

**MPhil by examination in International Relations (full-time)**  
**For students entering in 2017/8**

Awarding Institution:	University of Reading
Teaching Institution:	University of Reading
Programme length:	2 years
Date of specification:	04/Oct/2016
Programme Director:	Dr Christina Hellmich
Board of Studies:	GIPIS

**Summary of programme aims**

The MPhil (Exam) in International Relations allows students to pursue a two-year Master's programme. It draws on the strengths of the various MA programmes within the Department of Politics and International Relations, allowing students considerable flexibility in their areas of specialization within the domains of International Relations and Strategic Studies. It also allows students to write an extended dissertation of 30,000 words and thereby develop a strong research profile.

Intended learning outcomes:

- to develop an understanding of debates in selected areas within International Relations and/or Strategic Studies;
- to develop an ability to apply relevant general concepts and approaches as appropriate to the programme;
- to develop the ability to structure oral presentations and written assignments, to conduct research projects of varying scales within International Relations and/or Strategic Studies, and to communicate that research and the analysis based on it effectively.

**Transferable skills**

The programme will develop writing skills in different forms, including essays and dissertations of varying lengths. In this context, skills of data identification, collection and analysis will be developed. The programme will also develop oral communication skills through participation in seminars and the presentation on 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 two years of study, each worth 180 credits. The first year mirrors the MA programmes and comprises a taught element of 120 credits and a short compulsory dissertation of 60 credits. The second year shifts the emphasis towards research: 120 credits are devoted to an extended dissertation and 60 to taught modules.

*Compulsory*

<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PIM12	Dissertation	60	7

*Students take at least two of the following modules:*

<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	30	7
PIM81	Themes and Issues in Contemporary International Relations	20	7

*Optional*

Students take further modules totalling 80 credits, which may include additional modules from those listed above and further modules from the following indicative list (some of which might not be available in any given year).

**Programme content- continued**

<i>Code</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
PIM71	The Origins and Causes of War	20	7

PIM73	Conflict in the Middle East	20	7
PIM49	Politics of Public Policy	20	7
PIM54	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	20	7
PIM85	Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
PIM86	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7

## Year 2

### Compulsory

Code	Title	Credits	Level
PIM47	Dissertation taught (MPhil)	120	7

### Optional

Students take at least three of the following modules (not studied in Year 1), list is indicative and a full list will be provided at the beginning of Year 2:

Code	Title	Credits	Level
PIM62	The Political Economy of Civil War	20	7
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	30	7
PIM81	Themes and Issues in Contemporary International Relations	20	7
PIM71	The Origins and Causes of War	20	7
PIM73	Conflict in the Middle East	20	7
PIM74	Terrorism in a Globalizing World	20	7
PIM49	Politics of Public Policy	20	7
PIM54	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	20	7
PIM85	Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7
PIM86	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods in Politics and International Relations	20	7

### Part-time or modular arrangements

The programme can be followed part-time over a period of 48 months. It can also be taken on a modular basis for a period up to but not exceeding 72 months.

### Progression requirements

In order to pass from the first year to the second year, students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall and have no mark below 40 in any module. The total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

### 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:

#### Passing categories:

70 - 100%	Distinction
60 - 69%	Merit
50 - 59%	Good standard (Pass)

#### Failing categories:

40 - 49%	Work below threshold standard
0 - 39%	Unsatisfactory Work

### For the MPhil Degree

To pass the MPhil, students must gain an average mark of 50 or more overall including a mark of 50 or more for both dissertations (PIM12 and PIM47) and have no mark below 40 in any module. The total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits in either year.

Students who gain an average mark of 70 or more overall including a mark of 70 or more for the extended dissertation (PIM47) 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 extended dissertation and have no mark below 40 will be eligible for a Merit.

### **For the MA**

To pass the MA, students must gain a weighted average mark of 50 or more over 180 credits including a mark of 50 or more for the short dissertation (PIM12) and have no mark below 40 in any module. The total credit value of all modules marked below 50 must not exceed 55 credits.

### **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, In-session English Support Programme, the Study Advice and Mathematics Support teams and IT Services. 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 Support Centres. If a student has a general enquiry and is unsure where to seek help, they should visit their Support Centre. There are five Support Centres across the University, including one based at the London Road Campus. The Support Centre will be able to advise on matters such as extenuating circumstances, module selection, suspensions, withdrawals, timetable queries and transferring programme. The Support Centre will also be able to signpost students to Carrington building where other University services related to disability, financial support, counselling and wellbeing, accommodation and careers can be found. More information on what student services are available can be found here: <http://student.reading.ac.uk/essentials>.

### **Career prospects**

Students will be well placed to pursue careers involving research or analysis in the areas of International Relations or Strategic Studies. This includes much defence- or policy-related work, teaching (including secondary school teaching), journalism, and work in research institutes specialising in international and security policy matters. Students will also develop transferable skills of research, analysis, critical thinking, and oral and written communication that will be valuable in a wide range of other fields.

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

### **Programme Outcomes**

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

**A. Knowledge and understanding of:**

**Teaching/learning methods and strategies**

1. the principal concepts and theories associated with the chosen areas of study within International Relations and Strategic Studies;
2. the major issues and debates in contemporary world politics and the relevance of theories and history to these;
3. research methods appropriate to the areas of chosen research specialism;
4. the specialist areas research through the dissertations

Students will be taught by means of seminars with student's 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 students will therefore consult with the programme director and their dissertation supervisor to choose a mix of modules suited to their particular goals for the programme as a whole. The core modules will provide a solid basis in the chosen areas of specialism and optional modules will typically build upon this. The short first-year dissertation will allow students to develop their initial research skills, while the longer second-year dissertation will allow students to build upon that and develop a more advanced research project.

#### *Assessment*

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

### **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. Ability to plan and manage a research project, working both with guidance and independently
2. Select and apply appropriate methodological approaches for the analysis.
3. Use of text software (e.g. Word)
4. Use of footnote software (e.g. Endnote), if appropriate
5. Use of 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.

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

These skills are taught in all the modules, including the dissertations, by means of presentations, engagement in seminar discussions, essays, and the preparation and writing of the dissertations. 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 dissertations.

#### **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.

**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 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.**