



BA (Hons) International Relations, Politics and Security Studies Programme Specification

Academic Year:	2020/21
Degree Awarding Body:	University of Bradford
Target award at FHEQ (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England) Level 6	Degree of Bachelor of Arts (with Honours) in International Relations, Politics and Security Studies
Exit award at FHEQ Level 6	Ordinary Degree of Bachelor
Interim/exit award at FHEQ Level 5	Diploma of Higher Education
Interim/exit award at FHEQ Level 4	Certificate of Higher Education
Programme duration:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 years full time ▪ 4 years full time with placement/study abroad
UCAS code:	L245
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s):	Politics and International Relations (2015)
Date last confirmed and/or minor modification approved by Faculty Board	September 2020

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

International relations, politics and security are undergoing a number of fundamental and global transformations in the 21st century. In the past three decades, many aspects of international relations have changed profoundly, including major power shifts, changing patterns of conflict and co-operation, and significant changes in the characteristics of the international system, with increasingly important transnational processes and complex impacts of recent technologies, environmental challenges, globalisation, societal change and flows of people and goods (illicit and legal). These are changing both international and domestic politics and security. In this context, an understanding of international and regional politics and security is often vital for understanding challenges at national and local levels; and vice versa.

Why International Relations (IR)?

International Relations is the study of the principles, norms, interests, power relations, knowledge, institutions and processes that determine and inform why and how states and other international actors engage with one another, and with other relevant non-state actors such as international, regional, transnational and civil society groups and organisations. Understanding international and regional dynamics and challenges requires

a good understanding of politics – both within and between different states and societies. It also requires contributions from other social sciences, and from peace, conflict and security studies.

This BA (Hons) International Relations, Politics and Security Studies provides a rigorous, exciting and relevant understanding of these disciplines and areas. It provides a strong education in the core concepts, theoretical frameworks and debates in the fields of international relations, politics and security studies, but gives particular emphasis on using them to understand key international problems and policy and practitioner experiences in responding to them. It primarily focusses on international and regional studies, but with careful attention also to politics and security at national and local levels and their interrelationships with international and transnational challenges.

While placing international developments within historical context, the programme focusses particularly on recent and contemporary processes, trends and problems, examining efforts to respond to international, regional and transnational challenges in the spheres of policy and practice. This programme is located within the Division of Peace Studies and International Development, an internationally recognised centre for excellence in teaching, research, and policy analysis on International Relations, Politics, Peace, Conflict and Security issues. It engages with policy and practitioner communities on these issues internationally and in developing, fragile and conflict affected areas in most regions of the world, including Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia and Latin America; thus providing an excellent context for this programme.

A unique student journey

There are strong opportunities for students to shape their particular areas of study, according to their specialist topic interests. Students will be engaged in research and analysis of the causes, characteristics, trends and responses to challenging political and security problems from early in Stage 1 and in all subsequent stages of the programme. Most modules provide students with scope to focus on the issues in that module that particularly interest them. Moreover, module optionality is built into the programme at both stage 2 and 3, including the possibility of opting for an elective in stage 3 - which can include one of the Masters modules offered by the Division - in order to enable students to further develop specialist areas of their choice. The topic of the final Year dissertation is chosen by the student, within the broad scope of the programme.

Stage 1 of the Programme aims to provide students with a thorough introduction and grounding in issues of international relations, politics and security. In Semester 1 of Stage 1, students study: politics and the state; understanding the international system; and challenges and approaches to development. Together, these modules provide a strong introductory grounding to the academic areas of international relations, politics, and development; and also explore issues and concepts of violence and security. Semester 2 of Stage 1 is innovatively designed to enable students to examine several major contemporary global issues and challenges, such as climate change, refugee crises, or threats to international peace. This alerts students to the complexity and dynamics of such problems, some of the key actors and institutions at the international/global level and the ways that they operate, as well as enabling them to relate these to the concepts and tools for critical thinking in international relations, politics, development and security

introduced in the previous semester. Alongside this, students learn about approaches and concepts for studying peace and violence, at local as well as international levels.

At Stage 2, in Semester 1 students learn about the main theoretical approaches in the international relations discipline; the development and implementation of foreign policies, and the changing characteristics, roles and significance of international diplomacy, with opportunities to be involved in simulated peace negotiations. They also study approaches and methods for analysing the range of types of contemporary conflict and the extent to which they help to understand key international processes of globalisation, conflict and governance. In Semester 2, students learn the key concepts, theories and frameworks for understanding and analysing security issues and how to apply them to various security issues in different contexts. Students will further be able to choose from a range of options to study global and regional power shifts and their implications; globalisation and global governance; or peace-building, conflict and security.

At Stage 3, students further develop their understanding and skills, including in their preferred areas of specialisation. The Dissertation provides a major opportunity to develop and implement a substantial academic project involving research and analysis, on a question that students will choose (within the overall programme aims and objectives). In Semester 1, students also develop their knowledge and experience of international policy processes and how they operate and are influenced, and thereby enhance their understanding and opportunities for employment in these areas. This is reinforced by introduction and training towards professional practices, including opportunities to engage with local and international organisations engaged with issues of peace and conflict, including preparation of briefing or research papers or work-placement opportunities. They are further able to choose from a set of options, for example, enabling them to develop a more focussed understanding of politics and security issues in Africa; authoritarianism, national and populism; or revolutions and regime change. In Semester 2, students continue to work on their dissertation and also study the politics, mechanisms and practices of international crisis response, including participating in crisis simulations and role plays (**subject to changes due to COVID19**). These provide opportunities for students to engage with the practices and dilemmas of practitioner and policy communities, helping them to prepare for future employment in these areas.

Students can also choose from a range of optional modules including technology, violence and war; politics and security in the Middle East; creative conflict transformation and, health crisis permitting, the Africa Study Visit. Alternatively, students can choose an elective module (subject to timetabling and prerequisites) from the wide range of modules for which they will be eligible across the university. This latter opportunity is provided to enable students to develop their specialist interests to an advanced level.

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.

Overall the programme has a strong focus on developing analytical, policy and negotiating skills. Students will graduate with a portfolio of evidence of their progress in this area, achieved through participation in interdisciplinary problem-based learning sessions; skills training days; when possible, field visits; simulations and roleplays; and professional practice projects.

Students can choose options enabling them also to graduate with a detailed knowledge of the international relations, politics and security of two regions of the world. All this will equip students with employability skills and professional competencies for work in, for example, global governance institutions such as the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU); national, local, and city government; counterterrorism and intelligence; policy-analysis, policy-making and peacekeeping, and it will equip them with the skills and competencies for work in research institutes, international, national and local development agencies, as well as private sector strategy, governance sectors, and for working in and with civil society and Non-Governmental (NGO) sectors.

Programme Aims

The programme aims to:

- A1 support students in the transition into higher education, cultivating the skills and qualities needed for social scientific inquiry and effective learning
- A2 introduce students to the study of international relations, politics, security and their inter-relationships
- A3 provide relevant conceptual and theoretical tools for studying international relations, including frameworks, themes and processes concerned with the state and other important actors, including local, national, regional and international organisations and networks, and the dynamics of their interactions in the international system, and in different countries and regions
- A4 foster a critical understanding of discourses, policies and practices associated with international relations, particularly in relation to politics and security studies, and the assumptions underlying them
- A5 create opportunities to engage in active and independent learning activities - carrying out research, managing projects, problem-solving - employing knowledge, methods and techniques in analysing relevant cases and issues
- A6 enable students to develop and demonstrate achievement towards a range of competencies relevant to professionals working in areas relating to international relations, and to politics and security issues in different countries and regions.

Admission Requirements

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing your application. It's not just about your grades; we take the time to understand your personal circumstances and make decisions based on your potential to thrive at university and beyond.

As the programme will be taught in English, we specifically require that all applicants have proficiency at GCSE English Grade 4 (old Grade C) or above, or the equivalent in another national course. For international students whose first language is not English, we require

an IELTS score of 6.0 overall with no individual score lower than 5.5, or the equivalent score in another recognised test.

Consideration of applications will be based on a combination of formal academic qualifications and other relevant experience. A typical profile for someone applying through the UCAS scheme would be:

- **112 UCAS points** including ONE full A-Level or equivalent (we will accept BTEC qualifications as part of the tariff) and GCSE Maths at Grade 4 (old Grade C) or above.

The UCAS tariff applicable may vary and is published here

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/ug/international-relations-politics-security-ba/>

The University of Bradford has always welcomed applications from disabled students, and these will be considered on the same academic grounds as are applied to all applicants. If applicants have some form of disability, they may wish to contact the Disability Service before they apply at www.bradford.ac.uk/disability/before.

Recognition of Prior Learning

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

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.

Placement and/or Study Abroad

This programme provides the option for students to undertake a work placement or period of study abroad of up to a year between Stages 2 and 3.

Students register initially for the 3-year BA programme; but may transfer to the 4-year programme anytime up to the end of Stage 2 of the BA Programme (specific deadline dates are provided in the Programme Handbook each year). The four-year programme option provides students with further opportunities for developing professional experience and practical skills during their BA programme by undertaking a voluntary placement or internship in a relevant organisation, either in the UK or abroad, for a period of up to twelve months. This internship or placement normally starts in September immediately following the end of stage 2.

Both the three- and four-year BA programme options provide excellent opportunities for engaging with the spheres of policy and practice as well as with academic studies. However, the four-year programme provides further enhanced opportunities for work experience and for integrating practitioner community engagement with their academic studies. This normally takes the form of an internship in another organisation and can be either undertaken in the UK or abroad. Students often use their placement period and experience to inform and shape their studies in their final year of the BA programme, including the final year dissertation.

This element of the four-year BA programme is student-centred and student-led, and thus the initiative for identifying and applying for internships or placements is driven by the students. Planning for the placement/internship year starts several months in advance, usually in the first semester of Stage 2 and at the latest by the end of Semester 2. 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.

Academic staff on the programme team can facilitate and support such searches for suitable placements with leads and suggestions, help with the writing of applications, and provide supporting letters of reference. They provide some customised preparatory training before students who choose the four-year option, proceed with their placement, and mentoring support as useful during the period of the placement or internship.

After the placement or internship is completed, students taking this four-year BA Programme return to the programme at the University of Bradford at the beginning of the next academic year to proceed with their final year on the programme, with the same requirements and academic supervision as for students on the three-year programme.

For further information about other study abroad opportunities, such as the Study Abroad Semester, please refer to <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/exchanges/>.

Programme Learning Outcomes

To be eligible for the award of **Certificate of Higher Education** at FHEQ level 4, students will be able to:

- LO1 Explain, employ and compare key concepts, theories and approaches in the discipline fields of international relations, politics and security studies, and demonstrate the ability to apply these to contemporary global challenges and the relationships between global, regional and national politics and processes.
- LO2 Distinguish a range of research designs and methods used in international relations, politics and security studies, and more broadly across the sciences, social sciences and humanities.
- LO3 Formulate and evaluate clear arguments, using knowledge of the different components of argumentation and rigour, and using relevant concepts and theories to investigate issues in international relations, politics and security studies and their inter-relationships, reflecting on their advantages and limitations.

- LO4 Communicate knowledge, understanding and argument in accurate, well- structured and coherent oral, written and multimedia presentations.
- LO5 Collaborate with others in a groupwork task, reflecting critically on group dynamics and outcomes, and demonstrating problem solving, policy assessment and analytical skills.
- LO6 Design and manage a learning project showing ability to clarify objectives, prioritise tasks, meet deadlines and reflect critically on outcomes.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of **Diploma of Higher Education** at FHEQ level 5, students will be able to:

- LO7 Critically assess the nature of the international system using relevant concepts, theories and methods to analyse political ideas, practices and issues of relevance to complex contemporary global, regional and transnational challenges, including security challenges.
- LO8 Explain and critically assess key theoretical approaches to the study of international relations, politics and security studies, and analyse the development, implementation and effectiveness of international and regional governance, agreements, policies, norms and institutions relating to contemporary global, regional and transnational issues.
- LO9 Demonstrate progress in the ability to use a range of common techniques used by international relations and security policymakers and practitioners including conflict analysis and security assessments.
- LO10 Systematically investigate topics or issues using relevant techniques and technologies to gather, evaluate and manage evidence, data and information from valid, appropriate sources.
- LO11 Plan and execute a range of assignments, including essays, reports and reflective pieces, showing awareness of the requirements to address different audiences and purposes.
- LO12 Explain and actively promote the characteristics and qualities of effective collaboration.
- LO13 Identify, analyse and assess implications of the characteristics and complexity of inter-relationships between conflict, security, development, and environment, and their relationships with governance, politics and security in a variety of international and regional contexts.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of Ordinary **Degree of Bachelor** at FHEQ level 6, students will be able to:

- LO14 Develop and apply appropriate multi-disciplinary approaches to researching and analysing in detail selected developments, trends, policy responses and practices relating to regional or international systems, governance, security, institutions, norms and complex international, regional or transnational challenges.

- LO15 Reflect critically on personal development as a scholar and policy analyst in international relations, politics and security studies, using evidence, feedback and insights from research and practice to make judgements about areas of personal development and progression.
- LO16 Plan and execute a range of assignments, including essays, reports and reflective pieces, in which style, scope and depth are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
- LO17 Analyse and critically evaluate contemporary debates relating to policy responses or practices on selected security issues, and regional or international issues or challenges.

Additionally, to be eligible for the award of **Honours Degree of Bachelor** at FHEQ level 6, students will be able to:

- LO18 Design and carry out, with ethical approval as appropriate, a capstone research project including a comprehensive literature review and desk research and analysis.
- LO19 Demonstrate initiative and independence in systematic academic inquiry, using relevant techniques and technologies to gather, evaluate and manage evidence, data and information from valid and appropriate sources relating to international relations, politics and security issues.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The strategy provides a wide range of learning opportunities in each module, including lectures and directed study, but also discussion of in-class and pre-class student research findings; oral presentations; and other methods of communicating arguments - within groups and to whole class audiences.

Graduate employability and professionalism capabilities and attributes are developed through group and pair work, in and out of class. In some modules, these skills are given a sharp focus, and self-reflection on skill development is an explicit learning outcome for the module. These include opportunities for placements or experience with practitioner methods in International Policy Processes in Practice at level 6. As such, some of these skills will be recognised explicitly through the University's HEAR Achievement recognition. This will also be the case for any study trips and crisis simulation exercises students are able to participate in over the course of the programme.

The dissertation project at Stage 3 is chosen (within the overall scope of International Relations, Politics and Security Studies), designed and undertaken entirely by students, under supervision. In the second semester at Stage 3, the core module, Politics of International Crisis Response, specifically includes crisis simulations and other exercises and when possible off-campus visits as well as lectures, seminars and directed reading.

Outside the modules, in each Stage, students will undertake a reflective learning journal, with the support of their Personal Academic Tutor, through which they will identify, and take, opportunities to develop all the skills outlined in the learning outcomes.

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 assessment tasks which are designed to help students to develop and demonstrate their understandings and skills as set out in the staged learning outcomes for each module and for the Programme overall. 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 presentations, and group and individual tasks for which formative feedback is given.

Summative assessment is similarly through a variety of tasks, including essays, reports, policy briefs, analyses, oral presentations, diagrammatic/pictorial representation of theories/concepts etc., data analysis/representation exercises and reflective notes. Each module is assessed by specified modes of assessment, as described in the relevant module descriptor. Some of the modules are 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 with a total word length as appropriate for the Stage and module. At each Stage of this Programme, assessment includes at least one assignment involving oral presentation, in line with subject benchmarks, in order to ensure both oral and written skills are developed.

Curriculum

Optionality is provided within some modules in all Stages, where students are supported to select their own projects, case-studies and topics within the overall syllabus. Further optionality between module choices is specifically provided in the design at stages 2 and 3. At Stage 2 and the first semester of Stage 3, this includes several specialisms.

In the second semester at Stage 3, this includes further options from specialist modules (e.g. the Africa Study Visit, Technology Violence and War) or, alternatively, an elective module where students can choose from any module (subject to timetabling and prerequisites) for which they are eligible offered across the University including one of the Masters level modules offered in Peace Studies and International Development.

The curriculum may change, subject to availability and the University's programme approval, review and modification processes.

Stage 1

Students will study 120 credits as follows:

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Credit	FHEQ Level	Study Period
PES4018-B	Understanding the International System	Core	20	4	Semester 1
PES4019-B	Politics and the State	Core	20	4	Semester 1
PES4020-B	Challenges and Approaches to Development	Core	20	4	Semester 1
PES4021-D	Issues in World Politics	Core	40	4	Semester 2
PES4022-B	Peace and Violence: theories, cases and challenges	Core	20	4	Semester 2

Stage 2

Students will study 120 credits, of which 80 credits are core and students choose two optional module choices of 20 credits each.

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Credit	FHEQ Level	Study Period
PES5018-B	Analysing Contemporary Conflict	Core	20	5	Semester 1
PES5020-B	Contemporary International Relations	Core	20	5	Semester 1
PES5035-B	The Politics and Processes of Foreign Policy	Core	20	5	Semester 1
PES5036-B	Security: Concepts, Constructions and Analyses	Core	20	5	Semester 2
PES5024-B	Peacebuilding, Conflict and Security	Option	20	5	Semester 2
PES5029-B	Power Shifts: Regional and Global Challenges	Option	20	5	Semester 2
PES5022-B	Globalisation and Global Governance	Option	20	5	Semester 2

Stage 3

Students will study 120 credits, of which 80 credits are core and the other 40 credits can be chosen from a list of options; 20 credits in semester 1 and 20 credits in semester 2:

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Credit	FHEQ Level	Study Period
PES6016-D	Dissertation	Core	40	6	Academic Year
PES6024-B	International Policy Processes in Practice	Core	20	6	Semester 1
PES6020-B	Politics and Security in Africa	Option	20	6	Semester 1
PES6026-B	Authoritarianism, Nationalism and Populism	Option	20	6	Semester 1
PES6023-B	Revolutions and Regime Change	Option	20	6	Semester 1
-	University Elective	Elective	20	6	Sem 1 or Sem 2
PES6019-B	Politics of International Crisis Response	Core	20	6	Semester 2
PES6021-B	Politics and Security in the Middle East	Option	20	6	Semester 2
PES6027-B	Technology, Violence and War	Option	20	6	Semester 2
PES6025-B	Africa Study Visit	Option	20	6	Semester 2
PES6015-B	Creative Conflict Transformation	Option	20	6	Semester 2

Assessment Regulations

This Programme conforms to the standard University Undergraduate Assessment Regulations which are available at the following link: www.bradford.ac.uk/regulations.

Achievable Awards

At the end of stage 1, students will be eligible to exit with the award of **Certificate of Higher Education** if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

At the end of stage 2, students will be eligible to exit with the award of **Diploma of Higher Education** if they have successfully completed at least 240 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Upon successful completion of the PES5001-Z Placement module, students on the 4-year route will be eligible for the additional award of **University Diploma in Industrial Studies**.

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Ordinary **Degree of Bachelor** if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits at both Level 4 and 5 and 60 credits at level 6 and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Students will be eligible for the award of **Honours Degree of Bachelor** if they have successfully completed at least 360 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Minor Modification Schedule

Version Number	Brief description of Modification	Date of Approval (Faculty Board)
2	COVID adjustments	September 2020
3	Specification reformatted and made accessible	January 2021