

1. Programme Title(s):

MA in Politics of Conflict and Violence

Postgraduate Diploma/Postgraduate Certificate in Politics of Conflict and Violence *

2. Awarding body or institution:

University of Leicester

3. a) Mode of study

Part-time

b) Type of study

Distance learning

4. Registration periods:

The normal period of registration is 2 years (25 months)

The maximum period of registration is 4 years

5. Typical entry requirements:

Either a first or a good second class honours degree from a British university or its equivalent in Politics, International Relations, European Studies, History, Law or other related subjects. In certain cases, equivalent relevant professional experience will be considered.

Where English is not a candidate's first language, applicants will be required to provide evidence of appropriate language skills, equivalent to IELTS 6.5.

Students must have access to regular and reliable internet access in order to follow this programme.

6. Accreditation of Prior Learning:

A standing Accreditation of Experiential Prior Learning (APEL) agreement is in place with the NATO Defense College, Rome. Completion of the NATO Defense College 'Senior Course' is accepted as APEL in place of PL7591 *Strategy in the Modern World* (30 credits). APEL is demonstrated through a portfolio submitted to the Department of Politics and International Relations. The portfolio should include:

- A CV
- Senior Course methodology paper (2,500 words)
- Senior Course Individual paper (2,500 words)

APEL is incorporated in the degree thus:

PG Certificate: NATO College Senior Course (accepted as Experiential Prior Learning on the completion of short portfolio) + core module offered by University of Leicester. *

PG Diploma: NATO College Senior Course (accepted as Experiential Prior Learning on the completion of short portfolio) + core module plus two optional modules offered by the University of Leicester.

Masters: NATO College Senior Course (accepted as Experiential Prior Learning on the completion of short portfolio) + core module, two optional modules and dissertation.

*In the case of the PG Certificate the University of Leicester requires that students successfully pass their core module (offered by the UoL).

Degrees will be calculated on the basis of the credits achieved at the University of Leicester only.

7. Programme aims:

This MA aims to equip students with the skills and resources necessary to ask critical questions about the politics of conflict and violence in the modern world.

Addressing conflict and violence in its many forms and drawing on cutting edge research conducted by members of the Department of Politics and IR at the University of Leicester students enrolled on this MA will have the opportunity to conduct advanced study on subjects such as the politics of war and peace; the politics of nuclear weapons and arms control; humanitarian intervention; the political legacies of conflict; the changing character of war; the politics of defining, conducting and combating terrorism; the nature and theoretical conceptualisation of violence; the role of gender politics in conflict and violence as well as classical strategy and the utility of force.

Combining theoretical and empirical approaches students will explore the politics, sites, logics, technologies and ethics of conflict and violence.

The programme will appeal to those interested in pursuing advanced postgraduate studies in the

field of conflict and violence with an academic background in (but not limited to) International Relations, politics, political theory, war studies, terrorism studies, history, human rights, journalism, philosophy or law. The programme will also appeal to those seeking professional development and enhanced employability in relevant sectors such as those working for NGOs, the military, media, private security, the UN or other international organisations.

8. Reference points used to inform the programme specification:

- QAA Benchmarking statement for Politics and International Relations
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-politics-15.pdf>
- QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
- University of Leicester Learning and Teaching Strategy:
<http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/sas2/quality/learnteach>
- University Employability Strategy
- Periodic Developmental Review Reports (February 2014)

9. Programme Outcomes:

N.B. Programme outcomes specific to the MA are in bold, and those specific to the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma are in italics.

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
(a) Subject and Professional skills		
Knowledge		
Graduates should possess knowledge and critical appreciation of academic literature relating to the politics of conflict and violence. Graduates will have gained empirical knowledge and theoretical understanding of the place of conflict and violence in the modern world and the political questions raised in relation to the problematic of conflict and violence.	Guided private study; directed reading; electronic seminar/forum; essay commentary/feedback; and independent research	A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; research proposals; essays; dissertation. <i>A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; essays.</i>
Concepts		
Graduates should be able to explain, critique and apply concepts such as political violence, terrorism, intervention, war, peace and the state.	Guided private study; directed reading; electronic seminar/forum; essay commentary/feedback; and independent research	A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; research proposals; essays; dissertation. <i>A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; essays.</i>

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Techniques		
<p>Mastery of key theories and concepts, methodological tools and bibliographic, writing and critical skills</p> <p>Understanding of both quantitative and qualitative research methods appropriate to the study of conflict and violence.</p> <p><i>Mastery of key theories and concepts, methodological tools and bibliographic, writing and critical skills</i></p>	<p>Guided private study; directed reading; electronic seminar/forum; essay commentary/feedback; and independent research</p>	<p>A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; research proposals; essays; dissertation.</p> <p><i>A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; essays.</i></p>
Critical analysis		
<p>Ability to identify and apply relevant concepts and techniques with independence and rigour</p>	<p>Guided private study; essay commentary/feedback; and independent research</p>	<p>A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; research proposals; essays; dissertation</p> <p><i>A range of on-line activities (E-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and Wikis; literature reviews; essays.</i></p>
Presentation		
<p>Ability to organise research material in a manner appropriate to the medium that is to be assessed; to distinguish between relevant and non-relevant material; to write up and deliver written work to a professional standard</p>	<p>Guided private study; essay commentary/feedback; and independent research</p>	<p>Essay plans; dissertation outline; dissertation</p> <p><i>Essay plans</i></p>
Appraisal of evidence		
<p>Ability to assess the relevance and evaluate the quality of a substantial range of primary sources and secondary literature</p> <p>Ability to mount and sustain an independent level of inquiry at an advanced level</p> <p><i>Ability to assess the relevance and evaluate the quality of a range of primary sources and secondary literature</i></p>	<p>Guided private study; independent research</p>	<p>A range of on-line activities (e-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and wikis; literature reviews; research proposals; essay; dissertation</p> <p><i>A range of on-line activities (e-tivities) including online presentations, podcasts, interactive message boards and wikis; literature reviews; essay</i></p>

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
(b) Transferable skills		
Research skills		
<p>Ability to: plan research projects, and locate, extract, produce and analyse relevant evidence; conduct significant background research and literature surveys; organise and marshal evidence and report on findings; analyse complex ideas and competing viewpoints; and construct informed critical arguments at an advanced level</p> <p><i>Ability to: locate, extract, produce and analyse relevant evidence for essays; organise and marshal evidence and report on findings; analyse complex ideas and competing viewpoints; and construct informed critical arguments</i></p>	<p>Online resource-based learning; study-skills activities; directed critical reading of research methods literature; dissertation supervision</p> <p><i>Online resource-based learning; study-skills activities</i></p>	<p>Essay plans; dissertation outline; essays; dissertation</p> <p><i>Essay plans; essays</i></p>
Communication skills		
<p>Ability to: respond with focus and clarity to written questions; write clearly and concisely; make effective use of graphical and statistical summaries, where appropriate; produce properly structured, clear essays and dissertations.</p> <p><i>Ability to: respond with focus and clarity to written questions; write clearly and concisely; make effective use of graphical and statistical summaries, where appropriate; produce properly structured, clear essays.</i></p>	<p>Guided private study; essay commentary/feedback; electronic seminar/forum; and independent research</p>	<p>Essay plans and dissertation outline; essays; dissertation; participation in on-line activities</p> <p><i>Essay plans; essays; participation in on-line activities</i></p>
Data presentation		
<p>Ability to synthesise research data into coherent and sustained arguments using appropriate IT resources</p>	<p>Online resource-based learning (e.g. use of EU documentation); electronic seminar/forum; independent research</p>	<p>Use of numerical evidence in support of activity such as an essay where relevant</p>
Information technology		
<p>Advanced ability to retrieve and present information using appropriate information technology, for example, bibliographic software, data archives, data analysis software</p> <p><i>Ability to retrieve and present information using appropriate information technology, for example, bibliographic software, data archives, data analysis software</i></p>	<p>Induction; online resource-based learning; e-tivities</p>	<p>Use of Blackboard and participation in on-line activities; essays; dissertation</p> <p><i>Use of Blackboard and participation in on-line activities; essays</i></p>

Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Methods	How Demonstrated?
Problem solving		
Ability to identify, investigate, analyse, formulate and advocate solutions to problems	Guided private study; online resource-based learning; electronic seminar/forum	Essay; dissertation; participation in on-line activities <i>Essay; participation in on-line activities</i>
Working relationships		
Ability to work collaboratively as part of a team. Knowing how and when to draw on the knowledge and expertise of others; ability to contribute and comment on ideas in learning groups	Electronic seminar/forum; dissertation supervision <i>Electronic seminar/forum</i>	Participation in on-line activities: message boards and Wikis
Managing learning		
Management of an extensive literature and familiarisation with key issues and concepts Ability to plan and implement tasks and manage work-loads	Guided private study; independent research; dissertation supervision; career management training <i>Guided private study; independent research; career management training</i>	Essays; dissertation; Personal Development Planning <i>Essays; Personal Development Planning</i>
Career management		
Ability to take charge of one's own progress and development Reflection on one's strengths, interests, motivations and skills; recognition of one's achievements	Personal Tutor System; PDP training (on-line)	Personal Development Planning

10. Special features:

The programme has been constructed to complement, and be compatible with, the Department's existing DL MA degrees, which build on the university's Learning Innovation Strategy, and are subject to on-going collaborative development with the Leicester Learning Institute. The programme is based on a social constructivist learning model.

The programme differs from most campus-based and distance learning MA degrees in violence and conflict studies as it does not have a traditional focus of war at its core. Rather it approaches violence and conflict from a broad perspective drawing on expertise from all research groups within the Department of Politics and International Relations and encouraging critical enquiry into contested subjects.

11. Indications of programme quality:

- Number one politics department in the 2009 and 2010 National Student Surveys;
- Considerable departmental experience in distance teaching and learning as a result of the development and success of our existing DL programmes;
- Consistent, positive feedback from current and former students;
- Consistent positive feedback from external examiners.

12. Scheme of Assessment

The programme structure is in accordance with [Senate Regulation 6: Regulations governing taught postgraduate programmes of study](#) and comprises of 120 taught credits and a 60 credit dissertation.

The criteria for and classification of awards are as detailed in Sections 6.32 and 6.41.

13. Progression points

As defined in [Senate Regulation 6: Regulations governing taught postgraduate programmes of study](#)

Board of Examiners in February and August confirm that students have satisfactorily completed four 30-credit modules and may progress to completing their dissertation.

14. Rules relating to re-sits or re-submissions:

As defined in [Senate Regulation 6: Regulations governing taught postgraduate programmes of study](#)

15. Additional information [e.g. timetable for admissions]

16. External Examiners:

The details of the External Examiner(s) for this programme and the most recent External Examiners' reports can be found [here](#).

Appendix 1: Programme structure (programme regulations)

For the award of MA, students must complete four 30 credit taught modules and a 12-15,000 word dissertation worth 60 credits. For the exit award of Postgraduate Diploma students must complete four 30 credit taught modules, and for the exit award of Postgraduate Certificate, two 30 credit taught modules.

All students must complete their core, compulsory module *The Politics of Conflict and Violence* before going on to choose from a list of optional modules. Students are given advice at the time of choosing as to which optional modules are best suited to their degree programme. All module choices are checked and approved by the Director of Distance Learning to ensure they are appropriate to the student's programme of study and provide coherent intellectual development. MA students must also devise a dissertation question that is relevant to their MA programme. Dissertation questions are reviewed by the Director of Distance Learning and the student's dissertation advisor. Our approach to programme structure combines choice and individual intellectual development for the student with flexibility for the Department in order to cater to teaching and research commitments whilst ensuring that students are presented with and complete an intellectually coherent and relevant programme of study.

N.B. All modules are 30 credits with the exception of the 60-credit MA Dissertation

Module Code	Module Name	Core or Optional	Credits
PL7530	The Politics of Conflict & Violence	C	30
PL7503	MA Dissertation	C	60
PL7500	American Interventionism after the Cold War	O	30
PL7501	Democracy & Legitimacy in the European Union	O	30
PL7502	Diplomatic Systems	O	30
PL7504	Intelligence & Security	O	30
PL7505	International Security	O	30
PL7508	Post Cold War World Order	O	30
PL7515	Theories of International Relations	O	30
PL7521	The International Politics of Protection	O	30
PL7587	EU Enlargement and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Communist Europe	O	30
PL7589	The Politics of Human Rights	O	30
PL7591	Strategy in the Modern World	O	30
PL7593	Governance and Corruption	O	30
PL7594	The Politics of European Integration	O	30
PL7595	Euroscepticism	O	30
PL7509	The Art of Negotiation	O	30
PL7531	Gender in Global Perspective	O	30
PL7532	The Transformation of Modern Warfare	O	30
PL7533	The Politics of Global Nuclear Order	O	30
PL7534	The Politics of Violent Conflict and its Legacies in Northern Ireland	O	30
PL7596	Europe as a Global Actor	O	30
PL7597	Political Economy of International Development	O	30

Core Module Structure: 14 Week Semester Structure

10 weeks of subject-specific reading and forum debate is accompanied by the following e-tivities:

E-tivities (Activities)	E-tivity Description	Module Weighting	Duration (days)	Weekly Reading (Weeks 1-10)
E1	Access and Socialisation	0	7	Week 1
E2	Accessing e-resources	0	15	Weeks 2-3
E3	Good Academic Practice	0	3	Week 4
E4	Essay Plan	0	20	Weeks 4-7
E5	Critical Analysis – Part 1	0	7	Week 7-8
	Critical Analysis – Part 2	20%	14	Weeks 8-10
E6	Essay (Final)	80%	32	Weeks 10-14

Optional Module Structure: 14 Week Semester Structure

10 weeks of subject-specific reading and forum debate is accompanied by the following e-tivities:

E-tivities (Activities)	E-tivity Description	Module Weighting	Duration (days)	Weekly Reading (Weeks 1-10)
E1	Access, socialisation and reflection	0	3	Week 1
E2	Constructing an argument plan (peer review)	0	7	Weeks 1-2
E3	Critical Analysis	20%	21	Weeks 3-5
E4	Essay Plan	0	14	Weeks 6-7
E5	Engaging with texts	0	14	Weeks 8-9
E6	Essay (Final)	80%	32	Weeks 10-14

Distance Learning Teaching

Distance Learning Modules in the Department of politics are taught entirely through our Virtual Learning Environment, Blackboard. Each week for ten weeks students are given a reading list accompanied by questions or exercises designed by the Course Convenor to help them critically engage with that literature. Students are encouraged to discuss and debate their reading on the online forums. An Associate Tutor supports these forum discussions through e-moderation. Accompanying weekly reading and discussion are six E-tivities. E-tivities are designed to build a supportive online community of students as well as develop scholarly skills. E-tivities take the form of formative and summative assessments designed to complement and support subject specific learning objectives by promoting key academic skills using subject specific materials. Students are guided through these E-tivities and the module as a whole by their Associate Tutor who is available in the online forums or via email. Course Convenors provide all learning materials and offer detailed feedback on all essay plans and essays. Online feedback is provided after each E-tivity and continuous support is available from the DL Personal Tutor.

Having completed the six E-tivities that comprise Core modules students should be able to:

- Contribute to forums
- Search for electronic library materials
- Identify and evaluate appropriate academic articles

- Compile and present a bibliography
- Understand why and how we reference academic writing
- Understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it
- Learn about good essay writing techniques
- Plan an essay
- Critically engage with texts
- Produce an article review (1,200 words) worth 20% of the module mark
- Write a 5,000 word essay worth 80% of the module mark.

In addition the E-tivities of the non-core modules encourage students to:

- Reflect on their module choice and their interest in the subject matter
- Reflect on their previous learning experiences and develop their learning practice.
- Identify the over-all argument and supporting arguments made by another author
- Consider good structure in academic writing
- Develop their critical analysis skills (produce an article review of 1,200 words) worth 20% of the module mark.
- Develop their essay writing skills (write a 5,000 word essay worth 80% of the module mark).

Politics and IR Distance Learning courses encourage active enquiry-based learning rather than simply transmitting information to students and facilitate independent knowledge production by supporting and encouraging dialogue between students, Associate Tutors and Course Convenors as well as - more importantly - amongst students themselves.

Our DL programme has been designed and developed in collaboration with learning technologists from the Course Development and Design Unit.

Suspension of Studies

The following information is given to students in the MADL Student Handbook:

As a distance learning student, you will probably be combining the challenge of study with the demands of work and family life. The University does permit therefore a suspension of studies for up to one year. A suspension of studies must be requested in writing to irdl@le.ac.uk, stating the reason for the suspension request. Suspension periods are included in periods of registration.

Where possible, it is preferred that a suspension of studies is planned between taught modules. However, should circumstances arise that make it difficult for students to complete their current module, a suspension of studies may be requested during a module. In such cases the following suspension guidelines apply:

Suspension of Studies during a Core Module:

Stage of module suspension of studies is requested:	Suspension Regulations
Up-to submission of E-tivity 5:	Student suspends to repeat the module in full or part (as agreed with their Personal Tutor) in a subsequent semester.
After submission of E-tivity 5 and up to seven days prior to the E-tivity 6 submission date:	Student suspends for 6 or 12 months and returns to active studies in time to submit E-tivity 6 in-line with a later intake.
No suspension is allowed after E-tivity 6 submission	If a student is subsequently unable to submit E-tivity 6

date (unless suspension is recommended by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel):	then this assessment will fall under the non-submission process.
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Suspension of Studies during an Optional Module:

Stage of module suspension of studies is requested:	Suspension Regulations
Up-to submission of E-tivity 3:	Student suspends to repeat the module in full in a subsequent semester. If the optional module is not available in the semester that the student is due to return, a new module is chosen.
After submission of E-tivity 3 and prior to E-tivity 5 submission date:	Student should attempt completion of E-tivity 5 prior to suspending studies, unless non-submission is approved by their Personal Tutor due to mitigating circumstances. Student then suspends for 6 or 12 months and returns to active studies in time to submit E-tivity 6 in-line with a later intake.
After submission of E-tivity 5 and up to seven days prior to the E-tivity 6 submission date:	Student suspends for 6 or 12 months and returns to active studies in time to submit E-tivity 6 in-line with a later intake.
No suspension is allowed after E-tivity 6 submission date (unless suspension is recommended by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel):	If a student is subsequently unable to submit E-tivity 6 then this assessment will fall under the non-submission process.

Appendix 2: Module Specifications

See module specification database <http://www.le.ac.uk/sas/courses/documentation>

Module specifications for the new core and new optional modules are attached.