

## **MA/PGDip/PGCert in Strategic Studies**

### **For students entering in 2009**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
	Faculty of Social Sciences
Programme length:	FT (12), PT (24), Modular (72)
Programme Director:	Dr Geoff Sloan
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	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	7
PIM30	<i>Strategic Theory (Core Module)</i>	30	7
PIM29	<i>The Practice of Strategy in History (Core Module)</i>	30	7
PIM12	<i>Dissertation (Core Module)</i>	60	7
<i>Students should choose 30 credits from the following options:</i>			

### **Optional Postgraduate Modules:**

PIM03	Conflict & Conflict Resolution	30	7
PIM42	Conflict in the Middle East	30	7
PIM21	Contemporary Diplomacy	30	7
PIM09	International Relations	30	7
PIM11	International Security Studies	30	7
PIM43	Terrorism in a Globalising World	30	7
PIM28	The United Nations, Humanitarian Intervention & Contemporary Warfare	30	7
PIM44	Research Training Philosophical Issues	30	7
PIM45	Research Training Data Collection & Analysis	30	7

### **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 Diplomas

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 Certificates

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 6.5.

### **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 Personal Tutors, School Senior Tutors, the Students' Union, the Medical Practice and the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and includes the Careers Advisory Service, the Disability Advisory Service, Accommodation Advisory Team, Student Financial Support, Counselling and Study Advisors. Student Services has a Helpdesk available for enquiries made in person or online ([www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk](http://www.risisweb.reading.ac.uk)), or by calling the central enquiry number on (0118) 378 5555. Students can get key information and guidance from the team of Helpdesk Advisers, or make an appointment with a specialist adviser; Student Services also offer drop-in sessions on everything from accommodation to finance. The Carrington Building is open between 8:30 and 17:30 Monday to Thursday (17:00 Friday and during vacation periods). Further information can be found in the Student Diary (given to students at enrolment) or on the Student website ([www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)).

### **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*

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
<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>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>

### *Skills and other attributes*

<p><b>B. Intellectual skills</b> – 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><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></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>
<p><b>C. Practical skills</b> – able to:</p> <p>Cull relevant material from select bibliographies for the preparation of oral presentations and written assignments.</p> <p>Use library and electronic resources, including databases and websites, for the purpose of conducting research.</p> <p>Budget one's time satisfactorily for the completion of weekly assignments, exam preparation and the writing of a dissertation.</p> <p>Memorise and recall key concepts, theories and historical data in support of one's work.</p>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>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.</p>

<p><b>D. Transferable skills – able to:</b></p> <p>Exercise Initiative</p> <p>Exercise Personal Responsibility</p> <p>Engage in Effective Decision Making</p> <p>Engage in Independent Learning</p> <p>Effective Oral and Written Communication</p> <p>Effective use of Sources</p>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i></p> <p>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.</p>
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**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.**