



Programme Specification (Undergraduate)

FOR ENTRY YEAR: 2026/27

Date created: 31/03/2021

Last amended: 27/03/2026

Version no. 1

1. Programme title(s) and code(s):

MA in International Relations
Postgraduate Diploma* in International Relations
Postgraduate Certificate* in International Relations

*Approved as exit awards only

a) [HECOS Code](#)

HECOS Code	%
[100490]	[100%]

b) UCAS Code (where required)

[n/a]

2. Awarding body or institution:

University of Leicester

3. a) Mode of study

Full-time/Part time

b) Type of study

Campus-based

4. Registration periods:

MA International Relations

The normal period of registration is one year full-time or two years part-time.
The maximum period of registration is two years full-time or four years part-time.

5. Typical entry requirements

Applicants should have at least a good second class honours degree or equivalent, in a relevant subject. Equivalent relevant professional experience may be considered. For candidates whose first language is not English the University's standard English language requirements will apply (IELTS 6.5).

6. Accreditation of Prior Learning

There are no exemptions on the basis of APL.

7. Programme aims

The programme aims to achieve a balance between a thorough exploration of the theoretical dimension and the consideration of empirical issues and practical debates in post-Cold War international relations. It aims to provide students with the competencies and skills to understand contemporary

debates in international relations and to analyse international relations using a mixture of theoretical and empirical tools. By providing a thorough grounding in the subject, students are made aware of the importance of this topic to a sophisticated understanding of global political developments.

8. Reference points used to inform the programme specification

The programme has been developed with reference to the following sources:

- [University of Leicester Education Strategy](#)
- [University of Leicester Assessment Strategy](#) [Login required]
- University of Leicester Periodic Developmental Review Report
- QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications

9. Programme Outcomes

Unless otherwise stated, programme outcomes apply to all awards specified in 1. Programme title(s).

a) Subject and Professional Skills

i) Knowledge

	Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Advanced knowledge of the major themes and issues in post-Cold War international relations	Seminars; directed reading; independent research; dissertation supervision.	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; essays; dissertation
PGDip	Recognise, describe and discuss the major themes and issues in post-Cold War international relations	Seminars; directed reading; independent research	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; essays
PGCert	Identify and explain the major themes and issues in post-Cold War international relations	Seminars; directed reading; independent research	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; essays

ii) Concepts

	Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Enhanced grasp of the principles and theories of international relations. Ability to evaluate appropriate theories of international relations and apply these to specific issues	Seminars; problem solving tasks; directed critical reading; independent research; dissertation supervision	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews; dissertation
PGDip	Discuss, analyse and appraise the major international relations concepts and theories and relate these to empirical practices and developments	Seminars; problem solving tasks; directed critical reading; independent research	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; critical reviews; essays
PGCert	Explain and assess key concepts and	Seminars; problem solving tasks; directed critical reading; independent research	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises;

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
	theories and relate these to empirical practices and developments		seminar presentations; critical reviews; essays

iii) Techniques

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Mastery of theories and concepts, methodological tools and bibliographical, writing, oral and critical skills. Understanding of research methods and their application international relations	Induction; library training; study-skills workshops; seminars; problem solving tasks; directed critical reading; dissertation supervision	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews; dissertation
PGDip	Confidently apply key theories and concepts and learnt skills in referencing and appropriate written and verbal communication	Induction; library training; study-skills workshops; seminars; problem solving tasks; directed critical reading	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; critical reviews; essays
PGCert	Apply key theories and concepts and learnt skills in referencing and appropriate written and verbal communication	Induction; library training; study-skills workshops; seminars; problem solving tasks; directed critical reading	Contribution to discussions; problem-based exercises; seminar presentations; critical reviews; essays

iv) Critical analysis

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to identify and apply concepts and techniques with independence and rigour	Study-skills workshops; seminars; directed critical reading; independent research; dissertation supervision	Contribution to discussions; seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews; dissertation
PGDip	Analyse relevant concepts and practices with independence and rigour	Study-skills workshops; seminars; directed critical reading; independent research	Contribution to discussions; seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews
PGCert	Independently analyse relevant concepts and practices	Study-skills workshops; seminars; directed critical reading; independent research	Contribution to discussions; seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews

v) Presentation

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to organise research material in a manner appropriate to the medium that is to be assessed; to distinguish relevant and non-relevant material; to write-up and deliver written work to a professional standard.	Induction; online resource- based learning; seminars	Seminar presentations; essays; dissertation
PGDip	Organise and present research material in a range of formats; develop arguments drawing on	Induction; online resource- based learning; seminars	Seminar presentations; essays

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
	relevant material; write-up and deliver written work to a professional standard		
PGCert	Organise and present relevant material; develop arguments drawing on material read; write-up and deliver written work to a professional standard	Induction; online resource- based learning; seminars	Seminar presentations; essays

vi) Appraisal of evidence

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to analyse and assess a variety of complex political and conceptual issues in contemporary international relations Ability to mount and sustain an independent level of inquiry at an advanced level	Study-skills workshops; seminars; directed critical reading; dissertation supervision	Seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews; dissertation
PGDip	Confidently and persuasively assess the relevance and evaluate the quality of a range of primary sources and secondary literature.	Study-skills workshops; seminars; directed critical reading	Seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews;
PGCert	Appraise the relevance and quality of a range of appropriate sources	Study-skills workshops; seminars; directed critical reading	Seminar presentations; essays; critical reviews;

b) Transferable skills

i) Research skills

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to: plan research projects, and locate, extract, produce and analyse relevant evidence; conduct significant background research and literature surveys; organise and marshal evidence and report on findings; analyse complex ideas and competing viewpoints; and construct informed critical arguments at an advanced level	Induction; online resource- based learning; study-skills and dissertation workshops ; directed critical reading of research methods literature; dissertation supervision	Essay plans; essays; dissertation; supervisory meetings

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
PGDip	Design appropriate research questions; develop research proposal; discuss the ethical implications of research; recognise and create effective literature reviews.	Induction; online resource- based learning; study-skills workshops ; directed critical reading of research methods literature	Essay plans; essays; tutor meetings
PGCert	Design appropriate research questions; develop research proposal; discuss the ethical implications of research	Induction; online resource- based learning; study-skills workshops ; directed critical reading of research methods literature	Essay plans; essays; tutor meetings

ii) Communication skills

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to: deliver professional oral presentations; respond with focus and clarity to written or oral questions; write clearly and concisely; make effective use of graphical and statistical summaries, where appropriate; produce properly structured, clear essays and dissertations	Seminars; dissertation supervision; dissertation workshop	Contribution to discussions; seminar presentations; essays; dissertation
PGDip	Summarise, explain and analyse complex material, and formulate and present critical discussions and independent appraisals orally and in writing	Seminars; study skills workshops	Contribution to discussions; presentations; essays
PGCert	Summarise and explain complex material, and formulate and present discussions and appraisals orally and in writing	Seminars; study skills workshops	Contribution to discussions; presentations; essays;

iii) Data presentation

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to synthesise research data and present it coherently and effectively	Online resource-based learning (e.g. accessing online archives, such as Digital National Security Archives); study-skills workshops; directed critical	Seminar presentations; essays; dissertation

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
	using appropriate IT resources	reading of research methods literature; dissertation supervision	
PGDip	Synthesise research data into coherent and sustained arguments using appropriate IT resources	Online resource-based learning (e.g. accessing online archives, such as Digital National Security Archives); study-skills workshops; directed critical reading of research methods literature	Seminar presentations; essays
PGCert	Present research data using appropriate IT resources	Online resource-based learning (accessing online archives, such as Digital National Security Archives); study-skills workshops; directed critical reading of research methods literature	Seminar presentations; essays

iv) Information technology

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Advanced ability to retrieve and present information using appropriate information technology, for example, bibliographic software, data archives, data analysis software	Induction; study skills workshop; online resource-based learning	Problem-based exercises; essays; critical reviews
PGDip	Retrieve, utilise and present information using appropriate information technology, for example, bibliographic software, data archives	Induction; study skills workshop; online resource-based learning	Problem-based exercises; essays; critical reviews
PGCert	Retrieve and present information using appropriate information technology, for example, bibliographic software, data archives	Induction; study skills workshop; online resource-based learning	Problem-based exercises; essays; critical reviews

v) Problem solving

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to identify, investigate, analyse, formulate and advocate solutions to problems	Seminars; dissertation supervision; online resource-based learning	Problem-based exercises; essays; dissertation
PGDip	Identify, investigate, analyse, formulate and advocate solutions to problems	Seminars; online resource-based learning	Problem-based exercises; essays
PGCert	Identify and analyse relevant problems and select between appropriate responses	Seminars; online resource-based learning	Problem-based exercises; essays

vi) Working relationships

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Knowing how and when to draw on the knowledge and expertise of others; ability to contribute and comment on ideas in seminar groups	Problem solving tasks; seminars; dissertation workshop	Contributions to discussions; problem-based exercises
PGDip	Collaborate effectively as part of a team. Identify appropriate opportunities for drawing on the knowledge and expertise of others; contribute and comment on ideas in learning groups	Problem solving tasks; seminars	Contributions to discussions; problem-based exercises
PGCert	Collaborate as part of a team. Identify appropriate opportunities for drawing on the knowledge and expertise of others; contribute and comment on ideas in learning groups	Problem solving tasks; seminars	Contributions to discussions; problem-based exercises

vii) Managing learning

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Management of an extensive literature and familiarisation with key issues and concepts Ability to plan and implement tasks and manage work-loads	Study-skills and dissertation workshops; independent research; dissertation supervision;	Essays; dissertations; supervisor meetings
PGDip	Develop and implement personal plan of work to meet a deadline Work independently and in groups towards the completion of a range of tasks	Study-skills workshops; independent research;	Essays; tutor meetings
PGCert	Develop and implement personal plan of work to meet a deadline Work independently and in groups towards the completion of a range of tasks	Study-skills workshops; independent research;	Essays; tutor meetings

viii) Career management

Intended Learning Outcomes		Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
MA	Ability to take charge of one's own progress and development Reflection on one's strengths, interests, motivations and skills; recognition of one's achievements	Personal Tutor System; Dissertation Supervision; PhD and careers seminar	Tutor meetings
PGDip	Take charge of one's own progress and development Reflect on one's strengths, interests, motivations and skills; recognise one's achievements	Personal Tutor System; PhD and careers seminar	Tutor meetings
PGCert	Take charge of one's own progress and development Reflect on one's strengths, interests, motivations and skills; recognise one's achievements	Personal Tutor System; PhD and careers seminar	Tutor meetings

10. Special features:

The programme draws on the multitude of approaches within International Relations to the study and examination of global politics, the shift in balances of power, and contemporary issues in war, peace, security, and regional geopolitics. The programme enhances students' competencies in engaging with the approaches of classical International Relations Theory, Strategic Studies, national security policy, and more.

To reflect the special focus of the MA programme, students taking this programme will be required to choose a dissertation topic that aligns with the many controversies, themes, debates, and issues raised in International Relations.

Students are able to engage with opportunities outside of the core programme by attending events organized by HyPIR research clusters, which include prestigious guest speakers which often include practitioners, panel events, an annual postgraduate research conference, lunchtime seminars and staff research peer review sessions, all of which help provide experience for our students to enhance professional transferrable skills and develop their awareness of professional academic practices and developments in the wider world with guest speakers.

The programme is based on a social constructivist learning model and includes blended learning environments.

10a. Research-inspired Education

Students on this programme will advance through the four quadrants of the University of Leicester Research-inspired Education Framework as follows:

RiE Quadrant	Narrative
<p>Research-briefed Bringing staff research content into the curriculum.</p> <p>Research-based Framed enquiry for exploring existing knowledge.</p> <p>Research-oriented Students critique published research content and process.</p> <p>Research-apprenticed Experiencing the research process and methods; building new knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-briefed Our students will be exposed to an inspiring and attractive curriculum in International Relations, Human Rights and Security Studies drawing on the expertise and internationally recognised research produced in the School of History, Politics and International Relations and beyond. All teaching staff are engaged in research and bring their subject expertise and enthusiasm for inclusive, rigorous research into their teaching practice. Through our seminars, workshops and assessments our teaching introduces students to an advanced curriculum and key innovations in our field, situating contemporary developments within appropriate conceptual and theoretical frameworks. • Research-based <i>Students are encouraged and supported to draw from a comprehensive range of published research and demonstrate a robust critical engagement with it. Typical assessments include essays, article analysis, policy and conceptual analysis.</i> Seminars involve students working in small groups on tasks that require them to identify, critically analyse, and apply concepts. • Research-oriented Our students are taught the key skills necessary to analyse and critically engage with published research, including how it is conceived, produced, used and communicated. • Research-apprenticed Our students are an important part of our research environment and are encouraged to take an active part in our learning community. MA Students finish the programme with a capstone 15,000-word dissertation on a topic of their choice. They are supported with a dissertation module, to develop their research skills, which helps them transition from being students to independent researchers.

As part of studying at a research-intensive university, students on this programme have the following extra or co-curricular opportunities available to them to gain exposure to research culture:

Our students have numerous opportunities to gain exposure to research culture through extra-curricular events. These include the popular roundtable seminar series, in which roundtable discussions featuring a varying mix of staff and student researchers come together to discuss contemporary issues. Roundtables in the last year have covered topics such as the rise of the far-right and misogyny, and the 2024 U.S. election, and offer research-led opening remarks from staff with relevant expertise, followed by audience questions. In addition, a popular film club offers introductory remarks and a Q&A led by a staff member whose research connects to the film being screened. These events allow students to engage with cutting edge research, and to experience and participate in lively academic discussion. MA students are invited to join HyPIR's research clusters which bring together academics, doctoral researchers, and PGT students

working on projects in similar subject areas (Feminism, Global Ethics and Politics Theory; Intelligence, Security and Strategic Studies; Parties, Parliament, and Public Opinion). Recent cluster activities have included workshops, roundtables, and guided art gallery visits. Our introduction to teaching programme for doctoral students brings research students into the classroom creating opportunities to learn, network and be inspired.

11. Indications of programme quality:

- Considerable departmental experience in blended learning as a result of the development and success of our existing DL programmes;
- Presentations from current students and former students at national and international conferences;
- Regular progression of former students into academic posts and postdoctoral and research projects;
- Consistent, positive feedback from current and former students;
- Consistent positive feedback from external examiners.

12. Scheme of Assessment

[Senate Regulation 6: Regulations governing taught postgraduate programmes](#) of study applies

13. Progression points

As defined in [Senate Regulation 6: Regulations governing Taught Postgraduate Programmes of Study](#) (see Senate Regulations)

In cases where a student has failed to meet a requirement to progress he or she will be required to withdraw from the course and a recommendation will be made to the Board of Examiners for an intermediate award where appropriate.

14. External Examiners:

The details of the External Examiner(s) for this programme and the most recent External Examiners' reports can be found [here](#).

Programme Specification (Undergraduate)

FOR ENTRY YEAR: 2026/27

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Appendix 1: Programme structure (programme regulations)

The University regularly reviews its programmes and modules to ensure that they reflect the current status of the discipline and offer the best learning experience to students. On occasion, it may be necessary to alter particular aspects of a course or module.

Updates to the programme

Academic year	Module	Change
2026/27	HS7037 After the Holocaust	Optional module not offered
2026/27	HS7311 Religious Conflict and Coexistence	Optional module not offered

MA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Level 7/Year 1 2026/27

Credit breakdown

Status	Year long	Semester 1	Semester 2
Core	60 credits	30 credits	n/a
Optional	n/a	45 credits	45 credits

180 credits in total

Core modules

Delivery period	Code	Title	Credits
Sem 1	PL7161	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AFTER THE COLD WAR	30 credits

Delivery period	Code	Title	Credits
Year long	PL7000	DISSERTATION	60 credits

Notes

[n/a]

Option modules

Delivery period	Code	Title	Credits
Semester 1	PL7089	THE POLITICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS	30 credits
Semester 1	PL7168	INTERNATIONAL SECURITY	30 credits
Semester 2	HS7026	A GENOCIDE - MASS MURDER IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE	30 credits
Semester 2	HS7212	GLOBAL CITIES: THE VIEW FROM ASIA	30 credits
Semester 2	PL7076	U.S. FOREIGN POLICY: THEMES AND CONTROVERSIES	30 credits
Semester 2	PL7095	GLOBAL ETHICS IN PRACTICE	30 credits

Notes

This is an indicative list of option modules and not definitive of what will be available. Option module choice is also subject to availability, timetabling, student number restrictions and, where appropriate, students having taken appropriate pre-requisite modules.

Appendix 2: Module specifications

See [module specification database](#) [Login required] (Note - modules are organized by year of delivery).