DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND PHILOSOPHY
SCHOOL OF LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024/2025

Contents

1 Introduction to your department

1.1 Welcome

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

Welcome to the Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy, which is part of the School of Law and Social Sciences. 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 University 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, the School and the University can support you academically and personally. We encourage you to read the handbook thoroughly in the first week of term.

We realise that you may have questions about your course that are not answered in this handbook. The 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 tutor (an academic member of staff assigned to each student who can provide academic and welfare advice) will be particularly important in helping you. We have listed all members of staff in order that you can find out the different things that they each teach, research, and administer.

The Department offers five different postgraduate taught courses in Politics and International Relations and three different programmes in Philosophy. Further details specific to these courses are featured later in the handbook. All courses offer a mixture of mandatory modules, subject-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, debates, institutions, and practices in the disciplines of politics, international relations and philosophy generally and more specifically in sub-disciplines related to individual course streams;
- to encourage a critical awareness of current problems and developments in political science, international relations and philosophy generally and in specific sub-disciplines related to individual courses
- to provide theoretical insights and methodological techniques relevant to the creation and interpretation of knowledge in politics, international relations and philosophy to the critical evaluation of current research and advanced scholarship in each field;
- to provide training in research techniques in the field of study;
- to foster independent learning abilities 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, International Relations and Philosophy, 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.

12   How to find us: the Department

Academic staff in the Department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy are located on the ground floor of McCrea Building. The School of Law and Social Science Administrative Office is located next to the main Entrance of the building in McCrea 1-01. This can be found on the University **campus map** (Building 4)

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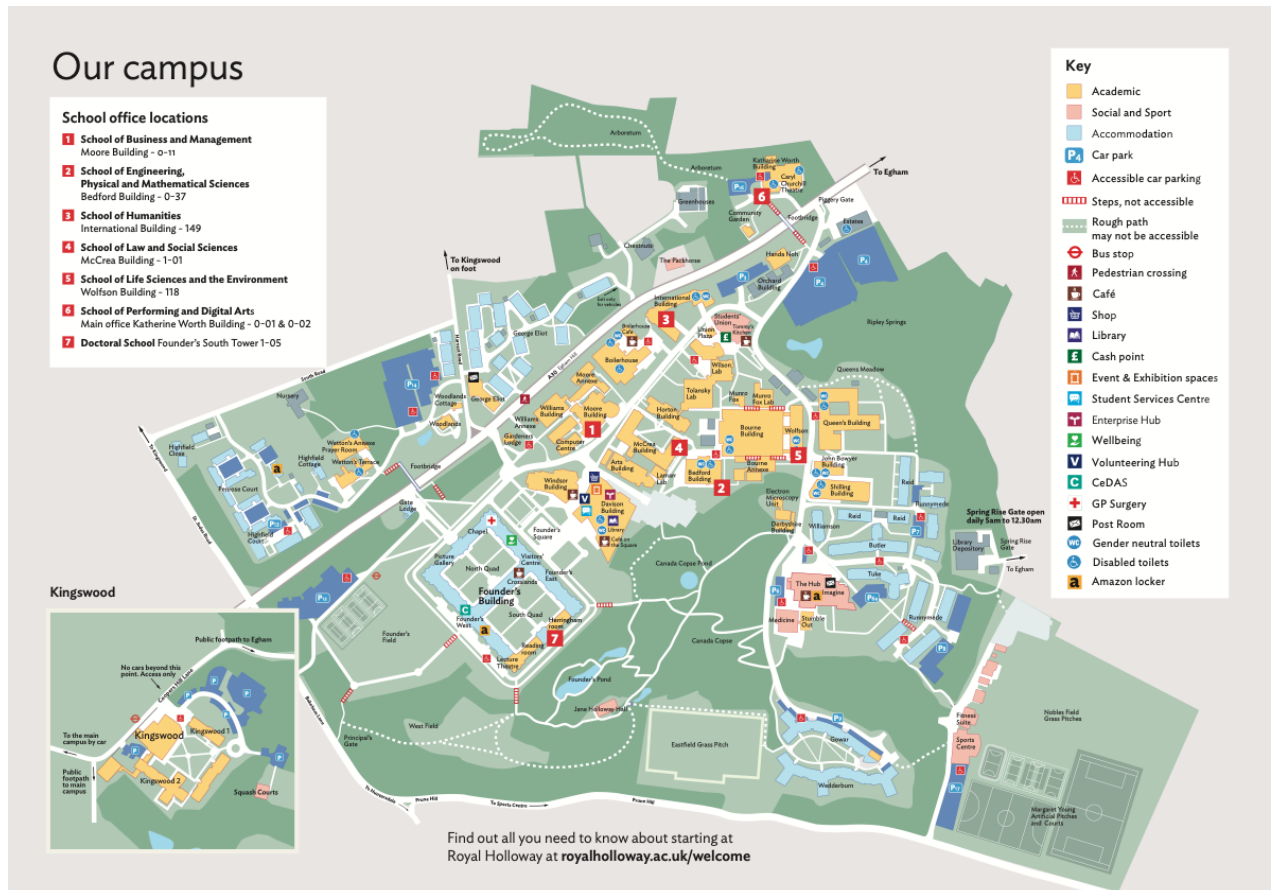
Please note, student parking is very limited and is not available if you live in Halls or within 1.5 miles of campus. If you do live more than 1.5 miles away or have a particular reason why you need to come to campus by car, you must apply for a parking permit. If you have a motorbike or scooter, you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

14 How to find us: the staff

Head of School: Professor Mathew Humphreys
Email: Matthew.Humphreys@rhul.ac.uk; Tel. 01784 44 6482; Office: McCrea 1-01

Head of Department: Professor Laura Sjoberg
Email: laura.sjoberg@rhul.ac.uk; Tel. 1784 276407; Office: McCrea 1-05

Academic Staff: A full list of academic staff and key contacts for Politics and International Relations and for Philosophy can be found on the website

School Manager: Moya Watson
Email: Moya.Watson@rhul.ac.uk; Tel. 01784 44 3564; Office: McCrea 1-01

Help desk & Student and Programme Officer: James McEwan
Email: James.McEwan@rhul.ac.uk; Tel. 01784 27 6883; Office: McCrea 1-01

Disability and Dyslexia Services Network Member : James McEwan
Email: James.McEwan@rhul.ac.uk
Tel: 01784 286 883
Office: McCrea 1-01

1.5   How to find us: The School office

The School admin office is located in Room 1-01 in the McCrea building. Please note the office opening hours will be from 10am-4pm (Monday – Friday).

1.6   The Department: practical information

Postgraduate enquiries should in the first instance be directed to the Helpdesk via email (LSS-School@rhul.ac.uk).

1.7   Staff research interests

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

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

Dr Michael Bankole: British politics, race and ethnicity, racism, intersectionality, political representation, political participation, social movements.

Dr Janina Beiser-McGrath: Ethnic politics, authoritarian politics, political violence and quantitative methods.

Dr 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.

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

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

Dr Andreu Casas: Political communication, policymaking, computational methods, social movements, digital media.

Dr Antara Datta: South Asian history and politics, with special focus on the politics of forced migration, and gendered communities in South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.

Professor Gavin Drewry (Emeritus): The interrelationships between politics, public administration and public law, legal institutions and the administration of legal services, parliamentary select committees and the legislative process, the political and constitutional implications of capital punishment.

Professor 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.

Dr Suki Finn: Logic, metametaphysics, metaphysics of pregnancy

Dr Yoav Galai: Narrative politics, visual politics and Israel-Palestine.

Dr Neil Gascoigne: Pragmatism, epistemology, metaphilosophy, philosophy and literature.

Dr Kat Gupta: Gender, LGBTQ+, media representation, language and linguistics, critical discourse analysis, queer theory.

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

Dr Ibrahim Halawi: Revolution and counterrevolution, Middle East Politics, critical political theory and post-colonialism

Professor Sandra Halperin (Emeritus): Global development, the causes and conditions of war and peace, Middle East politics.

Professor Chris Hanretty: Election forecasting; public opinion; constituency representation; judicial politics; West European politics; quantitative methods.

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

Dr Lyn Johnstone: The politics of Africa, postcolonial studies and normative international relations theory.

Dr William Jones: Refugee politics, politics of Africa (particularly Rwanda), Diasporas, mobilisation, authoritarianism, conflict and fragile states, refugee resettlement and relocation policy.

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

Dr Daniela Lai: Transitional justice and peacebuilding; gender and post-war transitions; feminist political economy; qualitative methods; politics of the Balkans.

Dr Manhua Li: Ascetics and practices of the self in Western and Chinese philosophy

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

Dr 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.

Professor Jennifer Piscopo: Gender, women, and politics; political representation; elections; legislative behaviour; Latin American and US politics.

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

Dr Chris Prosser: Political behaviour, political psychology, elections, British politics, comparative politics, quantitative methods

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

Dr Nat Rutherford: Disagreement over values, Marx and Marxist thought, political legitimacy, peace, political violence, methods in political theory.

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

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

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

Professor Laura Sjoberg: Gender, Sexuality, International Security, Women's Political Violence, Political Methodology, Just War

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

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

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

Dr Miriam Sorace: Quantitative research methods, European political behaviour and public opinion, gendered political behaviour, comparative political institutions and decision-making, and the politics of Brexit.

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

Professor Joost van Spanje: Political behaviour, comparative politics, elections, campaigns, public opinion, political journalism.

Dr Gauri Wagle: Contemporary democratic theory, political imagination, systemic and especially racial inequalities, international political economy.

Dr Tom Watts: American foreign and security policy, remote warfare, and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Professor Daniel Whistler: German Idealism, 18th-century European philosophy, philosophy of religion and philosophy of literature.

Professor Nathan Widder: Contemporary post-Nietzschean political theory and philosophy and the history of political and philosophical thought.

2   Support and advice

Support from the University

We stand resolute in our commitment to fostering a safe, equal, and inclusive learning environment. and campus life. In that pursuit, we have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of discrimination and unacceptable behaviour in our institution: bullying, harassment, unlawful discrimination or victimisation. We have implemented a comprehensive set of policies in which all allegations of discrimination: race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and socioeconomic status, will be investigated, and if appropriate, disciplinary action will be taken. We also firmly believe that education and awareness are crucial for combating discrimination. So we have been providing mandatory diversity and inclusion training for all members of our community, so that

they are equipped with the tools and knowledge needed to navigate the complexities of a diverse world with sensitivity and empathy. While we take pride in our accomplishments, we recognise that the journey towards equality and inclusion is still long. We are aware that structural injustices outside our campus inevitably make their way in, particularly in social dynamics, access to resources and support, as well as the very knowledge that is being promoted and exchanged. So, we regularly assess our policies, initiatives, and practices to adapt and evolve in response to the ever-changing social and political landscape, and to identify areas of improvement based on feedback, experience, and research. Our student-led support groups and organisations serve as vital platforms for feedback, advocacy, solidarity, empowerment, and community-building. We invite you to be part of this transformative journey, which is central to our collective prosperity and academic success. Here's a list of relevant contact details and resources available to students in relation to our equality, diversity, and inclusion pledge.

COLLEGE RESOURCES:

- RH Be Heard is a new way for you to report issues in one place, through one simple online form. Whether you have a concern, need to resolve complaint, or report misconduct that you experience or witness, RH Be Heard makes sure that we can help.
- https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/wellbeing/rhbeheard.aspx

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub: https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/campus-life/equalitydiversity-and-inclusion/equality-diversity-and-inclusion.aspx

- Security: 01784 443888 or 444 from internal phone lines. securityrhul@royalholloway.ac.uk or drop into the Security Office on the ground floor of Founder's East, next to the Visitor's Centre

- Health emergency services: 101 (Surrey police), 111 (non-emergency), 119 (Covid-19 related), 999 (emergency)

- Student Counselling: 01784 443128 or https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/helpsupport/counselling/home.aspx

- Student Wellbeing: wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Disability and Neurodiversity team: 01784 414621 or disability-dyslexia@royalholloway.ac.uk , or https://intranet.royalholloway.ac.uk/students/help-support/disabilities-and-dyslexia/home.aspx

- International Student Support: internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Multifaith Chaplaincy: chaplaincy@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Royal Holloway Students' Union Advice Centre: advice@su.rhul.ac.uk

- Accessibility: www.accessable.co.uk/royal-holloway-university-of-london

SCHOOL OF LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES – STUDENT SUPPORT GROUPS

First Generation Students Support Group: Janina.Beiser-McGrath@rhul.ac.uk

Woman of Colour Students Support Group: Gauri.Wagle@rhul.ac.uk

Muslim Students Support Group: Mohammadreza.Kalantari@rhul.ac.uk

Black, African and Caribbean Student Support Group: Michael.Bankole@rhul.ac.uk

2.1 Support within your School

The School Helpdesk is there to help you with any questions or concerns you might have about your studies.
It is situated in McCrea 1-01, our Term Time opening hours are - 10am – 4pm, Monday - Friday.

3   Communication

3.1   Notice boards.

Notices and events will be posted on Moodle or via group email. Very occasionally changes have to be made
at short notice and, in that case, email will be used.

It is your responsibility to check the times and venues of all class meetings and of any requirements (e.g. essay deadlines)
relating to your courses, so, if in doubt, please ask!

3.1 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 module
conveners, tutors, and department administrative staff should also be treated as contacts where
appropriate.

3.2 Questionnaires

Students are asked to complete evaluation forms at the end of each module, which will done via an online
form. In addition, verbal feedback is sought via student-staff committees. We continually strive to improve
and develop our programmes and highly value the feedback from students. Feedback from students and the
external examiners is also addressed in the quality assurance report provided annually for the University.

4   Teaching

4.1   Study Weeks

Term dates for the year are as follows.

Autumn Term: Monday 30 September to Friday 13 December 2024

Autumn Term Study Week: Monday 4 November to Friday 8 November

Spring term: Monday 13 January to Thursday Friday 4 April 2025
Spring Term Study Week: Monday 24 February to Friday 28 February 2025

Summer term: Monday 7 April to Friday 13 June 2025

Please note there is no teaching during the summer term.

5   Degree Structure

51   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, modules which make up the degree course and any course-specific regulations are set out in the degree course specification document available through Course Finder or the Degree Course Library. The basic outline of each course is set out in the chart below.

For a **postgraduate taught degree**, your complete registrations must add up to **180 credits**, including the dissertation (60 credits). The degree programmes are also offered at **Postgraduate Diploma** level 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. Students who are successful on the diploma may transfer to the MSc/MA subject to academic approval.

Politics and International Relations

	Core Modules	Compulsory Modules	Option Modules
MSc Elections, Campaigns and Democracy	PR5430 – Dissertation PR5600 – Introduction to Research Methods PR5944 – Elections and Campaigning	Choose one module from: PR5601 – Advanced Quantitative Methods PR5602 – Advanced Qualitative Methods Choose one module from: PR5942 – Public Opinion PR5964 – Strategic Political Communication	Two option modules from those available in your year of study (including the remaining compulsory module on the left)
MSc/PG Dip International Public Policy and Development	PR5600 – Introduction to Research Methods PR5948 – International Public Policy PR5952 – The Politics of Development PR5430 – Dissertation (for those on the MSc programme)	Choose one module from: PR5601 – Advanced Quantitative Methods PR5602 – Advanced Qualitative Methods	Two option modules from those available in your year of study
MSc/PG Diploma International Relations	PR5432 – Analysing International Politics PR5600 – Introduction to Research Methods	Choose one module from: PR5601 – Advanced Quantitative	Three option modules from those available in your year of study

		Methods PR5602 – Advanced Qualitative Methods	
	PR5430 – Dissertation (for those on the MSc programme)		
MSc International Security	PR5430 – Dissertation PR5600 – Introduction to Research Methods PR5924 – International Security	Choose one module from: PR5601 – Advanced Quantitative Methods PR5602 – Advanced Qualitative Methods	Three option modules from those available in your year of study

Course	Core Modules	Compulsory Modules	Option Modules
MSc/PG Diploma Media Power and Public Affairs	PR5422 – Media, Power and Public Affairs PR5600 – Introduction to Research Methods PR5430 – Dissertation (for those on the MSc programme)	Choose one module from: PR5601 – Advanced Quantitative Methods PR5602 – Advanced Qualitative Methods Choose one module from: PR5907 – Media, War and Conflict PR5964 – Strategic Political Communication PR5965 – Parties, Media and Defence of Democracy	Two option modules from those available in your year of study (including the remaining compulsory module on the left)

Philosophy

Course	Core Modules	Compulsory Modules	Option Modules
MA European Philosophy	PY5000 – Advanced Topics in Philosophy PY5001 – Dissertation	Two modules from among: PR5416 – Contemporary Continental Political Theory PY5002 – The European Philosophical Trajectory PY5003 – Twentieth Century French Philosophy	Two additional modules those available in your year of study (this may include the third among the European philosophy compulsory modules listed to the left of this box).
MA Modern Philosophy	PY5000 – Advanced Topics in Philosophy PY5001 – Dissertation	PY5002 – The European Philosophical Trajectory PY5004 – Legacies of Wittgenstein	Two additional modules from those available in your year of study
MA Political Philosophy	PY5000 – Advanced Topics in Philosophy PY5001 – Dissertation	PR5416 – Political Concepts PR5418 – Contemporary Continental Political Theory	Two additional modules from those available in your year of study

52   Change of degree course

You may apply to transfer from one degree course to another within the common curriculum where provision is made for this in the course specification. If you are on a student visa, however, there may be additional complications that rule out this possibility.

Further information about changing programmes is available in Section 8 of the Postgraduate Taught Regulations

6   Facilities

6.1   Facilities and resources within your department

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

6.2   The Library

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

Details, including information on 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 Greg Leurs, who can be contacted at greg.leurs@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.

6.3   Photocopying and Printing

The departmental printers and photocopier are reserved for staff use. Copier-printers (MFDs) for students are 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. Alternatively, there are computers available for your use in the Library and Computer Centre.

6.4   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 University card.

How to find an available PC

7   Assessment Information

7.1   Anonymous marking and cover sheets

The Department is committed to the principle of anonymous marking of assessments wherever possible. When submitting work through Moodle all work remains anonymised until marks and comments are released back to students. **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 or in the header of your work.

You are not required to submit your work with a cover sheet but you should declare your word count under the title of your essay.

7.2   Submission of work

The following University policy applies to the return of coursework:

Assessed work (other than formal examinations) should be returned within 15 working days 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 Department aims to provide feedback on coursework within 15 working days.

7.3   Penalties for over-length work

Work which is longer than the stipulated length in the assessment brief will be penalised in line with section 13, paragraph (7) of the University's Academic Taught Regulations

Section 13 (7)
Any work may not be marked beyond the upper limit set. 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 or presentations. In the case of presentations these may be stopped once they exceed the upper time limit.

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.

7.4   Penalties for late submission
Work submitted after the published deadline will be penalised in line with the University's Postgraduate Regulations

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

(a)For work submitted up to 24 hours late, the mark will be reduced by ten percentage marks;*
(b)For work submitted more than 24 hours late, the maximum mark will be zero

*eg. An awarded mark of 65% would be reduced to 55% and a mark of 42% would be reduced to 32%.

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.

7.5   Coursework Essays and Dissertation

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 noon on the submission date or penalties for late submission will be applied in accordance with the University 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.

Dissertation

The dissertation is the culmination of independent supervised research and should be 10 -12,000 words in length. If your dissertation is longer than 12,000 words, your work will be marked in accordance with University regulations on overlength work.

Schedules for dissertation preparation and submission for Politics/International Relations and for Philosophy are as follows. (**Note: All Submissions made through Moodle must be uploaded by 12:00 Noon**)

Politics and International Relations

- **Autumn Term:** The compulsory methods training module, PR5600, has a strong focus on research design, and students will be supported to develop their ideas for a dissertation proposal that is the last assignment for the module. During this time, students should also start thinking about their preferred supervisors, based on their intended dissertation topic and staff's research interests. They are welcome to approach members of staff to discuss supervision, although supervision allocations are made centrally.
- **13 January 2025:** Submission of Dissertation Outline (as part of PR5600)
- **25th July 2025:** Submission of a maximum 3,000-word writing sample to supervisors for comments (optional)
- **22nd August 2025:** Submission of Final Dissertation

Philosophy

- Students should approach members of staff to discuss your topic and potential supervision in the Autumn Term or by the beginning of the Spring Term.
- **17th January 2025:** A short title, 1-2 sentence description, and any request regarding dissertation supervisor should be emailed to the MA Philosophy programme director, who will make supervision allocations
- **24th February 2025:** Submission of a short (4-5 page) dissertation proposal to the dissertation supervisor
- **25th July 2025:** Submission of a maximum 3,000-word writing sample to supervisors for comments (optional)
- **22nd August 2025:** Submission of Final Dissertation

Note: these schedules are 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. Part-time Politics and International Relations students who submitted a dissertation outline in PR5600 in their

first year do not have to submit another dissertation outline.

Students cannot apply for an extension for their dissertation. Students who have been affected by extenuating circumstances will have the opportunity to submit an application to have these circumstances considered by the Department Assessment Board. For more information on extenuating circumstances, please see the online webpages. If you have been affected by extenuating circumstances, please ensure that the School Manager (Moya Watson) 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.

7.6   Dissertation Supervisor

The department will assign you a dissertation supervisor who will oversee your work. 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 PGT Director or your Personal Tutor to see whether the problem can be resolved informally, e.g. through mediation or by 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 University to resolve such matters or take remedial action at that point.

Students can express their preference for a supervisor when they are submitting their dissertation outlines. Effort will be made to accommodate the students' wishes in this regard but due to limited staff availability this may not always be possible. 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.**

7.7   Content of Dissertation

A dissertation may be a critical analysis of a theoretical problem or the result of an empirical project; a dissertation in Philosophy may be a critical analysis of a philosophical problem, a focused engagement with a particular philosopher or group of philosophers, or a work of applied philosophy that might involve empirical research and material. Dissertations may take other forms as well. In all cases, however, they will involve a review of relevant literature and debates that define the field in which the dissertation is intervening, and they will 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.

7.8   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 MA or 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.

7.9   Presentation

The dissertation should be a Word document or PDF, 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
  5. The word count

- **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.

Word Count

The Department expects students to adhere to the word limits set out for assigned essays. Work over the stipulated length of the assessment will not be considered by the markers in accordance with the University rules.

Marking Criteria

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

PIRP PGT MARKING CRITERIA

	86+ (Distinction) Essays Marked on Step at: 88, 92, 95, 98	70-85 (Distinction) Essays Marked on step at: 72, 75, 78, 982, 85	60-69 (Merit) Essays Marked on step at: 62, 65, 68	50-59 (Pass) Essays Marked on step at: 52,55, 58	40-49 (Narrow fail) Essays Marked on step at: 42, 45, 48	0-39 (Clear Fail) Essays Marked on step at: 0, 2, 5, 8 … 32, 35, 38
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	Excellent awareness and use of evidence, and/or	Good awareness and use of evidence, and/or a good grasp of	Some awareness and use of evidence, and/or some grasp of	Limited awareness and use of evidence, and/or poor grasp of	Very limited awareness and use of evidence, and/or very poor grasp of

	extremely sophisticated	methodologically sophisticated	methods with only minor gaps in understanding	appropriate methods but with some significant gaps in understanding	appropriate methods	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

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.

What to do if things go wrong – Extensions to deadlines

Students are given a quota for the number of extensions they may have in the year, and it is up to them to apply for extensions and meet the requirements for an extension to be granted. Extensions can be of two working days or five working days. Please refer to the Extensions Policy and guidance on the University's webpage about Applying for an Extension.

Please note: 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 your module convenor. Extensions can be requested for written work throughout the year, with the exception of the dissertation. Extensions cannot be granted for oral work.

7.10   Support and exam access arrangements for students requiring support

Some students at the University 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 Department Assessment Board will not make further allowance in relation to your disability or SpLD.

Academic Misconduct - Plagiarism

The University 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), and 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 University 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 depending 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.

8   Attendance and Engagement Requirements

The Schools Engagement Requirements are as follows:

- Submission of all coursework and/or
- 70% attendance/engagement at timetabled sessions

Please refer to the central Engagement web pages and Attendance and Engagement Policy for full details

9   Health and Safety Information

The Health and Safety webpage provides general information about our health and safety policies.

9.1   Code of practice on harassment for students

The University 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 University's Code of Practice on personal harassment for students should be read in conjunction with the Student Disciplinary regulations and the Complaints procedure.

9.2   Lone working policy and procedures

The University 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 School Health and Safety Coordinator (Moya Watson) or the University Health and Safety Office.

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

10 Department Codes of Practice

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 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 University is committed to ensure that:

- All staff, students, applicants for employment or study, visitors and other persons in contact with the University 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.

- 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.

- Appropriate measures are put in place 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 University publicity material.

- A positive, inclusive atmosphere based on respect for diversity is created within the University.

- It conforms to all provisions as laid out in legislation promoting equality of opportunity.

11 Core Student Handbook

The University's Core Student Handbook has further information about the following: -
- Support and Advice
- Communication
- Teaching
- Attending Classes and Engaging with your Studies
- Degree Structure
- Facilities
- Assessment Information
- Careers information
- Complaints and academic appeals procedure
- Equal opportunities statement and University codes of practice