

MA International Relations and Security Studies Programme Specification

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/international-relations-and-security-studies/>

Academic Year:	2024/25
Degree Awarding Body:	The University of Bradford
Target award:	Degree of Master of Arts [Framework for Higher Education (FHEQ) level 7]
Qualifications	
Interim awards:	Postgraduate Diploma [FHEQ Level 7]; Postgraduate Certificate [FHEQ Level 7]
Programme Admissions:	September and January
Programme duration:	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time; with internship or placement, 15 months full-time or 27 months part-time
Date last approved by Faculty Board:	December 2020

Please note: This programme specification has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. The curriculum may change, subject to the University's programme monitoring and review processes. 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.

Minor Modification Schedule

1. January 2021: Specification reformatted and made accessible. Duplicate text deleted and missing sections re-added. Confirmed COVID-19 accommodations.
2. April 2021: Further accessibility improvements
3. June 2021: Annual changes for 2021 academic year
4. May 2023: Annual changes for 2023 academic year
5. May 2024: Annual review; updates to optional modules and electives for 2024-25 academic year.

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 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.

Programme Overview

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. Every student will 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.

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 – in the past these have included trips to Northern Ireland, Hiroshima or The Hague, as well as more local field trips.

Note that any visits are subject to travel risk assessments and there may be an extra charge to students participating in some of these activities, but there may also be scholarship funding available on a competitive basis by application to help with the costs.

The programme culminates with research and preparation of a substantial dissertation project on a subject of the student's choice (relating to the Programme's aims and learning objectives). This involves project research and analysis, and preparation of a Dissertation of up to 15,000 words. This is a major opportunity for students not only to research and prepare a substantial scholarly analysis of a specialist area in which they are particularly interested, but also to demonstrate an advanced understanding of relevant policy and practitioner agendas and debates to help them to use this Masters degree to pursue careers in their preferred areas.

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 are 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.

This programme runs both full-time and part-time with intakes in the Autumn (September, Semester 1) and Spring (January, Semester 2):

September Full-time Intake	January Full-time Intake
Semester 1 Modules	Pre-enrolment
Winter Holiday Period	-
Semester 2 Modules & Dissertation Preparation	Semester 2 Modules
Summer Holiday Period & Dissertation	Summer Holiday Period
Dissertation Submission (September)	Semester 1 Modules & Dissertation Preparation
Graduation (Winter)	Dissertation
Studies completed	Dissertation Submission (March) Graduation (Summer)

Why Bradford?

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.

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.

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. Students have opportunities to participate in an extended 'crisis response game' or the similar international simulation games.

Please 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.

Work Placement Opportunity

There is an option to select an internship or placement opportunity which extends your programme duration by 3 months. Students may transfer to the placement route any time up to the middle of Semester 2 (specific deadline dates are provided in the Programme

Handbook each year). The 15-month option (full-time) or 27-month option (part-time) provides students with further opportunities for developing professional experience and practical skills during their Masters programme by undertaking a voluntary placement or internship in a relevant organisation for a period of up to three months. This internship or placement normally starts shortly after the end of Semester 2.

After an internship is completed, students return to the University to proceed with researching and preparing their Masters dissertation, with the same requirements and academic supervision as for students on the shorter programme, except that the dissertation submission date is extended by approximately three months (actual submission dates are specified annually in the Programme Handbook) as appropriate for a longer programme.

All of the Masters programme routes provide excellent opportunities for engaging with the spheres of policy and practice as well as with academic studies. However, the 3-month placement options provide further enhanced opportunities for integrating practitioner community engagement (such as internship experience) with their academic studies. This element of the programme is student-centred and student-led, and thus the initiative for identifying and applying for internships is driven by the students. The academic staff in 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 customised preparatory training before students who choose the placement route, and mentoring support as useful during the period of the placement or internship.

Students who transfer to the 15-month/27-month programme may be charged an additional tuition fee, reflecting this additional support. Please see the Placement and Study Abroad section for more details.

Programme Aims

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.

The programme is intended to enable students:

- A1. to develop an advanced knowledge and understanding of international relations and security studies.
- A2. to critically engage 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.
- A3. to critically engage with debates concerning the theoretical frameworks, themes and processes concerned with complex contemporary security issues and challenges, and responses to them.

- A4. to make informed analyses of complex events and ideas by synthesising knowledge and debates.
- A5. to prepare 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Identify and critically assess at an advanced level the ideas, practices and conditions that influence debates concerning international relations and security studies.
4. Collaborate effectively with others in the completion of appropriate academic tasks.
5. 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:

6. Employ relevant theories and evidence to engage constructively at an advanced level with debates concerned with international relations and security studies.
7. Identify and apply critical learning to real-world cases and the international responses to these cases.
8. 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.
9. 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 of Arts** at FHEQ level 7, students will be able to:

10. Design and carry out, with appropriate ethical approval, an original and self-directed capstone advanced research project, including a comprehensive and critical literature review.
11. 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.

12. Recognise and be able to reflect critically on one's own positionality, values and epistemological orientation in one's own academic work.

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 reflects the University's Blended Learning Strategy and provides a wide range of online and face-to-face 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 Blended 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.

Students start the programme with an intensive induction week to develop their learning and personal development planning skills and to provide an introduction to IT and library resources. Additional group and one to one support is provided as required. Students will be introduced to academic writing, research and analytical skills as part of the preparation for writing their dissertation.

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.

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.

Assessment Strategy

Informed by the University's Blended Learning 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 online and face-to-face 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.

Curriculum

The curriculum has been carefully designed to ensure coherence and progression through the programme of study. This programme also provides the opportunity for granular personalised learning and specialism where students can take one option in semester 1 and two options in semester two.

Semester 1 (September) Modules

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 options allows further specialisation in relation to a number of key areas.

Students in Semester 1 take 40 credits of core modules and one 20 credit option module from the available modules.

Stage 1

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Credits	Study Period	FHEQ Level
PES7037-B	Contemporary Security Challenges	Core	20	Sem 1	7
PES7054-B	The International System in Theory and Context	Core	20	Sem 1	7
DEV7037-B	Policy Analysis for Governance and Development	Option	20	Sem 1	7
PES7035-B	African Politics and Security Dynamics	Option	20	Sem 1	7
PES7036-B	Applied Conflict Research	Option	20	Sem 1	7
PES7048-B	Security and Development in Fragile and Conflict Affected Areas	Option	20	Sem 1	7

Semester 2 (January) Modules

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.

Students in Semester 2 study 40 credits of core modules and one 20 credit option module from the available modules.

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Credits	Study Period	FHEQ Level
DEV7008-B	International Economics	Core	20	Sem2	7
PES7062-B	Environment, Trafficking and Crime: Transnational Issues and international Governance	Core	20	Sem 2	7
PES7034-B	Africa Study Visit	Option	20	Sem 2	7
PES7043-B	Middle East Politics and Security Dynamics	Option	20	Sem 2	7
PES7045-B	Natural Resource Governance	Option	20	Sem 2	7
PES7046-B	Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding	Option	20	Sem 2	7
PES7053-B	Terrorism and Political Violence	Option	20	Sem 2	7

Dissertation

The preparation and submission period for the Dissertation will vary depending on the student's route (academic or internship) and mode of study (full-time or part-time).

Full-time students will prepare begin to prepare their dissertation in semester 3 and submit in the autumn/winter. Students who undertake the part-time route will commence the dissertation process and submit their dissertation in the second year of study.

All students will be supported in their dissertation work by an academic supervisor.

Module Code	Module Title	Type	Credits	Study Period	FHEQ Level
PES7040-E	Dissertation	Core	60	FLYR, ACYR or NSYR	7

Placement and Study Abroad

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 obtain permission 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. For those choosing the 15-month Full Time option or a Part Time route (on application) including voluntary placement/internship, the degree of master will be awarded on successful completion of a voluntary placement or internship of up to three months. Those on the 15-month Full Time route are expected to start the placement/internship shortly after the end of Semester 2, that is to undertake it during the summer period (semester 3). Those on the Part Time route are able to do this (on application) after they complete the 120 credits of taught programme.

Students on the Rotary route

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Credits	Study Period	FHEQ Level
PES7023-Z	Professional Experience (Rotary Peace Fellows Applied Field Experience)	Core	0	Sem 3	7

All other students

Module Code	Module Title	Module Type	Credits	Study Period	FHEQ Level
PES7056-Z	Voluntary placement/internship	Core	0	Sem 3	7

Other Study Abroad

Students are welcome to explore available opportunities for a Study Abroad Semester that may be viable for them via our International Opportunities team.

A Study Abroad Semester can be available **ONLY** if the modules offered by the host institution allow the student to meet the learning outcomes of the Bradford Programme during Semester 1 **OR** Semester 2.

Any student wishing to study abroad for a semester should first contact the International Opportunities Team to explore the opportunities and funding in place and, secondly, the Faculty Exchange Coordinator to check if the available options and relevant modules are in line with the University requirements. Following these checks, the International

Opportunities Team and the Faculty Exchange Coordinator will liaise with the relevant Programme Leader to validate the modules and the semester exchange.

The semester exchange requires students to study only modules suitable to the Bradford programme when abroad. Therefore, all modules selected for the exchange will have to be mapped to the Bradford programme learning outcomes and be approved by the Programme Leader and the Director of Studies in Bradford in advance of the exchange. During the exchange, if the student needs to change the modules, this can only be done after approval of the Programme Leader and Director of Programmes.

If the student fails a module abroad, the student must:

- a) inform immediately the International Opportunities Team and the Faculty Exchange Coordinator
- b) explore the possibility of re-taking any exams at the host institution.

During the exchange, students will have support from the relevant University services. All credit successfully obtained whilst on study abroad semester will count towards the student's final degree. Our International Opportunities team can advise students about the available funding to support their study or work experience abroad.

The list of exchange partners and network of Universities available for Study Abroad Semester, as well as further information about international opportunities can be found online at www.bradford.ac.uk/exchanges/current-students.

Please note: Some institutions are only available to undergraduate or postgraduate students. Any potential exchange is dependent on student eligibility, student finance, and the appropriate modules required to fulfil the requirements of the programme being available at either institution.

Assessment Regulations

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

Achievable Awards

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.

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

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.

Academic Admission Requirements

The standard entry requirements for this postgraduate programme are that all applicants have at least a Bachelor's degree with honours classified as lower second-class (2:2, or

equivalent). Relevant professional or voluntary activities would be desirable as the course will draw on your experience and the experiences of your fellow students.

Language Competency

As the programme is taught in English, all applicants are required to have GCSE Grade 4 (national grade C) or above in English Language. Alternative RQF Level 2 qualifications such as Key Skills are also acceptable if equivalent. For international students, the standard postgraduate English language requirements for the University apply and these are listed at <https://www.bradford.ac.uk/international/entry-requirements/> .

Access and Recognition of Prior Learning

Applications are welcome from students with non-traditional qualifications, or with significant personal and professional 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.

The University of Bradford has always welcomed applications from disabled students. To discuss adjustments or to find out more about support and access, you may wish to contact the Disability Service before you apply: www.bradford.ac.uk/disability/before .