

**MRes Politics and International Relations (full-time)  
For students entering in 2016/7**

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:	03/Oct/2016
Programme Director:	
Programme Advisor:	
Board of Studies:	GIPIS
Accreditation:	

**Summary of programme aims**

The MRes in Politics and International Relations is designed primarily to prepare students for study at doctoral level, though it is also suitable for anyone else wishing to pursue research into political issues. It is particularly suitable for students that have a Master's degree that did not involve a substantial research training element or for students who do not have a Master's degree but do have some background in the fields of Politics and International Relations. The core modules provide in-depth training in social science research methods and research philosophy. Additional, substantive modules are chosen from across the modules available on MA programmes within the Department of Politics and International Relations in consultation with the programme director and prospective dissertation supervisor. The dissertation will in most cases take the form of a research template and pilot in order to prepare for doctoral work.

**Intended learning outcomes:**

- to develop an understanding of debates about the nature of the social world and the nature of research into and knowledge of that world in the social sciences;
- to develop an understanding of a range of research methodologies used within the disciplines of Politics and International Relations;
- to develop the ability to apply the points above to the development of a research question and a project designed to provide an answer to that question;
- to develop understanding of existing knowledge and debates in aspects of Politics and International Relations relevant to that research question.

**Transferable skills**

The programme will develop writing skills in different forms, including essays and a dissertation. In this context, skills of data identification, collection and analysis will be developed, relating to a range of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The programme will also develop oral communication skills through participation in seminars and the presentation of the student's research topic to the postgraduate research seminar. Practical skills required for the location of bibliographical and historical materials, including the use of electronic means of bibliographic searching and information retrieval and storage, are included. Students are encouraged to use a range of computer software, including the Microsoft Office suite and, where appropriate, other, specialized software.

**Programme content**

The programme consists of one year of study worth 180 credits. Three modules on philosophy of social science and research methods, totalling 60 credits, are compulsory, as is the dissertation of 60 credits. Students take an additional 60 credits in taught modules, which can include any of the MA modules available within the Department that year and, in consultation with the programme director, up to 20 credits in modules from another Department.

*Compulsory modules*

Code	Title	Credits	Level
PIM12	Dissertation (of 13,000-15,000 words)	60	7
PIM54	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	20	7
PIM85	Introduction to Qualitative research methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
Or			
PIM86	Introduction to Quantitative research methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7

Students must take **at least** one of these 20 credit modules, and are advised on which to take by their programme director.

#### *Optional*

Students take further modules totalling 60 credits. The following list is an example of optional modules and not necessarily indicative of the available modules in any given year.

<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PIM63	International Relations Theory	20	7
PIM64	International Security Studies	20	7
PIM66	Contemporary Diplomacy	20	7
PIM69	Strategic Theorists	20	7
PIM70	Strategic Practice	20	7
PIM71	The Origins and Causes of War	20	7
PIM73	Conflict in the Middle East	20	7
PIM74	Terrorism in a Globalising World	20	7
PIM80	Building Peace After Civil War	20	7
PIM81	Themes & Issues in Contemporary International Relations	20	7
PIM84	Parliamentary Studies	20	7
LWMTSI	International Institutional Law & Dispute Settlement	20	7
LWMTCB	International Criminal Law	10	7
LWMTPI	Israel/Palestine: International Law & Human Rights Questions	10	7
LWMTAC	Law of Armed Conflict	20	7
LWMTUM	The Use of Military Force	20	
LWMTPU	Public International Law	10	7

Students may, alternatively, take up to 20 credits from another MA programme, subject to the approval of the programme director.

#### **Part-time or 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**

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

Assessment varies between modules (see the module descriptions), but in most cases involves a mixture of coursework and exams. The pass mark for all modules is 50%. Marks shall be interpreted as follows:

Mark	Interpretation
70% - 100%	First class
60% - 69%	Upper Second class
50% - 59%	Lower Second class
40% - 49%	Third class
35% - 39%	Below Honours Standard
0% - 34%	Fail

##### **For Masters Degree**

To pass the MRes, students must gain a weighted 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 a weighted 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 a weighted 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 eligible for a Merit.

##### **For PG Diploma**

To pass the Postgraduate Diploma students must gain an average mark of 50 or more over 120 credits and have no mark below 40 in any of the compulsory modules. The total credit value of all modules marked below 40 must not exceed 30 credits and for all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits).

##### **For PG Certificate**

To pass the Postgraduate Certificate students must gain a weighted average mark of 50 or more over 60 credits and have no mark below 40 in any of the compulsory 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 BA Upper Second class degree or its equivalent, though special consideration may be given to candidates with relevant professional experience. For students whose first language is not English, an IELTS score of 6.5 is required.

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Christina Hellmich

### **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-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, 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 programme is primarily intended for students wishing to pursue a PhD and, thereafter, a career in academia or any other area involving research or analysis in the areas of International Relations or Strategic Studies. It is also suitable for anyone wanting to develop their research skills in this area of study and is appropriate for those interested in careers in think tanks, research institutes, or other organizations where research is conducted or analysed.

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

#### **Programme Outcomes**

##### **Knowledge and Understanding**

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

1. a broad range of research methods relevant to the study of Politics and International Relations;
2. in greater depth, the research methods appropriate to the student's chosen area of research specialism;
3. the principal concepts and theories associated with the chosen areas of study within International Relations and Strategic Studies;
4. the major issues and debates in contemporary world politics and the relevance of theories and history to these;
5. the specialist areas researched through the dissertations.

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

Students will be taught by means of seminars with students presentations and structured discussion, individual tutorials and supervision meetings, and, in some cases, a limited number of lectures. The programme is designed to be flexible to the particular interests of different students, and, beyond the core research methods training, students will therefore consult with the programme director and their dissertation supervisor to choose the substantive modules suited to their particular research interests. The dissertation will allow students to put their knowledge of research methods into practice and plan a detailed research programme.

###### *Assessment*

Students' knowledge is tested through a combination

of coursework, examinations, and the dissertation.

### **Skills and other attributes**

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

1. Formulate research questions and identify strategies for exploring them
2. Recognise and evaluate methodological issues arising from the selection and use of data
3. Identify relevant data (primary and secondary sources)
4. Collect relevant data (primary and secondary sources)
5. Order, collate, and interpret relevant data and information;
6. Understand diverse analytical patterns as presented by different authorities
7. Locate the issues in the context of relevant larger themes and literature
8. Analyse the data in this light
9. Come to own conclusions, think critically and independently
10. Communicate the evaluation and conclusions effectively, both in written and in oral form

#### **C. Practical skills - able to:**

1. Plan and manage a research project, working both with guidance and independently
2. Select and apply appropriate methodological approaches for the analysis
3. Use text software (e.g. Word)
4. Use footnote software (e.g. Endnote), if appropriate
5. Use PowerPoint or other similar software
6. Research and evaluate literature in libraries
7. Research and evaluate literature on the internet
8. Learn through peer group discussions as well as teacher-student advice

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

1. See C above, plus:
2. Present written work at various lengths
3. Present written work in answer to a specific given question
4. Develop and present a bibliography
5. Research and analyse material for a self-chosen research question, and present the material and the analysis in a longer work.

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

These skills are taught in all the modules, including the dissertation, by means of presentations, engagement in seminar discussions, essays, and the preparation and writing of the dissertation. Students are also encouraged to attend the Department's research seminars and doctoral seminars. Additional training is available to students through the Library and the support of the study advisors.

#### *Assessment*

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

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

The Department'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 Programme Director and Study Skills Advisors and taking courses available within the University in the use of software and other specific skills.

#### *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 dissertations.

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

These skills are taught by means of seminars with student presentations and structured discussions, some individual tutorials, essay writing, 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 dissertations.

**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.**