

MA in Strategic Studies

For students entering in September 2007

Awarding Institution:
Teaching Institution:
Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences

The University of Reading
The University of Reading
Programme length: FT (12)
PT (24)
Modular (72)

Date of specification: September 2007
Programme Director: **Dr Geoff Sloan**
Board of Studies: **GIPIS**
Accreditation: **The University of Reading**

Summary of programme aims

The MA in Strategic Studies offers a comprehensive education in both the theory and practice of strategy. In the current challenging strategic environment, a dedicated study of this subject is required for all those who seek to understand modern warfare and how military force can be used in the pursuit of policy objectives. The programme also provides an invaluable education for those who are currently engaged, or seek a career, in the defence profession. The MA in Strategic Studies provides a thorough analysis of contemporary strategic issues and the challenges of defence planning in the modern world. This analysis is aided by an exploration of the great works of strategic theory, and an examination of some of the most significant historical case studies in the practice of strategy. The latter will include the campaigns of Alexander the Great; US Civil War; World War Two; Vietnam; and the two US-led wars against Iraq.

Transferable skills

Amongst a range of transferable skills, this programme will provide students with those necessary for employment where there is a requirement for the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility, decision making in complex and unpredictable situations, and the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development. In addition, the programme will also provide the students with an informed and critical approach to using primary and secondary sources, and an enhanced confidence in, and effectiveness of, oral and written communication.

Programme content

The MA in Strategic Studies consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). There are three compulsory core modules, which run for two terms (Autumn and Spring). In addition, students choose one further optional module, which runs concurrently with the core modules. Students must also write a dissertation which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted in September.

Mod Code		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PIM18	<i>Modern Strategy (Core Module)</i>	30	M
PIM30	<i>Strategic Theory (Core Module)</i>		
PIM29	<i>The Practice of Strategy in History (Core Module)</i>	30	M
PIM12	<i>Dissertation (Core Module)</i>	30	M
	<i>Students should choose 30 credits from the options in the appendix to this specification</i>	60	M

Part-time/Modular arrangements

The programme can be followed part-time over a period of 24 months. It can also be taken on a modular basis for a period up to but not exceeding 72 months.

Progression requirements

None

Summary of teaching and assessment

The programme is taught by a mixture of seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials (especially where the dissertation is involved).

The Core Modules and most Option Modules are assessed on the basis of 50 per cent course work and 50 per cent examination (though some Option Modules may also be assessed on the basis of coursework only, or of 75 per cent examination and 25 per cent coursework). The pass mark for all modules is 50 per cent. In addition, students will have the opportunity to partake in a series of battlefield tours in Europe.

Mark Interpretation

70 – 100% Distinction

60 – 69% Merit

50 – 59% Good standard (Pass)

Failing categories:

40 – 49% Work below threshold standard

0 – 39% Unsatisfactory Work

For Masters Degrees

To pass the MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall *and have no mark below 40 in any of their modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For PG Diploma

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in any of their modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must be less than 60 credits.*

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 40 will be awarded eligible for a Merit.

For PG Certificate

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain an average mark of 50 or more *and have no mark below 40 in any of their modules*. In addition the total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 10 credits.*

* The provision to permit a candidate to be passed overall with a profile containing marks below 40 is made subject to the condition that there is evidence that the candidate applied his or herself to the work of those modules with reasonable diligence and has not been absent from the examination without reasonable cause.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a 2.1 Honours degree or its Equivalent. However, special consideration may be given to defence professionals based on their experience. For students whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of 7.0.

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Programme Directors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

Career prospects

The MA in Strategic Studies provides an excellent education for those seeking a career as a defence professional. Alternatively, for those already working in the defence field, this programme offers such a comprehensive education in the theory and practice of strategy that it can be regarded as an important element in the development of their career.

Opportunities for study abroad or for placements

During their studies the students will be given the opportunity to engage in a series of battlefield tours in Europe.

Educational aims of the programme

The MA in Strategic Studies offers a comprehensive education in both the theory and practice of strategy. To achieve this goal, the programme provides a thorough analysis of contemporary strategic issues and the challenges of defence planning in the modern world. This analysis is aided by an exploration of the great works of strategic theory, and an examination of some of the most significant historical case studies in the practice of strategy.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <p>Strategic Theory</p> <p>Contemporary Strategic Issues</p> <p>The Complexities of Strategy</p> <p>Defence Planning Issues</p> <p>The Practice of Strategy</p> <p>Historical Case Studies</p>	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>Students will be taught by means of seminars, with students presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials, and a limited number of lectures. In the Core modules students will become familiar with the key concepts and theories, historical practice, and with the major issues and debates in Strategic Studies. In the Optional modules, students will gain specialized knowledge of different aspects of areas related to Strategic Studies. In the Dissertation module, students will, under the guidance of dissertation supervisor, apply appropriate methods of analysis to a specific topic, taking increasing responsibility for their own learning.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>Students' knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework, examinations and a dissertation.</p>
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Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <p>Identify and employ relevant scholarly literature in support of one's own research.</p> <p>Demonstrate a sound understanding of research methods and techniques appropriate to the study of Strategic Studies</p> <p>Structure complex arguments.</p> <p>Criticise and defend intellectual positions in a well reasoned and empirically substantiated fashion.</p> <p>Express oneself orally and in writing in a cogent and effective manner.</p>	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</p> <p>These intellectual skills will be taught in all modules: Core, Option, Dissertation. These skills will be taught by means of seminars with students' presentations and structured discussions, some individual tutorials, essay writing, workshops and the writing of a dissertation. Additional training will be available to students through study visits to the library and other research resources, and through the support of Study Advisors.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>All these intellectual skills are assessed throughout the programme in essays, exams and the dissertation.</p>
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C. Practical skills – able to:

Cull relevant material from select bibliographies for the preparation of oral presentations and written assignments.

Use library and electronic resources, including databases and websites, for the purpose of conducting research.

Budget one's time satisfactorily for the completion of weekly assignments, exam preparation and the writing of a dissertation.

Memorise and recall key concepts, theories and historical data in support of one's work.

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

The Graduate Institute's induction day includes an introduction to the use of the University Library and other relevant resources. Students learn through independent study, availing themselves when necessary of guidance from the Course Convenor and Study Skills Advisors.

Assessment

The practical skills developed during the course form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skill acquisition and are assessed throughout the programme in coursework, exams and the writing of the dissertation.

D. Transferable skills – able to:

Exercise Initiative

Exercise Personal Responsibility

Engage in Effective Decision Making

Engage in Independent Learning

Effective Oral and Written Communication

Effective use of Sources

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These skills are taught by means of seminars with students presentations and structured discussions, some individual tutorials, essay writing, workshops and the writing of a dissertation. Additional training is available to students through study visits to the library and other research resources, and through the support of Study Advisors.

Assessment

The transferable skills developed during the course form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skill acquisition and are assessed throughout the programme in coursework, exams and the writing of the dissertation.

Please note - 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 he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the module description and in the programme handbook. The University reserves the right to modify this specification in unforeseen circumstances, or where the process of academic development and feedback from students, quality assurance processes or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.