

ACADEMIC POLICY & QUALITY OFFICE

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

for the award of

MA / PG Dip / PG Cert in International Relations (Distance Learning)

Managed by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

delivered by the Department of Social Sciences

Date approved:	
Applies to students commencing study in:	September 2020

RECORD OF UPDATES

Date amended	Nature of amendment	Reason for amendment
January 2020	Type A change	Section 4.1 updated to reflect the change of module title: INRL7018 Global Civil Society to 'Global Civil Society and Social Movements'.

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

Awarding body:	Oxford Brookes University
Teaching institution and location:	Oxford Brookes University - Gipsy Lane Campus
Language of study:	English
Final award:	MA
Programme title:	International Relations
Interim exit awards and award titles available:	PG Diploma (PGD-RL (DL)) / PG Certificate (PGC-RL (DL))
Brookes course code:	MA-RL(DL) / SS69
UCAS code:	N/A
JACS code:	L250
HECoS code:	100490
Mode of delivery:	Full-time (distance learning) Part-time (distance learning)
Mode/s and duration of study:	Full-time (normally 1 year, maximum 5 years) Part-time (normally 2 years, maximum 5 years)
QAA subject benchmark statement/s which apply to the programme:	None
Professional accreditation attached to the programme:	N/A
University Regulations:	The programme conforms to the University Regulations for the year of entry as published/archived at: http://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/



SECTION 2: WHY STUDY THIS PROGRAMME?

These are interesting times for international relations: issues such as globalisation, environmental degradation, poverty and deprivation, international conflict, the rise of religious fundamentalism, the future of democracy - among many others - challenge us to understand trends taking place in modern society. International Relations is quintessentially concerned with these issues. This postgraduate degree enables students to increase their understanding of contemporary issues in a global context.

This programme is delivered entirely online with the central aim being to create a web-based community of learners. This flexible method of delivery requires students to interact online with a variety of learning activities, which are based on engagement with a range of materials and guided online discussion and debate. Synchronous online activities are also used as consolidation activities to enable students to interact in a live seminar with other students and staff.

There is a strong emphasis throughout the degree on gaining critical perspectives on contemporary theory and practice in international relations. The aim of this course is not only to enable students to evaluate and explain contemporary issues in international relations, but also allow them to gain insights into the nature, development, and history of contemporary theoretical perspectives. The course also aims to provide a sound grounding in relevant research methods. The degree begins with three modules that are taught in Semester 1 that provide students with a solid grounding in theoretical debates in the discipline and how they apply to a range of contemporary issues. The modules taught in Semester 2 and the dissertation module then allow students to explore a range of discreet aspects of international relations in more detail. The course as a whole enables students to develop core skills in research, information literacy and life-long learning habits that are relevant to a diverse range of career opportunities.

Tutors on the course teach in areas that are directly derived from their own research, while the core modules in Semester 1 reflect the state-of-the-art in methodological and theoretical thinking in the field. As a postgraduate programme, the integration between research and teaching is a crucial part of the quality of the experience. The teaching team will often use their refereed publications in the teaching process and encourage students to participate in their respective research interests. Teaching staff are active members of the Centre for Global Politics, Economy and Society and their research profiles can be viewed at <http://www.social-sciences.brookes.ac.uk/People/Academic/>.

SECTION 3: PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the programme, graduates will demonstrate the following Brookes Attributes:

3.1 ACADEMIC LITERACY

- a. demonstrate a critical understanding of the major debates in contemporary International Relations theory;
- b. demonstrate understanding of the history of the international system;
- c. analyse and engage with state-of-the-art academic literature in the field of International Relations;
- d. demonstrate advanced knowledge and understanding of inter-state practices and the application of key theories and concepts in International Relations.

3.2 RESEARCH LITERACY

- a. conduct individual research with a critical awareness of current debates within the discipline of International Relations;
- b. demonstrate an advanced knowledge and understanding of an area of particular interest in International Relations (MA only);
- c. understand and apply relevant social science epistemology and methodology (MA and PG Dip only);
- d. formulate, design and conduct an extended piece of project research with a critical awareness of relevant debates within the discipline (MA only).



3.3 CRITICAL SELF-AWARENESS AND PERSONAL LITERACY

- a. manage workloads effectively and set personal goals;
- b. demonstrate the skills of reflective independent learning;
- c. make appropriate decisions in communicating effectively within diverse settings.

3.4 DIGITAL AND INFORMATION LITERACY

- a. communicate arguments online, orally and on paper;
- b. collect, collate and present material from a variety of sources;
- c. develop research skills with information technology.

3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

- a. apply the understanding as defined by programme outcomes 3.1a and 3.1b to contemporary real world cases and issues of International Relations;
- b. critically engage with different understandings of the 'global' and the 'local' and how they relate to the concept of citizenship;
- c. demonstrate a critical understanding of how International Relations as a discipline is often built on dominant cultural understandings of the world.

SECTION 4: CURRICULUM CONTENT & STRUCTURE

4.1 PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS:

Code	Module Title	Credits	Level	Status	Coursework: Exam ratio
INRL7014	International Relations in Theory and Practice	20	7	Compulsory	100:0
INRL7015	Global Political Economy	20	7	Compulsory	100:0
INRL7016	Advanced Research in International Relations	20	7	Compulsory	100:0
INRL7017	International Development	20	7	Compulsory	100:0
INRL7018	Global Civil Society and Social Movements	20	7	Compulsory	100:0
INRL7019	Critical Approaches to Terrorism	20	7	Compulsory	100:0
INRL7020	Dissertation	60	7	Compulsory	100:0

4.2 PROGRESSION AND AWARD REQUIREMENTS

To obtain the PG Certificate students must pass INRL7014 (International Relations in Theory and Practice), INRL7015 (Global Political Economy), and one additional 20-credit module (excluding INRL7016 Advanced Research in International Relations). The PG Diploma requires students to pass the PG Cert, INRL7016 Advanced Research in International Relations, plus two more 20-credit modules.

To obtain an MA students have to pass the dissertation module. Students are able to devise their own dissertation topic and receive support from a supervisor to complete this 60-credit module.

4.3 PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

N/A

SECTION 5: TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Teaching methods:

A range of online teaching methods will be employed throughout the programme in order to aid the quality of learning opportunities for students' knowledge and understanding of International Relations. Most modules include 8-10 hours of online seminars, which provide students with the opportunity to



interact in a live environment with staff and other students. Overall, each 20 credits is expected to take about 200 hours of student effort in total (including online contact time).

Online teaching methods will include:

- narrated powerpoints
- formative comprehension activities including quizzes
- analysis of case studies
- individual presentations
- online asynchronous discussion forums
- synchronous online seminars
- individual online tutorials and essay clinics

Module leaders on the programme use a combination of narrated powerpoints, videos, and documents to introduce the specific topics covered in each module. A range of online activities are provided to encourage direct engagement with these materials. Online discussion forums then allow students to deepen their engagement with the topic by discussing a range of key questions related to the essential reading for that topic. At a number of points during the modules asynchronous online seminars are used to consolidate the learning activities covered during the preceding weeks. Space is also provided through the online seminars and/or 1-1 essay clinics to provide formative feedback on work being prepared for assessment later in the modules.

Assessment methods:

Assessment for the programme will be conducted through a variety of assignments linked to the learning outcomes to be achieved in the course. The Postgraduate attributes are addressed throughout all teaching, learning and assessment (see below).

- a) **Academic literacy** is inherent to the substantive content of all modules and is particularly addressed in *INRL7014 International Relations in Theory and Practice*, which encourages students to critically engage with a range of theoretical approaches central to the discipline by applying them to real world issues.
- b) **Research literacy** is addressed in students' independent learning and resource retrieval for all assessments. The module *INRL7016 Advanced Research in International Relations* provides dedicated training in both the philosophical and practical questions of conducting research in International Relations. The dissertation module then provides an opportunity to conduct an in-depth piece of independent research.
- c) **Critical self-awareness and personal literacy** is exercised through student initiative and personal responsibility in their own learning and with all forms of assessment. This is crystallised in the dissertation module during which students are able to present and receive feedback on their proposals at the online dissertation seminar in June.
- d) **Digital and information literacy** is achieved through the full use of online resources via Moodle. Students are also expected to use the electronic library as resources and readings for the programme are made available digitally.
- e) **Active citizenship** is addressed through the nature of the disciplinary remit and its benchmarks and subject matter which prescribe not only country studies, but area studies, including regionalisation, comparative analysis, inter and trans-national perspectives and attention to the global frame of reference. Students are encouraged to critically reflect on both different understandings of what it means to be a citizen in a globalising world and the dominant cultural underpinnings of International Relations as a discipline.



Assignments will include essays, presentations, projects, reports and a dissertation (MA only). Assignments will be spread over the year to provide constant feedback and assessment. The teaching team are committed to the [Assessment and Feedback Policy](#) and will return coursework within a maximum of 3 weeks (during semester time) from the time when it was handed in.

SECTION 6: ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

6.1 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The MA International Relations course entry requirements, as well as English language requirements are listed on the webpage (<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/ma-international-relations--distance-learning/>) under section 'How to apply / Entry requirements'.

The University's general minimum postgraduate entry requirements are listed here:

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/studying-at-brookes/how-to-apply/entry-requirements/postgraduate-courses/>

6.2 DBS AND OTHER PRE-COURSE CHECKS REQUIRED

N/A

6.3 JOB ROLE/EMPLOYER PROFILE (DEGREE AND HIGHER APPRENTICESHIPS)

N/A

SECTION 7: PREPARATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Students with a postgraduate award in International Relations have made successful careers in a variety of professions, including parliamentary researchers, non-governmental organisations, charity organisations, social work, management, teaching, lecturing, publishing, journalism, financial sector, advertising, government, civil service, local government, international organisations, law and the trade unions. A number of our students have also gone on to undertake research degrees.

In addition to the general support offered by the central Careers Service, students have the opportunity to access materials from a dedicated 'careers workshop' run for postgraduate students in International Relations. This workshop enables students to explore how the course cultivates cognitive and social skills that are relevant to intellectual, professional and personal development. Alumni of the course are also involved in the workshop and they are able to share their personal experiences of how the degree has helped them in their career development.

As active researchers, tutors on the programme have a number of links with employers, in particular with civil society organisations (such as Oxfam and Rights and Accountability in Development) and the policy-making community. Researchers from outside the University are invited to our weekly seminar series run by our Centre for Global Politics, Economy and Society (GPES) and some of these seminars are live-streamed via the GPES twitter account. The GPES Annual Lecture is also live-streamed allowing students on this programme to engage with the discussions.

Students will also have access to materials from our 'Politics at Work' seminars where guest speakers from relevant careers talk about their experiences, to help inspire students as to the range of options that are open to them. Our speakers reflect on their career progression, discuss some of the key details of their work and offer reflections on recent developments in their sector. Previously we have hosted speakers from a range of organisations including International Rescue Committee and Friends of the Earth.

Students get the opportunity to develop their presentation skills on a number of modules during the course and as part of the dissertation module they deliver an outline of their research project during an online dissertation seminar. The Annual Postgraduate Day, held in May/June each year, also includes a lecture from a guest speaker from outside the University and this is also live-streamed.

