UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Programme Specification 2025–2026

Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies

MA

Important document – please read

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Important information regarding the Programme Specification

About this document

Last revised 27 February 2024

The Programme Specification gives a broad outline of the structure and content of the programme, the entry level qualifications, as well as the learning outcomes students will achieve as they progress. Some of the information referred to in this Programme Specification is included in more detail on the University of London website. Where this is the case, links to the relevant webpage are included.

Where links to external organisations are provided, the University of London is not responsible for their content and does not recommend nor necessarily agree with opinions expressed and services provided at those sites.

If you have a query about any of the programme information provided, whether here or on the website, registered students should use the *ask a question* link in the Student Portal; otherwise the *Contact Us* link at the bottom left hand corner of every webpage should be used.

Terminology

The following language is specific to the Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies programme:

Core module: a compulsory module that must be taken.

Elective module: a module that is chosen from a number of options.

Dissertation module: a compulsory module that forms the programme's dissertation component.

Terms: Term 1 runs from October to March. Term 2 runs from March to October. The core and elective modules run in either one term or the other and students can start in either term. The relevant term is included in the module title, i.e. '(October)' if the module runs in Term 1 and '(March)' if the module runs in Term 2. The dissertation modules run in dissertation study sessions in each term.

Key revisions made

Programme Specifications are revised annually. The School of Advanced Study (SAS) provides the academic direction for the programme. Its quality committee confirms the programme structure and the educational aims and learning outcomes as part of its annual review of standards, and advises on any development in student support.

Where there are changes which may impact on continuing students, these are listed below. For all new students, the programme and general information provided in this document is correct and accurate and will be applicable for the current year.

Significant changes made to the Programme Specification 2025–2026:

There are no significant changes to the Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies Programme Specification for 2025–2026.

Programme title and name of qualifications

Postgraduate Degrees of the University of London may be classified. The award certificate will indicate the level of the academic performance achieved by classifying the award. The classification of the degree will be based on the ratified marks from the completed assessments.

The classification system for this programme is as follows:

Distinction; Merit; Pass.

Specific rules for the classification of awards are given in the Programme Regulations under Scheme of award.

Programme name

Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies

Award title

Master of Arts in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies

Exit qualifications

- Postgraduate Diploma in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies

- Postgraduate Certificate in Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies

Students who for academic or personal reasons are unable to complete the 180 credits required for the Master of Arts award may exit with the successful completion of 120 or 60 credits and be awarded a Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate respectively.

Exit qualifications are granted at the discretion of the Board of Examiners and once a student has accepted an exit qualification they will not be permitted to continue their study of the same award with the University of London.

Individual modules

There is no provision for individual modules of the programme to be studied on a stand-alone basis.

Qualification titles may be abbreviated as follows:

Master of Arts – MA

Postgraduate Diploma – PGDip

Postgraduate Certificate – PGCert

Level of the programmes

The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-awarding Bodies (FHEQ) forms part of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education of the [Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education](#) (QAA).

The awards are placed at the following Levels of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):

- MA   Level 7

- PGDip   Level 7

- PGCert   Level 7

Relevant QAA subject benchmarks group(s)

See the [QAA website](#) for information about benchmark statements.

The QAA has not published a postgraduate subject benchmark statement for Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies.

Awarding body

University of London

Registering body

University of London

www.london.ac.uk

Academic direction

School of Advanced Study, University of London

www.sas.ac.uk

Accreditation by professional or statutory body

Not applicable

Language of study and assessment

English

Mode of study

Flexible and online study

The University of London website provides an overview of teaching institutions and a [Directory of Institutions](#).

Programme structure

The MA Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies consists of two core modules, four elective modules and a dissertation component. Modules will run subject to availability.

To be considered for the award, students must have attempted and passed both core modules, four elective modules and the dissertation component. The pass mark for all modules, including the dissertation component, is 50%.

Full details of the Scheme of Award are included in the [Programme Regulations](#).

Maximum and minimum periods of registration

The minimum period of registration, from a student's effective date of registration, is:

	Minimum
MA	Two years

See the [General Regulations](#) for the maximum periods of registration for these qualifications.

Students will retain the period of registration initially given to them on registration if the maximum registration period for their qualification changes during their studies.

Study materials are made available after registration and on payment of the applicable fee.

Credit value of modules

Further information about the credit systems used by universities in the UK and Europe is provided by the [Quality Assurance Agency](#) and the [European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System](#).

Where credits are assigned to modules of a programme, credit indicates the amount of learning carried out in terms of the notional number of study hours needed, and the specified Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (FHEQ) credit level indicates the depth, complexity and intellectual demand of learning involved. The details below indicate the UK credits and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) values.

For the Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies programme, credits are assigned to the modules as follows:

- 30 UK credits or 15 ECTS credits for a core module

- 15 UK credits or 7.5 ECTS credits for an elective module

- 60 UK credits or 30 ECTS credits for the dissertation

One UK credit equates to a notional ten hours of study. This equates to 300 notional study hours for each core module, 150 notional study hours for each elective module, and 600 notional study hours for the dissertation component (which includes completion of the research methods course 'Researching Refugees').

Recognition of prior learning

Prior learning will not be recognised or accredited for this programme.

Entrance requirements

Applicants must submit an application in line with the procedures and deadlines set out on the website.

All entrance requirements are set out in detail on the programme page under the Entry requirements tab.

We consider qualifications from around the world. Details are available in the Qualifications for Entrance schedule.

English language requirements

Applicants must satisfy the English language requirements for the programme. These are set out in detail on the programme page under the Entry requirements tab. All teaching is in English. Therefore, students need to have the required level of written and spoken English to cope with their studies right from the start.

Where an applicant does not meet the prescribed English language proficiency requirements but believes that they can demonstrate the requisite proficiency for admission the University may, at its discretion, consider the application.

Internet access and computer specification

Students will require regular access to a portable computer with an internet connection to use the University of London's online resources and systems.

Students must be able to download and install software to their Windows or MacOS device to include secure examination browsers for online assessment purposes (if offered on their programme of study)*. Depending on the security settings for each assessment, students may be required to have full administrator rights on their computer to install and run the software needed to take part in the assessment. Full administration rights are likely to apply to a computer that they own but not to one provided by their employer, for example.

*Online examinations are not offered by MA Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies

Computer requirements

The portable computer must have at least the following minimum specification:

- Windows: 10 and 11 on 64-bit platforms.

- MacOS Big Sur (version 11) and higher.

- CPUs newer than 2011 (Intel Sandy Bridge (Core i3, i5 and i7 or newer)).

- OpenGL 2.0 graphics driver.

- Local storage for the recording of proctored examinations (75MB per hour), if applicable.

- Web camera & microphone (internal or external).

- A broadband internet connection capable of streaming live video.

- Minimum device requirements are subject to change and older operating systems may become obsolete over time.

It should also have the following applications installed:

- Word processor (for Microsoft Word documents).

- A PDF reader (e.g. Adobe).

Some modules may have additional requirements such as video and audio recording options, Microsoft Excel, STATA, statistical or other specialist software. Where this is the case, students will find information on the course webpages.

Where applicable, you will be provided with any additional requirements for your assessment platform in advance of your assessment.

Certain services will require a mobile device for Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA). This is a key security feature that adds an extra layer of protection for your account and data, requiring two or more steps to verify your identity when logging in. This may include accepting a sign-in notification on your smartphone or entering a unique code sent via SMS or phone call to your mobile device. It is your responsibility to ensure that your mobile device meets the specified requirements for MFA.

Students with access requirements

The University of London welcomes applications from disabled students and/or those who have specific access requirements. The University will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to enable those with a disability, learning difficulty or access requirements to have the same opportunity as all other students to successfully complete their studies.

The University is committed to managing the application procedure and the programme itself to ensure that services are accessible for all students and that an inclusive environment is created. Students with a disability, or others who may need access arrangements to assist in taking assessments, should complete the relevant section of the application form, or contact the Inclusive Practice Manager. A separate room or other arrangements may be considered.

Requests are considered by a University panel, whose purpose is to ensure that students with disabilities and/or specific access requirements are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged by such arrangements when compared with other students. These considerations remain separate from the academic selection processes.

For further information, see the Inclusive Practice Policy

Scholarships and sources of funding

There are often scholarships available to new students each year. Information about potential sources of funding is updated annually and, where available, is included in the Funding your study area of the [programme web page](#).

Educational aims and learning outcomes of the programmes

The MA Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies is designed to provide students with a theoretical and practical understanding of refugee protection and forced migration. Successful completion of the MA will develop the knowledge and skills base of students with a view to enhancing employability, the ability to think critically and contribute effectively in their academic and professional environments.

Aims and learning outcomes of the programmes

Aims

The overall programme aims are to:

- Provide students with a solid legal, theoretical and practical understanding of refugee protection and forced migration, with expertise developed through elective module choices.

- Develop students' self-reliance in dealing with – and critiquing – law, policy and practice in the refugee and forced migration fields.

- Advance and refine students' analytical skills through conducting independent legal and social science research and fact-based problem-solving.

- Facilitate students' integration into a broad community of scholarship and practice in the refugee protection field, based around the Refugee Law Initiative.

- Provide students with a range of knowledge and transferrable skills necessary for working in positions across the refugee and human rights field.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the MA programme, students will be expected to be able to:

- Describe and appraise basic and advanced concepts, theories and debates in the field of refugee and forced migration studies.

- Critique these theoretical concepts by reference to contemporary and historical refugee situations and policy from across the globe, and vice-versa.

- Explain and analyse foundational and complex international law concepts, standards and mechanisms relating to refugees and displaced persons.

- Apply these legal concepts and standards to interpret, evaluate and critique examples of real-life protection policy and practice, and vice-versa.

- Demonstrate special theoretical and/or legal expertise in selected areas of the field by selecting and completing four specialist elective modules.

- Demonstrate special theoretical and/or legal expertise in a selected area of the field by planning and completing an independent research project on a topic chosen in consultation with programme staff.

- Develop a range of transferable skills such as research, analysis and argumentation in law and social sciences, inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to research, problem-solving, autonomous and peer-to-peer working and report writing, as well as research design and implementation.

The following learning outcomes apply to the PGDip and PGCert, both of which are available as exit qualifications only, for students who are unable to complete the full degree programme.

Students who are granted the PGDip as an exit qualification will be expected to be able to:

- Describe and appraise basic and advanced concepts, theories and debates in the field of refugee and forced migration studies.

- Critique these theoretical concepts by reference to contemporary and historical refugee situations and policy from across the globe, and vice-versa.

- Explain and analyse foundational and complex international law concepts, standards and mechanisms relating to refugees and displaced persons.

- Apply these legal concepts and standards to interpret, evaluate and critique examples of real-life protection policy and practice, and vice-versa.

- Demonstrate special theoretical and/or legal expertise in selected areas of the field by selecting and completing four specialist elective modules.

- Develop a range of transferable skills such as research, analysis and argumentation in law and social sciences, inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to research, problem-solving, autonomous and peer-to-peer working and report writing.

Students who are granted the PGCert as an exit qualification will be expected to be able to:

- Describe and appraise foundational concepts, theories and debates in the field of refugee and forced migration studies.

- Critique these theoretical concepts by reference to contemporary and historical refugee situations and policy from across the globe, and vice-versa.

- Explain and analyse foundational international law concepts, standards and mechanisms relating to refugees and displaced persons.

- Apply these legal concepts and standards to interpret, evaluate and critique examples of real-life protection policy and practice, and vice-versa.

- Begin to develop a range of transferable skills such as engagement with sources, analysis and argumentation in law and social sciences, inter- and multi-disciplinary approaches to engagement with sources, problem-solving and autonomous and peer-to-peer working.

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. More detailed information on the specific learning outcomes, content and the learning, teaching and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module syllabuses.

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies

Students learn on this programme by engaging with academically rigorous and up-to-date learning materials and resources. For each module, students will be provided with access through the University of London's Online Library to all necessary materials from a range of appropriate sources, as well as having access to the relevant journals and academic databases subscribed to by the University.

This programme uses a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to enable students to access learning materials and knowledge sources; interact with their fellow students; use knowledge and skills in online tasks; complete assessments and receive feedback from their tutors.

The Programme Director is the main point of contact between the School of Advanced Study and the students, and is available to assist students with any questions that they may have about the academic content of the programme. A Student Support Officer is also available to answer questions about the administrative aspects of the students' studies. A technical team may also be called upon to help with any difficulties in accessing the VLE. A key component of the student experience is peer-to-peer learning, and so students are enrolled in tutor groups and have access to relevant discussion forums and peer review tasks throughout each module on the programme.

Each module on the programme includes online assessments (E-tivities), which take the form of written work prepared in response to a task or tasks specified by the Programme Director. The E-tivities provide formative and summative feedback to the students as a means of monitoring their progress and identifying areas in which they can improve. Timely and concise feedback for each E-tivity is provided by either the Module Convenor or the assigned Tutor, as appropriate.

Core modules are assessed by five E-tivities and a 4,000 word item of coursework accounting for 70% of the module mark. The E-tivities account for 30% of the module mark.

Elective modules are assessed by three E-tivities and a 4,000 word research essay (or 3,000 word project proposal) accounting for 70% of the module mark. The E-tivities account for 30% of the module mark.

E-tivities, along with the final assessment for each module, serve to counter plagiarism in addition to providing pedagogic merit. The final assessment for each module allows students to demonstrate that they have acquired appropriate understanding, the ability to analyse a range of materials and incorporate feedback. Students receive feedback on assessed E-tivities and written work.

Students must also undertake a dissertation that relates to refugee protection and forced migration studies. This enables the student to develop and demonstrate their capacity to carry out a substantial piece of independent academic research on a selected topic. Students are assessed on their capacity to define a topic, to articulate a coherent scheme for

examining the topic, to gather necessary data and to analyse and present this data in a way that satisfactorily analyses the topic. The dissertation is assessed by completion of the 'Researching Refugees' research methods course and submission of a research proposal (15%), as well as the final 15,000-word dissertation itself (85%).

Assessment criteria for the programme take into account the level at which these skills have been achieved.

Assessment methods

All assessments are submitted online via a University of London platform. Students must ensure that their device is kept up to date and complies with University Computer Requirements.

Assessment for each module is:

- For core modules: via online activities (E-tivities) specifically designed to meet the module learning outcomes, and a final piece of coursework, weighted 70:30 in favour of coursework.

- For elective modules: via online activities (E-tivities) specifically designed to meet the module learning outcomes, and a research essay, weighted 70:30 in favour of the research essay.

The dissertation is assessed 15% by completion of the 'Researching Refugees' research methods course and submission of a research proposal, and 85% by the submission of the dissertation thesis.

The deployment of E-tivities is specifically designed to encourage student engagement and enjoyment of the programme alongside peers. Timely and concise feedback is critical to student engagement in distance learning, and is provided for each E-tivity.

The series of E-tivities uses a scaffolded learning approach, with the lower value E-tivities undertaken early in the programme. The assessment structure also ensures that the E-tivities build towards the final assessment, providing formative feedback and the opportunity for students to develop key skills.

For further information on assessment and the scheme of award, please see the Programme Regulations and Programme handbook.

Student support and guidance

The following summarises the support and guidance available to students:

- Student Portal: for accessing student induction, study skills support, careers and employability resources, student wellbeing advice.

- University of London Careers Service – offers tailored careers and employability support to students whatever their course, wherever they are studying, and whether they are starting, developing, or changing their career. Support includes webinars led by careers consultants, employer and alumni panel events and a range of online careers resources.

- The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE): This gives access to materials (including lessons, activities and assignments) for each module studied.

- The VLE also includes a range of additional study resources such as:

  - Online student café and discussion areas which allow students to communicate with each other.

  - Study Skills area: tutorials on how to approach common study-related areas such as essay writing, note taking and referencing.

  - Careers area: tutorials on career progression and access to online careers events.

- Student guide: This provides information which is common to all students and gives information about matters of importance from the start of a student's relationship with the University of London through to their graduation.

- Programme handbook: This tells students how to access available resources and assessment procedures.

- Module subject guides for each module studied: these introduce and develop the topics and include recommended reading lists, discussion activities, a study planner and information on module assessments.

- Programme Regulations.

- The Online Library: This provides a range of full-text, multidisciplinary databases where journal articles, book reviews and reports can be found. Additionally, two core textbooks are sent to students in hard copy.

- University of London library: Registered students may use the resources located within the Senate House library.

- A University of London email account and web area for personal information management.

Quality evaluation and enhancement

The University of London delivers the majority of its online and distance learning programmes through a collaboration between the University of London Worldwide and of the University of London federation members. However, some of the online and distance learning programmes draw solely on academic input from the University of London, and are delivered without academic lead by a federation member. The policies, partnerships (where applicable) and quality assurance mechanisms applicable for the programmes are defined in the following key documents: The Quality Framework, the Quality Assurance Schedules, Guidelines for Examinations, General Regulations and, for each programme, Programme Regulations.

Awards standards

All University of London qualifications must comply with the Office for Students' (OfS) Conditions of Registration relating to quality and standards, which includes ongoing

conditions of registration set by the Office for Students (OfS), including condition B5 (sector-recognised standards). This is to ensure appropriate standards for each qualification. In addition, every programme that is developed by a federation member of the University of London (or a consortium with representation by more than one federation member) will be developed to the same standard as would be applied within the institution concerned. Proportionate and robust approval procedures, including external scrutiny and student engagement are in place for all programmes. Learning materials are written and all assessments are set and marked by academic staff who are required to apply the University's academic standards.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

Some of the key mechanisms in place to assure the standards of all University of London qualifications and the quality of the student experience, include:

- Annual programme reports: produced for all programmes in order to review and enhance the provision and to plan ahead;
- Independent external examiners: submit reports every year to confirm that a programme has been assessed properly and meets the appropriate academic standards;
- Annual student performance, progression and completion statistics;
- Periodic programme reviews: carried out every 4-6 years to review how a programme has developed over time and to make sure that it remains current and up-to-date and continues to provide a good student experience.

Enhancements are made as necessary to ensure that systems remain effective and rigorous.

Student feedback mechanisms

The principal channel for collecting feedback from students is the Student Experience Survey. Carried out every year, this collects feedback from the student body on a range of topics relating to the student lifecycle. The results are analysed externally and then considered in a number of different ways, including by the programme team, principal committees and the senior leadership team. Details of any resulting actions taken are published on the Virtual Learning Environment and the Student Portal.

Students are also asked to complete a feedback survey on completion of each individual module on the MA Refugee Protection and Forced Migration Studies. Student feedback is considered as part of the annual review of learning materials on each module.

Additionally, on completion of their programme of study students will be invited to take a survey that seeks to measure what they have gained from their studies.

There are also opportunities for students to get involved in governance. An undergraduate and postgraduate student member is appointed by the University to the majority of committees through an annual appointment round.

Some programmes also recruit student members at the programme level. Students are frequently invited to take part in quality review processes such as Periodic Programme Reviews, Programme approval, Thematic Reviews, MOOC review panels and ad hoc focus

groups. Opportunities such as these are advertised through social media and on the website. More information can be found on the website.

Students can also apply to join the Student Voice Group, which meets four times a year to consider initiatives for enhancing student experience. Notes from these meetings are published on the Student Portal.

After graduation

Further study

Successful completion of the programme can allow students to progress to a higher-level qualification in both the subject area and potentially many other subject areas.

Graduate employment routes

Graduates from this programme go on to a range of different graduate employment routes. This programme is designed for those who wish to pursue careers in a range of professional contexts in the refugee, human rights or humanitarian fields. Potential employers include international agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), governmental bodies and non-governmental organisations.

The Alumni community

Upon finishing a course of study, graduates automatically become part of the University of London alumni community, a diverse global network of more than one million graduates in over 180 countries, providing lifelong links to the University and to each other.

Alumni are encouraged to keep in touch after they graduate and to become active members of the alumni community; in return they receive a number of benefits and services, including an extensive programme of events and engagement opportunities.

More information is available on the alumni webpage.

Follow the alumni community on social media: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn