

Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution MA Programme Specification

Academic Year:	2026/2027	
Degree Awarding Body:	The University of Bradford	
Main Location:	City Campus	
Qualifications Framework:	HE Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ: QAA 2014)	
Target Degree Award:	Master of Arts, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution	[FHEQ Level 7]
Intermediate/exit awards:	Postgraduate Diploma or Postgraduate Certificate	[FHEQ Level 7]
Programme Admissions:	UK and international	
Programme Start Month:	September and January	
Course modes of study:	September start, 12 months full-time	
	January start, 15 months full-time	
	September start, 15 months full-time with internship/placement	

The September start with internship or placement is accessible with the [Rotary Peace Fellowship](#) programme. Visit the Rotary website to apply for 2028/2029 or refer a potential candidate.

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.

Minor Modification Schedule

1. May 2024: Title updated from 'MA Advanced Practice in Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution' and annual review; updates to optional modules and electives for 2024/25 academic year.
2. July 2025: Annual Review, additional optional modules added for semester 2 for 2025/6 and changes to academic regulations.
3. May 2026: Annual changes for 2026, simplified presentation and changed modes of study.

Programme Overview

The MA Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution is designed to develop students' understanding of the causes and dynamics of social conflict in a range of contexts, with a strong focus on applied analysis. It will allow students to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills required to engage constructively with conflict, recognising the strengths and limitations of different approaches to intervention.

Students will explore critical questions surrounding efforts to build peace in different contexts and in the light of contemporary trends, including converging environmental, economic and political developments. Through a diverse programme of study, including a significant applied, practical element, students will develop and demonstrate knowledge and recognised competencies essential to effective, ethically aware practice within conflict resolution and peace practice - locally, nationally or internationally.

The MA Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution is offered by the internationally recognised Department of Peace Studies and International Development, drawing on over 50 years of experience as a leading centre of peace and conflict research, education and training. Students further benefit from studying at a major international centre for research and engagement with policy and practitioner communities working in the areas of peacebuilding and peacemaking, providing many opportunities for interested students to participate or observe regular workshops, international conferences, research seminars, and engagements in or near Bradford with relevant NGOs, community organisations, governmental and international agencies, and with the UK Ministry of Defence and other foreign and development agencies and police, military or justice services.

Peace Studies and International Development is a dynamic learning community within a diverse and active Faculty and wider University. We typically arrange numerous events and opportunities beyond the taught modules, fostering engagement with academic, policy and practitioner communities. These include invited speakers, seminars, workshops, activities and conferences.

Academic staff at the Department are actively engaged in international research on the issues addressed in this course, with academic backgrounds in branches of economics, politics, management, and other social sciences, and have specialist areas of expertise combined with a focus on contemporary international, regional and transnational challenges and processes; and international debates and responses.

The MA programme will equip students with advanced understanding and skills for work for example in national and local government; global governance institutions; research institutes; international, national and local development agencies; advocacy and policy work in environmental, security, and other regional and international issue areas; private sector strategy and governance for sustainability; and NGOs.

Programme Structure

MA Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution runs full-time with entry in September or January. Students and Rotary Peace Fellows who start in September can stay on to complete an integrated internship or placement as part of the degree award. Students may transfer to the placement route any time up to the middle of Semester 2 (specific deadline dates are provided in the Programme Handbook each year).

The 15-month option provides students with further opportunities for developing professional experience and practical skills during their Masters programme by undertaking a voluntary placement or internship in a relevant organisation for a period of up to three months.

This internship or placement normally starts shortly after the end of Semester 2:

Table 1: Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Routes Compared

Route \ Period	Year 1 Period 1	Year 1 Period 2	Year 1 Period 3	Year 2 Period 1	Year 2 Period 2	Year 2 Period 3
September Entry, no placement	Semester 1 Modules	Semester 2 Modules	Research	Submit Dissertation & Graduate		
January Entry, no placement	-	Semester 2 Modules	-	Semester 1 Modules and Research	Submit Dissertation	Graduate
September entry, with Placement	Semester 1 Modules	Semester 2 Modules	Professional Experience & Research	Submit Dissertation	-	Graduate

After completing the taught modules, students then undertake a substantial Dissertation project on a subject of their choice (relating to the Programme's aims and learning objectives). This involves research and analysis, and preparation of a Dissertation of up to 15,000 words. This is a major opportunity not only to research and prepare a substantial scholarly analysis of a specialist area in which the student is particularly interested, but also to demonstrate an advanced understanding of relevant policy and practitioner agendas and debates to increase the value of the Masters degree to pursue relevant careers.

After an internship is completed, students return to the University to proceed with researching and preparing their Masters dissertation, with the same requirements and academic supervision as for students on the shorter programme, except that the dissertation submission date is extended by approximately three months (actual submission dates are specified annually in the Programme Handbook) as appropriate for a longer programme.

All of the Masters programme routes provide excellent opportunities for engaging with the spheres of policy and practice as well as with academic studies. However, the 3-month placement options provide further enhanced opportunities for integrating practitioner community engagement (such as internship experience) with their academic studies. This element of the programme is student-centred and student-led, and thus the initiative for identifying and applying for internships is driven by the students. The academic staff in the programme team can facilitate and support such searches for suitable placements with leads and suggestions, help with the writing of applications, and provide supporting letters of reference. They provide customised preparatory training before students who choose the placement route, and mentoring support as useful during the period of the placement or internship.

The academic modules for this programme include a range of innovative approaches to teaching, blended learning and assessment, to enable students to actively engage with the key concepts and syllabus and to develop not only their academic knowledge and understanding but also to their skills and experience for the worlds of policy, practice and employment. Every student will participate in at least two intensive laboratory workshops/webinars or 'immersion days' on key cross-cutting thematic issues including on: the roles and significance of gender; the skills of using conflict analysis methods and conflict sensitivity guidelines for assessing and ensuring conflict sensitivity in fragile and conflict affected areas. These are incorporated into the core modules for the programme. Students can also have the chance to participate in an extended 'crisis response game' to further sharpen their skills as a practitioner.

There are opportunities for students to create their own specialism, such as the themes discussed above, or also in a selected region (e.g. Africa, Middle East), with opportunities for selected study visits. This includes the Africa Study Visit which includes a study visit of approximately 12 days to an African country recovering from conflict as well as preparatory and post-visit study and analysis (which can be taken as an assessed element of the programme). It also includes further voluntary study visits to Northern Ireland, Hiroshima or to major locations of international organisations, such as The Hague or Brussels as well as London.

We take the safety of our students and practitioners very seriously. Participation in study visits is subject to travel risk assessments and there may be an extra charge to students participating in some of these activities, but there may also be scholarship funding available on a competitive basis by application to help with the costs.

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to enable students to become well-informed, skilful analysts and practitioners who can:

- conduct effective research into the causes and dynamics of social conflict, in a range of contexts and settings.
- design ethical and constructive responses to particular conflict situations, with awareness of the potential and limitations of different strategies for conflict intervention.
- select and employ relevant strategies and techniques for constructive engagement with conflict.
- reflect critically on their own evolving practice with reference to academic and practitioner perspectives on the theory and practice of conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Programme Learning Outcomes

Students eligible for the FHEQ Level 7 Degree award of Master will be able to:

1. Conduct systematic research into conflict situations and contexts, using relevant techniques and technologies to gather, evaluate and manage evidence, data and information from valid, appropriate sources, and using data and theory in the analysis of causal mechanisms, conflict dynamics and impacts within contemporary case-studies.
2. Design situationally appropriate and ethical conflict engagement processes, making informed judgements about the validity and application of different methods for the peaceful management, resolution or transformation of social conflict, in relation to real-world cases.
3. Identify and critically assess the ideas, practices and conditions that influence long-term initiatives to address legacies of social conflict and build sustainable peace.
4. Collaborate effectively with others in the completion of appropriate academic tasks, recognising and managing social dynamics related to conflict resolution theory.

5. Generate clear, concise and coherent communication in which style, scope and depth are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.
6. Employ relevant competencies and strategies to engage constructively with conflict, in third-party and other appropriate roles.
7. Identify and apply critical learning from past or current conflict intervention processes, and debates surrounding peace work internationally.
8. Reflect critically on personal development as a practitioner in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and cognate fields.
9. Demonstrate initiative and independence in systematic academic inquiry, using relevant techniques and technologies to gather, evaluate and manage evidence, data and information from valid, appropriate sources.
10. Plan and execute a range of assignments, including essays, reports and reflective pieces, in which style, scope and depth are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
11. Design and carry out, with appropriate ethical approval, an original and self-directed capstone research project, involving desk-based and/or applied research.

Assessment Strategy

Our assessment strategy for this programme is based on principles of constructive alignment, diversity and inclusion. Assessment tasks are designed to help students both develop and demonstrate their skills as set out in the learning outcomes for the programme overall and for specific modules. Because these learning outcomes cover different aspects of learning – including the demonstration of academic knowledge, academic skills and professional-related competencies – assessment will be similarly varied, including some more traditional assignments (essay-type tasks) alongside more competency-based assessment. Our overall strategy attempts to strike a balance between developing students' abilities to succeed in a balanced and diverse range of assessment tasks and to stretch beyond existing comfort zones on the one hand and allowing them to play to their strengths on the other hand.

The formative assessment strategy aims to monitor and support learning throughout each semester. Preparatory assignments, in-class activities, tutorials and the preparation of coursework assignments all provide evidence of learning and development and create opportunities for peer or tutor-led feedback in different forms. Personal tutorials and dissertation supervision in particular provide opportunities for formative feedback and guidance. The dissertation module has been designed with a view to maximising students' engagement in a structured process of research, with formative feedback built in from the start.

Each module is assessed formally in order that students can demonstrate their achievement of module learning objectives. Throughout the course, students will encounter a diversity of assessment tasks, with opportunities for choice on substantive content and presentation formats where appropriate.

While all of our assessment tasks are designed with the aim of promoting an inclusive and accessible curriculum for all, we will, in co-ordination with the Disability Service, work with any individual students who might have additional access requirements to find solutions appropriate to their needs.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The learning and teaching strategy for this programme emphasises the active development of students' academic skills and professional competencies related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Successful completion of the Masters Degree will help equip graduates with the skills needed to begin or further develop a career in a range of roles related to conflict analysis, conflict resolution and peace-work.

The programme has been designed with reference to professional competencies frameworks developed by professional agencies in the fields of humanitarian, peace and conflict work, and to negotiation, mediation and facilitation training guides, for example:

- [Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework \(2011-2016\)](#) (CBHA, the Start Network)
- [European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations](#) (EUHAP) (2014)
- [Technical competency framework for conflict \(2016-2026\)](#) (UK FCDO)

Throughout the programme, students will be actively engaged in a diverse range of learning activities designed to develop their capacities for thoughtful analysis and reflective practice. These will include individual and group tasks that require students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world dynamics and scenarios. As such, the emphasis in teaching sessions will often be on active, problem-based learning activities, with students undertaking reading and other preparatory work beforehand. This 'flipped classroom' approach maximises opportunities for discussion and feedback, whilst using selected inputs – short lectures, readings, video, etc. – to both frame and deepen the learning experience.

Our approach to learning and teaching makes a conscious effort to encourage collaboration and honest dialogue and puts significant emphasis on the development of interpersonal and intercultural skills. Throughout, the curriculum is designed to encourage reflection on social relationships, and this includes the interpersonal level and the wider structures in which interpersonal dynamics are situated. Our overall aim is to develop reflective practitioners who take a thoughtful approach to engaging with others, and our own practices as a teaching team seek to model and foster this ethos.

Placement and Study Abroad

Further information about [internships and placements](#) and [study abroad opportunities](#) is published on the University's website.

Professional Experience Option

The Professional Experience is an elective integrated work experience element of the MA programmes in PSID. This normally takes the form of an internship in another organisation and can be either undertaken in the UK or abroad. Students normally use their placement period and experience to inform and shape their dissertation. Students on the September route without placement can transfer into the placement route during Semester 2 if they change their mind;

exceptionally, in the unfortunate circumstance that an arranged placement falls through it is also possible to transfer back onto the without placement route.

It is up to students to plan and arrange their placement. For Rotary Peace Fellows, designing the applied field experience is an integral part of their scholarship. Planning for the placement/internship starts several months in advance. The Department will provide information sessions. The process may involve several steps including:

- Identifying and searching for voluntary placement/internship opportunities.
- Preparing applications, covering letters, supporting letters of reference.
- Contacting relevant organisations, arranging for and agreeing specifics such as location, domain of work, start and end dates, focal point, terms of reference of placement and what the student is expected to do and the days and hours.
- Sorting out financial planning issues, visas, travel risk assessments and permissions.
- Discussing with the relevant contact person in the host organisation about aims and reviewing arrangement.

Students are required to complete a form detailing their proposed activities and obtain permission from the Department before they can go on placement/internship. Many organisations also offer virtual placements or virtual internships and these may be a more feasible option.

Upon completing the period of placement/internship, students should come back on the programme and submit a completion report summarising key learning points before they can formally continue work on their dissertation.

Study Abroad Semester Option

Students can choose to study abroad for Semester 1 or Semester 2 at specified approved partner Universities. This is a cost- and time-effective way of getting international experience alongside university education.

The list of Study Abroad Semester partners changes year-to-year depending on the curriculum offered. This option can be available ONLY if the modules offered by the host institution allow the student to meet the learning outcomes of the Bradford Programme Stage. The semester exchange requires students to study only modules suitable to the Bradford programme stage when abroad. Therefore, all modules selected for the exchange will have to be mapped to the Bradford programme learning outcomes and be approved by the Programme leader in Bradford in advance of the exchange.

During the exchange, if the student needs to change the modules, this can only be done after approval of the Bradford Programme Leader. If the student fails a module abroad, the student must explore the possibility of re-taking any exams at the host university and immediately inform the International Opportunities Team. Students will have support from the relevant University of Bradford services while overseas. All credit successfully obtained whilst on study abroad semester will count towards the students final degree.

Curriculum

The MA Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution curriculum has been carefully designed to ensure coherence and progression through the different stages of study. This course also provides the opportunity for granular personalised learning and specialism within 120 total taught credits.

Semester 1

Applied Conflict Research develops both theoretical knowledge and professional skills for advanced analysis of the causes, dynamics and consequences of (violent) conflict. This module includes a significant case-study focus, to test what theories and concepts offer in the task of analysis. **Theories and Practices of Conflict Resolution** introduces some key approaches to conflict intervention – including negotiation and mediation – and how these have been theorised and applied. There is a mix of theory, case-study analysis and practical skill development associated with the design and delivery of processes for constructive conflict engagement. Students select one option in Semester 1:

Table 2: Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Semester 1 Modules (FHEQ Level 7)

Mod. Code	Module Title	Credit	Selection
PES7036-B	Applied Conflict Research	20	Core
PES7064-B	Theories and Practices of Conflict Resolution	20	Core
PES7048-B	Security and Development in Fragile & Conflict Affected Areas	20	Option 1
PES7065-B	Social-Ecological Systems and Crises	20	Option 2
PES7035-B	African Politics and Security Dynamics	20	Option 3
PES7051-B	Studying Peace in a Changing World	20	Option 4

Semester 2

Creative Practice in Conflict Engagement and Peacebuilding opens up an exploration of creative approaches to peace, conflict and social justice work and provides an opportunity to deepen skills for reflective practice. Students select two options in Semester 2:

Table 3: Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Semester 2 Modules (FHEQ Level 7)

Module Code	Module Title	Credit	Selection
PES7063-B	Creative Practice in Conflict Engagement & Peacebuilding	20	Core
PES7034-B	Africa Study Visit	20	Option 5
PES7041-B	Gender, Conflict and Development	20	Option 6
PES7045-B	Natural Resource Governance	20	Option 7
PES7046-B	Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding	20	Option 8
PES7053-B	Terrorism and Political Violence	20	Option 9
PES7043-B	Middle East Politics and Security Dynamics	20	Option 10
PES7069-B	Politics, Security and Development in South Asia	20	Option 11
PES7062-B	Environment, Trafficking and Crime: Transnational Issues and International Governance	20	Option 12

Semester 3

Study in semester 3 involves work on the 60-credit dissertation for all MA students and the professional experience for students and Rotary Peace Fellows on the placement route. The preparation and submission period will vary depending on the route taken – see the Programme Structure section for more details. All students will be supported in their dissertation work by an academic supervisor.

Table 4: Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution Semester 3 Modules (FHEQ Level 7)

Mod. Code	Module Title	Credit	Period	Selection
PES7040-E	Dissertation	60	FLYear	Sept. Start Core
PES7040-E	Dissertation	60	NSYear	Jan. Start Core
PES7023-Z	Professional Experience (Rotary Peace Fellows Applied Field Experience)	N/A	Sem 3	Rotary Peace Fellowship
PES7056-Z	Voluntary placement/ internship	N/A	Sem 3	Non-Rotary Placement Route

Assessment, Continuation and Award Regulations

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

Award of the Masters degree requires 180 FHEQ Level 7 credits and achievement of the award learning outcomes. Students who exit the programme with 120 or 60 credits completed may be eligible for an intermediate award in line with the regulations.

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.

Language competency

As the programme is taught in English, all applicants are required to have proficiency at GCSE Grade 4 (national grade C) or above in English Language. Alternative RQF Level 2 qualifications such as Key Skills are also acceptable if equivalent. For international students, the level of English required is listed on the [University of Bradford English language requirements website](#).

Exceptionally, holders of a UK degree awarded within 2 years prior to entry to the Bradford programme may be exempt from these English test requirements. International applicants who do not meet the IELTS requirement can take a [University of Bradford pre-sessional English course](#).

Academic entry

Applicants typically have at least an undergraduate degree passed at 50% or above, such as a UK Bachelor's degree with honours classed 2:2, or equivalent, in any subject. Examples of other

equivalent international qualifications are provided on the [University of Bradford page for a country or region](#).

Relevant professional or voluntary activities would be desirable as the course will draw on your experience and the experiences of your fellow students.

Access and Recognition of Prior Learning

Applications are welcome from students with non-traditional qualifications, or with significant personal and professional experience, and these applications are assessed by interview.

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University of Bradford has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme. Find more information about [recognition of prior learning decisions](#) on the University website.

People thinking of studying with the University of Bradford don't need to wait for the start of the year to contact our Disability Service. The University can arrange for anyone to talk to this team about what support is on offer at Bradford including an invitation to our Get Set Day. To contact the Disability Service please complete the [request support form](#).

Please note: 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/peacebuilding-and-conflict-resolution>