



MA

International Relations and Security

Study mode

Full-time

Part-time

Duration

12 months

24 months

Apply by: **11 September 2026**

Starts on: **28 September 2026**

About this course

This MA offers a fantastic opportunity for postgraduate students from across the world to join in and learn about contemporary debates on the meaning of security, democracy and the role of political processes in International Relations.

Introduction

This MA programme offers a brilliant opportunity for you to enhance your career prospects by learning about international relations, academic methods and contemporary security debates.

One of the key characteristics of the programme is flexibility and choice, which allows you to pursue your own particular areas of interest through our optional pathways, which draw on the expert knowledge of staff in the Department of Politics i.e. International Relations and Security, Conflict Resolution and Political Communication.

The Department of Politics at the University of Liverpool has an internationally recognised expertise on topics of international relations and security. We have a unique combination of expertise in international relations theory, non-state actor violence and resolution of conflicts.

The department puts a strong emphasis on high quality teaching. Classroom seminars and lectures are designed interactively and centre around student engagement. Likewise teaching

staff are passionate about making complicated matters of international relations accessible to students.

Who is this course for?

The MA is ideal for graduates in Politics studies or other social science degrees who want to increase their knowledge in international relations and contemporary security debates.

What you'll learn

- Advanced knowledge of a specific international relations topic(s) and/or region(s) of the world in which you have an interest in
- Advanced expertise in a variety of significant topics in the sphere of international relations and security
- To apply research methods in the field of social sciences to the study of international relations
- To critically assess key concepts in the literature on international relations and security studies
- To apply concepts in the field of international relations and security studies to the analysis of contemporary developments in the international sphere
- Advanced understanding of the dynamics of contemporary international relations in one (or more) region(s) of the world.

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Course content

Discover what you'll learn, what you'll study, and how you'll be taught and assessed.

Semester one

The core modules are complemented by optional modules. You are free to choose optional modules at your own discretion. However, the programme design provides pathway suggestions (which are not mandatory) that recommend certain optional modules to ensure coherency in your studies. Each pathway is designed to complement the core modules, yet offers a unique additional specialisation and qualification. These pathways are:

Pathway I: International Relations and Security

This pathway would deepen your understanding on matters international relations and security discussed in the core modules.

Pathway II: Conflict Resolution

The conflict resolution pathway complements the discussions on conflict, violence and security in the core modules as it provides a deeper insight into conflict analysis and peaceful conflict solutions tools.

Pathway III: Political Communication

The political communications pathway provides an additional perspective on international politics by adding the role of media to the picture.

For more information on what optional modules would complement the above pathways please contact the programme lead.

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORIES (POLI132)	30

Optional modules	Credits
THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST (POLI130)	15
AFRICA-CHINA RELATIONS IN A CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER (POLI305)	15
FROM THE IRA TO THE FAR RIGHT: UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD (POLI324)	15
THE PUZZLE OF CIVIL WAR (POLI353)	15
MODERN SLAVERY, FORCED LABOUR AND HUMAN RIGHTS (POLI521)	15
BIG DATA AND SOCIETY: FOUNDATIONS, POLITICS, AND POLICY B (COMM752)	15
MEDIA AND POLITICS: THEORIES AND CASES B (COMM765)	15
PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW (LAW353)	15

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Semester two

The core modules are complemented by optional modules. You are free to choose optional modules at your own discretion. However, the programme design provides pathway suggestions (which are not mandatory) that recommend certain optional modules to ensure coherency in your studies. Each pathway is designed to complement the core modules, yet offers a unique additional specialisation and qualification. These pathways are:

Pathway I: International Relations and Security

This pathway would deepen your understanding on matters international relations and security discussed in the core modules.

Pathway II: Conflict Resolution

The conflict resolution pathway complements the discussions on conflict, violence and security in the core modules as it provides a deeper insight into conflict analysis and peaceful conflict solutions tools.

Pathway III: Political Communication

The political communications pathway provides an additional perspective on international politics by adding the role of media to the picture.

For more information on what optional modules would complement the above pathways please contact the programme lead.

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICS (POLI116)	15
CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION (POLI131)	30

Optional modules	Credits
COMPARATIVE PEACE PROCESSES (POLI133)	15
HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN COMPLEX EMERGENCIES (POLI306)	15
INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION (POLI321)	15
CONTEMPORARY POLITICS OF NATIONALISM (POLI332)	15
GENDER AND GLOBAL POLITICS (POLI349)	15
QUANTITATIVE METHODS AND WORLD POLITICS (POLI510)	15
GLOBAL JOURNALISM AND POLITICS (COMM748)	15

Optional modules	Credits
MEDIA AND POLITICS: ECONOMY AND SOCIETY B (COMM763)	15
CRISIS AND CHANGE IN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY (ENVS434)	15

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Summer period

The dissertation (**POLI119**) is taken in the summer vacation period.

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
MASTERS DISSERTATION (POLI119)	60

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Teaching and assessment

How you'll learn

Teaching is mainly by 2-hour seminar, with some lecture input within the seminars. The seminars will constitute the primary forum by which key concepts, ideas and information will be communicated. You will also have the opportunity to discuss the content of the seminars during the office hours that are offered by all teaching staff.

The emphasis on seminars as a teaching tool reflects the belief among the teaching staff involved in the MA that this form of communicating knowledge is ideal for studying international relations at MA level. The seminar is intended to serve as a venue where the different debates and perspectives in the literature are closely examined by you and your peers.

Your independent study and research skills will be enhanced through your work developing a 12,000 – 15,000 word dissertation in a research subject of your choice, which is completed in the summer period at the end of your MA.

How you're assessed

Methods of assessment on the MA are predominately via essays and presentations. There are some exam assessments in optional modules.

Your completed 12,000 – 15,000 word dissertation in a research subject of your choice makes up 60 credits (one third) of your final MA mark.

Liverpool Hallmarks

We have a distinctive approach to education, the Liverpool Curriculum Framework, which focuses on research-connected teaching, active learning, and authentic assessment to ensure our students graduate as digitally fluent and confident global citizens.

The Liverpool Curriculum framework sets out our distinctive approach to education. Our teaching staff support our students to develop academic knowledge, skills, and understanding alongside our **graduate attributes**:

- Digital fluency
- Confidence
- Global citizenship

Our curriculum is characterised by the three **Liverpool Hallmarks**:

- Research-connected teaching
- Active learning
- Authentic assessment

All this is underpinned by our core value of **inclusivity** and commitment to providing a curriculum that is accessible to all students.

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Careers and employability

Student career development is a major interest for the department and we actively encourage you to integrate career planning into your academic studies. The International Relations and Security MA provides you with analytical skills and empirical knowledge to equip you for a range of chosen careers, including, but not limited to: diplomacy, journalism, the military, as well as the non-governmental sphere. The MA also delivers ideal training if you are interested in an academic career in doctoral research.

If you have a professional background in any of these (or other relevant) areas, the MA provides you with the opportunity for continuing professional development, whilst enabling you to bring your experiences to the cohort which will further enrich the programme.

Career options are wide and extensive, including working in:

- Diplomacy
- Journalism
- National and international political organisations
- Mental health charities
- Non-governmental organisations
- Education
- The military
- Civil service
- Political parties
- Corporate organisations
- Financial sector
- Doctoral research.

Career support from day one to graduation and beyond

Career planning

From education to employment

Networking events

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Fees and funding

Your tuition fees, funding your studies, and other costs to consider.

Tuition fees

UK fees (applies to Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland)

Full-time place, per year – £12,500

Part-time place, per year – £6,250

International fees

Full-time place, per year – £28,000

Part-time place, per year – £14,000

Tuition fees are for the academic year 2026/27.

Tuition fees cover the cost of your teaching and assessment, operating facilities such as libraries, IT equipment, and access to academic and personal support.

- You can pay your tuition fees in instalments.
- All or part of your tuition fees can be funded by external sponsorship.
- International applicants who accept an offer of a place will need to pay a tuition fee deposit.

If you're a UK national, or have settled status in the UK, you may be eligible to apply for a Postgraduate Loan worth up to £12,167 to help with course fees and living costs. **Learn more about paying for your studies**.

Additional costs

We understand that budgeting for your time at university is important, and we want to make sure you understand any course-related costs that are not covered by your tuition fee. This could include buying a laptop, books, or stationery.

Find out more about the additional study costs that may apply to this course.

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Entry requirements

The qualifications and exam results you'll need to apply for this course.

Postgraduate entry requirements

We accept a 2:2 honours degree from a UK university, or an equivalent academic qualification from a similar non-UK institution. This degree should be in Politics or another social science. On occasion, 2:2 Bachelor's degrees from non-social science areas will be considered.

International qualifications

Select your country or region to view specific entry requirements.

Many countries have a different education system to that of the UK, meaning your qualifications may not meet our entry requirements. Completing your Foundation Certificate, such as that offered by the University of Liverpool International College, means you're guaranteed a place on your chosen course.

English language requirements

You'll need to demonstrate competence in the use of English language, unless you're from a majority English speaking country.

We accept a variety of international language tests and country-specific qualifications.

International applicants who do not meet the minimum required standard of English language can complete one of our Pre-Sessional English courses to achieve the required level.

IELTS

6.5 overall, with no component below 6.0

TOEFL iBT

If you took a TOEFL test on or before 20 January 2026, you'll need 88 overall, with minimum scores of listening 19, writing 19, reading 19 and speaking 20. If you took a TOEFL test from 21 January 2026 onwards, when a new scoring system was introduced, you'll need 4.5 overall, with 4 or above in all components. TOEFL Home Edition not accepted.

Duolingo English Test

125 overall, with writing not less than 125, speaking and reading not less than 115, and listening not below 110. For academic year 2025/26 only, we will also accept the production, literacy, comprehension and conversation score set: 120 overall, with no component below 105.

Pearson PTE Academic

61 overall, with no component below 59

LanguageCert Academic

70 overall, with no skill below 65

PSI Skills for English

B2 Pass with Merit in all bands

INDIA Standard XII

National Curriculum (CBSE/ISC) – 75% and above in English. Accepted State Boards – 80% and above in English.

WAEC

C6 or above

Pre-sessional English

Do you need to complete a Pre-sessional English course to meet the English language requirements for this course?

The length of Pre-sessional English course you'll need to take depends on your current level of English language ability.

Pre-sessional English in detail

If you don't meet our English language requirements, we can use your most recent IELTS score, or [the equivalent score in selected other English language tests](#), to determine the length of Pre-sessional English course you require.

Use the table below to check the course length you're likely to require for your current English language ability and see whether the course is available on campus or online.

Your most recent IELTS score	Pre-sessional English course length	On campus or online
6.0 overall, with writing at 6.0 and no component below 5.5	6 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with writing at 5.5 and no component below 5.0	10 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with no more than one component at 5.0	12 weeks	Online
5.5 overall, with no component below 5.0	20 weeks	On campus
5.0 overall, with no more than one component at 4.5	30 weeks	On campus
4.5 overall, with no more than one component at 4.0	40 weeks	On campus

If you've completed an alternative English language test to IELTS, we may be able to use this to assess your English language ability and determine the Pre-sessional English course

length you require.

Please see our guide to [Pre-sessional English entry requirements](#) for IELTS 6.5 overall, with no component below 6.0, for further details.

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