

**MA in International Relations (Strategic Studies) (full-time)  
For students entering in 2013/4**

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:	12 months
Date of specification:	28/Nov/2013
Programme Director:	Prof Beatrice Heuser
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	

**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.

**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 two compulsory core module, which run for two terms (Autumn and Spring). In addition, students choose two further optional modules, which run concurrently with the core modules (or enough modules to make up to 180 credits) . Students must also write a dissertation which is planned in consultation with a supervisor and submitted in September.

Code	Title	Credits	Level
PIM 30	Strategic Theory (compulsory)	30	7
PIM 31	Modern Strategy (compulsory)	30	7
PIM12	Dissertation (compulsory)	60	7

*Students should choose 60 credits from a list of optional modules which may include the following:*

Code	Title	Credits	Level
PIM03	Conflict and Conflict Resolution	30	7
PIM09	International Relations	30	7
PIM11	International Security Studies	30	7
PIM15	Political Integration in Europe	30	7
PIM21	Contemporary Diplomacy	30	7
PIM25	International Political Economy	30	7
PIM28	The United Nations, Humanitarian Intervention and Contemporary Warfare	30	7
PIM29	The Practice of Strategy in History	30	7
PIM37	The Origins and Causes of War	30	7
PIM42	Conflict in the Middle East	30	7
PIM43	Terrorism in a Globalising World	30	7

PIM46	Cold War Culture	30	7
PIM54	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	20	7
PIM55	Introduction to Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
PIM56	Advanced Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
LWMTDS	International Dispute Settlement	20	7
LWMTEF	European Legal Frameworks : Constitutionalism, Citizenship and Democracy	20	7
LWMTHR	International Human Rights Law	30	7
LWMTIC	Prosecuting International Crimes: Contemporary Issues and Problems	10	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 core modules in Modern Strategy and International Relations. In the second year of study, a student will be required to take the two optional modules and the Dissertation.

### **Progression requirements**

None

### **Summary of Teaching and Assessment**

Teaching methods will vary from module to module but teaching will primarily be by means of seminars. Certain modules may be partially taught by means of lectures and tutorials.

All modules 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 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 MA students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 40 in any module. The total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 60 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 50 will be eligible for a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for the dissertation and have no mark below 50 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 module. In addition the total credit value of 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 50 will be eligible for the award of a Distinction. Those gaining an average mark of 60 or more and have no mark below 50 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 module.

### **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.

**Admissions Tutor:** Prof Beatrice Heuser

### **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 Careers, Placement and Experience Centre (CPEC), In-session 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, academic issues (eg problems with module selection) and exam related queries. 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](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.

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

##### **A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

1. Strategic Theory
2. Contemporary Strategic Issues
3. The Complexities of Strategy
4. Defence Planning Issues
5. The Practice of Strategy
6. Historical Case Studies

##### **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, 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.

##### *Assessment*

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

#### **Skills and other attributes**

### **B. Intellectual skills - able to:**

1. Identify and employ relevant scholarly literature in support of one's own research.
2. Demonstrate a sound understanding of research methods and techniques appropriate to the study of Strategic Studies
3. Structure complex arguments.
4. Criticise and defend intellectual positions in a well reasoned and empirically substantiated fashion.
5. Express oneself orally and in writing in a cogent and effective manner.

### **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.

### **D. Transferable skills - able to:**

1. Exercise Initiative
2. Exercise Personal Responsibility
3. Engage in Effective Decision Making
4. Engage in Independent Learning
5. Effective Oral and Written Communication
6. Effective use of Sources

### **Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

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.

#### *Assessment*

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

### **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.

### **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.**