



**RICHMOND**  
THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL  
**UNIVERSITY**  
IN LONDON

SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES

# **MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

## **Programme Specification**

**2015-2016**

## Introduction

This document describes the Masters Degree in International Relations awarded at Richmond, the American International University in London, using the protocols required by *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland* (QAA, 2014). Also key to the background for this description are the following documents:

QAA (2013). *UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A: Setting and maintaining academic standards and B1: Programme Design and Approval*. ([www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk))

QAA (2008). *Higher Education Credit Framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in Higher Education in England*.

SEEC (2010). *Credit Level Descriptors for Higher Education*. Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer ([www.seec.org.uk](http://www.seec.org.uk)).

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. *Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education: Requirements of Affiliation and Standards for Accreditation*. 2006, Rev. Ed. 2011. (<http://www.msche.org/publications.asp>)

The programme's mission and goals interface with the curriculum design, content and organisation which in turn engage with the requirements of

- the Middle States Commission for Higher Education;
- the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Politics and International Relations Subject Benchmark Document (February 2015): <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-politics-15.pdf>;
- specific recommendations since 2005 for developing programme specifications at Masters level <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/Documents/Masters-Degree-Characteristics-2010.pdf> ;

The degree is delivered at a US Liberal Arts style university with a degree structure in line with comparable MA degrees in the UK. Successful students complete 8 courses amounting to 36 US / 180 UK credits, comprised of coursework (24 / 120 credits), an optional internship (4 / 20 credits) and thesis (8 / 40 credits) component submitted at the start of the following Fall semester. Normally, each course carries 4 US / 20 UK credits. On this basis students are required to earn 36 US / 180 UK credits including successful completion of the internship and thesis, in order to complete their degree.

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## 1. Overview/Factual Information

<b>Programme/award title(s)</b>	MA International Relations
<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Richmond, the American International University in London
<b>Awarding Institution</b>	The Open University
<b>Date of latest OU validation</b>	1 September 2011
<b>Next revalidation</b>	2015-2016
<b>Credit points for the award</b>	36 US Credits 180 UK Credits ( <i>FHEQ</i> Level 7)
<b>Programme start date</b>	1 September 2011
<b>Underpinning QAA subject benchmark(s)</b>	QAA Masters Degree Characteristics (March 2010): <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/MastersDegreeCharacteristics.pdf">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/MastersDegreeCharacteristics.pdf</a>  Politics and International Relations Subject Benchmark Document (February 2015) consulted: <a href="http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-politics-15.pdf">http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-politics-15.pdf</a>
<b>Other external and internal reference points used to inform programme outcomes</b>	See sections 2.2– 2.4 below.
<b>Professional/statutory recognition</b>	N/A
<b>Language of Study</b>	English
<b>Duration of the programme for each mode of study (P/T, FT,DL)</b>	FT (one year), PT (two years)
<b>Dual accreditation (if applicable)</b>	Middle States Commission on Higher Education (First accredited 1981; renewed 1996 and 2006. Institutional Review scheduled for 2016.)  QAA – IRENI May 2013
<b>Date of production/revision of this specification</b>	July 2010 (first publication), 4 <sup>th</sup> revision June 2015

**Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.**

More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content, and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each course can be found in course specification documents, syllabi, and the student handbook.

The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University and may be verified by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

#### **Programme Specification Publication Dates**

<b>First Edition</b>	May 2010
<b>Revision 1</b>	February 2013
<b>Revision 2</b>	April 2013
<b>Revision 3</b>	June 2014
<b>Revision 4</b>	June 2015

## 2. Programme aims and objectives

### 2.1. Educational aims and mission of the programme

The **Master of Arts Degree in International Relations** at Richmond provides a combination of practical and theoretical skills in the discipline of International Relations (hereafter IR). It also equips students with the intellectual and personal skills that will enable them to exercise influence and succeed in an increasingly inter-dependent and evolving world. The degree provides an in-depth theoretical appreciation of the various schools of thought and paradigmatic approaches in International Relations, as well as of the tensions that exist within the theoretical traditions that make up the discipline. The degree also offers a range of case studies in comparative and historical perspectives, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the subjects studied across two semesters, the third being dedicated to researching and writing of the dissertation. An invaluable internship option is also available, thus strengthening the practical component of the programme.

The degree provides its own reward, as well as serving as a platform for further graduate or professional study, and as an avenue for career development. The degree can lead to eventual careers in roles that require articulate, clear thinking individuals with a grasp of contemporary events, including government, international organisations, international business, non-governmental organisations, finance, public affairs and the media, as well as to doctoral research. In keeping with the university's wider mission, the programme ensures that its graduates are well positioned to assume leadership responsibilities in careers in which issues with global implications are addressed.

#### Programme Goals

- To produce Masters level graduates in International Relations whose subject specific knowledge, performance, understanding, skills and attributes; critical thinking and cognitive abilities; personal and enabling skills and attributes, prepare them for their careers and for further study in the discipline.
- To provide students with a theoretically, conceptually and historically informed analytical framework in the field of International Relations, engaging with advanced debates of the various schools
- To equip students with the skills necessary to undertake successful PhD and further studies and/or applied, advanced professional training
- To maintain academic standards equal to or better than comparable MA degrees offered by UK universities and other higher education institutions in Europe and elsewhere.

### 2.2. Subject benchmarks

QAA Masters Degree Characteristics (March 2010):

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Documents/MastersDegreeCharacteristics.pdf>

Politics and International Relations Subject Benchmark Document (February 2015)  
consulted:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/SBS-politics-15.pdf>

### 2.3. Internal contexts

**The Master of Arts Degree in International Relations** features:

(a) Detailed published educational objectives that are consistent with the mission of the institution

All course outlines contain course specific objectives that are regularly monitored by the individual instructors and by the Social Sciences faculty as a group.

(b) Processes based on the needs of the programme's various constituencies in which the objectives are determined and periodically evaluated.

Each degree's Annual Programme Evaluation (APE) is a central element of Richmond's internal quality assurance and enhancement processes. APEs measure the academic quality and standards of the programme, identify good practice, record any issues to be addressed, and, from year to year, track the ways in which those issues have been addressed. During the APE process, the academic schools:

- consider student input via course evaluations;
- consider any formalized faculty course evaluations conducted;
- consider all External Examiner reports;
- examine the Programme Specification, and note any changes required;
  - any major changes ("those which change the basic nature of the programme or student experience") to existing programmes are first approved by Academic Board;

in the case of validated programmes, they are also submitted to the Open University (Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships) for external approval.

(c) A curriculum development process that assures the achievement of the programme's objectives.

Ongoing evaluation is carried out for both the US (*Middle States*) and UK (*The Open University – CICP*) institutional reviews, and independently by departmental members (when updating courses) and by students (during regular faculty-student meetings). The Academic Board closely analyses the APEs of all degree programmes, and The University's response to the AMR is considered at the Schools and at Academic Board. A comprehensive additional formal and

substantive review takes place every five years, which is also supplied to The OU as part of its revalidation process of Richmond's degree programmes.

#### **2.4. External contexts**

**The Master of Arts in International Relations** is provided through a system of ongoing evaluations that demonstrate achievement of the programme's objectives, and uses the results to improve the effectiveness of the programme. Ongoing evaluation is carried out for both US (the Middle States Commission on Higher Education) and UK (The Open University – CICP) reviews. Richmond is a voluntary subscriber member of the QAA, and underwent its first full Institutional Review in May 2013 (<http://www.richmond.ac.uk/about-richmond/american-british-accreditation/>).

The faculty belong to professional organisations such as the British International Studies Association, Political Studies Association, International Studies Association and the Royal Institute of International Affairs at Chatham House. Students are encouraged to attend meetings, lectures, conferences and workshops taking place at other London Universities, institutions, think-tanks, agencies and organisations as appropriate.

In addition the university provides a budget that enables schools, discipline-specific student societies and individual lecturers to invite a wide range of external guest lecturers to address students.



### 3. Programme Outcomes

Programme-level learning outcomes are identified below, based on *SEEC* categories linked to level 7 of the *FHEQ*: <http://www.seec.org.uk/seec-credit-level-descriptors-2010-revised-2004/>.

Refer to Appendix II – Curriculum Map for details of how outcomes are deployed across the programme of study.

Upon successful completion of the **MA in International Relations** students will be expected to be able to demonstrate all of the Programme Outcomes as follows:

- A. Demonstrate a deep and systematic understanding of key texts, thinkers, intellectual paradigms, themes and debates in International Relations, while reflecting on their relationship to empirical evidence and to other relevant disciplines.
- B. Develop critical and innovative responses to theories, methodologies and practices in International Relations and their impact on the how the knowledge base is interpreted.
- C. Demonstrate a deep, systematic and innovative ability to adapt and apply knowledge in the discipline of International Relations to multiple contexts
- D. Design and undertake substantial investigations addressing significant areas of theory and/or practice in International Relations, using selected advanced methodological approaches.
- E. Engage with and evaluates complex, incomplete or contradictory evidence while critically reflecting on the different theoretical and methodological tools used
- F. Demonstrate the ability to exercise initiative in organising and pursuing both supervised and self-directed individual and/or team projects, while accepting full accountability for outcomes
- G. Demonstrate the ability to gather, organise and deploy complex and abstract ideas and diverse information in complex and specialised contexts, while reflecting upon and improving the skills required for effective communication
- H. Demonstrate the ability for innovative and autonomous learning, normative and ethical reflection, self-evaluation and engagement with disciplinary benchmarks

## 4. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies

### 4.1. Teaching and learning strategy

The teaching and learning strategy within the **MA in International Relations** treats students as active learners embarking on advanced research projects. The strategy has been adopted to ensure that student enthusiasm for the programme and the subject remains high at all times, by engaging them fully in the learning process. While the precise approach will vary from course to course, the learning outcomes relevant to each class will ensure that students are encouraged to fully immerse themselves in the subject and take full responsibility for their progress through the programme. Indeed, this concept of progression through the distinct aspects of the degree (class-based learning focusing on theory, class-based learning focusing on case studies in a comparative perspective, internship, thesis) is integral to the intellectual journey that the students will make during their time on the programme.

The initial class-based stage will introduce students to advanced theoretical themes and concepts of international development studies that will require them to display their ability to analyse the complex and often contradictory nature of the subject matter. Students will be required to synthesise this material in an original manner and demonstrate adequately a critical understanding of the conflicting perspectives that abound in the subject area. Additionally, students will be required to exhibit an application of these three aspects (analysis, synthesis and evaluation) in the assignments that they are required to complete in their individual courses, and especially in their case studies course material.

Upon successful completion of the initial class-based stage of the programme, students may be permitted to progress to the internship, should they so wish. This step, from the classroom to the workplace, will require students to demonstrate intellectual growth as well as the maturity to manage and thrive in a professional environment. Students will be required to apply lessons learnt throughout their initial classroom experience to the workplace to demonstrate their preparedness for progression to the professional arena. Within their internship students will be required to reveal an ability to analyse material that they encounter in the workplace that may be at odds with their expectations, synthesise that data and deliver an evaluation in a succinct and timely manner. Their ability to apply the skills they have learnt in the classroom to the workplace will therefore be of the highest importance. But in case students wish to substitute their internship with a case study, they will be able to choose from a variety of courses an empirical field of study in which history, comparison and application of concepts are organically integrated as a whole. This path is also conducive to students pursuing further studies, enabling them to duly proceed to MPhil and PhD degrees.

Finally students will be required to successfully complete a 12,000-word thesis (or a 15,000-20,000 extended thesis if not taking the internship) on a topic agreed upon between the student and their supervisor. The initial classes will provide the intellectual basis for the work, although students are expected to engage in in-depth Programme specification and curriculum map – MA International Relations

research and produce a quality piece of work. The thesis will provide a platform for them to demonstrate a number of key abilities, such as their capacity to analyse material drawn from a variety of sources. The students' ability to adequately synthesise this material in an innovative manner will be integral to the thesis, as will their ability to offer up mature and balanced evaluations.

Students will not only benefit from the structured classroom based learning, the internship and the thesis preparation, but also from a series of arranged presentations and lectures by outside experts, who will contribute greatly to the learning experience. These presentations and the work they generate will require students to analyse both what is said and the manner in which it is delivered as well as to evaluate the importance of the message in the context of any potential clashes or contradictions that may exist.

Due to the nature of our institution, Richmond, the American International University in London is well placed to serve the varied circumstances and needs of our students and to ensure their continued participation at all stages of the programme. Our central London location places our graduate students at the heart of the capital's diplomatic zone and a short distance from the seat of national power in Westminster. This location also grants students the opportunity to utilise the assets of the British Library and many other academic and professional libraries and archives.

The liberal arts foundation of our university influences the running of our postgraduate programme in International Development. Class sizes are consistently small and the academic faculty are dedicated to focused, small group learning and faculty/student interaction. The open door policy that permeates the university includes postgraduate students who have direct access to the faculty and the programme convenor, allowing for a free flow of ideas and concepts between the student body and the university.

The programme's combination of academic study, empirically-focused case studies and internship ensures that students will receive both an education as well as invaluable experience that will be of great benefit to them in their quest for employment or in efforts to continue their education at higher levels. This is compounded by the university's focus on providing students with dedicated, full-time faculty, with expertise pertinent to the courses that they deliver. Classes are constructed to reflect the demands of graduate level education with assignments reflecting both an academic level of research as well as a focus upon deliverable skills and analytical capacities.

The combination of teaching and learning approaches detailed above develops students' knowledge, critical and analytical skills and practical skills. These include presenting an overview of a topic, encouraging concentration, note taking and sifting of information. The use of case studies within seminars encourages the application of knowledge to real life situations, independent learning, group cooperation, imagination and original thinking.

## 4.2. Assessment strategy

Assessment is by examination, essays, dissertations, and other forms of written work; oral presentations and group work; as well as projects and this assessment strategy usually meets the University Assessment Norms at level 7. Courses which do not meet these norms are deemed *atypical*. Atypical courses are assessed according to special rules approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee, and provided in the CSD for that particular course.

**RICHMOND UNIVERSITY ASSESSMENT NORMS TABLE**

Standard Assessment Norms			
FHEQ level	Richmond/UK Level	Normal number of items (including final exam)*	Total assessment
Level 7	R7000/UK MA	2-3	5000-7000 words

**\* Reasonable adjustments should be made for assessment activities such as midterm exams, in-class presentations, group assignments, tests etc. Any summative assessment activities must be reflected in the final overall assessment count.**

Excluding all atypical courses, the following should apply to all courses:

- Final exams should normally be no less than 25% and no more than 50% of the overall final grade.
- Instructors may not fail a student solely for failing the final exam if all graded activities result in a passing grade for the course.
- Midterm and final exams are not obligatory.
- At Level 7, word count will need to take into account the inclusion of a final exam.
- Attendance and participation cannot be assessment activities.
- Formative assessments are at the discretion of the instructor and do not count toward the number of items or toward the total word count.

For courses that have atypical assessment norms and do not follow one of the above tables, assessment will first be approved by the Learning and Teaching Policy Committee.

### **Degree Requirements:**

Students on the MA in International Relations must complete an approved program of 36 US/180 UK credits, including an 8 US/40 UK credit thesis (10,000 to 12,000 words). Students may complete an extended thesis (15,000 to 20,000 words) if they do not elect to take the optional internship of 4 US/20 UK credits.

Details of all Richmond University's degree program, including approved Program Specifications for each program, Course Specification Descriptions (CSDs) and detailed degree planners are held in an official archive by academic year, available at <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/programme-and-course-specifications/>.

All students on Masters programmes are required to be in London from early May to Mid-June for thesis/dissertation supervision and seminars, unless their internship takes them outside London.

The thesis/dissertation for all Richmond's Masters programs must be submitted no later than the first day of the following Fall semester and the student must be registered with the University at this time if the work is to be accepted for marking.

### **4.3. Assessment Tariff**

#### **Academic Standing**

A graduate student is in good academic standing if maintaining a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 (B).

Graduate students with a cumulative (GPA) of less than 3.0 (B) risk dismissal from the university (see below under "Grade Point Average" and "Academic Probation").

#### **Grades**

A	4.0	Excellent
A-	3.7	Very good
B+	3.3	Good
B	3.0	Satisfactory
B-	2.7	Poor (redeemable fail)
F	0.0	Fail

#### **Grade Point Average**

A grade point average (GPA) is calculated each semester and summer session and is recorded on the student's transcript. A cumulative GPA, including all graduate courses taken at Richmond, is also calculated. The numerical equivalent for the grade (see above) of each course is multiplied by the number of credits for that course to give the number of quality points for the course.

The GPA is then the sum of quality points for all courses divided by the total number of credits of all courses attempted.

- Students achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.7 and above will be awarded the degree with Distinction.
- Students achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.30 to 3.699 will be awarded the degree with Merit.

- Students achieving a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 to 3.299 will be awarded a Pass.
- Students achieving a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 will fail the degree.

Students who choose not to submit the thesis/dissertation, or who do not obtain a minimum grade of B (3.0) on the thesis/dissertation, may transfer programs and apply to receive a (US) Postgraduate Certificate, and, for students on the MA in Art History and Visual Culture and the MA in International Relations, a (UK) Postgraduate Diploma, as an exit award in recognition of their achievement in this area. A minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on all coursework is required for the award of the US Postgraduate Certificate and the UK Postgraduate Diploma.

## 5. Programme structure

### 5.1. Master of Arts Degree in International Relations

The programme is a discrete and self-contained programme of 36 US / 180 UK credits. As such, the structure does not follow the progressive PGC (US)/PGDip (UK) ► MA structure of some other programmes although a PGC/PGDip is awarded as an exit award in recognition of students who complete the required 24 US / 120 UK credits of fall and spring course work (see appendix II). It is not possible for students to register for the PGC/PGDip.

The programme is delivered over one academic year full-time or two-years part-time from the start of September to the end of August. Full-time students take six courses of 4 US/20 UK credits, of which four are core, spread over the fall and spring semesters. In the summer semester students take the internship course of 4 US/20 UK credits if they so wish, and write the research project which is submitted at the end of the summer and is weighted at 8 US/40 UK credits. Students not taking the internship complete an extended thesis of 15,000-20,000 words for 12 US/60 UK credits instead of the normal project of 10-12,000 words.

Part-time students take one or two courses in the fall and spring semesters, completing the required course work over two years and complete the internship in the summer of year one and the thesis in the summer of year two, and like full-time students not taking the internship, part-time students not taking the internships complete an extended thesis of 15,000-20,000 words for 12 US/60 UK credits instead of the normal project of 10-12,000 words.

US credit is equivalent to one contact teaching hour per week and each course typically involves three to four contact hours per week over a 15 week semester, except the thesis which requires self-directed learning with academic supervision, and the internship which requires part-time work placement for 2-3 months (minimum of 9 weeks). There is a ratio of 1 US to 5 UK credits at *FHEQ* Level 7 (see under US and UK credits in the *University Catalogue* at: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/catalogues/>, and Appendix I below).

### DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Successful students complete 36 US / 180 UK credits at *FHEQ* Level 7.

		US Credits	UK Credits
<b><i>FHEQ</i> Level 7 (Total)</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>180</b>
INR 7100	Research Methodology	4	20
INR 7101	International Relations Theory and Concepts	4	20
DEV 7102	International Organization	4	20
INR 7105	Global Political Economy	4	20
<b>Plus two of the following:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>
DEV 7400	African Development Politics		

DEV 7401	Gender and Development		
DEV 7402	Migration, Labour and Development		
INR 7403	Global Environmental Politics		
INR 7120	Origins and Development of International Relations		
INR 7121	International Relations and the Media		
INR 7422	Conflict and Post-Conflict Studies		
INR 7423	Diplomacy		
INR 7424	International Politics of East Asia		
INR 7425	The Middle East and International Politics		
INR 7426	US Foreign Policy		
<b>Plus EITHER both of the following</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>60</b>
INR 7902	Internship	4	20
INR 7500	Thesis Research	8	40
<b>OR</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>60</b>
INR 7550	Extended Thesis Research (Students not completing the internship complete an extended thesis of 12/60 credits)	12	60

## 5.2. Postgraduate Certificate/Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations

The US Postgraduate Certificate (PGC) / UK Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in International Relations is awarded to students registered on the MA who have successfully completed in good academic standing (with a 3.0 GPA/B average) for all courses but: 1) fail to submit the thesis ( without extenuating circumstances eligible for resubmission), or 2) fail to pass the thesis. The PGC is therefore conferrable as an exit award in recognition of successful completion of postgraduate coursework, but it is not possible for students to register on the PGC.

### CERTIFICATE/DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS

Successful students complete 24 US/120 UK credits at FHEQ Level 7

		US Credits	UK Credits
<b>FHEQ Level 7 (Total)</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>120</b>
INR 7100	Research Methodology	4	20
INR 7101	International Relations Theory and Concepts	4	20
DEV 7102	International Organization	4	20
INR 7105	Global Political Economy	4	20
<b>Plus two of the following:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>40</b>
DEV 7400	African Development Politics		
DEV 7401	Gender and Development		
DEV 7402	Migration, Labour and Development		
INR 7403	Global Environmental Politics		
INR 7120	Origins and Development of International Relations		
INR 7121	International Relations and the Media		



INR 7422	Conflict and Post-Conflict Studies		
INR 7423	Diplomacy		
INR 7424	International Politics of East Asia		
INR 7425	The Middle East and International Politics		
INR 7426	US Foreign Policy		

Successful students awarded the PGC/PGDip are able to demonstrate all learning outcomes for the MA except the thesis research component – see ‘H’ in Section 3 “Programme Outcomes” above, and in the Curriculum Map (Appendix II below).

## 6. Regulatory framework

The **MA in International Relations** is operated under the policy and regulatory frameworks of Richmond the American International University in London, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the *Framework of Higher Education Qualifications*, *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, and The Open University policies and procedures for validated institutions.

The following sub-sections include the relevant University or institutional policy documents, where applicable.

### 6.1. Admissions

To be considered for admission, prospective students should:

- By the start of the programme, be at least 17 years of age and have been awarded a first degree in a discipline recognised by the University as being relevant to the programme and which is either:
  - from an accredited US institution with a minimum GPA of 2.5; or
  - from a UK HEI with first or second class honours; or
  - from an institution which is recognised by the University as awarding qualification of equivalent to such US or UK degrees;
- Have completed a timely direct application to the University, including a Curriculum Vitae, personal/professional statement and academic reference, supplying verification of existing academic and English language attainments as required by the University.
- Exceptionally, the University may consider substantial professional experience, of direct relevance to the programme, in lieu of a first degree. In such cases the prospective student may be required to submit a satisfactory extended essay and /or complete certain University undergraduate courses before being admitted to the programme. Whilst not routinely required, prospective students may be invited to interview where this is considered necessary in order to fully consider their application.

Students who are neither nationals of a majority English speaking country, nor have completed a full programme equivalent to a UK first degree taught within such a country, should normally have achieved at least CEFR level B2 in a secure English Language test (“SELT”) acceptable to the University prior to entry to the programme. At the University’s discretion, students in this category who are EEA nationals may be excused this requirement where they have recently undertaken a full time programme of study of at least 2 years duration with English as the medium of instruction.

Further details of all of the above, including the specific minimum SELT grades currently required within level B2, may be found at the appropriate page of the University website, where a comprehensive Admissions Policy and Summary of Practice document is also published.

Programme specification and curriculum map – MA International Relations

## **6.2. Assessment**

A proper assessment of student learning and progression of skills gained is fundamental to the work of the university. Much of what shapes the university's perspective on this has been mentioned within section 4.2, above, under Assessment Strategy, which has been shaped in accordance with the expectations outlined in Section B6 of the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. The University is also in compliance with Standard 14 on 'Assessment of Student Learning', as laid out by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Standard 14 includes the following passages:

"The systematic assessment of student learning is essential to monitoring quality and providing the information that leads to improvement. Implemented effectively, the assessment of student learning will involve the shared commitments of students, administrators and academic professionals. Assessment is not an event but a process and should be an integral part of the life of the institution."

(<http://www.msche.org/publications.asp>).

## **6.3. Progression**

Progression is built into the Programme Outcomes (Section 3 above), as they are derived from the *SEEC* categories associated with specific levels of the *FHEQ*. Learning outcomes in each individual course are therefore level-specific, ensuring an appropriate structure of progression through the degree, with students at graduation meeting the requirements of the QAA subject benchmarks.

## **6.4. Repeat of a Course**

Any repeats of courses in the taught elements of Masters programs are subject to availability (course scheduling and course cycling).

Any graduate student who receives a grade of F (0.0) on a course may repeat it in any subsequent semester (subject to availability and within the "time for completion" restrictions outlined below).

Any graduate student who receives a grade lower than B (3.0) on a course may petition the Postgraduate Associate Dean of the relevant School for permission to retake the course. The Associate Dean may consult with the Academic Progress Committee in coming to a decision. All petitions are considered on a case-by-case basis, and in the larger context of the student's overall academic record.

## **6.5. Incomplete Courses and Re-sits**

Where graduate students believe that they have a legitimate reason for missing a final examination or failing to complete coursework, they may appeal to the relevant School's Postgraduate Associate Dean for a re-sit examination or an extension to coursework deadlines.

The Associate Dean may consult with the Academic Progress Committee in coming to a decision. If the appeal is approved an interim grade of I (incomplete) is assigned. Incomplete grades have no quality points and are not factored into a graduate student's semester or overall GPA.

Re-sit examinations are completed in the official re-sit period, which is the fourth weekend of the semester following the original exam date. Re-sits are not normally permitted at any other time.

Graduate students given an extension to their coursework submission deadlines are normally required to submit the coursework in the same timeframes as students permitted a resit opportunity (ie week 4 of the following Fall or Spring semester).

The final grade for the course is revised by the instructor on completion of the course requirements. Failure to meet the deadlines will result in the 'I' grade reverting to the original grade submitted by the instructor, or to an F grade if no work was submitted.

## **6.6. Leave of Absence**

Graduate students wishing to withdraw from the University may apply to the Postgraduate Associate Dean of the School for a leave of absence for one semester (which may be extended up to a maximum of two semesters). The Associate Dean will consult with the Academic Registrar in all leave of absence requests. Normally, students applying for a leave of absence must be in good academic, social, and financial standing. Approved leaves of absence provide students with the right to return to the University under the same graduation requirements that were in place when they began their leave, and to register for a future semester or summer session without applying for readmission. Graduate students must be particularly aware of the practical restrictions placed upon their return to studies posed by cycling and scheduling of courses in a Masters program.

Leave of absence must be applied for and approved in advance of the semester in which it is to be taken. Students registered for and attending classes will not be permitted to apply for a leave of absence retrospectively. They must withdraw from any courses in which they are enrolled in the usual manner.

Any graduate student granted a leave of absence for medical reasons may be required to provide confirmation from their health-care provider that they are medically fit to resume their studies. Students failing to return from a leave of absence within one calendar year must apply for readmission. If readmitted, they will be governed by the graduation requirements in effect at the time of their readmission.

***Note:** The University is obliged to report to the UK Border Agency any student who is in the UK on a Tier 4 visa but who is not attending classes. This also applies to students who are taking a Leave of Absence. The University's granting of a LoA should not be interpreted as granting permission for a student on a Tier 4 visa to remain in the country.*

### **6.7. Time for Completion**

Graduate students are normally expected to complete all requirements in one academic year (Fall, Spring and Summer semesters). Students must complete all requirements for the award of the degree within three years of the date of their first registration.

### **6.8. Placements**

The Internship Office of the University offers a formal mechanism through which students may receive work-placement opportunities. These placements are supervised, career-related work experiences combined with reflective, academic study that help students apply theoretical knowledge in the workplace. Participation in the internship programme is optional but highly encouraged because the **MA in International Development** programme has been designed to ensure that students graduate with both a qualification as well as experience of the workplace. The internship has been established to act as a conduit between the classroom and a career, enabling students to meet and work with potential future employers. The internship programme demands that students interact with professionals in their field, allowing them to learn by seeing as well as by doing. Key to the success of this initiative is the relationship that has been developed with organisations and governmental agencies. Internship positions have previously been secured at the United States' Institute for Peace and Congressional Offices, Washington DC; the House of Commons, Israeli Embassy and United Nations, London; US Department of Commerce, Sydney; and through CRCC Asia, Beijing. For full details of the internship programme, please see: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/internships/graduate-internships/>.

Expectations with regard to careers education, information, advice and guidance (as outlined in Section B4 of *The UK Quality Cole for Higher Education*) are handled by the university's Student Affairs department. This department conducts a variety of career services for students, ranging from resource provision to a CV service, and in particular through the LEAD (Leadership, Education and Development) seminar series. For full details of career services offered to students at Richmond, please see: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/career-services/>.

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In addition to these services, the alumni office offers networking opportunities where students may contact alumni working in a variety of fields. The alumni office also offers these services via social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook. Please see: <http://alumni.richmond.ac.uk/>

Graduating students from the programme progress to further studies, or to work within a variety of sectors including the media, public affairs, finance, private, governmental, non-profit and international non-governmental organisations.

### **6.9. Student support and guidance**

Every student is advised academically by the Associate Dean for Graduate Programmes who takes a close interest in the students' academic progress. Students who need a particular form of academic help can approach the convenor who can then provide the necessary liaison with the Registrar, Student Affairs and other offices forming the key parts of the academic and pastoral support infrastructure.

In accordance with the 2010 *Equality Act*, and with Chapter B4 of the *Quality Code*, Richmond endeavours to make all practical and reasonable adjustments to ensure students are able to fully participate in the University community. Students who declare a physical disability or a special educational need are accommodated to ensure the quality of their educational experience meets their individual requirements – the university disability officer works with individual students to determine accommodations, and works with colleagues in the Academic Registry and the Schools to see that their needs are addressed. SEN students, for instance, receive extra time in examinations, and have the option of writing exams on university-provided computers, and/or of taking exams in a separate room. Please see: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/content/student-affairs/students-with-disabilities.aspx>

The University operates a well-staffed Student Affairs department headed by the Vice-President for Students that provides services intended to support and encourage student welfare, safety and development. This department oversees medical registration of students and provides counseling services. It also organizes a range of extracurricular activities and travel designed to further enhance students' educational experiences. The university [Student Charter](#) outlines responsibilities and expectations of both the students and the university, and the [Conduct Code](#) addresses expectations as to social conduct. Non-academic appeals and complaints and disciplinary incidents are overseen by the Student Affairs Department.

In its 2013 [IRENI review](#), Richmond was commended for "The care and attention paid to academic and pastoral support for international students throughout their association with the University".

The University recognises that different demands are placed on full-time and part-time students and its guidance, support and advice systems are in place for all students.

## Appendix I: Credit Articulation

In this document and other University literature, US credit is articulated in terms of US and UK credit frameworks.

At the Masters degree level (see below for discussion of Levels on the *FHEQ*), UK MA students obtain a minimum total of 180 UK credits, which equates to 90 ECTS credits or 36 US credits.

American Masters degrees typically award 30-36 credits. Richmond's degree awards 36. The ratio for credit translation at the Masters level (Level 7) is therefore as follows:

	US credit	ECTS credit	UK credit
UK Level 7	1	2.5	5
Required minimum number of credits for MA	36	90	180 (120 of which must be at Level 7)
Richmond MA in International Development	36	90	180 (at Level 7)

### Levels

The *FHEQ* (Framework for Higher Education Qualifications) in the UK defines Higher Education levels in the following way:

**Levels 4-6** (previously HE1-3) – years 1 to 3 of a UK undergraduate degree

**Level 7** (previously M) – UK Masters degrees and postgraduate diplomas and certificates

**Level 8** (previously D) – UK Doctoral degrees

Each level is illustrated by, and each award determined by, reference to a qualification descriptor. The level 7 descriptors can be found in the *FHEQ* (QAA, August 2008).

### References

QAA. *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland*. November 2014.

QAA. *The Higher Education Credit Framework for England: guidance on academic credit arrangements in higher education*. August 2008.

QAA. *Academic Credit in Higher Education in England – an introduction*. 2009

European Communities. *ECTS Users' Guide*. February 2009; *ECTS Users' Guide—Draft Revision* January 2015.

