Programme Specification:
MA International Relations and Emerging Technologies

https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/international-relations-emerging-technologies/

Entry year:	2026/2027
Target degree award:	Master of Arts (FHEQ Level 7)
Exit award:	Postgraduate Diploma (FHEQ Level 7)
Exit award:	Postgraduate Certificate (FHEQ Level 7)
Target award title	**International Relations and Emerging Technologies**
Specified variant(s)	1 year full-time
Admissions	September, City Campus, UK/Home and International
Degree Awarding Body	The University of Bradford
External Framework:	HE Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (QAA 2024)
Subject Benchmark Statement:	Politics and International Relations (QAA 2023)

Please note: The University has a set of terms and conditions for all students accepting an offer to study on a course here at Bradford. This is called the Student Contract. This document sets out the Terms and Conditions which apply when an offer of a place on a programme of study at the University of Bradford is accepted. **View our Student Contract for further details**. Information about this programme and its modules has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them.

Programme Aims

This programme addresses a defining challenge of the twenty-first century: the widening gap between rapid advances in artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, and the social, political, and security frameworks that are needed to govern them responsibly. The MA International Relations and Emerging Technologies at the University of Bradford is designed to equip students with the intellectual depth, practical skills and professional confidence needed to navigate one of the most dynamic and consequential areas of contemporary global affairs.

The MA pathway is designed for students from social science and humanities backgrounds who seek to develop technological literacy and apply it to policy, governance, and international security challenges. It prepares graduates to interpret, assess, and respond to technological developments in complex international environments, rather than to design or engineer technical systems. What makes this programme particularly exciting is the strength and passion of the team behind it. It builds directly on the research strengths of the Bradford–Renduchintala Centre for Space AI and the University of Bradford's established global expertise in peace studies, ethics, and socially

responsible science to ensure that technological innovation is understood alongside governance, accountability, and real-world application.

Students will work in our exceptional learning facilities, benefitting from scholars and practitioners who are not only highly skilled in their respective disciplines, but who are genuinely committed to integrating advanced analytical, space technology and AI related capabilities explicitly within high stakes, conflict affected, and humanitarian contexts. The programme aims to develop an advanced interdisciplinary understanding of how artificial intelligence, space systems, and emerging technologies reshape global security, international relations, and patterns of power. It aims to enable students to critically analyse technological change within international political, strategic, and institutional contexts, and to equip them with the ability to assess governance, ethical, and legal challenges associated with emerging and dual-use technologies.

The programme further aims to develop the capacity to translate complex technological developments into policy-relevant, operational, and ethically informed analysis, and to foster the integration of social-science perspectives with technological awareness in the analysis of complex global challenges. It prepares graduates for professional roles in policy, international organisations, defence and security sectors, humanitarian contexts, and technology governance, and supports progression to advanced research in areas including international relations, peace studies, development, and science and technology governance.

The programme is informed by the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ Level 7) and QAA Subject Benchmark Statements for Politics and International Relations. It also draws on relevant interdisciplinary scholarship in international security, science and technology studies, and the governance and ethics of emerging technologies. Key areas of literature informing the programme include research on artificial intelligence and global security, cyber conflict, space governance, and anticipatory governance, as well as policy-oriented work produced by international organisations, governments, and research institutes in the field of technology governance.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this programme, graduates will be able to demonstrate achievement of the following learning outcomes:

Subject knowledge and skills

1. Critically evaluate how emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, cyber systems, and space infrastructures, shape international security, global power, and patterns of conflict and cooperation.

2. Analyse the strategic implications of technological change for international relations, including its impact on deterrence, escalation, and institutional frameworks.

3. Evaluate governance, legal, and ethical responses to dual-use and security-relevant technologies in international and comparative contexts.

4. Demonstrate a critical understanding of how technological systems interact with political, economic, and institutional structures in shaping global security outcomes.

5. Apply international relations theories and concepts to the analysis of technology-driven security challenges and associated policy responses.

6. Integrate social-science perspectives with informed understanding of technological systems in analysing complex global security issues.

Practical and transferable skills

7. Produce clear, concise, and policy-relevant analysis addressing challenges at the intersection of technology and international security.

8. Communicate complex interdisciplinary issues effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences in both written and oral formats.

9. Design and complete an original, advanced research project (eg, dissertation) addressing a substantive question in international relations and emerging technologies.

Professional behaviours and qualities

10. Demonstrate the ability to work effectively across disciplinary and professional boundaries, collaborating with technical specialists, policy practitioners, and stakeholders in complex international environments.

11. Apply ethical reasoning and professional responsibility in the assessment and use of emerging technologies, recognising issues of accountability, legitimacy, and risk in real-world decision-making contexts.

12. Exercise informed judgement and decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, complexity, and incomplete information, including the ability to prioritise, evaluate trade-offs, and respond to evolving situations.

13. Translate complex interdisciplinary analysis into clear, policy-relevant, and operationally viable recommendations for government, international organisations, NGOs, and technology governance contexts.

Learning, teaching and assessment strategy

Themes and considerations

The programme is interdisciplinary, research-led, and policy-oriented, integrating international relations, security studies, and qualitative technological literacy in areas such as artificial intelligence, cyber systems, and space infrastructures. It is designed to equip students to understand and analyse how technological change reshapes global security, governance, and conflict dynamics.

The programme places particular emphasis on high-stakes and uncertain environments, including conflict-affected and technologically accelerated contexts, where decision-making must account for risk, ambiguity, and unintended consequences.

Teaching is therefore oriented towards developing the ability to interpret complex technological developments, assess their strategic and societal implications, and translate analysis into policy-relevant responses.

The programme is particularly attentive to the challenges of bridging technical and non-technical expertise, ensuring that students can engage confidently with specialists while maintaining a critical, policy-oriented perspective.

Programme teaching and learning
Teaching is delivered through a structured combination of interactive taught sessions, using applied exercises designed to integrate international relations analysis with qualitative technological understanding. The programme adopts a seminar-led and research-informed approach, encouraging active participation, critical discussion, and engagement with both academic and policy debates, applying these concepts to real world issues.

Core modules provide a progressive learning structure. In Semester 1, teaching focuses on developing conceptual and analytical foundations, including international security theory, strategic analysis, and qualitative understanding of artificial intelligence, cyber systems, and space technologies. This establishes the basis for informed engagement with technological issues without requiring prior technical training. In Semester 2, teaching shifts towards governance, ethics, and policy application. Students engage with legal, normative, and institutional frameworks, and develop the ability to analyse and design policy responses to emerging technological risks. Teaching at this stage incorporates applied policy exercises, including scenario-based analysis, risk assessment, and structured problem-solving tasks.

Across the programme, learning is supported through the use of case studies, simulations, and real-world examples, such as the role of AI in security decision-making, cyber conflict, and the militarisation of space. These approaches are designed to bridge theory and practice, enabling students to translate conceptual understanding into applied analysis. Interdisciplinary teaching draws on expertise from international relations, peace studies, ethics, and engineering, ensuring that students develop the ability to engage critically with both technical and policy perspectives.

The programme is designed for an international and diverse cohort and incorporates inclusive and participatory teaching approaches that support different disciplinary backgrounds and learning styles. It emphasises critical thinking, ethical awareness, and real-world application, preparing students to operate effectively in professional environments that require collaboration across technical, policy, and organisational boundaries. To reflect our diverse student population and to accommodate differences in learning preferences, asynchronous online activities and resources are also provided to enable our students to work through any key concepts at their own pace and in their own time. Digital content will be created in a way that is accessible to all. Students are signposted to required learning before each taught session, which might be required reading or watching of online content, and the classroom time can then focus on exploring that in more depth.

Independent study is a core component of the programme, culminating in the dissertation, where students apply their knowledge and skills to an original research problem in international relations and emerging technologies.

We have an internationally renowned, research-active teaching team who provide our students with cutting-edge, inspirational research through a variety of interactive and research informed teaching methods. This engages and enthuses our students and provides further opportunities for those students wishing to pursue a research career pathway. Our research engaged approach

builds our students' confidence in how they understand and use research whilst contextualising this to real world case studies.

Programme assessment
Assessment on the programme is designed to reflect its interdisciplinary, policy-oriented, and applied focus. It evaluates students' ability to integrate international relations analysis with informed understanding of emerging technologies, and to translate this into clear, evidence-based, and policy-relevant outputs.

A range of assessment formats is employed across modules, including analytical essays, policy briefs, applied reports, presentations, and other forms of written and oral assessment. These formats are selected to reflect the types of analytical and communication tasks undertaken in professional environments such as government, international organisations, NGOs, and consultancy. Across the programme, assessment supports the development of key skills, including critical analysis of technology-driven security challenges, evaluation of governance and ethical frameworks, and the ability to produce concise and actionable policy-relevant recommendations. These assessments evaluate both subject-specific knowledge and transferable skills, equipping students with a competitive edge upon graduation.

While individual modules have distinct assessment patterns, the overall design ensures that students engage with both conceptual analysis and applied problem-solving. Formative assessment and regular feedback opportunities are embedded throughout the programme to support learning and progression. This includes seminar discussions, short written exercises, draft submissions, and feedback on assessment planning. These activities provide opportunities for students to refine their analytical approach and develop confidence in producing policy-relevant work.

The dissertation represents the culmination of the programme. It requires students to design and execute an independent research project addressing a substantive question in international relations and emerging technologies. The dissertation assesses the ability to integrate theoretical knowledge, empirical analysis, and critical judgement in a sustained and coherent piece of work.

Overall, the assessment strategy ensures progressive development from analytical understanding to applied and independent research, while maintaining flexibility across modules and supporting a diverse range of student backgrounds and career pathways.

Student journey

International Relations and Emerging Technology is a postgraduate Master of Arts programme. Students will aim to complete the course in one year of study. At Bradford, the year is split in three parts. Students study taught modules of academic taught content in Semester 1 and Semester 2, followed by a dissertation research stage.

From the moment students join our programme, they are welcomed into a supportive, inclusive and intellectually stimulating academic community. We recognise and celebrate the diversity of our cohort and draw upon students varied prior experiences, disciplinary backgrounds, professional knowledge and cultural perspectives.

Our induction process establishes from the beginning that accessing help and support is a normal and positive part of academic development. Students are introduced to the wide range of support available across the University, including academic skills development, library services, career development and wellbeing services. Each student is allocated a Personal Academic Tutor who provides consistent academic guidance throughout the course. This sustained relationship ensures that students feel supported as individuals and are able to navigate the programme with confidence.

Taught Elements of the Programme

In the first semester, students develop a foundational understanding of the relationship between technological change and global security. The focus is on how artificial intelligence, cyber systems, and space infrastructures are reshaping international relations, strategic competition, and the structure of global order. Core modules introduce key concepts in international security, strategic studies, and qualitative technological literacy, enabling students to engage critically with emerging technologies without requiring prior technical expertise. Optional modules allow students to begin tailoring their studies towards particular areas of interest.

In the second semester, the focus shifts towards the governance, regulation, and ethical implications of emerging technologies. Students examine how states, international organisations, and other actors attempt to manage high-risk and dual-use technologies under conditions of uncertainty, competition, and institutional constraint. Teaching emphasises the evaluation of governance frameworks, ethical reasoning, and the use of anticipatory tools such as scenario planning, horizon scanning, and risk assessment. Optional modules allow students to tailor their studies towards political or more technical focused learning

Modules List 1:
Each Semester consists of two (2) Core modules plus one (1) Optional module. For each Optional module, the students will pick one of two offered modules.
All modules are offered at FHEQ Level 7.

Period	Type	Module Title	Credit	Code
Sem 1	Core	Technology, Power, and the Global Security Order	20	PES7080-B
Sem 1	Core	International System in Theory and Context	20	PES7054-B
Sem 1	Optional	Big Data Visualisation	20	COS7046-B
Sem 1	Optional	Contemporary Security Challenges	20	PES7037-B
Sem 2	Core	Governance, Ethics, Future of Science and Technology	20	PES7081-B
Sem 2	Core	Technology, Violence and Crisis	20	PES7082-B
Sem 2	Optional	Terrorism and Political Violence	20	PES7053-B
Sem 2	Optional	Applied AI in Space Data and Systems	20	ELE7042-B
Full Year	Core	Dissertation	60	PES7040- E

Research Elements of the Programme
Alongside the taught elements of the programme, students undertake a 60-credit dissertation. Students are expected to formulate a clear research question, apply appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks, engage with relevant academic and policy literature, and produce a sustained and coherent piece of independent work. The dissertation represents the culmination of the programme, demonstrating the ability to conduct independent research on a topic related to international relations and emerging technologies, including issues of governance, strategy, ethics, or policy response.

There are two parts to the teaching and academic support related to the dissertation. The first part is developing a generic understanding of social science research methods through taught sessions in the first semester. The second part is dissertation support sessions and the actual work on writing a dissertation which take place mainly in the second and third semester. Each student is allocated a dissertation supervisor who provides sustained, tutorial-style guidance through the research process. The dissertation is carefully scaffolded into manageable stages, with structured milestones and ongoing feedback loops to support steady progress.

Graduation and next steps
This programme prepares graduates for professional roles in policy, international organisations, defence and security sectors, humanitarian contexts, and technology governance, and supports progression to advanced research in areas including international relations, peace studies, development, and science and technology governance.

Programme regulations

This programme follows the Assessment, Continuation and Award regulations for undergraduate taught courses published on the University's Website (**Regulation 9**).

Students will be eligible for the award of a Master of Arts if they have successfully completed 180 credits and thus achieved the Programme Learning Outcomes. Exit awards are available at 60 and 120 credits in line with the regulations if students exit before completing the programme.

Entry and admission requirements

We are proud to be **one of the most inclusive universities in the UK**. All our students have potential, and we believe that as many people as possible should have the chance to benefit from higher education, no matter what their background or circumstances.

We take the time to understand the background of our applicants, understand their journey to education, and make decisions based on an applicant’s potential to thrive at university and beyond.

The programme is designed for applicants with an interest in international relations, global security, and the governance of emerging technologies.

It is particularly suited to graduates seeking to develop policy-relevant analytical skills and technological literacy in areas such as artificial intelligence, cyber security, and space systems. Applicants may include early-career professionals and career changers aiming to work in international organisations, government, NGOs, or technology governance roles.

The **minimum entry requirements** for this programme are: A 2:2 or better UK Honours degree (passed at 50% or higher), or an equivalent internationally recognised qualification from an approved degree-awarding body.

Applicants without a formal degree qualification will be considered on a case-by-case basis where they can demonstrate substantial and relevant professional experience. For example, candidates may have extensive experience in policy development or related fields. We also welcome applicants from diverse disciplinary backgrounds who have developed a strong professional or academic interest in international relations, security, and emerging technologies.

English language requirements: IELTS with 6.0 overall, no sub-test less than 5.5.

Information in this document is for the contemporary recruitment cycle and was accurate at time of publication. The current tariff and accepted qualifications for entry onto the programme is published at the online course page:
https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/international-relations-emerging-technologies/