

MRes in International Relations (Strategic Studies)

For students entering in 2010

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Faculty:	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

This programme aims to introduce students to theoretical and practical approaches to the study of the related topics of international relations and strategic studies. The MRes in International Relations (Strategic Studies) provides a thorough analysis of contemporary strategic issues and the challenges of defence planning in the modern international world. It seeks also to develop those practical, generic and personal transferable skills necessary to conduct independent research.

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 MRes in International Relations (Strategic Studies) consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). There are four compulsory modules, which run for two terms (Autumn and Spring). Students must also write a dissertation which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted in September.

PIM 09	International Relations	30	7
PIM18	Modern Strategy	30	7
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7
PIM44	Research Training Philosophical Issues	30	7
PIM45	Research Training Data Collection and 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 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 1st 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.

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 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 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 is required.

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), 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).

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 postgraduate studies at PhD level.

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 MRes 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 international world.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:	Teaching/learning methods and strategies
<p>Contemporary Strategic Issues</p> <p>The Complexities of Strategy</p> <p>Defence Planning Issues</p> <p>Historical Case Studies</p> <p>Research Methods</p>	<p>Students will be taught by means of seminars, with students presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials, and a limited number of lectures.</p> <p>Students will become familiar with the key concepts and theories, historical practice, and major issues and debates in International Relations and Strategic Studies.</p> <p>In the Research Methods modules students will become familiar with the full range of quantitative and qualitative research skills and underlying issues, train in a range of methods of data collection and analysis, and acquire an understanding of the main epistemological and theoretical issues in the social sciences.</p> <p>In the Dissertation module students will, under the guidance of a 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. 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 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>C. Practical skills – 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>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</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>D. Transferable skills – able to:</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>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</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.