

## **MRes in International Relations (International Security Studies)**

### **For students entering in 2010**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Faculty:	Social Sciences
Programme length:	12 months
Date of specification:	2010
Programme Director:	Dr Dominik Zaum
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	The University of Reading

### **Summary of programme aims**

The programme aims to equip students with a thorough understanding of key theories, concepts and scholarly debates related to international and global security, broadly defined, and their relationship to contemporary security problems. As well, it aims to provide students with empirical knowledge of specific security issues, especially since the Cold War period, and with the ability to critically analyse these.

### **Transferable skills**

This module will enhance students' capacity for independent study by requiring them to prepare for weekly discussions using recommended bibliographic materials (print and electronic). It will help them to develop further their IT skills by using a variety of internet sites and public access databases in the preparation of assignments. It will enhance their presentational skills by requiring them to make oral presentations to groups of fellow students. It will strengthen their written communication skills through the writing of essays and a dissertation. The dissertation and research methods components will strengthen students' research skills and their ability to structure complex subject material as well as evaluate and present their own thinking on a subject in a coherent and precise manner.

### **Programme content**

The MRes in International Security Studies consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). There are four compulsory core modules 'International Relations', 'International Security Studies', 'Research Training Philosophical Issues' and 'Research Training Data Collection & Analysis', totalling 120 credits. These run for two terms (Autumn and Spring). Students must also write a dissertation (60 credits), which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted for assessment in September.

Mod Code	Module Title	Credits	Level
<i>Compulsory Modules</i>			
PIM09	International Relations	30	7
PIM11	International Security Studies	30	7
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7
PIM44	Research Training Philosophical Issues	30	7
PIM45	Research Training Data Collection & Analysis	30	7

### **Part-time/Modular arrangements**

The programme can be taken part-time over two years (or exceptionally on a flexible basis over a maximum of 6 years). In the first year of study a student will be required to complete the two modules 'International Relations' and 'Research Training Philosophical Issues'. The other modules and dissertation will be completed in the second year of study. The programme may not normally be extended beyond two years.

### **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), and a small number of lectures.

All modules, except for the Dissertation, are assessed by course work and examination. Failed coursework has to be re-submitted at the latest by 1<sup>st</sup> September the same year. If the examination is failed it has to be re-sat in September the same year. A failed dissertation has to be re-submitted within 12 months. The pass mark for all modules is 50 per cent.

The University's taught postgraduate marks classification is as follows:

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Interpretation</u>
70 – 100%	Distinction
60 – 69%	Merit
50 – 59%	Good standard (Pass)
<u>Failing categories:</u>	
40 – 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 – 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

#### For Masters Degrees

To pass the MRes 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.

### **Admission requirements**

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained a first degree of 2.1 Honours degree standard or its equivalent and, for students whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of at least 6.5.

Admissions Tutor: Dr P.J Giddings.

### **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 Directorate. The Student Services Directorate 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 website ([www.reading.ac.uk/student](http://www.reading.ac.uk/student)).

GIPIS has its own handbook as well as a full induction programme at the beginning of the university year. Student progress is monitored via termly progress reports written by the Module Convenor and provided to the Director of Studies. Through its formative essays scheme GIPIS also gives individual help to students whose early assignments have revealed the need for remedial effort to enhance their writing skills.

### **Career prospects**

Students with a postgraduate degree in International Relations may be able to pursue careers in a wide range of areas in government, business, research, journalism, publishing, teaching, and the work of non-governmental organizations. A number of students also go on to further post-graduate studies at the PhD level.

### **Opportunities for study abroad or for placements**

The Graduate Institute has exchange arrangements with Charles University, Prague, and with the Université Libre de Bruxelles. Each year a weeklong study trip to Brussels is organised to visit EU and other governmental and non-governmental institutions.

## **Educational aims of the programme**

Upon completion of the MA programme, students will have broadened and strengthened their knowledge and understanding of International Relations in a systematic way. They will be aware of the main epistemological and theoretical issues relevant to the academic study of International Relations, and of current debates within the discipline. They will have a general familiarisation with the full range of quantitative and qualitative research skills relevant to the study of International Relations and will have practical knowledge of specific methods and research techniques. They will have engaged in a sustained piece of independent and critical research within the context of close and supportive supervision. They will also have acquired non-subject specific research skills and generic skills and knowledge appropriate to a research and other careers.

## Programme Outcomes

### *Knowledge and Understanding*

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
<p>(a) key theories, paradigms and concepts of international and global security, and their application to contemporary issues;</p> <p>(b) major debates in security studies;</p> <p>(c) empirical security issues and threats (military and non-military), and alternative means of managing them;</p> <p>(d) research methods and skills relevant to security studies.</p>	<p>Teaching takes the form of seminars with student presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials, and lectures where appropriate. Other provisions include training sessions in the University Library and an optional annual study trip to Brussels.</p> <p>The core modules introduce students to international relations and concepts and issues of security during and since the end of the Cold War. It surveys different approaches to questions about what security is and how to promote it, and who should be made secure. Critically examined are concepts of 'international', 'global' and 'human' security; the nature of various threats to security; and ways in which states and other actors have sought and now seek to tackle them.</p> <p>The Research Methods modules introduce a broad range of research tools (quantitative and qualitative), and provides training in different methods of data collection and analysis. It provides students with knowledge of the major epistemological and theoretical issues in the social sciences. In the Dissertation module, students apply, under the guidance of dissertation supervisor, appropriate methods of research and analysis to a specific topic.</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) critically assess and compare major paradigms and concepts of security;</li><li>(b) apply current debates and paradigms of security to empirical issues and events, and vice versa;</li><li>(c) formulate and defend intellectual positions effectively, including with reference to relevant scholarly literature and empirical evidence;</li><li>(d) undertake independent research, and in so doing demonstrate understanding of and the ability to apply research methods appropriate to the field of security studies.</li></ul>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>These intellectual skills will be taught in all modules by means of seminars with student 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 termly essays, exams and the dissertation.</p>
<p><b>C. Practical skills</b> – able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) select and assess quality materials on assigned topics, using library and electronic resources;</li><li>(b) distill the essence of and organise large amounts of information on contested issues, and prepare it for presentation orally and in writing;</li><li>(c) refer effectively to key concepts, theories and empirical data in support of one's arguments;</li><li>(d) manage time effectively in the completion of weekly assignments, termly essays, exam preparation, and the writing of a dissertation.</li></ul>	<p><b>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</b></p> <p>The Induction Programme at the beginning of the academic year, as well as the taught modules, introduce students to library collections and internet resources, and advise them on how to use these in their work.</p> <p>Effective processing and presentation of information, and the use of concepts and empirical data, are demonstrated and practiced in seminars and assignments.</p> <p>Time management and other study skills are acquired by students independently, and/or via Course Convenors 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 skills acquisition. They are assessed throughout the programme in coursework, exams and the writing of the dissertation.</p>

**D. Transferable skills – able to:**

- (a) undertake independent study and research, including through the use of IT;
- (b) evaluate different sources of information and evidence, and formulate and defend positions and arguments effectively;
- (c) process large amounts of information, and present it and one's arguments effectively orally and in writing;
- (d) manage time effectively in the completion of work assignments

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

These skills are taught through weekly assignments to prepare for seminar discussions, oral presentations to fellow students and participation in seminar debates, and the preparation of essays and a dissertation. Additional tuition is available from Study Skills Advisors and Course Convenors.

*Assessment*

The practical skills developed during the course form an integral part of knowledge and intellectual skills acquisition. They 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.**