



UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM

SCHOOL OF  
GOVERNMENT

# DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (POLSIS)

Postgraduate programmes



# Introduction to the Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS)

POLSIS is one of the largest departments of Political Science and International Studies in the UK. The Department is committed to research excellence, quality learning and teaching provision, and the continuing professional development of its staff and students. You may opt for a general multidisciplinary approach or choose from a range of more specialised programmes with a more specific career orientation.

## Welcome from the Head of POLSIS and the Director of Postgraduate Studies

'Welcome to the Department of Political Science and International Studies. We have an excellent reputation based on the quality of the teaching and research of our academic staff and the performance of our students. If you choose to study with us, you will be joining a dynamic and vibrant academic community where you will be challenged and stimulated through whichever postgraduate programme you undertake. This brochure is designed to give you a taste of what we have to offer and we do encourage you to contact us directly or visit us in person, to learn more about our department.'

**Dr Richard North**  
Head of Department

The Department of Political Science and International Studies offers a broad range of MA programmes, all delivered by internationally recognised staff. We offer a range of unique degrees including International Relations, International Political Economy and Politics.

Our staff are engaged in leading research in a variety of fields, the results of which they weave into the modules they teach on, meaning that our students are consistently at the forefront of academic thought and debate in their chosen area of specialism. To learn more about the academic interests of our staff and their publications, visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis)

Many of our lecturers also have practical experience in the international sector and have worked or studied in many countries. The Department often works in collaboration with organisations in the business sector, politicians, diplomats, military personnel and other experts from within a broad range of fields.

The Department of Political Science and International Studies is within the School of Government. We are committed to creating a caring, accessible and inclusive environment in which everyone feels they belong, fit, and may thrive. We welcome, value, and embrace diversity in our staff and student body, such as differences in nationality, cultural backgrounds, race, ethnicity, disability, age, class, religion or belief, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

### Student enhancement activities

Beyond the formal teaching, the Department offers a series of student enhancement activities including study visits, film screenings and research seminars. To ensure the Department remains at the forefront of intellectual and academic debate, we run a Research Seminar Series where our academics, or guest speakers from other universities or organisations deliver research seminars to share their thoughts and expertise and facilitate debates.

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# Diplomacy MA/PGDip

The MA Diplomacy is designed to give students a thorough grounding in the principles and practice of diplomacy. It traces the origins of diplomatic institutions, international law and organisation and brings these right up to date by exploring the social, political and technological challenges faced by contemporary diplomats. It is designed for students who are either familiar with the study of international relations or politics at undergraduate level or who are enthusiastic to focus on this area of study at the postgraduate level.

## Core modules

Diplomacy and Statecraft (20 credits)  
Diplomatic History (20 credits)  
Dissertation (60 credits)

## Optional modules

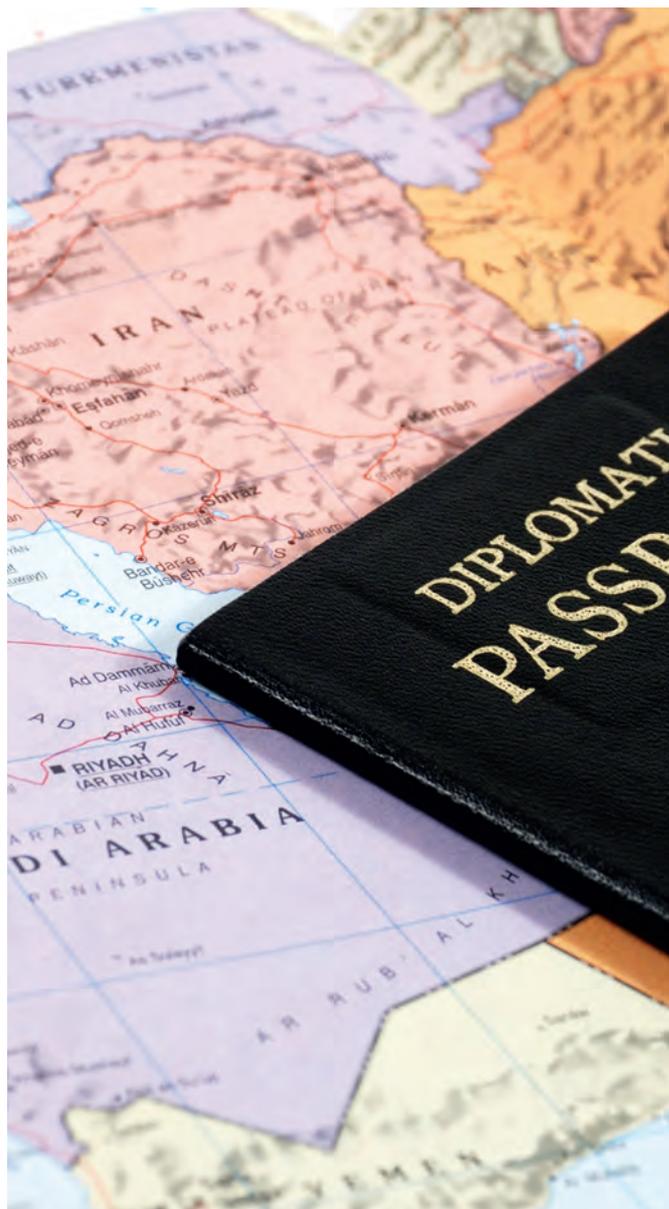
Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting four modules from a wide range of options – see page 11.

Topics and issues examined include:

- What is diplomacy?
- How has the role of diplomats changed over time?
- What techniques of negotiation, bargaining and coercion are available to diplomats and when are they most effective at getting results?
- What impact has technology had on the speed and nature of diplomatic work?
- How significant are human rights and social justice in diplomacy?
- What are the most important challenges for international diplomacy and how can they be overcome?
- Is international order under threat and how can it be reformed to make it more sustainable?

## LEARN MORE

**Admissions Tutor:** Dr Tsering Topgyal  
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**Website:** [www.birmingham.ac.uk/ird](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/ird)



# Global Cooperation and Security MSc

We live in an age where there is an urgent need for cooperative responses to address major global security challenges, as well as to transform intractable interstate and intrastate conflicts. This programme responds to that need by providing students with an advanced interdisciplinary training in the theory and practice of global cooperation and conflict resolution. We offer research-led teaching at the intersection of International Relations, Political Psychology and Security Studies, combined with a five-day training programme in 'Trust, Diplomacy and Conflict Transformation'. This programme invites you to engage closely with the Institute for Conflict Cooperation and Security (ICCS).

## Core modules

Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics (20 credits)  
 Global Cooperation in Practice (20 credits)  
 Trust, Diplomacy and Conflict Transformation (20 credits)  
 Dissertation (60 credits)

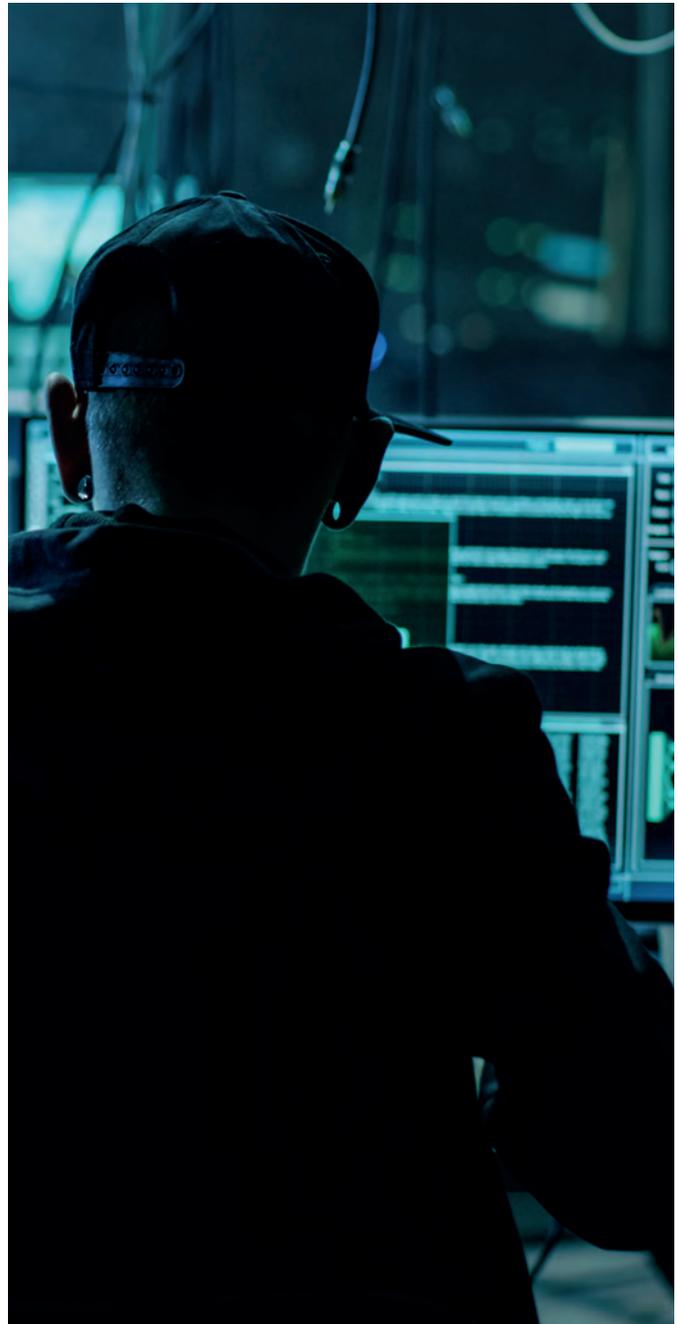
## Optional modules

Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting an additional 60 credits from the list of optional modules – see page 11.

Topics and issues examined include:

- The Security Dilemma
- Face-to-face diplomacy
- Peace building, alliances and institutions
- Emotions in crises and conflicts
- The psychology of radicalisation, terrorism and political violence
- Identities of religion, gender and nationalism
- Game theory: the Prisoner's Dilemma
- The risks of nuclear war during the Cold War
- US–Iran nuclear relations
- The possibilities for avoiding a new Cold War with China

This MSc degree is linked to the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security (ICCS), a world-leading interdisciplinary research centre within the Department of Political Science and International Studies. Our MSc students become members of the ICCS Research Working Groups: Trust, Political Settlements, International Political Psychology, International Drone Policy and Responsible Nuclear Sovereignty.



## LEARN MORE



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**Telephone:** +44 (0)121 414 7535

**Website:** [www.birmingham.ac.uk/global-cooperation-security](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/global-cooperation-security)

# International Political Economy MA/PGDip

The MA in International Political Economy is for students who are interested in the problems, challenges and opportunities presented by global capitalism, and for those wanting to gain an advanced knowledge of the theories and practice of international political economy from a range of different disciplinary and empirical perspectives.

## Core modules

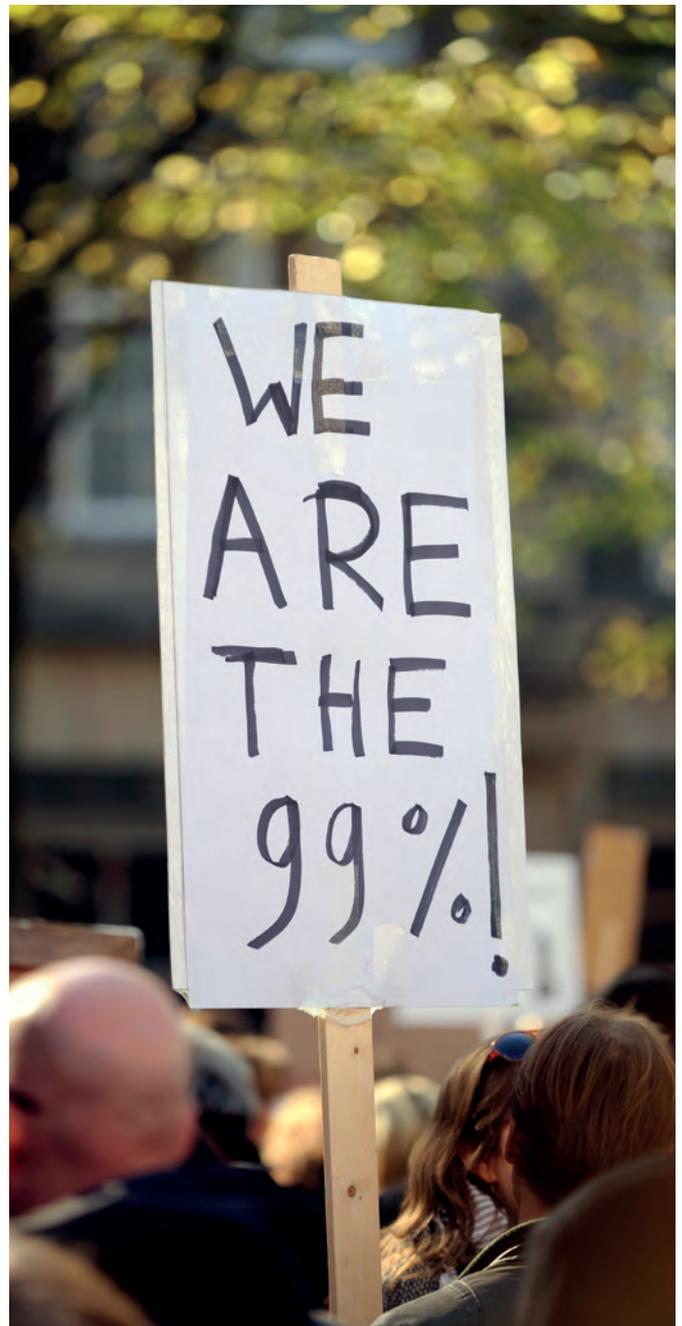
Globalisation and Governance (20 credits)  
International Political Economy (20 credits)  
Dissertation (60 credits)

## Optional modules

Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting four modules from a wide range of options – see page 11.

Key issues and questions examined include:

- The theoretical foundations of International Political Economy (IPE)
- The history of global capitalism
- Changes to the global political and economic order
- A range of issues central to the study of contemporary IPE, including international economic organisations and regimes
- Development
- Poverty and inequality
- Gender
- Environmental sustainability



## LEARN MORE



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# International Relations MA/PGDip

The MA International Relations Programme explores issues and problems crucial to international politics which are of international, regional and national importance. It promotes the study of those problems through theoretical, ethical and practical inquiry, drawing on the expertise of a large and diverse team of research-active international relations specialists. It is designed for students who are either familiar with the study of international politics at undergraduate level or who are enthusiastic to focus on this area of study at the postgraduate level. This programme invites you to engage closely with the Institute for Conflict Cooperation and Security (ICCS).

## Core modules

International Relations Theory (20 credits)  
Dilemmas in International Relations (20 credits)  
Dissertation (60 credits)

## Optional modules

Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting four modules from a wide range of options – see page 11.

Topics and issues examined include:

- Which actors have power and how is power exercised?
- Why are there wars?
- What is 'security' and how can security be achieved at national, regional and international levels?
- When and how is international cooperation possible?
- Is there a relationship between democracy and peace?
- Are human rights universal?
- Is it possible to realise global justice?
- What are the legal and political conditions for humanitarian intervention and can intervention be justified on ethical grounds?



## LEARN MORE

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# International Security and Terrorism

## MA/PGDip

The MA in International Security and Terrorism explores issues of political violence, terrorism, conflict, the use of force and the nature and management of security threats including security cooperation in the absence of an overarching world government. It promotes the study of those problems through theoretical, empirical and ethical inquiry, drawing on the expertise of a team of internationally renowned research-active Security Studies specialists. It is designed for students who are either familiar with the study of International Relations, Criminology, Sociology, Psychology, Language-based Area Studies, History, Religious Studies and Law, and issues of war, security and terrorism at undergraduate level, or who are enthusiastic to focus on this area of study at the postgraduate level.

### Core modules

Security Studies (20 credits)  
Terrorism and Political Violence (20 credits)  
Dissertation (60 credits)

### Optional modules

Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting four modules from a wide range of options – see page 11.

Key issues and questions examined include:

- What are the causes of insecurity in the world?
- Are wars ever just?
- What is the role of terrorism and political violence in the contemporary world?
- What explains the number and intensity of terrorist attacks?
- What policies would reduce the threat of terrorism?

### LEARN MORE

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# Political Psychology of International Relations MSc

Political decision-making and action at the international level are shaped by complex psychological mechanisms that are often under-explored or overlooked by mainstream approaches to International Relations. This programme focuses on the individual, group and mass-level psychological dynamics and processes that determine political outcomes. Our students gain an in-depth understanding of the psychological underpinnings of International Relations and the empirical tools to engage with timely issues and puzzles in international politics. This programme invites you to engage closely with the Institute for Conflict Cooperation and Security (ICCS).

## Core modules

Political Psychology of Conflict and Cooperation (20 credits)  
 Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics (20 credits)  
 Fundamentals in Quantitative Research Methods (20 credits)  
 Foundations in Qualitative Research (20 credits)  
 Dissertation (60 credits)

## Optional modules

Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting an additional 40 credits from the list of optional modules – see page 11.

Topics and issues examined include:

- Emotions in crises and conflicts
- The psychology of radicalisation, terrorism and political violence
- Identities of religion, gender and nationalism
- Trust and empathy in International Relations
- Interpersonal dynamics in face-to-face diplomacy

This MSc degree is linked to the Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security (ICCS), a world-leading interdisciplinary research centre within the Department of Political Science and International Studies. Our MSc students become members of the ICCS Research Working Groups: International Political Psychology, Trust, Political Settlements, International Drone Policy and Responsible Nuclear Sovereignty.



## LEARN MORE

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**Website:** [www.birmingham.ac.uk/global-cooperation-security](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/global-cooperation-security)



# Politics MA/PGDip

The MA in Politics examines central questions of political science related to power, the state and the sources of political change. The programme offers students insights into the causes and consequences of a variety of different political phenomena across the globe. It is designed for students who are either familiar with the study of political science and issues at undergraduate level or who are enthusiastic to focus on this area of study at the postgraduate level.

## Core modules

Developments in Contemporary Political Analysis (20 credits)  
 Varieties of Politics: The Comparative Politics of Parties, Institutions and Regimes (20 credits)  
 Dissertation (60 credits)

## Optional modules

Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting four modules from a wide range of options – see page 11.

The flexibility of this programme is ideal for those with a broad range of interests in politics or for those who want to construct a curriculum around a particular area of interest.

Key issues and questions examined include:

- Where does power lie and how is it exercised?
- What is the role of the state and what is its relationship to society?
- Why are democracies not ubiquitous and why do we see a mixture of democratic and non-democratic regimes across the globe?
- Why do democracies vary in their form and content?
- Who wins elections and why?
- What role do electoral systems, social context and campaigning play in determining election outcomes?
- Why does political conflict emerge and how can it be managed?

## LEARN MORE



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**Website:** [www.birmingham.ac.uk/politics-ma](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/politics-ma)



# Social and Political Theory MA/PGDip

The MA in Social and Political Theory explores problems crucial to society and politics domestically and in the global sphere. It promotes the study of those problems through theoretical, ethical and practical inquiry, drawing on the expertise of a diverse team of research-active social and political theorists. It is designed for students who are either familiar with the study of social and political ideas and issues at undergraduate level or who are enthusiastic to focus on this area of study at the postgraduate level.

## Core modules

Radical Social Theory: Modernism to Postmodernism (20 credits)  
 Liberalism and its Global Discontents (20 credits)  
 Dissertation (60 credits)

## Optional modules

Students can design the rest of the programme around their own interests by selecting four modules from a wide range of options – see page 11.

Key issues and questions examined include:

- What is power and who has it?
- How can we bring about radical social and political change?
- Is terrorism ever morally permissible or excusable?
- Under what circumstances are armed resistance and revolution permissible?
- What is justice and what does it ask of us?
- What's wrong with inequality and what should we do about it?
- What is tyranny? Why should we oppose it?
- What are the sources of tyranny in present-day politics and society?



## LEARN MORE

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**Website:** [www.birmingham.ac.uk/sopt](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/sopt)



# Optional modules

In POLSIS, we are proud of the extensive range of modules that are available to our students; allowing students to tailor their course and study topics that are of interest.

All modules are 20 credits and are available as options on postgraduate taught POLSIS programmes where the module is not compulsory:

Arguing Against Tyranny	Global Cooperation in Practice	Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and the International Order
Authoritarianism and Development [IDD]*	Global Environmental Governance	Radical Social Theory
Chinese Politics and Foreign Policy	Globalisation and Governance	Rising Powers and Global Order
Democracy and Development [IDD]*	Governing British Capitalism	Security Studies
Developments in Contemporary Political Analysis	International Political Economy	Sex, Death Gender and (in)security
Dilemmas in International Relations	International Relations Theory	Strategy and Leadership
Diplomacy and Statecraft	Liberalism and its Global Discontents	Terrorism and Political Violence
Diplomatic History	Political Psychology of Conflict and Cooperation	US Foreign and Defence Policy
Ethnic Conflict and its Management: Theories and Cases	Politics and International Relations of the Asia Pacific	Varieties of Politics
Fear, Cooperation and Trust in World Politics	Politics of Arab-Israeli Conflict	*Module hosted by the International Development Department (IDD)
Gender and Global Governance	Politics and the State	Please note that these options are subject to change as we are constantly developing new and exciting modules.

# Enhancing your student experience

In the Department of Political Science and International Studies, we offer much more than a degree. You will have the opportunity to take part in a range of events and extra-curricular activities, all designed to enhance your experience whilst studying with us.

## High-profile speaker visits

POLSIS regularly attracts high-level speakers to talk directly to students, including government ministers, leading politicians and high-profile scholars.

As well as attending talks by high-profile speakers, you will also have the opportunity to be involved in the organisation of the events. Students from the Politics Society (POLSOC) organise regular events throughout each term; involvement in these activities can help broaden your career horizons and develop the key skills that employers are looking for.

## MODULE SPOTLIGHT

### Extra-curricular study events

POLSIS also provides a series of extra-curricular study events. This includes an annual graduate lecture, with past speakers including Gisela Stuart MP and former US Congressmen George Nethercutt and David Skaggs. The Department has also run in previous years a trip to the London Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and a graduate seminar series with invited speakers focusing on topics such as the global right to protest.

These events are an excellent opportunity to supplement learning gained through formal study, with additional activities designed to provide students with insights into more concrete developments in the world of politics and international relations.



### Study Tour of Brussels

Every year, students studying on postgraduate programmes within the Department of POLSIS have the opportunity to take part in a week-long study trip to Brussels. This trip immerses students in the politics of one of the centres of European and global politics and includes trips to some of the most significant international institutions to learn first-hand about how they operate. As part of the trip, students have the opportunity to discuss policy-making, institutional questions and to learn about working life in global institutions. The tour also includes a day trip to Bruges. Students selected for the tour receive support towards costs from the Department of Political Science and International Studies.

### Advanced Intensive Study Module at the University of Delhi, India

This opportunity is open to postgraduate students studying with the School of Government (including students studying in the following departments within the School – POLSIS, the International Development Department and the Institute of Local Government Studies).

Students have the opportunity to study in Delhi, India, alongside students from the University of Delhi and the University of Melbourne in a truly global learning environment.

Students can apply to take the intensive module 'Security and Development in South Asia' during Term 2 and experience what the British Council has called, 'teaching at the cutting edge of international teaching collaboration'. The module, worth 20 credits, is taught over the course of a week by scholars from Delhi, Birmingham and Melbourne and focuses on exploring some of the most central security and development challenges faced by states and peoples in South Asia today. Participants are selected competitively and receive a bursary which covers travel, visas and accommodation. The trip also offers students the opportunity to visit Agra and the Taj Mahal.

### Student Enhancement Fund

Students can apply for up to £300 from the Student Enhancement Fund to support individual or group professional development activities. This can include support towards conference attendance, international trips, professional training courses or internships. Recent awards have helped support students to participate in a Model UN Conference, a research methods festival, internships at the UN Headquarters in New York and US Congress and professional development trips to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European University Institute in Florence.



## INTERNATIONAL MODEL NATO CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON DC

This opportunity is open to postgraduate students studying with the School of Government (including students studying in the following departments within the School – POLSIS, the International Development Department and the Institute of Local Government Studies).

Students are eligible to apply to be part of a delegation to the annual International Model NATO Conference, held in Washington DC in the Spring Term. This experience provides students with a unique opportunity to participate in a role-play exercise of decision-making at NATO, working with delegates from universities and institutions across the globe under the expert guidance of NATO specialist and the University of Birmingham's Professor of International Politics, Mark Webber. In previous years, students have represented France, Turkey and the US and have also visited the US State Department as part of the trip. Students who are selected for this Conference will be provided with bursaries that cover the cost of Conference registration, accommodation and subsistence.

[www.internationalmodelnato.org](http://www.internationalmodelnato.org)



## LEARN MORE

For further information about the opportunities available to postgraduate students in the Department of Political Science and International Studies, please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis)

# Research degrees

## POLSIS offer the following research degrees:

### MPhil programme:

Minimum two years, in order to complete a significant piece of original research.

### PhD programme:

Minimum three years, to complete a major piece of original research.

### Distance Learning PhD:

Political Science and International Studies PhD by distance learning.

The Department currently has around 50 PhD students focusing on a range of topics. Our PhD students are integrated into the Department, engaging in teaching and attending the regular PhD colloquium. They are fully involved in both the research and social life of POLSIS. PhD students have a desk in a shared office space. POLSIS supports PhD student participation at conferences and research training courses are available at the University.

Our distance learning MPhil and PhD degrees in Political Science and International Studies offer the opportunity to pursue original research under the guidance of an academic supervisor in a more convenient manner for those unable to live and work on campus on a regular basis. We are able to supervise a wide range of topics, in line with the research interests of staff.

## ICCS

Students interested in diplomacy, security, political psychology of conflict, trust processes and conflict reconciliation can engage with the research opportunities available the Institute for Conflict Cooperation and Security (ICCS). For more information [www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/iccs/index.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/iccs/index.aspx)

## Research groups

The Department has a number of research groups. Each group meets regularly to: discuss work and texts; hold workshops or seminars; share relevant information, and provide an intellectually exciting environment for study and discussion. You are welcome to join more than one group.

**Asia Research Group** explores issues related to: the political economy of the Asia Pacific region; issues of citizenship and democracy in Southeast Asia; Asian security; regionalism and inter-regionalism, and the role of civil society actors in Asia.

**European Politics** deals with European integration, European political economy and contemporary European politics.

**International Relations Theory** deals with all matters of IR theory and current issues of international politics.

**Political Economy** focuses on comparative and international political economy, and positive and normative political economy.

**Social and Political Theory** deals with modern political thought, Continental thought and contemporary critiques of liberalism. The group holds seminars and conferences on themes in political theory and the history of ideas.

**Gender and Feminist Theory** covers a wide variety of topics including intersectionality, the politics of the sex industry and female representation.

**Middle East Research Group** focuses on the politics and contemporary history of this dynamic region.

**Parties, Voters and Election Research Group** focuses on political parties, campaigning and populism.



**British Politics** studies the institution, politics and policies of the United Kingdom.

**International Political Psychology** psychological factors that shape cooperation and conflict in global politics.

**Trust in World Politics** theoretical debates and empirical puzzles on the nature, forms, and roles of trust in international politics.

**Political Settlements** origins, nature, and impact of political settlements in fragile and conflict-affected states around the globe.

**International Drone Policy** impact of drones on conflict and cooperation between states and on domestic peace processes.

**Responsible Nuclear Sovereignty** reform and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, develop new ethical approaches.

# Applying and fees

## How to apply

The online application form is available from [www.apply.bham.ac.uk](http://www.apply.bham.ac.uk)

The application form must be supported by two letters of reference, and non-native English overseas students should also submit a statement of English language competence (TOEFL 580/237; IELTS 6.5). A good honours degree (UK 2.1, GPA 3.00) is required for admission to the taught Masters programmes. For details of the application for research degrees, please contact the Graduate School's secretary.

The taught Masters programmes begin in the autumn of the year and applicants should submit their application forms no later than the end of July. Applications for research degrees are welcome at all times, but the Department prefers students to commence studies at the start of either October or January.

## Fees

The University charges an annual tuition fee. The fee covers the costs of your tuition, examination, graduation and includes membership of the Guild of Students. Fees are payable prior to the start of your programme, although it is possible for you to pay in instalments.

Please visit our website and course pages for the most up-to-date fees.

Annual fees do not include living expenses or accommodation fees. You are also responsible for buying your own books and equipment. We estimate that for a period of 12 months you will need between £7,500 and £10,000.

Please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/postgraduate](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees/postgraduate)

For up-to-date fees information, please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis) or contact the Department directly.

## Sources of finance

There are various sources of finance available for postgraduate students including loans, awards, scholarships and studentships, sponsorship, allowances, learning funds and paid work. These include:

- Career Development Loan: [www.direct.gov.uk/cdl](http://www.direct.gov.uk/cdl)
- Professional Studies Loan
- Scholarships and studentships: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/fees)
- Research councils: [www.ukri.org](http://www.ukri.org)
- Disabled Students' Allowance: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/support/disability.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/support/disability.aspx)
- Access to Learning Fund: [www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/support/moneyadvice/alf.aspx](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/support/moneyadvice/alf.aspx)

Please visit [www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate) for further information.



## LEARN MORE

For further information about our postgraduate programmes in POLSIS, please contact: [polsisma.admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:polsisma.admissions@contacts.bham.ac.uk)

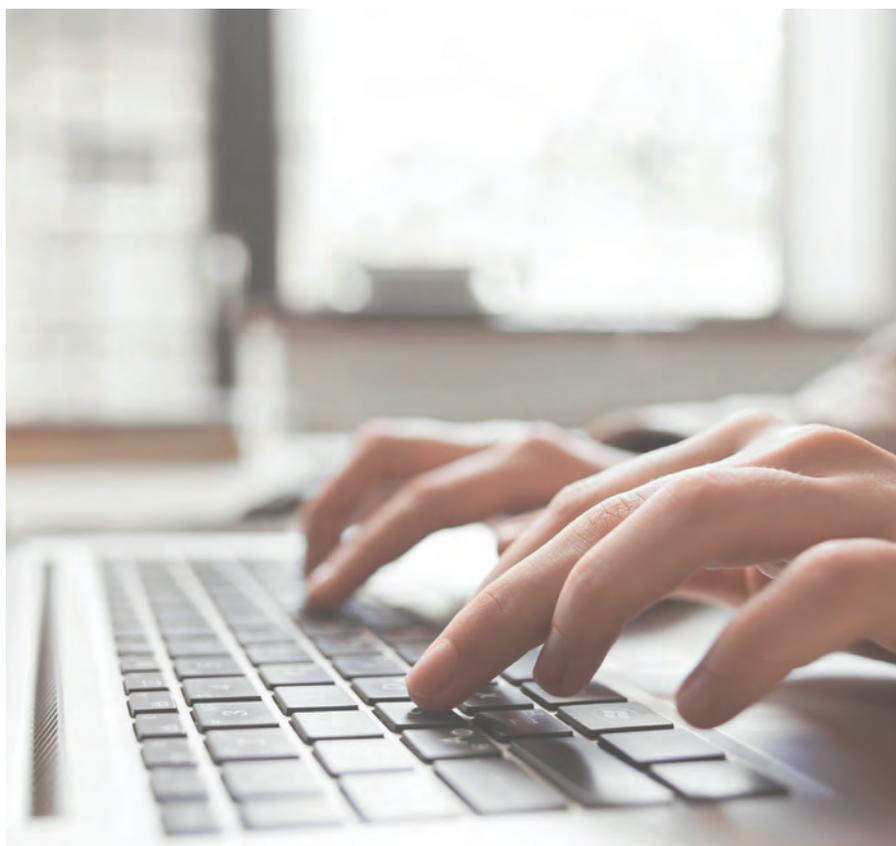
For specific information about the MSc programmes and engagement with the Institute for Conflict Cooperation and Security (ICCS) please contact:

**Dr. Tereza Capelos**  
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For further information on Postgraduate Research, please contact:

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For further information on our programmes, you can also visit our website [www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/polsis)





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This leaflet was written several months in advance of the start of the academic year. It is intended to provide prospective students with a general picture of the programmes and courses offered by the School. Please note that not all programmes or all courses are offered every year. Also, because our research is constantly exploring new areas and directions of study some courses may be discontinued and new ones offered in their place.

Please note the information in this brochure is correct at time of publication but may be subject to change (October 2019).

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