

Programme Specification

Programme title: MA International Relations and Security Studies

Academic Year:	2019/20
Degree Awarding Body:	University of Bradford
Partner(s), delivery organisation or support provider (if appropriate):	
Final and interim award(s):	[Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) level 7] MA International Relations and Security Studies Postgraduate Diploma International Relations and Security Studies Postgraduate Certificate International Relations and Security Studies
Programme accredited by (if appropriate):	
Programme duration:	12 months full time 15 months full time with internship/placement 24 months part time 27 months part time with internship/partnership
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s):	
Date last confirmed and/or minor modification approved by Faculty Board	April 2018; July 2019

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them. Upon commencement of the programme, students will receive further detail about their course and any minor changes will be discussed and/or communicated at this point.

Introduction

In the past three decades, many aspects of international relations and security have changed profoundly. This includes major power shifts at global and regional levels; changing patterns of conflict and co-operation; complex risks and processes of insecurity and violence at human, community, regional and international levels; and important changes in the characteristics of the international system, with increasingly important transnational processes and complex impacts of new technologies, environmental challenges, and flows of people and goods (illicit and legal).

This MA programme in International Relations and Security Studies enables an advanced understanding of these issues and trends, and of the range of policy and practitioner responses to them.

The MA International Relations and Security Studies is offered by the internationally recognised Department of Peace Studies and International Development, drawing on over 40 years of experience as a leading centre of international peace and conflict research. The programme will develop an advanced academic and policy relevant understanding and analytical skills concerning international relations, regional politics, and security studies through a rigorous advanced and multidisciplinary understanding of theories and empirical evidence and trends in these academic disciplines and area studies; combined with a focus on contemporary international, regional and transnational challenges and processes; and international debates and responses.

The programme is strongly informed by themes of peace and conflict studies, including issues of war, violence and security-building between and within communities, states and regions across the world; and understanding WMD, conventional arms proliferation, political violence and terrorism; but also the development and operation of international and regional institutions and past and present environmental and other transnational challenges relating to international and regional diplomacy in a complex world.

The curriculum has been carefully designed to ensure coherence and progression through the programme of study.

The first semester provides an advanced understanding in two core areas. First, there will be an examination of the historical development and contemporary trends and characteristics of the international system in theory and in context. Second, an advanced investigation of the contemporary security challenges, including the current state of the theoretical and policy literatures and practices focused on the understanding and responding to these security challenges. The provision of an elective allows further specialisation in relation to a number of key areas, including options including dynamics of politics and security in Africa; applied conflict research; security and development in fragile and conflict affected areas; sustainable development; development theory and practice; governance for development, designing and assessing conflict intervention processes; project planning and design, and economic growth and development,

Semester 2 offers opportunities to deepen knowledge of particular contexts, themes or policies relating to international relations and security studies, building directly on the previous core modules. One core focus is on developing advanced understanding and lessons from experience concerning environment, trafficking, crime and other transnational challenges, and responses at international, regional, national and local levels. In addition, students can then develop their knowledge by choosing two options from a range of modules. For example, specialist regional understanding can be developed through engagement with either the module on Middle East Politics and Security Dynamics or the Africa Study Visit. Thematic knowledge may be developed through study of international environmental governance; gender, conflict and development; political violence and terrorism; or natural resource governance, while familiarity with skills and competencies associated with contemporary policy paradigms may be gained through participation in the modules Assessing Development Practices, Needs and Outcomes, or Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding.

Every student will also participate in at least two intensive laboratory workshops or 'immersion days' on key cross-cutting thematic issues and these are incorporated into the core modules for the programme.

After completing the taught modules, students then undertake a substantial Dissertation project on a subject of their choice (relating to the Programme's aims and learning objectives). This involves research and analysis, and preparation of a Dissertation of up to 15,000 words. This is a major opportunity not only to research and prepare a substantial scholarly analysis of a specialist area in which the student is particularly interested, but also to demonstrate an advanced understanding of relevant policy and practitioner agendas and debates to increase the value of the Masters degree to pursue relevant careers.

The academic modules for this programme include a range of innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment, to enable students to actively engage with the key concepts and syllabus and to develop not only their academic knowledge and understanding but also to their skills and experience for the worlds of policy, practice and employment. There are opportunities to take specialist pathways, including thematic specialisms such as those indicated above, and also specialising in selected regions (e.g. Africa, Middle East), with opportunities for selected study visits. This includes the high profile Africa Study Visit to an African country recovering from conflict (which can be taken as an assessed element of the programme) or other further voluntary study visits which have recently included visits to Northern Ireland, Hiroshima or to major locations of International Organisations, such as The Hague or Brussels as well as London. Students have opportunities to participate in an extended 'crisis response game' or the similar international simulation games.

(Note that there may be an extra charge to students participating in some of these activities, but there may also be scholarship funding available on application to help with the costs.)

Students further benefit from studying at a major international centre for research and engagement with policy and practitioner communities working in the areas of international relations and security studies, providing many opportunities for interested students to participate or observe regular workshops, international conferences, research seminars, and engagements in or near Bradford with relevant NGOs, community organisations, governmental and international agencies, and with UK and other foreign and development agencies and police, military or justice services.

There is an option to select either a 12 or 15 month Masters programme. The latter provides further opportunities for developing professional experience and practical skills by undertaking a voluntary placement or internship in a relevant organisation for a period of up to three months. Relevant internships provide enhanced opportunities for integrating practitioner community engagement (such as internship experience) with their academic studies. This element of the 15 month programme is student-centred and student-led, and thus the initiative for identifying and applying for internships is driven by the students, while academic staff on the programme team will facilitate and support such searches for suitable placements with leads and suggestions, and help with the writing of applications, and provide supporting letters of reference.

A part time route for this Programme, both with or without internship, is available on application. The Division has an excellent track record of integrating part-time students into this and its other programmes. Part-time students will be able to join with programme activities of interest to them, and to discuss their learning trajectory with the academic programme team at key points, and when requested.

The programme will equip students with advanced understanding and skills for work for example in national and local government; global governance institutions; research institutes; international, national and local development agencies; advocacy and policy work in environmental, security, and other regional and international issue areas; private sector strategy and governance for sustainability; and NGOs.

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to:

- enable students to develop an advanced knowledge and understanding of international relations and security studies
- critically engage students with debates concerning the various theoretical frameworks, themes and processes concerned with the state and the range of other international actors; the dynamics of their interactions in the international system of states, international and regional organisations, and non-states actors and networks; and the development and effectiveness of regional and international governance
- critically engage students with debates concerning the theoretical frameworks, themes and processes concerned with complex contemporary security issues and challenges, and responses to them
- provide knowledge and debate to allow students to make informed analyses of complex events and ideas
- prepare students for engagement and employment in the field of international relations and security studies

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Certificate at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

- LO1 Conduct systematic research into international relations and security-related contexts, using relevant techniques and technologies to gather, evaluate and manage evidence, data and information from valid, appropriate sources, and using data and theory in the analysis of relationships, dynamics and impacts within contemporary case-studies.
- LO2 Use knowledge, evidence, techniques and theory to analyse at an advanced level and understand real-world cases of international relations and security and to the international, regional and national responses to these cases.
- LO3 Identify and critically assess at an advanced level the ideas, practices and conditions that influence debates concerning international relations and security studies.
- LO4 Collaborate effectively with others in the completion of appropriate academic tasks.

- LO5 Generate clear, concise and coherent advanced analysis and communication tailored to the audience.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Postgraduate Diploma at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

- LO6 Employ relevant theories and evidence to engage constructively at an advanced level with debates concerned with international relations and security studies.
- LO7 Identify and apply critical learning to real-world cases and the international responses to these cases.
- LO8 Demonstrate initiative and independence in systematic academic inquiry, using relevant techniques and technologies to gather, evaluate and manage evidence, data and information from valid, appropriate sources.
- LO9 Plan and execute a range of assignments, including essays, reports and reflective pieces, tailored to the audience.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Degree of Master at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

- LO10 Design and carry out, with appropriate ethical approval, an original and self-directed capstone advanced research project, including a comprehensive and critical literature review.
- LO11 Exercise initiative and personal responsibility in completion of an advanced, original and self-directed capstone project, using critical reflective communication to deepen understanding of the learning process, with appropriate documentation
- LO12 Recognise and be able to reflect critically on one's own positionality, values and epistemological orientation in one's own academic work.

Curriculum

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Type	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
7	The International System in Theory and Context	Core	20	Sem 1	PES7054-B
7	Contemporary Security Challenges	Core	20	Sem 1	PES7037-B
7	African Politics and Security Dynamics	Option	20	Sem 1	PES7035-B
7	Environment, Trafficking and Crime: Transnational Issues and international Governance	Core	20	Sem 2	PES7062-B
7	Natural Resource Governance	Option	20	Sem 2	PES7045-B
7	Africa Study Visit	Option	20	Sem 2	PES7034-B
7	Middle East Politics and Security Dynamics	Option	20	Sem 2	PES7043-B

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Type	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
7	Gender, Conflict and Development	Option	20	Sem 2	PES7041-B
7	Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding	Option	20	Sem 2	PES7046-B
7	Terrorism and Political Violence	Option	20	Sem 2	PES7053-B
7	Assessing Development Practices, Needs and Outcomes	Option	20	Sem 2	DEV7039-B
7	Elective	Elective	20	Sem 1	-

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate if they have successfully completed 60 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Degree of Master

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/ Option/ Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
7	Dissertation	Core	60	Diss	PES7040-E

Students will be eligible for the award of Degree of Master if they have successfully completed at least 180 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

For those choosing the 15-month Full Time option or a Part Time route (on application) including a voluntary placement/internship, the degree of master will be awarded on successful completion of a voluntary placement of up to three months. Those on the 15-month Full Time route are expected to do this during the summer period (semester 3). Those in the Part Time route are able to do this (on application) after they complete the 120 credits of taught programme.

FHEQ Level	Module Title	Core/ Option/ Elective	Credits	Study Period	Module Code
7	Professional Experience	Core	0	Sem 3	PES7056-Z
7	Dissertation	Core	60	DISS	PES7040-E

The Professional Experience is a work experience element of the programme. This normally takes the form of an internship in another organisation and can be either undertaken in the UK or abroad. Students normally use their placement period and experience to inform and shape their dissertation.

Planning for the placement/internship starts several months in advance usually in the first semester itself. The Division will provide information sessions. The process may involve several steps including:

- Identifying and searching for voluntary placement/internship opportunities;
- Preparing applications, covering letters, supporting letters of reference;
- Contacting relevant organisations, arranging for and agreeing specifics such as location, domain of work, start and end dates, focal point, terms of reference of placement and what the student is expected to do and the days and hours;

- Sorting out financial planning issues, visas, travel risk assessments and permissions;
- Discussing with the relevant contact person in the host organisation about aims and reviewing arrangement.

Students are required to complete a form detailing their proposed activities and get a sign off from the Division before they are able to go on placement/internship.

Upon completing the period of placement/internship, students should come back on the programme and submit a completion report summarising key learning points before they can formally continue work on their dissertation.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The learning and teaching strategy for this programme emphasises the acquisition of academic skills, familiarity with contemporary policy and professional competencies related to peace and development work. The strategy provides a wide range of teaching and learning methods and opportunities in and across modules, including lectures and directed study, but also discussion of in-class and pre-class student research findings; simulations, presentations and other methods of communicating arguments - within groups and to whole class audiences. A range of innovative approaches to teaching and learning are incorporated throughout the programme, enabling active study and analyses of important historical and contemporary issues relating to international relations and security studies, so that learning about theories develops closely with understandings about the application to real issues and problems.

Employability and professionalism capabilities and attributes are developed through group and pair work, in and out of class, and experience with oral, written and other audio-visual presentations. In some modules, these skills are given a sharp focus, and self-reflection on skills development is an explicit learning outcome for the modules.

Extensive optionality is provided within some modules, where students are supported to select their own projects, case-studies and topics within the overall syllabus. The dissertation project is also chosen (within the overall scope of International Relations and Security Studies), designed and undertaken by each student, under academic supervision. Furthermore, during the first and second semesters of the programme, students will undertake at least two intensive laboratory workshops or 'immersion days' on key cross-cutting thematic issues including on: the roles and significance of gender; and the skills of using conflict analysis methods and conflict sensitivity guidelines for assessing and ensuring conflict sensitivity in fragile and conflict affected areas; these are incorporated into the core modules for the programme.

Peace Studies and International Development is a very dynamic division, within a diverse and active Faculty and wider University. It arranges numerous events and opportunities each semester beyond the taught modules to engage with not only academic but also policy and practitioner events and issues. These include invited speakers, seminars, workshops, activities and conferences, both off and on-campus. Please note that such off-campus learning activities may involve an extra cost to the student.

Assessment Strategy

The assessment strategy is based on principles of rigour, constructive alignment, diversity and inclusion. It employs a well-developed range of formative and summative assessments tasks which are designed to help students to develop and demonstrate their understandings and skills as set out in the learning outcomes for each module and for the Programme overall. Our overall strategy attempts to strike a balance between developing students' abilities to succeed in a balanced and diverse range of assessment tasks and to stretch beyond existing comfort zones on the one hand, and allowing them to play to their strengths on the other hand.

The formative assessment strategy includes monitoring learning throughout each semester using a range of class activities, tutorials and coursework, including reports, essays, reflective notes, literature reviews, oral or audio-visual presentations, and group and individual tasks; for which formative feedback is given. During the process of selection, refinement, research and drafting of the dissertation project, formative feedback and guidance will be provided by a personal supervisor, as well as by other members of academic staff on request. The dissertation module has been designed with a view to maximising students' engagement in a structured process of research, with formative feedback built in from the start.

Summative assessment is similarly through a variety of tasks, including essays, reports, policy briefs, case study analyses, oral and audio-visual presentations, and reflective notes. Each module is assessed by specified modes of assessment, as described in the relevant module descriptor. Some of the modules may be assessed through submission of a portfolio of work. A Portfolio is a specific set of assignments of varying types and lengths, including reports, essays, and written or oral project presentations.

While all of our assessment tasks will be designed with the aim of promoting an inclusive and accessible curriculum for all, we will, in co-ordination with the Disability Service, work with any individual students who might have additional access requirements to find solutions appropriate to their needs.

Assessment Regulations

This Programme conforms to the standard University Assessment Regulations which are available at: <http://www.bradford.ac.uk/agpo/ordinances-and-regulations/>

Admission Requirements

The University welcomes applications from all potential students and most important in the decision to offer a place is our assessment of a candidate's potential to benefit from their studies and of their ability to succeed on this particular programme. Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience.

The standard entry requirements for the programme are as follows:

All applicants are required to have an Honours degree at 2:2 or above (or equivalent plus GCSE Grade 4 (old grade C) or above in English Language.

Also for international students minimum IELTS at 6.0 or equivalent.

Applications are welcome from students with non-standard qualifications or with significant relevant experience.

Recognition of Prior Learning

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme.

Minor Modification Schedule

Version Number	Brief description of Modification	Date of Approval (Faculty Board)
1	Module and curriculum changes	June 2019