

Programme Specification

BA Philosophy and International Relations

For students entering Part 1 in September 2027

UCAS Code: VL52

UFPPXIR

UFPPXIRPE

UFPPXIRSY

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	3 years
Length of Programme with placement/year abroad	BA Philosophy and International Relations with Placement Experience - 4 years (UCAS Code: VL53) BA Philosophy and International Relations with Year Abroad - 4 years (internal transfer only)
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Philosophy; Politics and International Relations

Programme information and content

The Philosophy programme aims to provide you with a comprehensive degree-level education in Philosophy, to encourage you to confront your deepest beliefs and assumptions in a characteristically philosophical way, and to enhance your global engagement and multi-cultural awareness. You will learn the basic rudiments of philosophical argument, understand different conceptions of social and civic responsibility, and gain knowledge about current debates in philosophy. As you do so, you will develop a sense of the significance of philosophical thinking in dealing with modern problems, helping you to appreciate multiple perspectives and the values of diversity, to cultivate your skills in oral and written argument, and encouraging you to compare and contrast diverse ways of doing philosophy. The programme of study is specifically designed to introduce you to progressive intellectual challenges and to consolidate your previous experience at each new level.

The International Relations programme aims to provide you with the tools to understand and assess how global political processes shape our lives. You will study the dynamics of international politics, exploring the major threats to global order and the institutions that seek to address these challenges. Throughout the programme you will connect the academic study of international relations to contemporary issues, such as climate change and war. You will learn to think critically and independently about a wide range of political ideas, organisations, and events: from the role of NATO, to terrorism and nuclear weapons.

Interactive small group teaching is central to the programme. Through discussion and debate, you will deepen your understanding of international politics and gain an appreciation of the complex and contested nature of global political problems. As you move

through the programme you will become an increasingly independent learner, acquiring the tools you need to analyse how global society is and should be organised.

The programme will equip you with a broad set of transferable skills. You will learn to interpret data and evidence from diverse sources, develop persuasive arguments, and communicate them effectively. The knowledge and skills you gain will prepare you for careers within the commercial and charitable sectors, as well as roles in international organisations, government and the civil service.

Part 1:	In Philosophy, Part 1 introduces you to the core topics of philosophy and to the basic concepts and methods of critical thinking, basic logic, and the psychology of reasoning. There is a particular emphasis on developing oral and written skills through small group discussion. You will undertake research to produce coursework essays and to learn how to critically appraise what you discover. In International Relations Part 1, you will study central concepts and theories in international relations. You will have the opportunity to apply your knowledge to major global issues, such as climate change and war.
Part 2:	In Philosophy, Part 2 provides you with a deeper awareness of current philosophers, of the skills of argument and presentation, and of the epistemology and methodology of Philosophy. There is a greater emphasis on developing skills of research and enquiry and to presenting arguments in public meetings in an effective way, anticipating and responding to questions, and using a range of means (speaking, summary-writing, essay-writing, presenting, designing slides). In International Relations Part 2, you will build on the foundations established at Part 1, extending and deepening your understanding of global order. You will receive skills-based training to enable you to evaluate existing research in international relations, and to conduct original research. You will also have the opportunity to select a specialist optional module offered by the Politics and International Relations Department.
Placement/Study abroad year:	If you are enrolled on a four-year programme, you will undertake a professional placement or study abroad year between Parts 2 and 3. If you choose to study abroad, you will follow several courses at one of our partner institutions. You may take courses that deepen your understanding of subjects you have already studied or extend your knowledge into new areas that are relevant to your personal or career goals. If you choose a professional placement year, you will undertake an approved role related to your programme of study. A placement will provide you with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in your first two years of study, as well as develop your skills in a professional context.

Part 3:	In Philosophy, Part 3 gives you the opportunity to develop full mastery of the discipline of Philosophy across a broad range of different conceptions of what counts as ‘Philosophy’. The emphasis is on developing independent learning, personal effectiveness and self-awareness as well as the ability to reflect effectively on your progress and strengths and on the goals you wish to achieve. In International Relations Part 3, you will tailor the degree to your own interests: choosing from a wide range of research-led modules that reflect the expertise of our members of staff. You will also have the opportunity to complete an independent research project, working under the guidance of a dedicated individual supervisor.
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Programme Learning Outcomes - BA Philosophy and International Relations

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	Critically read, comprehend and evaluate a range of philosophical texts.
2	Explain and evaluate ideas, theories, schools of thought and arguments of the key philosophers and major fields of philosophy.
3	Explain and evaluate various approaches to philosophy across a range of different philosophical traditions.
4	Apply philosophical principles to contemporary issues and real-world situations.
5	Construct and communicate complex, rational and persuasive arguments in a philosophical way for a variety of purposes and audiences.
6	Describe and analyse global political processes and institutions.
7	Think critically and independently about historical and contemporary challenges in international relations and identify potential solutions.
8	Understand and apply qualitative and quantitative data relating to international politics.
9	Independently formulate a research question in international relations or philosophy and, under supervision, use appropriate methods to address it.
10	Gather and synthesize complex information from a wide range of primary and secondary data sources.
11	Effectively communicate their knowledge to a range of audiences and in a variety of formats, including in writing and orally.
12	Articulate reasoned and persuasive arguments in support of their views.

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.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Additional Learning outcomes	
Study Abroad	
By the end of the Study Abroad Programme, students will have adapted to international study contexts in order to achieve the required academic outcomes determined by the host institution.	
Placement	
By the end of the Placement Year Programme, students will have explored and developed their professional experience, skills and knowledge, contributing significantly towards their continuous learning and career prospects as graduates.	

Module information			
Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.			
Part 1 Modules:			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
PO1IRE	International Relations	20	4
PO1PCC	Politics of Climate Change	20	4
PO1WAR	War and Warfare	20	4
PP1GW	Great Works in Philosophy	20	4
PP1RA	Reason and Argument	20	4
Remaining 20 credits will be made up of optional modules available in the Department of Philosophy.			
Students on the 4 year with placement year programme will take a preparatory module providing placement training.			
Part 2 Modules:			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
PO2GLO	Global Order	20	5
PO2SOP	The Study of Politics	20	5
Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available in the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Politics and International Relations. You must select one additional optional module offered by the Politics and International Relations Department as well as the compulsory modules listed above.			
Students on the 4 year with placement year programme will take a preparatory module providing placement training.			
Modules during a placement year or study year (if applicable):			

Students enrolled on a 4-year programme will take one 120 credit module in either Study Abroad or Professional Placement Year.

Students may be permitted to undertake a placement year or a study abroad year between Part 2 and Part 3 of the programme. In such cases students will transfer to a 4-year programme. The placement or study abroad year should not normally be shorter than nine months full-time.

If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation.

Part 3 Modules:

In Part 3, students will take one of two pathways:

On the first pathway, students will take a 40 credit Dissertation module in either Philosophy or International Relations, with the remaining credits taken from modules available in the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Politics and International Relations. Credits must be balanced across the two subjects.

On the second pathway, students will take a 20 credit Independent Learning module within the Department of Philosophy with the remaining credits taken from modules available in the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Politics and International Relations. Credits must be balanced across the two subjects.

Placement opportunities

Placements:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a credit-bearing placement as part of your Programme. This will form all or part of an optional module. You will be required to find and secure a placement opportunity, with the support of the University.

Study Abroad:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a Study Abroad placement during your Programme. This is subject to you meeting academic conditions detailed in the Programme Handbook, including obtaining the relevant permissions from your School, and the availability of a suitable Study Abroad placement. If you undertake a Study Abroad placement, further arrangements will be discussed and agreed with you.

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:

In Philosophy, you will be taught primarily through a mixture of lectures and seminars, depending on the modules you choose. Some modules may include group work, including marked presentations. Further information on the delivery of module content is contained in the individual module descriptions.

In International Relations, you will be taught primarily through a combination of lectures and seminars. Small-group teaching is central to each stage of the programme, and all modules will include some seminar sessions in which you develop your knowledge through discussion and group exercises. At Part 1, this small-group teaching is supported by larger lectures. Lectures will introduce you to a topic and provide a framework to enable you to engage successfully with seminar activities. At Parts 2 and 3, there is less reliance on large lectures, with modules typically including more and longer seminars. Students are also introduced to other forms of teaching such as PC labs, simulation exercises and practical activities.

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

In Philosophy, the programme will be assessed through a variety of means, including written coursework, class tests, and oral examinations. Some non-philosophy modules may be assessed by written examinations. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

In International Relations, you will be assessed through a combination of written examinations, coursework (including class tests) and presentations. Assessments are designed to develop your transferable skills, as well as to test your subject knowledge. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Students considering transferring to another programme should seek guidance from their designated Support Centre in the first instance.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Professional/placement year

Students are required to pass the professional placement year/study abroad year in order to progress on the programme which incorporates the professional placement year/study abroad year. Students who fail the professional placement year/study abroad year transfer to the non-placement year version of the programme.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

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

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Three year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Four year programmes, including study abroad/professional placement:

Part 2: one-third

Study abroad/Professional placement: not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

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

- Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's), or
- Section 18: Awards (Integrated Master's programmes). Students who do not progress to Part 4 of the Integrated Master's will normally be subject to the method detailed under Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's)

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

Additional costs of the programme

During your programme of study you will incur some additional costs. A wide range of resources to support your learning, including textbooks and electronic resources, are available through the library.

In Philosophy, there are no textbooks which you must buy and students are encouraged to discuss the purchase of textbooks or other resources with the module convenor before purchasing.

In International Relations, for some modules, we will recommend that you purchase a copy of the textbook, and there may be other books/resources which it would be convenient for you to buy. We recommend that you budget £300 per year for purchasing books. Some optional modules may involve additional costs for fieldtrips or travel to work placements. You will be advised of these costs before you enrol on the module.

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.

BA Philosophy and International Relations for students entering Part 1 in session 2027/28
2 July 2026

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