

Programme Specification

MRes Politics and International Relations (full-time)	PFTZPOLIREHS
MRes Politics and International Relations (modular, part-time)	PPTZPOLIREFS
MRes Politics and International Relations (part-time)	PPTZPOLIREHS

For students entering in 2027/28

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	MRes Politics and International Relations (full-time) - 12 months MRes Politics and International Relations (modular, part-time) - 6 years MRes Politics and International Relations (part-time) - 24 months
Accreditation	N/A
Programme Start Dates	September
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	N/A

Programme information and content

This programme is intended as a thorough preparation for a PhD in the broad field of Politics and International Relations. The three compulsory modules – Introduction to Qualitative Methods, Introduction to Quantitative Methods, and Philosophy of Social Science – supply a comprehensive and enlightened overview of the methods and traditions of every area of the discipline. A previous degree in Politics and/or International Relations is advantageous rather than essential; the course is well-adapted to the needs of graduate students whose previous degree is in another field of study.

Interactive small-group teaching sets out to develop personal and intellectual skills required by PhD programmes in the UK and elsewhere. The most important purpose of the exercises set is to assist the students in devising research questions and mastering the methods they will use to answer them. The programme culminates with the production of a dissertation, assisted by an expert, that aims to meet the standards of doctoral-level research.

Programme Learning Outcomes

-MRes Politics and International Relations (full-time)

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Think critically and independently about events, ideas and institutions related to Politics and International Relations.
2	Use concepts and theories derived from the academic study of Politics and International Relations to analyse political relations within and between states, and to situate them within the wider context of politics within and among societies.
3	Demonstrate a critical awareness and understanding of current problems faced by policymakers.
4	Select qualitative and/or quantitative methods appropriate to any given project in Politics and International Relations.
5	Exercise critical judgement, independently evaluating arguments and ideas in their proper context.
6	Construct reasoned argument based on knowledge and understanding of key concepts, giving ample justification capable of persuading others.
7	Communicate clearly and effectively in speech and writing.
8	Devise and conduct a programme of research at PhD level, with due regard to philosophical, methodological and ethical considerations.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

Module information			
The programme comprises 180 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.			
Compulsory modules			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
PIM12	Dissertation	60	M
PIM54	Philosophical Issues in the Social Sciences	20	M
PIM85	Introduction to Qualitative research methods in Politics and International Relations	20	M
PIM86	Introduction to Quantitative research methods in Politics and International Relations	20	M

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available in the Department of Politics and International Relations and modules from an approved list from elsewhere in the University.

All students will take a preparatory module in advanced academic skills required for transition to postgraduate study.

| Part-time or flexible modular arrangements | | | |

The programme can be taken part-time over two years. In the first year of study, a student will normally be required to complete PIM54, PIM85, PIM86 and optional modules totalling no less than 20 credits. The programme may not be completed over more than two years.

Placement opportunities

N/A

Study abroad opportunities

N/A

Optional modules

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery

Teaching on the M(Res) Politics and International Relations focuses on equipping students to undertake a doctoral-level project. By the end of the programme, students will have the knowledge, capacities and confidence to assess and to engage with current cutting-edge research in Politics and International Relations, and to contribute to it through a doctoral dissertation.

The central method of teaching in the M(Res) Politics and International Relations is the small-group seminar. While some modules may include lectures, either as a way of grounding the first few weeks in the course material in order to prepare students for class discussion, or occasionally in a more systematic way, seminar discussions make up a large portion of the contact hours for each module. Seminars will typically consist primarily of discussion of a set of readings to be prepared by students in advance, and/or other module content presented to students by the instructor. Seminar discussions allow students not only to sharpen their knowledge of core readings and module content but also enable them to subject the module content to critical analysis and evaluation and expose them to a variety of perspectives. This in turn enables students to grow as independent learners and reasoners. We ensure that all students from all backgrounds are given the opportunity to develop their own critical perspective through these discussions and exercises in a respectful and mutually supportive environment. Seminar activities will also include opportunities to develop employable skills, for example through presentations, practical sessions, or simulations.

Students will also benefit from an academic skills module, which will consist of a small number of sessions designed to prepare students from a variety of backgrounds for academic study at graduate level in the UK. It will cover the range of different aspects of the programme, including guidance on the various different types of assessment students should expect to complete.

Students will complete their own independent research project in the form of a dissertation. While students will be guided by a supervisor who will help focus their project, identify appropriate methods and material, and comment on work, they themselves will select and investigate their question.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details
N/A

Assessment
The programme will be assessed through a combination of coursework, written examinations, and class tests. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression
N/A

Classification
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 Master's Degree

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Master's degree:

Award of a Master's degree

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 180 credits

(ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 120 credits

(iii) no credits with a mark below 40%

(iv) a mark of 50% or more for the Dissertation

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Master's degree, the following **further** conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 180 credits and marks of 70% in at least 90 credits

AND

Where the dissertation is included in the conditions for the award of a Master's degree, a mark of at least 60% in the dissertation

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 180 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 180 credits and marks of 60% in at least 90 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Diploma

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma:

Award of a Postgraduate Diploma

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 120 credits

(ii) a mark of 50% or more in at least 80 credits

(iii) no credits with a mark below 40%

In addition to the threshold conditions for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma, the following further conditions must be satisfied for a classification of Distinction or Merit:

Distinction

An overall weighted average of 70% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall weighted average of 68% or more over 120 credits and marks of 70% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

Merit

An overall weighted average of 60% or more over 120 credits

OR

an overall average of 58% or more over 120 credits and marks of 60% in at least 60 credits

AND

No marks below 40%.

For Postgraduate Certificate

The following conditions must be satisfied for the award of a Postgraduate Certificate:

Award of a Postgraduate Certificate

(i) an overall weighted average of 50% or more over 60 credits

(ii) No credits with a mark below 40%.

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 19: Awards: Postgraduate Master's, Postgraduate Diploma, Postgraduate Certificate

Please note that there may be a specific version for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

Students are encouraged to discuss the purchase of textbooks or other resources with the module convenor before purchasing. Some books may be available second-hand, which will reduce costs. A range of resources to support your curriculum, including textbooks, electronic resources and computer facilities are available through the library and through both the Department of Economics and the Department of Politics and International Relations.

Printing and photocopying facilities are available on campus at a cost per A4 page of £0.05 (black and white) and £0.30 (colour). Essential costs in this area will be low as most coursework is submitted electronically.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2026.

Students may consider purchasing a laptop to help support their learning. Information on recommended device specifications can be found on the [DTS Student Hub](#).

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

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30 July 2026

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