

MRes in International Relations

For students entering Part 1 in 2011/2

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Relevant QAA subject Benchmarking group(s):	
Faculty:	Arts, Humanities and Social Science Faculty
Programme length:	1 years
Date of specification:	23/Aug/2011
Programme Director:	Dr Dominik Zaum
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	

Summary of programme aims

The programme aims to provide students with a deeper knowledge and theoretical understanding of the academic discipline of International Relations than that provided at the undergraduate level. It seeks to acquaint them with the current debates in the field and their relationship to contemporary problems of world politics. It also aims to strengthen their ability for critical analysis of International Relations. It offers the opportunity for specialisation in various aspects of international politics, strategic studies, international political economy, international law, international organisations, and area studies.

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 component 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. This module provides training for doctoral programmes as part of the ESRC 1 + 3 scheme.

Programme content

The MRes in International Relations consists of 180 credits; a taught element (120 credits) and a dissertation (60 credits). There are four compulsory core modules 'International Relations', 'Conflict and Conflict Resolution', '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.

Compulsory Modules

Code	Title	Credits	Level
PIM03	Conflict and Conflict Resolution	30	7
PIM09	International Relations	30	7
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7
PIM44	Research Training Philosophical Issues	30	7
PIM45	Research Training Data Collection & Analysis	30	7

Part-time or 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

Assessment and classification

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.

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

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 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.

Admission requirements

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 is provided by a wide array of services across the University, including: the University Library, the Student Employment, Experience and Careers Centre (SEEC), In-sessional English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support Centre teams, IT Services and 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 advisers in the Student Services Centre. The Student Services Centre is housed in the Carrington Building and offers advice on accommodation, careers, disability, finance, and wellbeing. 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 and runs workshops and seminars on a range of topics. For more information see 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 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 Universite Libre de Bruxelles. Each year a weeklong study trip to Brussels is organised to visit EU and other governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Programme Outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

A. Knowledge and understanding of:

1. the principal concepts and theories associated with the academic discipline of International Relations;
2. the major issues and debates in contemporary world politics and the relevance of International Relations theory to these questions;
3. specific aspects of International Relations;
4. research methods

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

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 of International Relations and Conflict and Conflict Resolution and with the major issues and debates. Students will gain specialised knowledge of different aspects of International Relations, politics, economy, international law and international organisations. 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. 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.

Assessment

Students' knowledge is tested through a combination of coursework, examinations and a dissertation.

Skills and other attributes

B. Intellectual skills - able to:

1. analyse and interpret patterns and processes of world politics in a theoretically aware manner;
2. identify and employ relevant scholarly literature in support of one's own research;
3. demonstrate a sound understanding of research methods and techniques appropriate to the study of International Relations;
4. structure complex arguments;
5. criticise and defend intellectual positions in a well reasoned and empirically substantiated fashion;

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

These intellectual skills will be taught in all modules: Core, Option, Dissertation and (for the MA in research training), Research Methods. 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.

6. express oneself orally and in writing in a cogent and effective manner.

Assessment

All these intellectual skills are assessed throughout the programme in termly essays, exams and the dissertation.

C. Practical skills - able to:

1. cull relevant material from select bibliographies for the preparation of oral presentations and written assignments;
2. use library and electronic resources, including databases and websites, for the purpose of conducting research;
3. budget one's time satisfactorily for the completion of weekly assignments, exam preparation and the writing of a dissertation;
4. 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:

1. engage in independent study;
2. evaluate evidence using reasoned arguments;
3. structure complex arguments;
4. articulate one's own thoughts in a coherent fashion;
5. give oral presentations;
6. write effectively;
7. manage one's time efficiently;
8. use IT (e.g., internet sites and electronic databases) and other scholarly resources.

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 process or external sources, such as professional bodies, requires a change to be made. In such circumstances, a revised specification will be issued.