

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Awarding body/institution:	Queen Mary, University of London
Teaching institution (if different from above):	
Name of the final award and Programme title:	MA/MSc Geography
Duration of Study/Period of Registration	12 months FT/24 months PT
UCAS code:	n/a
QAA Benchmark Group	n/a
Academic Department/s involved in programme delivery	Geography

If accredited by a professional/statutory body, please give the name, date of last accreditation visit, approximate date of next visit and details of exemptions that will be given to QMUL graduates.	n/a
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Criteria for admission to the programme

Normally an upper second class honours degree or higher in a humanities or social science subject (or equivalent international qualification) together with two supportive academic references. Candidates may be asked to provide examples of written work and/or be interviewed.

Aims of the programme

The programme aims to:

- Provide an advanced understanding of the dominant theoretical paradigms used in the analysis of geographical processes across a range of scales.
- Provide an advanced level knowledge on the study of cultural, economic, development, historical, political, social and urban geographies to enable students to develop a critical understanding of human geographical debates in the 21st century.
- Provide students with a sound conceptual base as well as suitable practical training to carry out theoretical and policy-related research on issues relating to globalisation and development through the provision of core research training in methods and methodologies as well as ways of thinking geographically.

Learning outcomes for the programme

Teaching and learning are closely informed by the research interests and expertise of staff teaching on the programme. The programme provides opportunities for students to achieve and demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

Knowledge and understanding

The programme is designed to allow and encourage students to develop knowledge and understanding of:

- the construction and constitution of the distinctiveness of particular places and their interdependence with other places at various spatial scales
- the key geographical processes that shape social, economic and cultural worlds such as globalisation and development, urbanisation and urbanism
- the geographies of difference and inequality across the world and the processes underpinning them
- the practical and policy dimensions of addressing and resisting key geographical processes from local to global levels

Intellectual skills

The programme is designed to allow students to develop competencies in:

- critical reading skills
- oral and written communication skills
- leading and participating in group discussion
- working with a range of primary and secondary materials in order to study and understand processes of globalisation and development
- developing theoretical positions, identifying research questions and devising methodological strategies in order to carry out independent research
- critically interpreting data and text
- appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- taking responsibility for their own learning, and developing habits of critically reflecting upon that learning

Discipline specific skills

The programme is designed to develop the following discipline-specific skills:

- planning, designing and executing a piece of advanced level rigorous research or enquiry, including project design, project planning, project management, and analytical and interpretive skills
- critically assessing knowledge of core geographical processes such as globalisation,

development, urbanisation and urbanism

- recognising the variety of different approaches to understanding processes of uneven development and urbanism around the world both theoretically and practically
- working confidently and critically with a range of different sources and materials for studying the contested processes of geographical change at a range of scales
- developing advanced level knowledge of a range of data sources relevant for exploring issues linked with geographical trends and processes and be able to carry out applied research of relevance to both academic debates and wider social concerns
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Key skills

The programme will develop the following key skills:

- learning and study
- advanced written communication
- advanced verbal presentation
- information handling and retrieval (including, identifying, retrieving, sorting and exchanging information, drawn from a wide range of sources – including online databases, archives and other resources)
- interpersonal working, including working with groups/teams and recognising and respecting the viewpoints of others

Personal attributes and social skills

In addition, the programme fosters the development of a range of personal attributes important beyond academia: for employment, for future personal intellectual development and in order to contribute to the wider community. These include heightened motivation, dedication, the ability to work autonomously and with others, critical self-awareness and self-management, empathy and insight, intellectual integrity, initiative and personal responsibility, interest in life-long learning, flexibility, adaptability and creativity.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies

This programme is taught by members of academic staff in the Department Geography. The Department of Geography is committed to developing, maintaining and supporting excellence in teaching and learning, to innovation in teaching practice, and to fostering independent learning and critical thinking in our students, whilst providing appropriate levels of support to students in their learning.

The majority of teaching and learning takes place through:

- small group, participatory seminars with a member of academic staff who has research expertise in the programme's subject area. Sessions will normally be based around the discussion of pre-circulated readings, where students will have the opportunity to shape the direction and content of debate. Indeed, seminars will offer students an open, democratic, flexible and supportive learning environment.

These are supplemented by a range of other teaching methods including:

- student-led conference presentations
- occasional field visits to organisations
- visiting speakers (professionals and consultants)
- field visits

There is also a substantial component of private study and reading.

Learning will be supported by:

- coherently designed and effectively delivered modules
- detailed module handbooks, providing learning outcomes and guided reading for

- each module, identifying the structure and pathway of each module.
- the provision of key materials in libraries or through electronic resources
- individual feedback on written work
- appropriate assessment exercises within each module
- use of electronic teaching materials including Powerpoint, Blackboard and online reading lists
- encouraging active participation by students in small group discussions
- research methods training
- appropriate use of AV teaching technologies

Students have access to a wide range of learning resources within the College. These include: the College Library, the University of London Library at Senate House and the first rate resources of other libraries with London collections (e.g. the British Library); a range of IT resources including networked PCs (with full internet and email privileges), and electronic learning resources (e.g. electronic academic journals); the Graduate School in the Social Sciences and Humanities, including the facilities of the 'Lock Keeper's Cottage' in the Campus's 'Arts Quarter' bordering the Regent's Canal (seminar room, a common room with kitchen facilities and three work rooms with additional computing resources). Students also benefit from the departmental seminar series, guest lectures, visiting fellows and frameworks sessions as well as a vibrant post-graduate community.

All students are allocated a supervisor with whom they will meet on a regular, one-to-one basis throughout the module. Supervisors will have some expertise in the student's proposed area of dissertation research and may be drawn from across the Department. Each student will receive individual supervisions, lasting at least 30 minutes, four times each semester and four times in the summer term and vacation. While primarily supporting the student in his or her dissertation research, the supervisor will also provide more general academic help, guidance and feedback. A 'Supervision Record Sheet' will be completed after each meeting and the student and supervisor will jointly fill in a 'Progress Report' at the end of each semester, identifying key achievements as well as any problems that need resolving.

Assessment takes a number of forms within the programme. Forms of assessment include:

- dissertation of at least 15,000 word
- dissertation proposal to be presented at a student conference day
- extended essays (usually of between 4,000 and 5,000 words). Seeking the approval of the module convenor, the exact focus of the essay will often be determined by the student's own module-related interests
- policy-oriented reports (2,500 words)
- formative feedback on drafts of assessed essays will be provided in certain modules via a student conference day
- there will be no examinations

Programme structure(s) and requirements, levels and modules

The programme is structured around a set of compulsory modules and a range of optional modules, as identified in the diagram below.

MA/MSc Geography offers a range of advanced specialist option modules in human geography totalling 180 credits. Students registering for MA/MSc Geography complete the compulsory module *Social Science Research: Methods and Methodologies* (30 credits), and a dissertation (60-120 credits). Modules may be combined in one of three ways:

- i. Candidates opting for the **MA/MSc Geography (Research)** take the compulsory module *Social Science Research: Methods and Methodologies* (30 credits); one option module from the list of modules offered (30 credits); and complete a *Dissertation* (120 credits) of 30,000 words (**Mode A**) on an approved topic. Candidates who complete the programme of work to the required standard will be awarded a MA/MSc Geography (Research).
- ii. Candidates opting for the **MA/MSc Geography (Named Specialism)** take the compulsory module *Social Science Research: Methods and Methodologies* (30 credits); two option modules from the list of modules offered (30 credits each); and complete a *Dissertation* (90 credits) of 22,500 words (**Mode B**) on an approved topic. Candidates who complete the programme of work to the required standard will be awarded a MA/MSc Geography (Named Specialism) – for example, MA/MSc Geography (Cultural Geography).
- iii. Candidates opting for the **MA/MSc Geography** take the compulsory module *Social Science Research: Methods and Methodologies* (30 credits); three option modules worth 30 credits each from the list of modules offered; and complete a *Dissertation* (60 credits) of 15,000 words (**Mode C**) on an approved topic. Candidates who complete the programme of work to the required standard will be awarded a MA/MSc Geography. This option (**Mode C**) is ESRC recognised.

It is possible to take up to 30 credits of level 7 modules from other arts, humanities and social science programmes at QMUL subject to the approval of the Programme Convenor.

Part time students will undertake *Social Science Research: Methods and Methodologies* (30 credits) in the first year along with 60 credits of other modules (as specified below). In their second year they will register for the Dissertation module (60 credits) and one other option module (although it is likely that they will commence work on their dissertation during the first year of study).

MA/MSc Geography (Research)

GEG7113
Social Science
Research: Methods and
Methodologies
30 credits

One optional module

GEG7101
Advanced Readings in
Geography

GEG7102
Art, Performance and the
City

GEG7105
Cities, Empire and
Modernity

GEG7106
Culture, Space and Power

GEG7109
Empire, Race and
Immigration

GEG7110
Globalisation and
Development in Practice

GEG7114
Understanding
Globalisation and
Development I

GEG7115
Understanding
Globalisation and
Development II

Or one other level 7 30
credit module in social
sciences, arts and
humanities if approved by
Programme convenor

GEG7108
Dissertation 30,000
Words
120 credits (core)

MA/MSc Geography (Named Specialism)

GEG7113
Social Science
Research: Methods and
Methodologies
30 credits

Two optional modules

GEG7118
Dissertation 22,500
Words
90 credits (core)

MA/MSc Geography

GEG7113
Social Science
Research: Methods and
Methodologies
30 credits

Three optional modules

GEG7107
Dissertation 15,000
Words
60 credits (core)

The pass mark for each unit of assessment, each module and for the dissertation is 50%. A mark of 70% or above is a distinction. Candidates must pass ALL modules to be awarded the MA/MSc. One failed module may be condoned at the discretion of the MA/MSc Geography Examination Board if the failure is considered of a marginal nature (a mark of between 40% and 49%).

A candidate for the Masters degree who achieves an average mark of 70% over all elements of the programme, and a mark of at least 65% in the dissertation, may be recommended for the award of the degree with Distinction. A candidate for the Master's Degree who achieves an average of 65% or above over the whole programme of study may be recommended for the award of the degree with Merit.

Quality assurance mechanism (please include details of: SSLC meetings, student feedback mechanisms, personal tutor arrangements, programme induction, programme review and monitoring.)

Programme Review and Management will be undertaken as and when necessary under the direction of the MA/MSc Director, the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Departmental Quality Enhancement Committee. A module and programme evaluation system is also undertaken whereby students can feedback their experiences and report any problems. In addition, an opportunity for students to meet with the programme's external examiner at the end of the degree to discuss their experiences is provided. Programme convenors are also required to fill in an annual review of their programme taking both student evaluations and achievements into account. These feed back to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme convenor arrangements are overseen by the MA/MSc director. The Programme convenor is responsible for the overall running of the MA/MSc. They will hold one-to-one individual meetings with students during induction week to assist in selecting modules, and allocating a supervisor. The Programme Convenor is the first person for students to consult in relation to queries about the structure of the programme. They also act as a point of liaison between the student and other members of staff and between the students and the College (in relation to registration etc). The Programme Convenor is the first person to be consulted if illness or other problems result in difficulties in meeting coursework deadlines. If the problem escalates then the MA/MSc Director will be consulted. All complaints about the programme are raised first with the Programme Convenor. If these cannot be resolved the issue will be raised with the MA/MSc Director who may contact the Head of Department or the College Academic registrar. A guide for masters students is provided as a hard copy during the induction day and it is also available online at <http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/docs/4616.pdf>

Comprehensive **programme induction** is delivered via an induction day in the Department of Geography that is provided for all incoming students during induction week (the week before formal teaching commences). This is used as an opportunity to acquaint new students with the format of the programme and expectations of them. Students also receive a library induction. All students meet with the programme Convenor during this week to talk about module selection and how to manage the enrolment process. Students with special educational needs have the opportunity to talk to their adviser about how the College can best support them, and to agree with the students how to communicate those needs to appropriate members of staff.

The student mentor scheme involves new MA/MSc students being assigned a postgraduate mentor from the Graduate School. This will be a fellow student who can help with information and advice about the department and the experience of being a postgraduate.

Graduate School Committee provides a formal means of communication and discussion between the Department and its postgraduate students. The committee consists of postgraduate student representatives together with some members of staff (including the Director of Graduate Studies, the MA/MSc Director and programme convenors). There are elections for postgraduate members at the start of each academic year. It is designed to respond to the needs of students and meets regularly throughout the year. Matters raised in this committee are reported to the rest of the Department's staff (via the Teaching and Learning Committee, the Departmental Quality Enhancement Committee or the Departmental Meeting) so that they can take action as appropriate.

Employers Links

Please provide details of any links with employers e.g.

- **Details of advisory panels that include current or potential employers;**
- **Organisations that regularly employ graduates from this programme and the roles that graduates undertake.**
- **Student prizes donated by organisations that may offer employment to**

graduates from this programme.

If there are no links with employers consider the learning outcomes and transferable skills and explain how these might be used to inform employers about the qualities and skills a graduate from this programme might be expected to have.

The programme provides a deep understanding of key processes of geographical processes in relation to global, local and urban inequalities and the contested nature of how culture is produced at these scales as well as developing a range of advanced analytical and research skills. This knowledge and experience will have considerably transferable value in the labour market. Depending on the nature of the modules that students choose, graduates would be especially well equipped to pursue careers in the field of development practice (Non-governmental Organisations, bilateral and multilateral development agencies) as well as those relating global and local development issue in the UK and beyond, as well be able to pursue careers in the metropolitan arts and cultural sectors. It is also envisaged that the research training offered by the programme would provide a suitable basis for undertaking PhD research and, therefore, as a stepping stone to an academic career.

Graduate skills and qualities

In terms of transferable knowledge and skills, an MA/MSc Geography graduate will:

- have a detailed and advanced interdisciplinary knowledge of geographical processes across a range of scales in relation to the study of cultural, economic, development, historical, political, social and urban geographies
- be able to work with advanced theoretical ideas relating to geographical processes that shape social, economic and cultural worlds such as globalisation and development, urbanisation and urbanism
- be familiar with and work confidently and critically with, a range of different sources and materials for studying geographical processes across different scales
- have an advanced level understanding of the key geographical have a range of advanced level research skills including: project design, project planning, project management, and analytical and interpretive skills
- be a confident oral and written academic communicator
- be a confident independent learner, thinker and worker
- be able to work in a group situation, showing empathy and sensitivity for the views of others, but with the ability to interact confidently and persuasively

Person Completing Programme Specification	Dr Cathy McIlwaine (MA/MSc Director)
Person responsible for management of programme	Dr Cathy McIlwaine (Programme Convenor)
Date programme specification agreed by Department or teaching and learning committee	16 November 2009
Date of approval by Faculty Board/SMD Education Board	

Date of update/amendment	