



POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

Programme Title: MA International Policy and
Diplomacy (by distance learning)

Awarding Body: Staffordshire University

Teaching Institution: Staffordshire University

Final Awards: MA

Intermediate Awards:

Mode of Study

UCAS Codes: N/A

QAA Subject Benchmarks: N/A

Professional/Statutory Body:

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EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME OUTCOMES

What will this programme teach me to do?

At the end of your studies you should be able:

Postgraduate Certificate

Locate and analyse developments in IR theory as a series of intellectual debates in the context of changing twentieth century events (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis)
Demonstrate a critical understanding of policy implementation related theory in the context of global policy issues (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; communication)
Understand the key functions that global policy forums have served in the past and in the present (knowledge & understanding; learning)
Analyse some aspects of the changing nature of diplomacy (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; application)
Apply appropriate skills of research (for individual assignments) with awareness of methodological problems using secondary sources (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; problem solving; application; reflection)
Demonstrate a level of communicative skill appropriate for the Masters level utilising standard notational and referencing conventions (communication)

Postgraduate Diploma

Locate and analyse developments in IR theory as a series of intellectual debates in the context of changing twentieth century events (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis)
Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of policy related theory and apply this to analyse a range of global policy issues and case examples (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; communication; application)
Understand the key functions that global policy forums, in their various forms, have served in the past and in the present (knowledge & understanding; learning)
Analyse the changing nature of diplomacy in the context of globalisation and the growth of international organisations (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; application)
Locate practical research problems against focused exercises and sustained research tasks (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; reflection)
Apply appropriate skills of research (for individual assignments) with awareness of methodological problems using secondary sources (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; problem solving; application; reflection)
Demonstrate a level of communicative skill appropriate for the Masters level utilising standard notational and referencing conventions (communication)

Masters

Locate and analyse developments in IR theory as a series of intellectual debates in the context of changing twentieth century events (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis)
Demonstrate a critical understanding of a range of policy implementation theory and apply this to analyse a range of global policy issues and case examples, and apply them at a more sustained level in the Dissertation (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; communication; application)

Understand the key functions that global policy forums, in their various forms, have served in the past and in the present (knowledge & understanding; learning)

Analyse the changing nature of diplomacy in the context of globalisation and the growth of international organisations (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; application)

Locate practical research problems against focused exercises and sustained research tasks (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; reflection)

Apply extensive skills of research. Students will be expected to integrate elements of their learning on the programme as a whole, as well as applying skills of research (using primary and/or secondary sources), and be cognizant and appreciative of methodological issues relevant to undertaking a sustained Dissertation (knowledge & understanding; learning; enquiry; analysis; problem solving; application; reflection)

Demonstrate communicative skills appropriate for the Masters level utilising standard notational and referencing conventions (communication)

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE, MODULES AND CREDITS

**Award: MA INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND DIPLOMACY
(Distance Learning)**

September Start

YEAR 1	Teaching Block 1	Core AM25323-7 International Relations in the Twentieth Century (VLE) (30)
	Teaching Block 2	Core AM25324-7 Diplomacy and the Global World (VLE) (30)
YEAR 2	Teaching Block 1	Core AM25325-7 Global Policy Analysis (VLE) (30)
	Teaching Block 2	Options (30)
YEAR 3	Teaching Block 1	Core AM25329-7 Dissertation in International Policy and Diplomacy (VLE) (60)
	Teaching Block 2	

February Start

YEAR 1	Teaching Block 2	Core AM25324-7 Diplomacy and the Global World (VLE) (30)
	Teaching Block 1	Core AM25323-7 International Relations in the Twentieth Century (VLE) (30)
YEAR 2	Teaching Block 2	Option Module (30)
	Teaching Block 1	Core AM25325-7 Global Policy Analysis (VLE) (30)
YEAR 3	Teaching Block 2	Core AM25329-7 Dissertation in International Policy and Diplomacy (VLE) (60)
	Teaching Block 1	
YEAR 4	Teaching Block 1	

Option Modules					
Teaching Block 1		Cats	Teaching Block 2		Cats
			AM25326-7	International Security (VLE)	30
			AM25529-7	Human Rights (VLE)	30
			AM25538-7	Money trade and Development in the Global Political Economy	30
			AM25589-7	Civil Society: Origins, Development and International Context (VLE)	30
			AM25689-7	Foreign Policy Analysis	30

Potential Awards:

Postgraduate Certificate (60 credits) - comprises AM25324-7, AM25323-7

Postgraduate Diploma (120 credits) – comprises PG Cert plus AM25325-7 and 30 credits of option modules

Master of Arts (180 credits) – comprises PG Dip plus AM25329-7

Progression:

In order to progress from one stage of an award to another (i.e. PgC to PgD, PgD to Masters), you must normally obtain a Pass in all modules. Otherwise, award specific regulations must permit compensation of a failed module or retrieval of failure at a subsequent stage of your programme of study.

HOW WILL I BE TAUGHT AND ASSESSED?

Teaching and Learning

The Programme delivery is supported by an academic team that has a very wide experience of innovative approaches to curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessment. The team's expertise is the culmination of many years involvement with a variety of postgraduate and undergraduate awards (for example: BA (Hons) Modern Studies; BA (Hons) International Relations; BA (Hons) Politics; BA (Hons) History; and previous versions of the Masters awards in International Relations and International Policy and Diplomacy). In devising the teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the awards within the programme, the team has drawn from this expertise and has also been cognisant of current National, University and School wide concerns with the following principles and issues:

- Widening student access and recruitment
- Inclusion and diversity
- Promotion of life-long learning
- Student focussed and student led learning
- Transmission of transferable skills
- Employability

The team has also been influenced by the challenges presented by the current emphasis on employability and the need for the majority of students to find paid employment on graduation. Our teaching, learning and assessment strategy has therefore been influenced by both the need to address the requirements of students at point of entry and to create an active overall learning environment which strengthens their position regarding employability in future job markets. We recognise, however, that students choosing postgraduate study are often pursuing specific interests rather than seeking employability skills *per se*. The programme therefore offers a curriculum suited for those seeking employment in international institutions, national foreign ministries or other public or private organisations with an international outlook (International Policy and Diplomacy). Overall, we are concerned to provide an educational experience that is not only distinctive in terms of curriculum content and delivery but also facilitative in terms of employability.

Although most students will follow the entire programme via the VLE our teaching and learning on the award can allow a 'blended learning' approach, which brings together both off-campus distance-learning and the opportunity for on-campus face-to-face teaching. Some students may have some on-campus learning through two workshops a year which will be held (in conjunction with colleagues in Geography). Depending on the particular route chosen by students, some will also have the opportunity to study on-campus for a 12 week period at the Diploma stage of their Award; these students will be described as 'mixed mode' students in the following account. This element of student choice in their studies will introduce some variation in the teaching and learning experience of students undertaking the same award. However it is important not to overlook the shared elements; all the students will study from many of the same materials, with the support of the same group of tutors. On campus study will provide the opportunity to join students following the award by attendance. It should be noted that the learning outcomes for the modules concerned are the same although there are variations in assessment methods.

The variations reflect the different learning methodologies involved in on-line and face-to-face teaching. The on-campus versions of the modules are delivered by conventional lecture, seminar and workshop. Assessment is largely by written

essays, which provide opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The on-line modules all have a common approach to assessment that is in part designed to encourage regular engagement through the module and to facilitate a more incremental achievement of the learning outcomes. For this reason seminar 'presentations' are assessed. The online modules are designed to enable the students to become familiar with both a style of delivery from module to module as they progress through and also to become familiar with a style of learning task. Students opting to come to Staffordshire for a semester are doing so in order to achieve a different, but complementary, experience with a less task oriented approach to learning and assessment, commensurate with the opportunity to attend normal classroom based learning. Moreover, we would be reluctant to require students from this programme, joining the programme by attendance to have a different assessment regime compared with the other students in the same class.

For all students, teaching and learning self-instructional material is housed and delivered from within one of the University's virtual learning environments (currently Blackboard). The taught modules consist of weekly Activities containing information, directed reading [often from the resource pack provided to the learners or through hyperlinked web-based documents] and tasks (that may have formative exercises associated with them.) Throughout the Award(s), learners are also encouraged to further develop their own independent learning capabilities. Interaction between students and tutors during each module is enabled through chat room sessions and email interchange.

Mixed mode students have the opportunity to study for up to three modules on-campus. The on-campus students will have the opportunity to accelerate through their programme of studies, being able to start and complete two modules in parallel, and start preparatory work on a third module. For these modules, the students will join the students following the programme by attendance. They will, therefore, have opportunity to engage the more traditional learning methods associated with full-time attendance based on lectures, seminars and workshops. Given their on-campus status for part of their second year, they can be effectively regarded as 'full-time' rather than 'part-time' students. The precise package of modules will be negotiated on an individual student basis (see below).

Effectively 'mixed mode' students will not only interact between themselves and their on-campus tutors, but will also benefit from interaction with other students doing those same modules by attendance. The increasing use of computer-mediated communications (CMC) – whether these are asynchronous threaded discussion boards, or group e-mail exchanges – means that the distinction between on-campus teaching and distance learning may become less obvious in future. Students on the programme who choose to visit Staffordshire may alternatively choose to follow the online delivery programme while in attendance. The only difference between the distance learners and these students is where they hold some of their tutorials and seminars: one group exclusively on-line, and the others, having some face-to-face, as well as online interaction. Again this is subject to individual negotiation.

Assessment

Every module contributes to the overall final grade for an Award. All of the assessment consists of coursework rather than examinations. The coursework takes two main forms: essays and seminar 'presentations' which are assessed summatively, and a range of shorter submitted tasks (such as short responses to questions, evaluations of documents, critical analyses and comparisons – which will be offered formative feedback but are not assessed). Specific details about the format required for each assessment are provided in the Module Handbooks and the information that is associated with each Activity.

The essay, which is the main form of assessment for the programme, is modelled on the published paper to the extent that this is the main method of professional discussion in the field of international relations and associated specialist areas. Essays should therefore follow correct academic conventions of referencing and citation. The essay should also have a clear structure facilitating the presentation of an analysis or clear line of argument that directly focuses on the question under review.

The essay titles for each module are designed to reflect the learning objectives and planned skill enhancements of that module, as included in the module descriptor. All modules require two essays allowing feedback from the first (shorter and proportionally less significant essay) to assist in preparation for the second (offering an element of formative assessment). The virtual presentation allows opportunity to present student ideas and arguments to peers, inviting feedback and discussion.

The Dissertation is assessed on the basis of a range of criteria (see the separate Dissertation Guidance booklet). The Dissertation itself is the result of sustained research on the part of students and is considered to be the defining element of the Masters level.

With reliance on assessment of submitted assignments there may be a question of 'security' of assessment normally partly overcome by the use of unseen examinations. The University is currently implementing the use of a plagiarism search engine that requires all students attending Staffordshire to submit both hard copies of assignments and electronic versions on disk so that they can be checked. As submission of all assignments received from the distance learners will be electronically transmitted it will actually be easier to apply the plagiarism check. Students will of course be warned of the use of this checking method. Moreover, as most exchanges with the students, and all of their discussion forum contributions, are in the written form we have considerable insight on writing abilities and style in advance of assignments being submitted

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment does not count towards module grades, but it is an important part of undertaking a distance-learning course. Information in the weekly Activities direct learners to undertake many tasks that are not assessed – this is part of the 'active learning' approach that is fundamental to the way in which we have approached the design of the course. We advise learners to work through all of these tasks because only by doing this will they be able to achieve the knowledge and skills needed to fully gain from the experience of study at postgraduate level.

Some of the formative tasks can be immediately self-assessed by comparing answers or notes to those included as part of the Activity. For some of the formative tasks, learners are directed to submit work to the tutor or to share work with their

learner group. Learners are sometimes provided with individual feedback from tutors on formative assessments and sometimes with collective feedback commenting on the profile of work across the group. When work is shared with a learner group, individuals can compare their work with that of others, comment on each other's work and sometimes work collaboratively to produce joint documents that are then evaluated.

Feedback on Assessment: from Tutors

The team in line with University strategy regards this as a key aspect of student learning. The team will normally operate within a framework which comprises three elements:-

- The on-line return of work to students within a maximum of 20 working days of submission
- Provision of written commentary comprising (a) annotated engagement with the student's text and b) summary of overall strengths and weaknesses.
- The opportunity to receive further informal feedback from tutors when work is returned.

Personal Tutor support

Each student will normally experience contact with the tutor(s) responsible for the individual module being taken at any particular time. However, a second named tutor will be available should a student not wish to raise a particular concern with the module tutor.

The supporting relationship with tutors will also allow reviews of progress to take account of issues such as: keeping up with progression through modules week by week; arrangements if they have to disengage for short or long periods (perhaps because of work commitments); issues associated with intermitting study; etc.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Entry Requirements (including ILETS score)

What qualifications would I need to join this programme?

Admission is by one or more of the following:

1. An Honours degree of a United Kingdom institution of higher education or international equivalent.
2. A Post-graduate Diploma or Post-experience Diploma recognised as being equivalent to an Honours Degree.
3. Accredited prior experiential learning.

Accredited Prior Learning

Students may be considered for APL/APEL on the basis of credit achieved in prior study; work based training, substantial employment or other experiential learning. This will be considered in accordance with the APL/APEL Handbook. Evaluation is delegated to the School which is required to assess each application according to the specified procedure. The Faculty will ensure consistent application of the Handbook. For the Masters, postgraduate diploma or postgraduate certificate awards a maximum of 50% of the total credits for the award may be set against accredited prior learning/experience.

Application from Overseas Students

The normal language requirement is Cambridge English and International English Language Testing Service (IELTS) examinations passed at WLTS 6.5 or other equivalent. Language ability is assessed through e-mail correspondence/interview. Applicants may also attend summer language schools run by the English Language Centre.

Disability Statement

Staffordshire University operates a policy of inclusive teaching and learning to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to fulfil their educational potential. Details about how to apply to have your needs assessed can be found at: http://www.staffs.ac.uk/study_here/disabled_students/index.jsp

AWARD SPECIFIC INFORMATION

The *MA International Policy and Diplomacy* (by distance learning) addresses key issues associated with the way countries of the world co-exist in the face of rapid change. It aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of problems associated with developing and implementing global policy, the operation of modern diplomacy and the process of governance in a complex world. With no political authority above that of sovereign states, the means to achieve order and stability are both uncertain and necessary. Diplomacy and international institutions play a hugely important role - but both must accommodate the massive transformations associated with globalisation. The process of globalisation has increased the importance of policy making and implementation in a wide range of universal and regional organisations as well as between states (and especially in a multilateral context). A study of diplomacy can be appropriately grounded in the global policy context. State-centric images of the world have come under considerable challenge and there is important scope for a focus on the policy context of this trend. Diplomacy is studied in terms of the complex and wide-ranging means for official communication and in the context of the many types of intergovernmental organisations and their links with a growing transnational environment of international non-governmental organisations.

The award is given clear direction through its core modules. We provide a thorough overview of perspectives on the international politics of the twentieth century and the problems faced by states in their efforts to co-exist. An analysis of the problems of developing and implementing global policy, directed towards a range of complex international issues, sets the scene for addressing diplomacy and global governance

in the contemporary world. The award draws on the wide disciplinary experience of the team in International Relations and history. A selection of two options is available which, with the material presented in the core and the flexibility of the dissertation, enables a degree of specialisation.

An ever-increasing number of people are working in international oriented institutions, of many sorts, and may require a practical international understanding located in an appropriate conceptualisation of the modern world. This programme is designed to be attractive to students from a variety of social science backgrounds who may wish to take their career in these directions, or who may simply want to pursue an interest in such issues. Past graduates (of the version taught by attendance) have, for example, obtained posts in national Foreign Offices. To date many students from such backgrounds have joined the programme.

Thus the Masters in International Policy and Diplomacy is designed to meet the needs of students who wish to specialise in policy and diplomacy in the context of the modern world. Moreover, it is designed to be very attractive to students from around the world who wish to follow a programme with clear international vocational elements.

Further information about the award can be found in the relevant Student Handbook and on the University Website. This includes information about optional modules, student support, and academic regulations.

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