course leaders, the School Manager, or the Head of School.

We also ask you to fill out course evaluation forms. These are distributed in the last week of each term, and are anonymous. We take this feedback seriously, and use it when we revise our courses at the end of the year.

The results from course evaluations are collated and monitored by the Department's Teaching Committee and by the Head of Department and the staff concerned.

## 4 Teaching

### 4.1 Dates of terms

**Term dates** for the year are as follows.

**Autumn term:** Monday 24 September to Friday 14 December 2018

**Spring term:** Monday 14 January to Friday 29 March 2019

**Summer term:** Monday 29 April to Friday 14 June 2019

You are expected to be in the UK and engaging with your studies during term time. In the case of an emergency which requires you to leave the country and/ or miss lectures/ seminars/ practicals etc., you are expected to inform your department and fill in a Notification of Absence Form ([explained further below](#)). During the summer term, after the examination period, you are expected to attend all required academic activities organized by the department and to be available should you be required to meet with College staff for any reason.

### 4.2 Academic Timetable

Your individual student timetable will be available via the [Your Timetable](#) page on the Student Intranet. Log in with your College username and password and view your timetable via the system or download to a personal calendar. In September you will receive communications by email about exactly how to access and download your timetable, so keep any eye out for these. Timetables are subject to change during the course of the academic year, so you should check yours regularly, (as a minimum every few days) to ensure you are using the most up to date timetable. Any changes to your timetable that occur within two working days will be notified by email to your RHUL account, so please also check your emails regularly. All classes start on the hour. They end ten minutes before the hour to allow you to move between classes.

### 4.3 Study weeks

Each term has 10 weeks of teaching that all students are expected to attend. Students are also expected to be available and around campus for the two reading weeks; one per term. Term dates can be found inside this handbook (section 4.1) and online.

## 5 Attending classes and engaging with your studies

The College has a responsibility to ensure that all students are attending classes regularly and progressing with their studies. We also have legal obligations placed on us under the Equality Act (2010), UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) and Student Finance to ensure we monitor your attendance and engagement with studies.

Your regular attendance in class and consistent engagement with your studies are essential to your learning experience with the College. If you encounter difficulties with this, do please tell your tutor or another member of staff as soon as you can. The earlier you do so, the sooner we can provide the appropriate help. As such, failure to attend and/or absence without permission can result in serious consequences and may lead to disciplinary action, including the termination of your registration.

### 5.1 Attendance requirements

Your classes are the learning activities deemed essential to your programme of study. These could include a variety of different activities, including lectures, seminars, tutorials, workshops, field work, laboratory work, and meetings with your Personal Tutor.

While you are expected to attend all the classes related to your programme of study, the College understands that emergencies may occur at any time throughout the year. In light of this, the School of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy has set a minimum attendance level at 80%. You should be aware that you may also study courses that have different and specific course attendance requirements, particularly if you are taking courses in another department, so it is essential that you check all programme and course handbooks to ensure you are fully aware of the requirements. You can find out more about attendance policy [here](#).

It is vital that you manage your time effectively, so that any paid employment, voluntary work, extracurricular activities or social commitments do not interfere with periods where you are required to attend classes. The [Postgraduate Taught Programme Regulations](#) stipulate that the amount of paid work undertaken by a student enrolled with the College on a full-time basis must not exceed 20 hours per week during term time. You may not undertake paid work which may conflict with your responsibilities as a student of the College. International students must ensure that any working restrictions, as stated on their visa, are also adhered to.

### 5.2 Adjustments to attendance requirements

If you believe that you will not be able to comply with the attendance requirements, you may request an adjustment in your case. This would only be permitted if you have good reason to ask for it and if adjustment would not compromise competence standards or your ability to reach the learning outcomes of your programme. Requests to consider an adjustment to attendance requirements will be treated case by case and discussed by the department with the Disability and Dyslexia Services (D&DS) and Academic Quality and Policy Office (AQPO).

### 5.3 Monitoring attendance

The Department will monitor your attendance at all seminars and lectures. It is your responsibility to complete any attendance register that is circulated and to make sure that your attendance has been noted. The activities at which your attendance is monitored may vary depending upon the discipline in which you are studying or the department in which you are taking courses in the case of electives, for example.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your attendance has been recorded. It is also essential that you arrive at your classes in good time, as you will be marked absent if you turn up late without good reason.

We will contact you in the event that:

- i. you fail to attend for **two weeks** without providing notification of your absence;
- ii. you display a **pattern of absence** that the department feel is affecting or is likely to affect your work
- iii. you display a pattern of absence that causes **concern over your wellbeing or which may point to an undisclosed disability**

## 5.4 Formal Warnings

Should it become apparent that there are no acceptable reasons for your non-attendance and/or general lack of engagement with your studies, the Department may issue you with a formal warning which can escalate to the termination of your registration at the College. You are strongly advised to read the guidance on the formal warning process and the consequences of receiving such a warning in section 17 of the [Postgraduate Taught regulations](#).

In situations where you are experiencing documented severe difficulties the Department and College will make every effort to support you and counsel you as to the best course of action. However, there may be cases where, although non-attendance is explained by an acceptable reason, your level of attendance falls to a level which compromises educational standards and/or your ability to reach the learning outcomes of the course. In such cases it will be necessary to implement disciplinary procedures as detailed above.

## 5.5 Withdrawal of visa

If you are sponsored by Royal Holloway on a Tier-4 (General) Student visa, should your registration at the College be terminated for non-attendance, general lack of engagement with your studies or any other disciplinary matter you will be reported to the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) and your Tier 4 (General) Student visa will be withdrawn. Alternatively, in line with the College's legal obligations to UKVI, if you fail to meet the requirement of your Tier 4 (General) Student visa, including attendance and completion of assessments, the College may terminate your student registration without following the disciplinary procedures outlined in the Academic Regulations. This decision would not be open to appeal as it is part of the College's obligations to the UKVI. Please see our [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#).

## 5.6 Missing classes

If you face difficulty in attending any classes or undertaking an assessment it is very important that you inform the department as early as possible, giving the reasons for your non-attendance. The department will decide whether or not to authorise your absence. If you are experiencing such difficulties on an ongoing basis, please contact your Personal Tutor. In addition, an extensive range of additional support, guidance and advice is available from the College's Student [Advisory & Wellbeing teams](#). As explained in section 2 above, the Students' Union also operate an [Advice and Support Centre](#).

If you are unable to attend classes for whatever reason you must tell the department in which you are taking the course(s) in question and follow the [Notification of Absence Procedure](#). You must submit a Notification of Absence Form together with any supporting documentation either before your absence begins or within five working days of the end of the period of absence. The exact form to submit depends on the reason for your absence, as explained in the [on line guidance](#).

You should ensure:

1. that you advise the department by emailing [PIR-Admin@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:PIR-Admin@rhul.ac.uk).
2. that you complete the [Notification of Absence Form](#).
3. that you submit the paperwork to your department(s) either before your absence or within FIVE working days of the end of the period of absence. Failure to do so may result in the absence being

- counted as unacceptable and counting against the minimum attendance level. Please email this notification to [PIR-Admin@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:PIR-Admin@rhul.ac.uk).
4. that you meet any departmental requirements concerning notification of absence or request for leave of absence as you may be required to meet formally with an academic tutor.

If you are absent for a prolonged period it is essential that you keep in touch with the Department (e.g. through regular emails with your Personal Tutor). The Department will monitor the frequency of self-certified absences and the Head of Department may request a doctor's medical certificate from you in the event of multiple and/or sustained instances of self-certified illness. If you are sponsored by Royal Holloway on a Tier-4 (General) Student visa please be aware that if you do not follow the process to submit a notification of absence or have an acceptable reason for absence you are putting your Tier 4 visa at risk of withdrawal. Therefore, it is very important that you continue to communicate with the College through your Department and the Advisory & Wellbeing teams if you are struggling to attend.

## 5.7 Missing an examination

If you are unable to attend an exam (e.g. through reasons of sudden illness) then there are two steps to follow.

### Step 1

You must notify the Student Services Centre at the earliest possibility. Wherever possible, please e-mail them at [studentservices@royalholloway.ac.uk](mailto:studentservices@royalholloway.ac.uk) before the scheduled start of the exam with your name, student ID and confirmation of the exam that you are unable to attend. Please include a brief explanation within the email why you cannot attend the exam. The Student Services Centre will then forward this information to your department so that we are aware of your non-attendance.

### Step 2

It is essential that you inform your department and Chair of the Sub-board of Examiners by completing the Extenuating Circumstances form. For further information, please refer to [section 8](#) below.

## 6 Degree Structure

Full details about your programme of study, including, amongst others, the aims, learning outcomes to be achieved on completion, courses which make up the programme and any programme-specific regulations are set out in the programme specification available through the [Programme Specification Repository](#).

### 6.1 Department Specific information about degree structure

Full details about your programme of study, including, amongst others, the aims, learning outcomes to be achieved on completion, courses which make up the programme and any programme-specific regulations are set out in the programme specification available through [Course Finder](#) or the [Programme Specification Repository](#).

For a **postgraduate taught degree**, your complete registrations must add up to **180 credits**, including the dissertation (60 credits). The table on page 20 indicates the degree structure and which courses are available to each degree programme.

The degree programmes are also offered at **Postgraduate Diploma** level (full- and part-time) for those who do not have the academic background necessary to begin an advanced Masters course. The structure of the Diploma programmes is identical except that the registration will be **120 credits** as the students do not take the dissertation. Student who are successful on the diploma may transfer to the MSc/MA subject to academic approval.

Students who are completing their studies on a part-time basis will normally complete their mandatory courses in their first year, and their optional courses and dissertation in their second year. Part-time diploma students will have the same distribution, but will not take the dissertation.

### 6.2 Course registrations

You should register for 180 credits' worth of courses. While you may have the option of changing course unit registrations within the first two weeks after the start of teaching (excluding Welcome Week) subject to agreement from the department, once you have submitted assessment for the course, you may not replace it with another either in that term or in a subsequent term (e.g. Spring term). Any courses that you wish to take on an extracurricular basis (that is, as extra and not counting towards your degree) must be identified at the start of the academic year or before any assessment has been completed for the course.

### 6.3 Change of programme

You may apply to transfer from one programme to another within the common curriculum where provision is made for this in the programme specification.

Further information about changing programmes is available in Section 8 of the [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#).

## 7 Facilities

### 7.1 Facilities and resources within your department

The department has two seminar rooms that are used for teaching, FW101 and FW105. We also have a general space with sofas outside of FW141.

As the department has limited teaching space lectures are mostly taught across campus. For access to PC's or Study spaces students should use the computer centre or Library.

Course Code	Title	Course Convenor	Credits	Term	Degree Programme						
					IR	PoD	IPP	ECD	MPPA	IS	IWAS
PR5418	Contemporary Continental Political Thought	Nathan Widder	20	SPR	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5422	Media, Power and Public Affairs	Ben O'Loughlin	20	AUT					C		
PR5424	Internet and New Media Politics	Elinor Carmi	20	SPR	O	O	O	O	CS	O	
PR5430	Dissertation		60	--	C	C	C	C	C	C	
PR5432	Analysing International Politics	TBC	20	AUT	C		C				
PR5445	Identity, Power and Radical Theory	Nathan Widder	20	AUT	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5907	Media, War and Conflict	Ben O'Loughlin	20	SPR	O	O	O	O	CS	O	
PR5908	US Foreign Policy	David Wearing	20	AUT	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5913	China in the World	Jinghan Zeng	20	SPR	O	CS	O	O	O	O	
PR5914	Democracy and Citizenship in Europe	James Sloam	20	0	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5921	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	Kaat Smets	20	AUT	CM	O	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM
PR5923	Theories and Qualitative Approaches in Politics and International Relations	Jinghan Zeng	20	AUT	CM	O	CM	CM	CM	CM	CM
PR5924	Transnational Security Studies	Michelle Bentley	20	AUT	O	O	O	O	O	C	
PR5936	Contemporary Anglo-American Political Theory	Michael Bacon	20	AUT	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5937	Understanding Defence	Tom Dyson	20	SPR	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5942	Analysing Public Opinion	Kaat Smets	20	SPR	O	O	O	CS	O	O	
PR5944	Elections and Campaigning	Sofia Collignon	20	AUT	O	O	O	C	O	O	
PR5948	International Public Policy	Andreas Goldthau	20	AUT	O	O	C	O	O	O	
PR5950	European Union Politics and Policy	Giacomo Benedetto	20	AUT	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5952	Political Economy of Development	Ivica Petrikova	20	AUT	O	C	O	O	O	O	
PR5954	Political Economy of the Middle East	David Wearing	20	SPR	O	CS	O	O	O	O	O
PR5956	Political Leaders and Democratic Politics	Nick Allen	20	SPR	O	O	O	CS	O	O	
PR5957	Development Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa	Thomas Stubbs	20	SPR	O	CS	O	O	O	O	
PR5960	Genocide and Humanitarian Intervention	Michelle Bentley	20	SPR	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5961	International Public Policy Practice	Andreas Goldthau	20	SPR	O	O	C	O	O	O	
PR5962	The Global Politics of Food Security	Ivica Petrikova	20	SPR	O	O	O	O	O	O	
PR5963	Islam and West Asia in International Relations	Mohammad Kalantari	20	?	O	O	O	O	O	O	C
PR5450	The Israel-Palestinian Conflict: A Global Perspective	Yoav Galai	20	SPR	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
HS5425	Historical Study of the Modern Muslim World	Markus Daechsel	20	AUT/SPR							C
HS5450	History Past and Present	Akil Awan	20	AUT							CM
HS5130	Politics and Religion in the Middle East	James Baldwin	20	SPR							O
HS5721	The Infidel Within?	Humayun Ansari	20	AUT							O

Key	
C	Mandatory
CM	Core methods (must take at least 20 credits)
CS	Core Stream (must take at least 20 credits)
O	Optional
IR	MSc International Relations
PoD	MA Politics of Development
IPP	MSc International Public Policy
ECD	MSc Elections, Campaigns and Democracy
MPPA	MSc Media, Power and Public Affairs
IS	MSc International Security
IWAS	MA in Islamic and West Asian Studies



## 7.2 The Library

The Library is housed in the **Emily Wilding Davison Building**.

Details, including Library Search, dedicated subject guides and opening times can be found online from the [Library home page](#).

The Ground Floor of the Library contains a High Use Collection which includes many of the books assigned for Postgraduate Taught courses. . The rest of the Library collections are on the upper floors. There are plenty of study areas and bookable rooms to carry out group work, as well as many areas to work on your own. The Library contains a large number of PCs and has laptops to borrow on the ground floor to use in other study areas.

The Information Consultant for Politics, International Relations and Philosophy is Emma Burnett, who can be contacted at [Emma.Burnett@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:Emma.Burnett@rhul.ac.uk).

The Library provides a range of training sessions designed to enhance your existing library and research skills. These are available in both class-based and self-study formats. For information on available sessions and to book a place, please click [here](#).

If you cannot find the specific items that you require in the library, it is possible to order an Inter-Library Loan or to gain access to the online resources of Senate House Library as well as access to use the library's physical collections or other university libraries. You can obtain further information on this [here](#).

## 7.3 Photocopying and Printing

The departmental printers and photocopier are reserved for staff use. Copier-printers (MFDs) for students are located in the Library, the Computer Centre and many PC labs, which will allow you to make copies in either black and white or colour. Further information is available [here](#):

If you require copying to be done for a seminar presentation, you need to give these materials to your tutor to copy on your behalf. Please make sure that you plan ahead and give the materials to your tutor in plenty of time. Many of the PC labs are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Alternatively, there are computers available for your use in the Library, and Computer Centre.

## 7.4 Computing

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](#)

## 8 Coursework

### 8.1 Anonymous marking

The School uses anonymous marking for most of its assessments. This means that when you submit a piece of work, you **must not** write your name on your essay, and you **must** include your candidate number.

You can view your candidate number by going to the "My studies" tab in Campus Connect and then "My exams info".

Your candidate number is normally allocated around mid-October. You'll receive a new candidate number each year.

When submitting work through Moodle all work remains anonymised until marks and comments are released back to students, to this end please do not put your name or student number within the essay. When submitting on Moodle please ensure you include your candidate number in the essay submission title.

### 8.2 Coursework essays

Coursework essays are either formative or summative. Formative essays do not count towards the final mark for a course, whereas summative essays comprise some percentage of the overall mark.

All essays are submitted and marked via Turnitin on [Moodle](#). You do not need to hand in hard copies of your essays unless your seminar leader explicitly states that they would like a copy. Marks and comments will be provided via Turnitin.

The Department uses Turnitin, a plagiarism detection software. Coursework must be uploaded by 10:00am on the submission date or penalties for late submission will be applied in accordance with the College rules.

Any late essay, formative or summative, should be submitted to the relevant Moodle 'Late Submission Box' for the course and a late submission form must be either emailed to the office or handed in. More details on extensions and late submissions can be found online.

### 8.3 Marking criteria

Essays and the dissertation are marked in accordance with the following conventions:

#### PIR PGT MARKING CRITERIA

	<b>86+ (Distinction) Essays Marked on Step at: 88, 92, 95, 98</b>	<b>70-85 (Distinction) Essays Marked on step at: 72, 75, 78, 982, 85</b>	<b>60-69 (Merit) Essays Marked on step at: 62, 65, 68</b>	<b>50-59 (Pass) Essays Marked on step at: 52, 55, 58</b>	<b>40-49 (Narrow fail) Essays Marked on step at: 42, 45, 48</b>	<b>0-39 (Clear Fail) Essays Marked on step at: 0, 2, 5, 8 ... 32, 35, 38</b>
Knowledge and understanding	Exceptional knowledge and understanding of subject with expert grasp of material	Excellent knowledge and understanding of subject with no or only the most minor errors of fact and/or interpretation	Good knowledge and understanding of subject with only a few minor errors of fact and/or interpretation	Adequate knowledge and understanding of subject with some errors of fact and/or interpretation	Limited knowledge and understanding of subject with significant errors of fact and/or interpretation	Very poor knowledge and understanding of subject with many glaring errors of fact and/or interpretation

Clarity and strength of answer	An extremely clear, focused and convincing response to the question	A very clear, focused and convincing response to the question	A clear and focused response that directly answers the question	A generally clear response but weakened by some inconsistencies and omissions	An unclear and unconvincing response to the question	A inadequate answer that fails to address the question
Structure and organisation	Outstanding structure and organisation of material with successive sections sustaining an exceptionally clear argument	Excellent structure and organisation of material with successive sections sustaining a very clear argument	Good structure and organisation of material with the flow between sections sustaining a clear argument	Adequate structure and organisation with the clarity of argument weakened by some gaps, repetition, irrelevant material and/or the ordering of points	Weak structure and organisation with the argument greatly weakened by some significant gaps, repetition, irrelevant material and/or the ordering of points	Little discernible structure and organisation with no clear argument or order to the points being made
Critical thinking and analysis	Exceptional independent critical thinking and analysis of relevant material	Excellent independent critical thinking and analysis of relevant material	Good independent critical thinking and analysis of relevant material	Some independent critical thinking and analysis of relevant material, but more descriptive	Little independent critical thinking and analysis of relevant material	Very patchy or misguided thinking and analysis of material
Engagement with relevant literature	Exceptional breadth and depth of reading with complete mastery of the relevant and wider academic literature	Excellent breadth and depth of reading with very good knowledge of and insight into the relevant academic literature	Good breadth and depth of reading with clear knowledge of the relevant academic literature and only a few omissions and/or misunderstandings	Adequate discussion of the relevant academic literature but with some notable omissions in reading and/or misunderstandings	Little reading with significant gaps and limited understanding of the relevant academic literature	Very little reading on the topic and little understanding of the relevant academic literature
Use of evidence and/or methods	Exceptional awareness and use of evidence, and/or methodologically extremely sophisticated	Excellent awareness and use of evidence, and/or methodologically sophisticated	Good awareness and use of evidence, and/or a good grasp of methods with only minor gaps in understanding	Some awareness and use of evidence, and/or some grasp of appropriate methods but with some significant gaps in understanding	Limited awareness and use of evidence, and/or poor grasp of appropriate methods	Very limited awareness and use of evidence, and/or very poor grasp of appropriate methods
Quality of writing	Exceptionally fluent and authoritatively written in academic English with correct use of technical terms and stylistically outstanding	Fluent and convincingly written in academic English with correct use of technical terms and stylistically excellent	Clearly written with appropriate use of technical terms, but may contain a few minor grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and infelicities of expression	Adequate level of academic but undermined by a number of misunderstandings of technical terms and/or grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and infelicities of expression	Poorly expressed and unclear prose with significant misunderstandings of technical terms and/or grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and infelicities of expression	Very poorly expressed and unclear writing with many significant misunderstandings of technical terms and/or grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and infelicities of expression

Presentation and referencing	Faultless presentation and referencing consistent with professional standards	Excellent presentation and referencing with no or only the most minor errors	Good presentation and referencing with a few minor errors	Acceptable presentation and referencing but some errors	Poor presentation and barely adequate referencing	Very poor presentation and inadequate referencing
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All work is graded in these bands using our step marking procedure. Marks ending in 2, 5 and 8 are used (e.g. 52, 55 and 58; 62,65 and 68). In addition to the numerical mark, your course tutor will also add written comments. Please ensure that you read these comments carefully.

## 8.4 Referencing

Students should consult the 'Referencing, Sourcing, Plagiarism and Online Submission of Essays' provided by the Department, located on the [PIR Information for Current Students](#) page and also available at <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKewj78P3-ufTcAhVKAcAKHcxID1wQFjAAegQIABAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fintranet.royalholloway.ac.uk%2Fpoliticsandir%2Fdocuments%2Fpdf%2Fpirreferencingguide.pdf&usq=AOvVawo8PBXHwSvUxKSxrSfmd4>

## 8.5 Word counts and penalties for over-length work

The Department expects students to adhere to the word limits set out for assigned essays. Essays and dissertations that are above or below the word limit can be subject to penalties in accordance with the College rules.

Work which is longer than the stipulated length in the assessment brief will be penalised in line with Section 13, paragraph (6) of the College's [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#):

### Section 13 (6)

*Any work (written, oral presentation, film, performance) which exceeds the upper limit set will be penalised as follows*

- (a) *for work which exceeds the upper limit by up to and including 10%, the mark will be reduced by ten percent of the mark initially awarded;*
- (b) *for work which exceeds the upper limit by more than 10% and up to and including 20%, the mark will be reduced by twenty percent of the mark initially awarded;*
- (c) *for work which exceeds the upper limit by more than 20%, the mark will be reduced by thirty percent of the mark initially awarded.*

*The upper limit may be a word limit in the case of written work or a time limit in the case of assessments such as oral work, presentations or films.*

In addition to the text, the word count should include quotations and footnotes. Please note that the following are excluded from the word count: candidate number, title, course title, preliminary pages, bibliography and appendices.

## 8.6 Return of coursework

The following College policy applies to the return of coursework:

Assessed work (other than formal examinations) should be returned within 4 weeks of the submission deadline, except in cases where it is not appropriate to do so for academic reasons. The deadline for the return of marked work should be made clear to students when they receive their assignments. In the event that the intended deadline cannot be met, the revised deadline must be communicated to students as soon as possible.

All comments and marks will be returned electronically via Turnitin on [Moodle](#). The School aims to provide feedback on coursework within 3 weeks.

The full policy on the return of marked student work and feedback is available [here](#).

### **Return of marked student work and feedback**

All assessed work (other than formal examinations) should be returned with feedback within 20 working days\* of the submission deadline, except in cases where it is not appropriate to do so for exceptional and/ or pedagogic reasons. These may include the assessment of dissertations, final year projects, taped case studies, audio visual submissions, where the marking has been delayed due to staff illness and/ or where an extension to the submission deadline has been granted.

The deadline for the return of the marked work with feedback should be made clear to students when they receive their assignments. In the event that the intended deadline cannot be met for reasons such as those listed above, the revised deadline must be communicated to students as soon as possible.

\*Working days are Mondays to Fridays inclusive when the College is open for normal business. This includes periods outside of College term dates (vacation periods). Weekends, Bank holidays and College closure days around Easter and Christmas/ New Year are not regarded as working days (even if the Library is open on some of these days for study purposes).

Please note that even if annual leave is being taken the requirement to return assessed work with feedback within 20 working days of the submission deadline applies. This will mean that when taking annual leave, colleagues may have to manage return of assessments with feedback within a shorter period than 20 days.

### **Forms of feedback<sup>1</sup>**

Feedback should be available for all assessments/assignments, including dissertations, projects and examinations (see guidance below).

Feedback can be provided in a variety of formats. In addition to written/typed/on-line feedback on assignments, feedback can be audio/video recorded, provided verbally in classes/tutorials, etc. Feedback is typically provided by teachers on individual assignments, but can be an overview of the attainment of a group of students, for dissemination to students and possibly to Personal Tutors. Feedback can take the form of both comments relating to specific issues (e.g. marginal comments on written work), and general comments bringing the main points together.

Peer feedback can be a valuable activity for both provider and recipient in developing reflection and understanding.

Opportunities to compare feedback across a number of assessments should be provided to students periodically, e.g. through the Personal Tutor system.

### **Feedback should be clear about academic performance**

The language used in feedback should explicitly match the assessment/marking criteria and attainment level

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<sup>1</sup> **Reference:** David J. Nicol & Debra Macfarlane-Dick (2006) Formative assessment and self-regulated learning: a model and seven principles of good feedback practice, *Studies in Higher Education*, 31:2, 199-218, DOI: 10.1080/03075070600572090

descriptors, which should be provided to the students in advance of completing the assignment. Marking 'rubrics' can be helpful in many circumstances, while also recognising that it will not always be appropriate to deduce a mark mathematically from performance in each of the criteria.

Activities that help students to understand the assessment criteria in advance of being assessed can be extremely helpful. This might include self-assessment, peer-assessment, or assessing 'model' work.

Activities that help students to understand the feedback, for example group discussions, can also be extremely valuable.

### **Feedback should be constructive**

Feedback should carry a respectful tone, and contain a balance of both affirmative and developmental comments. Affirmative comments foster confidence and identify good practices that should be continued. Developmental (feed-forward) comments should always be provided, and clearly identify attainable goals to improve performance in future assignments.

Feedback proformas etc. should be designed to ensure that 'feed-forward' comments, and other good practices, are included. The structure of the feedback might constitute a 'feedback sandwich'. Potentially negative feedback can be framed in a constructive way, for example by commenting on the merits of features that nonetheless warrant further development.

There should be careful consideration of the number of developmental comments in a piece of feedback, avoiding over-long lists, and identifying an attainable number of targeted actions to raise attainment from the current level in a structured feedback section. Comments on less central issues could be made elsewhere (e.g. marginal comments on written work).

Where an assignment has multiple markers, there should be explicit mechanisms to promote consistency in academic expectations, and in feedback approaches/volume.

### **Feedback timing**

Assessment/feedback timings should be planned such that students receive feedback soon enough after the task for it to retain its relevance, and sufficiently in advance of upcoming related assignments to allow students to act upon the feedback.

Feedback should be returned within the College's stipulated maximum feedback deadline (with the exception of specifically exempted assignments), see first section above.

### **Students' use of feedback**

Students should engage with the feedback provided on their assignments at the earliest possible opportunity, to ensure that they understand its relevance to their work, and that they can apply it to their subsequent assignments.

Students should take all of the opportunities provided to obtain and benefit from feedback on their work, and be aware that it may take many forms (e.g. written, verbal, recorded, on line, from peers).

## **8.7 Progression and award requirements**

The Regulations governing progression and award requirements are set out in your Programme Specification [Programme Specification Repository](#) (and also more generally in the [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#)).

The sub-boards may permit resits or resubmissions prior to the start of the next academic year. They will normally only permit this in courses constituting a maximum of 40 credits.

For details on the requirements governing the level of award please see the section on the **Consideration and Classification of Candidates for the Award** in the [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#).

## 8.8 Examination results

Please see the [Examinations & Assessments](#) website for details of how you will be issued with your **results**.

The Examinations & Assessments website is the place where you can access the “[Instructions to Candidates](#)” and details of the examinations **appeals** procedures.

## 8.9 Penalties for late submission of work

Work submitted after the published deadline will be penalised in line with Section 13, paragraph (5) of the College’s [Postgraduate Taught Regulations](#).

### Section 13 (5)

*'In the absence of acceptable extenuating cause, late submission of work will be penalised as follows:*

- *for work submitted up to 24 hours late, the mark will be reduced by ten percentage marks;*
- *for work submitted more than 24 hours late, the mark will be zero.'*

If you believe that you will be unable to submit coursework on time because of illness or other acceptable causes then you should apply for an extension to allow you to submit the work late without suffering a penalty. If you did not request an extension but then miss a deadline due to factors which have affected your ability to submit work on time, then you may submit a request for extenuating circumstances to be considered. Please note however that if you do so, you will have to provide convincing reasons why you had been unable to request an extension.

## 8.10 What to do if things go wrong – Extensions to deadlines

You are expected to manage your time appropriately and hand in your coursework assessments on time. However, unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances may occasionally arise which prevent you from doing so. In this case you should apply for a deadline extension using the College’s online extension application system. You can read the policy and guidance on extensions on the College’s webpage about [Applying for an Extension](#).

Not every assessment is eligible for an extension via the online system. Listed below are those assessments that are not covered. If you would like an extension for one of these, you should speak directly with staff in your departmental Administrative Office.

Extensions can be requested for written work throughout the year. Extensions can’t be granted for dissertations or oral work.

## 8.11 What to do if things go wrong – the “Extenuating Circumstances” process.

If you are unable to submit coursework because of unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances then you should normally apply for an extension (see above) to allow you to submit the work late without suffering a penalty. If this proves impossible then you may apply for extenuating circumstances, which will be considered by the department after the main exam period in May.

Extenuating circumstances are defined as unforeseen *circumstances which are **outside a student’s control** and which may **temporarily** prevent a student from undertaking an assessment or have a **marked/ significant detrimental/adverse impact** on their ability to undertake assessment by coursework or examination to the standard normally expected*. You can read more about them [here](#).

This means that such circumstances rarely occur. They are outside your control if they are:

- Unforeseeable - you would not have prior knowledge of the event (e.g. you cannot foresee whether you will be involved in a car accident);
- Unpreventable – you could not reasonably do anything in your power to prevent such an event (e.g. you cannot reasonably prevent a burst appendix.)

It is these short-term (temporary) circumstances that the College normally regards as extenuating circumstances. The policy is explained in full in the [Extenuating circumstances – Guidance for students](#).

### Absence from an examination

[Section 5](#) above explains what to do on the day you miss an examination. You should apply for extenuating circumstances if you miss an examination through unexpected illness or other acceptable cause; if you begin an examination and have to leave due to acute illness; or if you believe your performance on the day was seriously compromised by an unexpected and acute illness that you could not reasonably have been expected to have managed otherwise.

### Applying for extenuating circumstances

If you apply for extenuating circumstances, you will need to supply a full explanation of your situation together with any supporting documentation. Before going ahead, you should check that your circumstances meet the criteria. These are explained in full in the [Extenuating circumstances – Guidance for students](#). You should also read the section **Illness & absences from an examination and departmental assessments and extenuating circumstances** in the [Instructions to Candidates](#) issued by Student Administration.

### Ongoing circumstances

If you have ongoing circumstances that you believe are adversely affecting your performance during the year, these should be raised with your department and with the College’s Student Advisory & Wellbeing teams as soon as possible. This will allow us to consider strategies that will help you manage the situation. Examples might be that you have an illness that does not constitute a disability, a close family member is ill and needs your support, or you have suffered an adverse life event.

It may be that the circumstances are severely affecting your ability to study by causing you to repeatedly miss scheduled teaching and/ or affecting your ability to complete assessments. If this is the case and there is no reasonable way to help you to manage the situation, then you may need to consider, in consultation with your department and Student Advisory & Wellbeing, if it would be in your best interests to interrupt until the issues have been resolved and you are able to fully commit to and benefit from your academic studies.

Ongoing adverse circumstances do not normally constitute extenuating circumstances as they are not unforeseen and in some cases may be preventable. As such, it is unlikely that the Sub-board will be able to take action to mitigate such circumstances. For further information, please read the [Extenuating circumstances – Guidance for students](#).

## 8.12 Support and exam access arrangements for students requiring support

Some students at the College may have a physical or mental impairment, chronic medical condition or a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) which would count as a disability as defined by the Equality Act (2010) that is, “a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. It is for such conditions and SpLDs that [Disability and Dyslexia Services](#) can put in place adjustments, support and exam access arrangements. Please note that a “long-term” impairment is one that has lasted or is likely to last for 12 months or more.

If you have a disability or SpLD you must register with the [Disability and Dyslexia Services Office](#) for an assessment of your needs before adjustments, support and exam access arrangements (\*) can be put in place. There is a process to apply for special arrangements for your examinations – these are not automatically put



in place. Disability and Dyslexia Services can discuss this process with you when you register with them. Please see section 2 above for further guidance about registering with the Disability and Dyslexia Services Office.

Please note that if reasonable adjustments, including exam access arrangements, have been put in place for you during the academic year, the Sub-board will not make further allowance in relation to your disability or SpLD.

### 8.13 What to do if you have difficulty writing legibly

It is College policy not to mark scripts which are illegible. If you anticipate that you may have difficulty in writing by hand which would lead to your scripts being illegible you should contact [Disability and Dyslexia Services](#). Please note the deadline for making an application for Examination Access Arrangements is in January each year. Therefore it is in your interest to contact DDS as soon as you are able in the Autumn Term in order that you have time to get any necessary evidence required for the application.

### 8.14 Academic Misconduct

The College regulations on academic misconduct (also known as assessment offences) can found on the [Attendance and Academic Regulations page](#) of the student intranet.

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to plagiarism (see below), commissioning, duplication of work, (that is, submitting work for assessment which has already been submitted for assessment for the same or another course), falsification, impersonation, deception, collusion, (for example, group working would constitute collusion where the discipline or the method of assessment emphasises independent study and collective ideas are presented as uniquely those of the individual submitting the work), failure to comply with the rules governing assessment, including those set out in the 'Instructions to candidates'.

The Regulations set out some of the types of academic misconduct in more detail, the procedures for investigation into allegations of such offences and the penalties. Students are strongly encouraged to read these Regulations and to speak with their Personal Tutors or other members of staff in their department should they have any queries about what constitutes academic misconduct. The College treats academic misconduct very seriously and misunderstanding about what constitutes academic misconduct will not be accepted as an excuse. Similarly, extenuating circumstances cannot excuse academic misconduct.

#### What is Plagiarism?

'Plagiarism' means the presentation of another person's work in any quantity without adequately identifying it and citing its source in a way which is consistent with good scholarly practice in the discipline and commensurate with the level of professional conduct expected from the student. The source which is plagiarised may take any form (including words, graphs and images, musical texts, data, source code, ideas or judgements) and may exist in any published or unpublished medium, including the internet. Plagiarism may occur in any piece of work presented by a student, including examination scripts, although standards for citation of sources may vary dependent on the method of assessment.

Identifying plagiarism is a matter of expert academic judgement, based on a comparison across the student's work and on knowledge of sources, practices and expectations for professional conduct in the discipline. Therefore it is possible to determine that an offence has occurred from an assessment of the student's work alone, without reference to further evidence.

## 9 The dissertation

The dissertation is the culmination of independent supervised research and should be 10-12,000 words in length. This word count includes the over and under-length limits. If your dissertation is longer than 12,000 words or shorter than 10,000 words, your marks will be reduced accordingly.

Schedule for dissertation preparation and submission:

- Beginning of Spring Term: students will be provided with an opportunity to indicate their preferred supervisor (it is expected that students will have approached their preferred supervisor in the final weeks of the Autumn Term). Shortly afterwards the department will make a decision about the allocation of supervisors.
- 25 February 2019: Submission of Dissertation Outline
- 29 August 2019: Submission of Final Dissertation

*Note: this schedule is the same for part-time students in their second year, although part-time students are encouraged to decide on their topic and discuss the matter with their potential supervisor by the end of their first year.*

The department **does not grant extensions to the final dissertation deadline given above**. However, we recognise that students may be affected by extenuating circumstances. For more information on extenuating circumstances, please see the online webpages. If you have been affected by extenuating circumstances, please ensure that the Department Manager (Viviane Schroeder) and your supervisor are contacted as soon as possible. Please also bear in mind that any applications for consideration of extenuating circumstances must be supported by medical or other supporting evidence.

### 9.1 Choice of dissertation topic

The dissertation allows students to pursue topics of interest without the restrictions of a taught course with a specific content. They only require a fit with the general themes and concerns of the MSc programme being studied. Students should feel free to pursue the topics that truly interest them, although it is hoped that they will take advantage of the research specialisms available in the Department.

In the first instance students need to choose a topic with sufficient specificity that a discussion can begin with the supervisor over what the project can become. Students work with their supervisor to develop a proper thesis or research question to pursue. The dissertation outline that students submit to their supervisor's aims to help students focus their topic.

### 9.2 The dissertation supervisor

While students will have an opportunity to express a preference about which supervisor they work under, the final decision about supervision will be taken by the department, as not all supervisors will be supervising the same number of students. In most cases students are happy with the supervisory relationship. However, there are occasions where for some reason the supervisory relationship does not work and breaks down. If this happens, you should speak as soon as possible with the Programme Director or your Personal Tutor to see whether the problem can be resolved informally, e.g. through mediation, changing supervisor. You should not wait until after you have received your final degree results to raise the matter as it is very difficult for the College to resolve such matters or take remedial action at that point.

Students should feel free to discuss their ideas for a dissertation with members of staff during the Autumn Term or the start of the Spring Term, when it will be possible for students to inform the Department about their preferred supervisor. After supervisors are determined, students should arrange to meet for supervision meetings. **It is the student's responsibility to contact supervisors to arrange meetings and to keep the supervisor informed of the progress of the research.**

After Spring Term, academics no longer have fixed office hours. From this point, students should arrange appointments with their supervisors by email. It is recommended that students see their supervisor at least three times before the end of Summer term. Once Summer term ends, many academics will leave to carry out research overseas; supervisors will continue to assist you by email, and if appropriate meetings can be arranged. Between 29<sup>rd</sup> April and 14<sup>th</sup> June it is important students remain in regular dialogue with their supervisors about progress being made or problems arising.

Supervisors will not read full drafts of dissertations but can read draft sections of up to 3,000 words if this is emailed to them by 31st July 2019. Supervisors will not comment on material sent after 31st July. This cut-off date has been chosen as the dissertation is a piece of independent supervised research and the final text should represent the student's work, not the joint work of the student and supervisor. Furthermore, a four week period provides a reasonable timeframe (two to three weeks) for the supervisor to read their students' work and for students to incorporate the comments.

### 9.3 Content of dissertation

A dissertation may be either a critical analysis of a theoretical problem or the result of an empirical project. In either case it must review the literature and include a full bibliography. There is no one prescribed structure for dissertations. There must be a statement of the aims of the dissertation either as the first section or included in the Introduction. We generally recommend subdivision into sections or chapters, including an Introduction and a Conclusion (5-7 chapters would not be unreasonable). Judicious use of subheadings within chapters can be helpful to readers but remember to be consistent about style (use of bold type, italics, etc.) for a given level of heading.

You may wish to include additional material in appendices, for example, depending on your topic, supplementary statistical material, extracts from official publications, a technical glossary, literature search strategies, methodological details, etc. All essential material, however, should be contained in the main text.

Before proceeding to write the dissertation students have the opportunity to submit a research outline to their supervisors for discussion. The outline is meant to assist students in preparing their research strategies and clarifying the tasks that need to be undertaken to complete a satisfactory piece of work. There is flexibility in the structure of the outline, but it should contain the information as outlined below.

#### GUIDELINES FOR DISSERTATION OUTLINE

1. **Title:** This should be carefully phrased to give a clear indication of the aim of the project and should not be too long. Direct the reader's attention explicitly to the central problem.
2. **Problem or Issue:** There is a central issue or group of related issues at the core of any project. You should say what the problem for investigation is, provide a context for its consideration and a justification of its importance for study. Delineate the crucial aspects of the problem requiring investigation and what areas will need to be considered to provide a better understanding of the chosen problem. Your case for studying an issue and the strategy with which you approach it will be strengthened if you demonstrate that the subject has not been adequately dealt with in the existing literature. You will not be able to review all the relevant literature but you should be able to reflect some major differences of viewpoint or approach by becoming familiar with some of the principal works that have touched on the problem. These should be stated succinctly, not summarised extensively. Remember that there is a significant difference between a field of enquiry (e.g. international finance) and a specific problem (e.g. the feasibility of control by national states over capital flows).
3. **Theoretical Framework:** This is where you consider the means appropriate for understanding and confronting your research question. What this involves is a discussion of the theoretical elements and guiding assumptions of the study. Whatever your approach there will be some hypothesis that will guide your research and that will suggest which factors or variables of the problem must be investigated in order to answer your central question.
4. **Structure of Argument:** This should be a rough outline of the way in which the research will be reported. This requires a chapter outline presented not just as a list, but as a logically connected series of distinct

points. It could finish with mention of the principal points on which you would expect to be able to reach a conclusion (but, of course, not the conclusions themselves).

5. **Bibliography:** List the principal sources that will be used to guide research with reference to: the theoretical framework; the substance of research; primary sources; possible interviews or databases.

Please NOTE: all sections should reinforce each other and stand together as a coherent whole. For example, discussion of the problem will be influenced by the choices made regarding the theoretical framework and will make reference to texts in the bibliography.

#### Rough Guide to Length and Space Allocation

Problem: 1-2 pages

Theoretical Framework: ½ page

Structure of Argument: 1 page

Bibliography: 1 page

Total: 4-5 pages

### 9.4 Presentation

The dissertation should be a Word document, with either 1.5 or double spacing for the main text, and include a bibliography following a recognised style (preferably Harvard). Pages must be numbered. A high standard of presentation, grammar and spelling is expected.

**Length:** The dissertation should be between 10,000 and 12,000 words, excluding abstract, contents page, bibliography, and appendices.

If you are in receipt of a green sticker from the Disability and Dyslexia Services Office (DDS) you will need to include the words 'GREEN STICKER' in the header of your submission to let the marker know and include one of the green stickers on the front page of each hard copy.

#### **Format:**

- **Cover Sheet:** a cover sheet is required and must include:
  1. your candidate number
  2. title of dissertation
  3. the degree course for which it is being submitted (e.g. MSc Media, Power and Public Relations; Royal Holloway, University of London)
  4. date of submission.
- **Abstract:** an abstract of approximately 100-200 words of the dissertation must be included following the cover sheet.
- **Contents page(s):** follows the abstract

There are no restrictions to the colour of the text; it would be recommended that the text colour is black however colour may be used if the student feels that it is appropriate.

Students should hand in 2 hard copies to the PIR Admin office (FW139). If students wish to post the hard copy, we would recommend that it is sent by recorded delivery. It is their responsibility up until the hard copy is received by the office.

Examples of past years' dissertations are available on [Moodle](#) for you to consult with in respect to format and organisation. Any quotation from previously submitted dissertations requires the permission of the author and must be fully acknowledged.

There are many published study guides which cover research projects, dissertations, etc., some of which are held in the Bedford Library. Three you may find useful are:

Lisa Harrison, *Political Research: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2001).

David M. Silbergh, *Doing Dissertations in Politics: a student guide* (Routledge, 2001).

C. Hart, *Doing a Literature Review* (Sage, 1998).

## 10 Careers information

The College's **Careers & Employability Service** is based in the Davison Building. The careers service run a number of industry themed weeks and a range of standalone events during the academic year including a careers fair in October. Our events are open to all students. 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.

Our website and Careers Moodle has a wide range of help and information including interview skills, writing CVs and applications, assessment centres & psychometric tests. For more information about all Careers events and appointments visit their website or come along and speak to their friendly and helpful staff.

## 11 Complaints and academic appeals procedure

If you have a complaint relating to any aspect of the Department or its staff or to any academic or College matter, you should first discuss it informally with your Personal Tutor or with another member of staff in the Department. We would hope that the majority of issues of this kind can be resolved by informal discussion. There are, however, procedures that can be invoked in serious cases. These are set out in the [College Complaints Procedures](#) for students. You should raise your complaint **as soon as possible**.

If the complaint concerns an academic decision, there is an academic appeals process. Please note that an academic appeal can only be submitted once you have received your results via the College portal. Details of the appeals procedure and permitted grounds for appeal can be found on the [Academic Appeals webpage](#).

## 12 Health and Safety Information

The [Health and Safety webpage](#) provides general information about our health and safety policies.

### 12.1 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](#).

### 12.2 Lone working policy and procedures

The College has a 'Lone Working Policy and Procedure' that can be found [here](#).

Lone working is defined as working during either normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace or when working outside of normal hours. The Department and the type of work conducted by students is classified as a low risk activity and as such the following advice is relevant.

Any health and safety concerns should be brought to the attention of the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator (Viviane Schroeder) or the College Health and Safety Office.

It is likely that most activities will take place on College premises. However, the principles contained in the above section will apply to students undertaking duties off campus.



## 13 Equal Opportunities Statement and College Codes of Practice

### 13.1 Equal opportunities statement

The University of London was established to provide education on the basis of merit above and without regard to race, creed or political belief and was the first university in the United Kingdom to admit women to its degrees.

Royal Holloway, University of London (hereafter 'the College') is proud to continue this tradition, and to commit itself to equality of opportunity in employment, admissions and in its teaching, learning and research activities.

The College is committed to ensure that:

- all staff, students, applicants for employment or study, visitors and other persons in contact with the College are treated fairly, have equality of opportunity and do not suffer disadvantage on the basis of race, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, age, marital or parental status, dependants, disability, sexual orientation, religion, political belief or social origins
- both existing staff and students, as well as, applicants for employment or admission are treated fairly and individuals are judged solely on merit and by reference to their skills, abilities qualifications, aptitude and potential
- it puts in place appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity
- teaching, learning and research are free from all forms of discrimination and continually provide equality of opportunity
- all staff, students and visitors are aware of the Equal Opportunities Statement through College publicity material
- it creates a positive, inclusive atmosphere, based on respect for diversity within the College
- it conforms to all provisions as laid out in legislation promoting equality of opportunity.

### 13.2 Additional codes of practice

A complete list of the College's codes of practice that are relevant to students is available at:

<http://golive.rhul.ac.uk/ecampus/onlinestudenthandbook.aspx>