

# University of Plymouth

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business

School of Society and Culture

## Programme Specification

### MA International Relations: Security and Development

(Part-time)

7950 (UK) / 7951 (Overseas)

Date of Approval: July 2024

Start Date: September 2025

Date of First Award: 2027

Review Date	Amended following review Yes/No	Sections amended

Approved Final Version for  
September 2025

## 1. MA International Relations: Security and Development

**Final award title:** MA International Relations: Security and Development

**HECOS code:** 100490 International Relations

2. **Awarding Institution:** University of Plymouth  
**Teaching institution(s):** University of Plymouth

## 3. Accrediting body(ies)

NA

## 4. Distinctive Features of the Programme and the Student Experience

The programme's distinctiveness lies in the combination of:

- its emphasis on a critically oriented synthesis of subfields of International Relations, namely Security Studies, International Political Economy and Development to provide new ways of analysing the practice of security and developmental politics from a global perspective;
- its basis in interdisciplinary collaboration between geopolitical and political economy experts;
- its links with broader research within the School of Society and Culture, in particular the Plymouth International Studies Centre seminar series;
- the dynamic, problem-based, approach to teaching and assessment;
- the two-year part-time online curriculum, providing access to study for those who otherwise are unable to access on-campus delivery due to professional, geographical location or family commitments.

The programme is underpinned by a small but strong International Relations cohort of academics, including leading specialists in the Middle East, Security Policy, European studies and International Political Economy.

## 5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group(s)

Politics and International Relations 2019 ([Subject Benchmark Statement: Politics and International Relations \(qaa.ac.uk\)](#) )

Geography 2019 [Subject Benchmark Statement: Geography \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk) History 2019 ([Subject Benchmark Statement: History \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk))

This programme aligns to the UK QAA Masters characteristics statement for specialised or advanced study ([Characteristics Statement: Master's Degree \(qaa.ac.uk\)](http://qaa.ac.uk))

## 6. Programme Structure

This is a Level 7 part-time programme studied over two years with intake points in (September and January). Over the two-year programme students will take one 30-credit module at a time, ending with the 60-credit dissertation. There is no formal choice of modules (although there will be a lot of variety within modules, including in assessment). The first module is foundational while the other three modules are interchangeable (they will be done in a different sequence depending on when students join the programme). Each module takes 15 weeks in total (including assessment).

The programme has an interdisciplinary and critical approach to issues of security and development, combining different social sciences and public policy perspectives from international relations. It addresses debates about how and why global security and development issues are constructed, including specific debates on security, globalisation, trade policy, development aid, conflict resolution and the environment.

### Module Breakdown

Module Code	Title	Credits	Year	Semester
IRLO7001	Global Governance	30	1	<b>Sep intake:</b> Semester 1
IRLO7001J				<b>Jan intake:</b> Semester 2
IRLO7002	Strategy and Security Studies	30	1	Summer
IRLO7003	Economic Diplomacy and Development	30	1 (Jan intake) 2 (Sep intake)	Semester 1
IRLO7004	Regional Geopolitics	30	1 (Sep intake) 2 (Jan intake)	Semester 2
IRLO7005	MA Dissertation on Security and Development	60	2	<b>Sep intake:</b> Semesters 2 & 3
IRLO7005J				<b>Jan intake:</b> Semester 3 <i>and</i> Semester 1 of next academic year

## September 2025 intake

### Year 1

Semester 1 (25/26)	Semester 2 (25/26)	Semester 3/Summer (25/26)
IRLO7001 Global Governance 30c  Mon 22-Sep-25 – Fri 19-Dec-25	IRLO7004 Regional Geopolitics 30c  Mon 26-Jan-26 – Fri 08-May-26	IRLO7002 Strategy and Security Studies 30c  Mon 18-May-26 – Friday 14-Aug-26

### Year 2

Semester 1 (26/27)	Semester 2 (26/27)	Semester 3/Summer (26/27)
IRLO7003 Economic Diplomacy and Development 30c  Mon 21-Sep-26 – Fri 18-Dec-26	IRLO7005 MA Dissertation on Security and Development 60c  Mon 18-Jan-27 – Fri 03-Sep-27	

## January 2026 intake

### Year 1

Semester 2 (25/26)	Semester 3/Summer (25/26)	Semester 1 (26/27)
IRLO7001J Global Governance 30c  Mon 19-Jan-26 – Fri 01-May-26	IRLO7002 Strategy and Security Studies 30c  Mon 18-May-26 – Fri 14-Aug-26	IRLO7003 Economic Diplomacy and Development 30c  Mon 21-Sep-26 – Fri 18-Dec-26

### Year 2

Semester 2 (26/27)	Sem 3/Summer (26/27)	Semester 1 (27/28)
IRLO7004 Regional Geopolitics 30c  Mon 25-Jan-27 – Fri 07-May-27	IRLO7005J MA Dissertation on Security and Development 60c  Mon 31-May-27 – Fri 21 Jan-28	

Students will need to complete all 180 credits to achieve the MA International Relations: Security and Development award. The Award can be at Pass, Merit or Distinction according to the academic regulations for awards

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essentialinformation/regulations>

## **Maximum Period of Registration**

The normal period of registration for a two-year part-time programme of study is a maximum of five years.

## **7. Programme Aims**

The programme is designed to meet the University of Plymouth's mission to apply core values of scholarship, capability, community, accessibility, effectiveness and quality to postgraduate studies. The programme has the following aims:

- to offer the opportunity to attain a postgraduate award at MA level in International Relations: Security and Development.
- to provide a supportive and friendly learning environment which enables you to develop an advanced understanding and knowledge of the significance of the theories and concerns of international relations, informed by global scholarship.
- to inculcate an in-depth, systematic and critical understanding of the discourse and practice of security and development issues in International Relations, including the perspectives of different world regions and cultures.
- to develop your capacity to apply analysis and critical evaluation and reasoning that inform the relevant debates and policy-making processes in global security and development.
- to foster the development of professional skills relevant to you, to employers and other stakeholders.
- to develop your competence in using methodologies and techniques appropriate to research and practical application in professional environments.
- to enable you to develop a capacity both for independent research and collaboration with others.

## **Strategy**

In order to achieve the aims and learning outcomes, the programme has an appropriate teaching, learning and assessment strategy. Progression is based on your ability to apply understanding and skills to the conduct of written and oral work.

## **Tutorials**

The main role of the module tutor is to guide you through each module of study. This includes running weekly webinar sessions, facilitating online discussions and providing assessment feedback.

## **Personal Tutor**

Your personal tutor can help you with any non-academic pastoral issues, such as extenuating circumstances, support and general guidance.

## **Skills Embedding**

Specialist skills are developed in the specific modules. These require you to undertake a series of exercises and activities, which enable you to develop and practise a variety of skills such as different types of analysis, communication, presentational and interpersonal skills, numeracy and diagnostic skills. Bibliographical, presentational and referencing skills are embedded in all modules. Advanced understanding, critical analysis and evaluation will be practised in a variety of ways such as seminar presentations, workshop tasks and written work.

## **8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs)**

### **8.1. Knowledge and understanding**

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

8.1.1 An in-depth, systematic and critical understanding of the discourse and practice of security and development issues in International Relations;

8.1.2 A comprehensive understanding of methodologies applicable to the discipline;

8.1.3 Understanding of the ethical implications of theorising and researching International Relations.

### **8.2. Cognitive and intellectual skills**

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

8.2.1 a critical awareness and ability to undertake analysis of complex and controversial areas in the discipline.

8.2.2 an ability to synthesise information in a manner that may be innovative, using knowledge and processes at the forefront of the discipline.

8.2.3 a conceptual understanding that will allow you to critically evaluate research, advanced scholarship, methodology and theory, and argue for alternative approaches.

8.2.4 an ability to demonstrate initiative and originality in problem solving, acting autonomously in planning and implementing tasks.

8.2.5 an ability to design, conduct and present an extended piece of research.

### **8.3. Key and transferable skills**

On successful completion graduates should have developed the following skills:

8.3.1 an ability to work collaboratively online, using relevant digital communication modalities to express views and develop ideas.

8.3.2 an ability to make use a full range of learning resources, manage information and undertake MA-level research tasks with minimum guidance.

8.3.3 an ability to engage confidently in academic communication with others, reporting on action clearly, autonomously and competently.

8.3.4 problem solving skills: use initiative and work with others to formulate solutions.

### **8.4. Employment related skills**

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

8.4.1 information Searching, Retrieval and Collation: retrieval using Internet, word processing, use of statistical, mapping and spreadsheets where relevant, bibliographic skills.

8.4.2 communication skills: oral and written presentation.

8.4.3 qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and reflection.

8.4.4 improved ability to work independently.

## **8.5. Practical skills**

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

8.5.1 interpersonal skills: group interaction, team work.

8.5.2 intercultural sensitivity and communicative skills.

8.5.3 project planning, personal development planning, and time management skills.

## **9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and Disability Service arrangements**

All applicants must have GCSE (or equivalent) Maths and English at Grade C or above.

### **Entry Requirements**

Applicants for admission to the Masters programme should normally hold a Second class (2:2) UK or equivalent Honours degree or postgraduate diploma in an International Relations/ Politics subject or a relevant cognate discipline. or an appropriate professional or academic qualification deemed by the University to be equivalent to a UK Honours degree or postgraduate diploma. Cognate disciplines included (but are not limited to) the following:

development studies; economics; public policy; history; geography; cultural studies; law; philosophy; sociology; psychology; anthropology; business studies; modern languages, English literature, media studies and communications.

When a potential student is ready to apply, they are directed to the UoP applications system, where they complete the standard application form for their chosen programme of study.

After an application has been submitted, it is forwarded to the dedicated Admissions Officer at UoP. The Admissions Officer checks the application meets minimum entry criteria and other requirements, referring any queries to Academic Partnerships or the Programme Lead as appropriate. There may also be consideration of APCL or APEL based on individual programme requirements and the process outlined in the University's [Academic Regulations for Admissions](#).

Normal UoP regulations apply to APCL and APEL claims, with final sign-off being required from the Programme Lead who is the Admission Tutor s.

Applicants who do not possess appropriate Higher Education qualifications may be admitted on the basis of prior experience (e.g. more than a year's work with an international NGO), if the admissions tutor considers that the applicant has demonstrated the potential to complete the programme successfully.

As the online programme will be using the University of Plymouth's digital learning environment, applicants will be made aware of the technical and connectivity requirements, which are outlined here:

<https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/new-students/it-equipmentspecifications>

The course requires applicants to handle complex language well, and to understand detailed reasoning. Applicants with limited experience of studying through the medium of English should possess English language skills equivalent to a minimum Level of IELTS 6.5 overall (**with a level of at least 5.5 in all components**) or TOEFL written paper 600. The University can offer various options for further language training, and the Programme Co-ordinator may strongly advise that you undertake such training.

<b>Entry Requirements for MA International Relations: Security and Development</b>	
Normal Minimum Entry requirements	An honours undergraduate degree in the aforementioned disciplines. Standard English language requirement as outlined above.
Non-standard qualifications: honours degree in a different discipline	Candidates are interviewed before an offer is made.
Non-standard qualifications: Professional experience	Candidates are interviewed before an offer is made.

## **10. Transitional Arrangements for existing students looking to progress onto the programme**

NA

**Appendices Programme Specification Mapping (UG) – core/elective modules  
Programme Specification Mapping (PGT)**

**(PGT) Mapping table that reflects which core modules contribute to the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs)**

Tick those Programme Intended Learning Outcomes the module contributes to through its assessed learning outcomes.

Module	Credits	C core E elec- tive	Programme Learning Outcomes contributed to (for more information see Section 8)																				Compensation Y/N	Assessment element(s) and weightings O1- remotely delivered assessment E1- exam E2- clinical exam T1- test C1- coursework A1- generic assessment P1- practical	
			8.1 Knowledge & understanding				8.2 Cognitive & intellectual skills					8.3 Key & transferable skills					8.4 Employment related skills				8.5 Practical skills				
			1	2	3		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3			
IRLO7001 / IRLO7001J	30	C	x	x	x		x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x					N	C1 100%		
IRLO7002	30	C	x	x	x		x		x	x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	Y	C1 100%		
IRLO7003	30	C	x	x	x		x		x	x			x	x				x	x	x	x	Y	C1 100%		
IRLO7004	30	C	x	x	x		x		x		x		x	x		x						Y	C1 100%		
IRLO7005 / IRLO7005J	60	C			x		x	x	x		x	x	x			x			x		x	N	C1 100%		
<b>Learning Outcomes 180 credits</b>			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x				

**IRLO7001 / IRLO7001J:**

Global Governance

**IRLO7002:**

Strategy and Security Studies

**IRLO7003:**

Economic Diplomacy and Development

**IRLO7004:**

Regional Geopolitics

**IRLO7005 / IRLO7005J:**

MA Dissertation on Security and Development