



Programme Specification
A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills
that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an
award from
The University of Sheffield

1	Programme Title	International Relations
2	Programme Code	SPRT006
3	JACS Code	L240; L250
4	Level of Study	Postgraduate
5a	Final Qualification	Master of Arts (MA)
5b	QAA FHEQ Level	7
6a	Intermediate Qualification(s)	Postgraduate Diploma; Postgraduate Certificate
6b	QAA FHEQ Level	7
7	Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)	Not applicable
8	Faculty	Social Sciences
9	Department	Politics
10	Other Departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	None
11	Mode(s) of Attendance	Full-time or Part-time
12	Duration of the Programme	1 year or 2 years
13	Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
14	Date of production/revision	October 2016, June 2017, March 2018, March 2026

15. Background to the programme and subject area

This programme focuses on the most contemporary and up-to-date debates, theories and practices of IR. It seeks to reflect on the identity of the discipline as much as it seeks to introduce the student to the cutting edge of the field in terms of the theory and practice of IR and world politics. The programme plays to Departmental strengths in research-led teaching (top three RAE / REF placement since 2001) by developing sociological understandings of IR, critical security studies, non-Western IR, gender and race, governance, and inter-disciplinarily more generally. This means looking at current moves within IR to develop a more sociological understanding of international relations, a greater focus on social practices and the constitution of subjectivity and identity and a questioning of some of the assumptions and framings that have traditionally defined the discipline to the exclusion of important issues found in new work on gender, race and class. The aim is not to focus only on reflexive, critical and sociological issues but to engage with the wider conventional portfolio of theory as well as the 'real' world in all its complexity. Accordingly, the programme is designed to offer students an equal balance between critical and sociological approaches and more conventional approaches to the discipline. To this end we offer cutting-edge modules that examine the key and most up-to-date issues in world politics. In such ways the programme provides an alternative to standard International Relations syllabi.

16. Programme aims

The programme aims are:

- 1) to reflect deeply on the identity of the sub discipline of International Relations, both in terms of its historical development and its multidisciplinary influences.
- 2) to provide students with sophisticated understanding of the cutting edge of the field in terms of the theory and practice of International Relations and world politics.
- 3) to allow students to apply such theories and approaches to a range of key issues and controversies in world politics.
- 4) to offer students an equal understanding of critical and sociological approaches and more conventional approaches to the sub-discipline.

17. Programme learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding:	
By the end of the programme, students will be able to:	
K1	Demonstrate advanced understanding of different theoretical approaches to the examination of world politics.
K2	Be able to employ these approaches to critical real world issues within international relations in a sophisticated, reflexive and critical manner.
K3	Critically engage with the key debates in the study of international relations; especially in relation to the historical development of the discipline and the different critical and conventional approaches to the subdiscipline.
K4	Demonstrate understanding of how to develop, design and plan an extended piece of independent research around a research question related to a core theme in international relations.

Skills and other attributes:	
S1	Critically evaluate advanced concepts and theories in the field of International Relations.
S2	Employ primary and secondary sources in an effective and accurate way.
S3	Present reasoned and effective arguments in both written and oral form.
S4	Pursue independent learning and to show critical judgement.
S5	Work collaboratively with others in a group.
S6	Conduct the relevant theoretical and / or empirical research necessary to produce a major piece of independent research.

18. Teaching, learning and assessment

Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

Lectures

Lectures will be used to impart essential knowledge and to give students the foundational knowledge they need for the successful completion of the Programme. Lectures are also an important means of engaging students with their modules and readings. No single module on the Programme will be delivered solely by lectures.

Seminars

Seminars will be used to develop students' critical understanding of the core issues raised in the modules and to deepen understanding gained in lectures and from readings.

- The use of group work in such seminars will enhance collaborative skills and allow students to apply their knowledge with others.
- The use of class presentations in those seminars will enhance communication and organisational skills and allow students to provide and receive peer feedback on their ideas.

Tutorials / Supervisions

Individual tutorials will be used during the supervision of the 12,000 word dissertation. Advice will be given on the construction and completion of an independent research project on a topic related to the Programme.

Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

12,000 word dissertation

The dissertation allows students the opportunity to put into practice all of the skills, knowledge and understanding that they have gained throughout the Programme. The dissertation is used to assess these attributes, as well as the ability of the student to undertake a major piece of independent research on a relevant topic to the Programme.

Essays

Essays will be used to evaluate students' comprehension of particular concepts, theoretical perspectives and

debates related to the module. They will also be used to assess students' ability to communicate clearly and construct well-developed arguments of their own.

Policy briefing papers

Policy briefings will be used in some modules to evaluate students' ability to apply academic theories and debates to real-world policy issues. In doing so, they will also assess students' depth of understanding of those theories and debates and their ability to communicate such understanding.

Book review

Book reviews will be used in some modules to test students' comprehension of key texts relevant to their modules and their ability to communicate the concepts, theories and arguments employed therein.

Group projects (producing podcast, website or brochure)

Some projects will make use of small group project, with groups tasked with employing a variety of research methods to generate 'first-hand' insights, and to disseminate their findings for wider non-academic audiences via either a video, podcast, a website, or a printed brochure. Such outputs will be used to assess students' understanding, communication and independent learning.

'Weekly responses' (reflections and questions in response to the weekly assigned readings)

In some modules, students will be required to submit reflections and questions each week in response to the assigned readings – to a maximum of half a page. Such responses will allow evaluation of students' comprehension of the material, critical reflection of it, and their ability to communicate such understanding in a concise format.

The relationship between these learning and teaching methods, assessment methods and the programme learning outcomes are set out in the table below:

Teaching and Learning				Assessment Methods					
Learning Outcome (see section 17 for full text)	Lectures	Seminars	Tutorials / Supervisions	Dissertation	Essays	Policy Briefing Papers	Book Review	Group Projects	Weekly Responses
K1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
K2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
K3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
K4	X		X	X					
S1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S2	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S3	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S4	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S5		X						X	
S6	X		X	X					

19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

QAA Framework: Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7 on the FHEQ and SCQF level 11 on the FQHEIS: master's degree

QAA Subject benchmark for Politics and International Relations (Honours level applied to the Masters framework)

The University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

The Department of Politics Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy

Feedback from External Examiners

20. Programme structure and regulations

Students will undertake:

The Core Module:

Debating International Relations (30 Credits)

Three Mandatory Modules:

Understanding Politics (15 credits)

Dissertation Preparation Module (15 credits)

Dissertation Module (60 credits) (Dissertations will be required to address a topic **directly related** to the student's MA programme).

Two Optional Modules (30 credits each) from the following list **OR** one from this list **PLUS one non-core** module (30 credit) from another Politics MA programme (including the Politics modules on the MA in Political Theory):

Contemporary Global Security

Terrorism and Political Violence

International Political Sociology of Civil Wars

Global Health and Global Politics

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>.

21. Student development over the course of study

This programme of study has been designed so that there is a clear development in relation to students' knowledge, understanding and skills relevant to the sub-discipline of International Relations.

The mandatory module Understanding Politics – taught in the first semester - provides students with a foundation in the main approaches to studying the discipline as a whole. The core module for the Programme, Debating International Relations – also taught in the first semester - provides students with a grounding in the main theories, debates and approaches relevant to the sub-discipline of International Relations more specifically.

The optional modules then allow students to develop their understanding further by giving them the opportunity to build specialist knowledge of key themes within the sub-discipline.

The Dissertation Preparation Module – taught in the first semester - gives students' vital and focused preparation on how to frame, construct and execute an independent research project. By the end of this module, and the end of the semester, they will have completed a research proposal to guide their work in the Dissertation, which they can start work on in January, before the second semester's taught modules commence.

The Dissertation itself allows students to use their accumulated skills and understanding, with the support of their individual supervisor, to undertake an independent piece of research on a theme or issue relevant to the

sub-discipline.

Throughout their development, students will be supported in their development by the teaching team and individual supervisors. And we expect them to be extremely well-placed to take up internships, placements and other employment opportunities once the formal teaching from the Programme comes to an end.

22. Criteria for admission to the programme

A **good Social Science degree** - first-class or a strong 2:1 honours, or an equivalent attainment in an overseas qualification. Relevant Social Science Degrees include Architecture, Economics, Education, Geography, International Relations, Journalism, Law, Management, Philosophy, Politics, Sociology, and Town and Regional Planning. Please get in touch if you would like to discuss whether your degree is suitable.

English Language Requirements

IELTS grade 6.5 overall with a minimum of 6.0 in all sub components.

23. Additional information

None

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.