Politics and international relations postgraduate study
Welcome to the school

In the School of Politics and International Relations, we are as proud of our excellent teaching reputation as we are of our superb research output.

Taught by academic experts within their respective fields, our postgraduate taught courses and research programmes attract a large and active graduate community from all corners of the globe.

Our chief research strengths lie in security, social and global justice, contemporary political theory, international history, comparative politics, and British politics. School staff have international reputations and we have a particular strength in the study of the Asia-Pacific area. Politics is taught and researched across all three of Nottingham’s campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia.

World-leading research underpins our curriculum, so you can be sure that you will graduate with a degree that is relevant to contemporary issues and aligns with the needs of employers around the world.

Professor Wyn Rees
Head of the School of Politics and International Relations
A university without borders

The University of Nottingham has campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia, and an outstanding reputation for ground-breaking research and teaching excellence.

Research at Nottingham generates discoveries, many of which have profound social, economic and cultural benefits and address major global challenges. Our postgraduate students make significant contributions to this pioneering work and can get involved in projects which have been rated internationally excellent.

Postgraduate study is challenging and all our students benefit from outstanding academic and pastoral support. Our experienced team are on hand to provide help and advice on issues ranging from your course, to finances, wellbeing and career planning.

Once you have completed your studies, you will become part of our family of 270,000 alumni in all corners of the globe. You can enjoy benefits including invitations to exclusive events, lifetime access to our Careers and Employability Service and access to a network which may prove invaluable in your future career.

Why study with us?

“Being passionate about the South East Asian region and its culture, I decided to go to Malaysia for my spring semester and I am currently living in Kuala Lumpur. This course offers a combination of high-quality education and practical experience.”

Carlotta Panchetti,
MA Asian and International Studies

The School of Politics and International Relations is based on the beautiful University Park Campus – take a virtual tour at nottingham.ac.uk/virtualnottingham

Find your future at Nottingham

International research

In the latest Research Excellence Framework, 96% of our research was rated as ‘國際 excellent’. We engage with the most fundamental political questions of our time. Our research projects have led to the regular production of high-quality publications by staff, awards and prizes, and frequent hosting of seminars and conferences.

Our research activity is organised around several research centres and institutes:
- Asia Research Institute
- Centre for British Politics
- Centre for the Study of Social and Global Justice
- Centre for Conflict, Security and Terrorism
- Nottingham Interdisciplinary Centre for Economic and Political Research
- Centre for Normative Political Theory
- Methods and Data Institute
- Centre for the Study of Political Ideologies
- Politics Centre for Teaching Development

You will be encouraged to play an active role in the school’s research centres and institutes, and the school as a whole.

High-quality teaching

We have an ongoing commitment to promoting excellence in teaching, which is embodied in the Politics Centre for Teaching Development. The centre holds events to share ideas and practices, and learn from experts in the field.

Our research philosophy underpins our interactions with students, producing graduates who are capable of independent thinking and have a critical approach to their work and the world around them.

One-to-one expert supervision

All masters students receive one-to-one supervision for their dissertation. Your supervisor will be a research-active member of the academic staff who can provide genuinely expert guidance.

Meanwhile, PhD students are allocated two expert supervisors who are chosen to provide complementary skills and guidance.

Masters students are also allocated a designated personal tutor for their time at Nottingham. Personal tutors can offer advice and guidance on academic matters and provide personal written references.

The University of Nottingham provides a wide range of support services for postgraduate students. As a postgraduate, you will have access to the University’s Graduate School – a dedicated facility which will provide you with support and guidance. The Graduate School offers induction events, training opportunities, funding, careers support and social and sporting events. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/graduateschool

Excellent employment prospects

The acquisition of a postgraduate degree demonstrates a high level of knowledge in a specific field. Career destinations for our postgraduates include economists, management consultants, researchers, statisticians and university lecturers. Companies and organisations our graduates have gone to work for include the BBC, Channel 4, the European Union, GCHQ, Reuters and the Thailand National Police Department.

Our international research underpins our curriculum, so you can be sure that you will graduate with a masters degree that is relevant to contemporary issues and aligns with the needs of employers around the world. If you wish to continue with your studies after completing an MA programme, our staff offer research degree supervision in most of the major sub-areas of the discipline.

95.2% of our postgraduates who were available for employment secured work or further study within six months of graduation. £25,000 was the average starting salary, with the highest being £42,000.*

* Known destinations of full-time home postgraduates 2016/17. Salaries are calculated based on the median of those in full-time paid employment within the UK.

National and international placements

We offer a range of local, national and international placement opportunities, which may be paid or voluntary, part-time alongside your studies or longer placements during University vacations. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/politics/placements
MA Asian and International Studies

An ideal foundation for a career in Asia, this course includes the opportunity to study in China or Malaysia, developing your knowledge of the culture and politics of the region. You will study at our UK campus for the first semester, moving to the University's campuses in China or Malaysia for the second. This provides you with the genuinely distinctive opportunity to study the countries of Asia, and the relations between them and the rest of the world.

This course is taught by academics across the University's UK, China and Malaysia campuses, who are experts on Asian politics, history and international relations. The Global Asia module will introduce you to Pan-Asian themes such as nationalism, globalisation, environmental challenges, resource politics and gender relations. It challenges the prevailing conception of 'Asia Rising' as a new phenomenon and will also allow you to specialise on specific country or regional studies.

You will immerse yourself in the culture of these countries and take language options if required. Accommodation will be organised by the University, although it is not covered by the course fees.

Course details

In the autumn semester, you will take a core module, plus 40 credits of optional modules (up to 20 of which can be from outside the School). You will spend the spring semester at either our China or Malaysia Campus, and will complete your studies by researching and writing a 60-credit, 15,000-word dissertation, on a subject related to Asia.

Career and professional development

This course is ideal if you would like to pursue a professional career in Asia, whether you are mid-career and wish to change direction, aiming to move into policy areas, or interested in taking time out to make sense of your day-to-day policy activities. It does not presuppose any knowledge of the region. However, modules are designed to enable those who have previous experience of living or working in Asia to expand and build on their existing knowledge.

The semester you spend in China or Malaysia will make you particularly attractive to employers who are seeking graduates with cultural and political experience. This course will develop your skills for a career in a range of fields, such as academe, civil service, international cultural exchange, international organisations, journalism, ministerial advising, non-governmental organisations and policy research.

Taught courses

MA Diplomacy

Designed to introduce you to the advanced study of diplomacy, this course will expose you to the latest research in the law of armed conflict, crisis management and contemporary international history.

Diplomacy provides the vital human framework for the development of international society in a globalising world. Increasingly complex patterns of law, culture, history, economics and politics – within and between states – are mediated by the practice of diplomacy. The craft of diplomacy plays a key role in regulating the contemporary world.

This dynamic, interdisciplinary course is offered jointly by the School of Politics and International Relations, School of Law, and Department of History. You will develop a broad understanding of diplomacy and negotiation, including traditional approaches that view it as a specialist form of statecraft, and modern conceptions that embrace areas such as the media and cultural diplomacy.

You can take part in a field trip to Europe visiting sights of political and cultural interest. Recent trips have included Brussels, The Hague and Berlin.

Course details

Across the autumn and spring semesters, you will take 60 credits of core modules and 60 credits of optional modules.

You will complete your studies by researching and writing a 60-credit, 15,000-word dissertation, on a subject related to diplomacy.

Career and professional development

This course is particularly suitable if you would like to pursue a career in international representation and negotiation, or in a field that is informed by diplomacy, mediation and negotiation. It is aimed at trainees or in-service diplomats, those who are mid-career and wish to change direction, aiming to move into policy areas, or interested in taking time out to make sense of their day-to-day policy activities.

It will develop your skills for a career in a range of fields, such as civil service, commercial negotiation, defence liaison, foreign trade departments, international cultural exchange, international financial regulation, international and non-governmental organisations, journalism, ministerial advising, public information and telecommunications consultancy.

Many of our previous students have held Chevening Scholarships from the UK Government.

MA Governance and Political Development

Introducing you to a variety of political systems and development across the world, this course includes the opportunity to spend a semester studying abroad.

You will benefit from our strengths in comparative politics, in particular Asian and Chinese politics, and will develop the skills required to better understand the varieties of contemporary governance. This course links into a number of leading research centres:

- Asia Research Institute
- Nottingham Interdisciplinary Centre for Economic and Political Research
- Methods and Data Institute

It is offered over one year full-time, based entirely at Nottingham, or two years full-time, with a semester of your second year in Europe, China or Malaysia. This allows you to directly experience the comparative method of studying at different institutions and living in different countries.

In China or Malaysia, you will study at the University’s campus. In Europe, our current partner institutions are the universities of Aarhus, Cologne, Vienna, Gothenburg, Konstanz, and the Central European University in Budapest.

Course details

On the one-year course, you will be based entirely at Nottingham and will complete 120 credits of taught modules, plus a 60-credit, 15,000-word dissertation over the summer.

On the two-year course, you will take 100 credits of taught modules at Nottingham over your first year. You will begin your second year by completing 60 credits of taught modules over your first semester in Europe, China or Malaysia, returning to Nottingham for your second semester to complete your 60-credit, 15,000-word dissertation.

Career and professional development

This course will equip you with the knowledge and skills needed for a career in a range of sectors, including international organisations such as the World Bank, UN, OECD or International IDEA, NGOs such as Oxfam, political foundations, think-tanks, civil service, political institutions such as parliament or ministries, and political parties.

This course will provide you with a solid grounding in the philosophical and practical aspects of international political analysis. You will be introduced to key concepts such as power, agency, the state, international society and order. This course can be tailored to your interests and career aspirations through the wide range of optional modules.

Teaching is informed by the research interests of our academic staff, who are well-established leaders in the field of international relations, covering:

- diplomacy in the Middle East and Asia
- global civil society and global justice
- globalisation
- human security and humanitarianism
- intelligence and national security
- international human rights and war crimes
- international political economy
- international relations theory
- justice beyond borders
- terrorism, guerilla war and low intensity conflict
- United States foreign and security policy

Course details

This course is made up of a 20-credit core module, 20-credit methodology module and 80 credits of optional modules, plus a 60-credit, 15,000-word dissertation.

Career and professional development

This course will prepare you for a career in a wide range of fields, such as national government, international organisations, international trade, and non-governmental organisations.
MA International Security and Terrorism

This innovative course provides you with a framework for detailed investigation of international security and terrorism. Security and safety have always been at the heart of the human condition. An understanding of security involves studying not only what makes us feel secure, but also what we regard as threatening. In the current world environment, with the upsurge in international terrorism and conflicts in Syria and Ukraine, this course offers the opportunity for in-depth study and analysis.

Taught by international security and terrorism experts, it will introduce you to some of the major schools of thought within the discipline, including realism, liberalism and critical theory. You will explore key issues in contemporary international security, including international intervention, conventional and nuclear deterrence, insurgency and counter-insurgency, peacekeeping, and peacekeeping.

This course will facilitate the analysis of terrorism as a political strategy, and will explore its contemporary significance and relative success. It will also develop your understanding of counter-terrorist strategy, and will explore its contemporary significance and relative success. It will also develop your understanding of counter-terrorist strategy, and will explore its contemporary significance and relative success. It will also develop your understanding of counter-terrorist strategy, and will explore its contemporary significance and relative success.

Course details
This course is made up of a 40 credits of core modules, 80 credits of optional modules, plus a 60-credit, 15,000-word dissertation.

Career and professional development
This course is particularly suitable if you are interested in pursuing a career in the social sciences. It may also be useful if you are looking to pursue a career in a statistical or quantitative discipline, such as analysis or planning roles.

Providing broad-based training in social science research, this course will equip you with the skills to manage a successful research career and contribute to society in a number of ways. You will develop a variety of skills and the ability to apply them to a wide range of practical research contexts.

Course details
You will complete 80 credits of core research methods modules, plus 40 credits of either advanced research methods or politics-specific training, and a 60-credit dissertation.

Career and professional development
This course is particularly suitable if you are interested in pursuing PhD study in the social sciences. It may also be useful if you are looking to pursue a career in a statistical or quantitative discipline, such as analysis or planning roles.

Taught courses

MA Politics and Contemporary History

Reflecting increased interest in contemporary history following the end of the Cold War, this course is explicitly historical in scope, with particular focus on events within living memory. It addressescontending approaches to recent events which have shaped your own life and the lives of those around you. Nottingham has one of the largest number of academics focused on contemporary history in the UK. Staff in the School of Politics and International Relations are actively engaged in this research and are joined by experts in the Department of American and Canadian Studies, Department of History, and the Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

Areas of special interest include:
- 20th-century American history
- 20th-century Chinese history
- Anglo-American relations
- Cold War history
- communism and fascism
- contemporary British political history
- film history
- intelligence and national security
- labour and urban history, especially in Britain and Europe
- modern German history including the Holocaust
- modern Russia, especially imperial, diplomacy and war
- modern war in Europe, Asia and the Pacific
- religion and conflict in the Middle East
- South East Asia, especially social movements
- United States foreign and security policy
- women’s history

Course details
You can tailor this flexible, interdisciplinary course to your interests and career aspirations by choosing from a wide range of modules. At least 60 credits will be taken with the School of Politics and International Relations, plus a 60-credit, 15,000-word dissertation. The remaining 60 credits may be studied with other schools/departments across the University, subject to approval, with certain modules being especially recommended.

Career and professional development
This course will introduce you to the advanced study of contemporary history and equip you with the skills needed for a wide range of career paths, from media and leisure, to national government and international organisations.

MA Social Science Research

(Political Science and International Relations)

Providing broad-based training in social science research, this course will equip you with the skills to manage a successful research career and contribute to society in a number of ways. You will develop a variety of skills and the ability to apply them to a wide range of practical research contexts.

Course details
You will develop a variety of skills and the ability to apply them to a wide range of practical research contexts. Primarily aimed at students following an ESRC-funded pathway onto a PhD, this course may also be suitable if you are intending to apply for an ESRC funding (that is, to cover a PhD) or are interested in developing a wide range of social science research skills.

Career and professional development
This course is particularly suitable if you are interested in pursuing PhD study in the social sciences. It may also be useful if you are looking to pursue a career in a statistical or quantitative discipline, such as analysis or planning roles.

There are more slaves alive today than at any point in history. Around the world, nearly 41 million people are forced to work against their will for no pay. Together, we can work to change this.”

Professor Kevin Bales

MA/PGDip/PGCert Slavery and Liberation

This internationally recognised distance-learning course is the first of its kind in the world. It is taught by world-leading academic and practitioner experts, from our Rights Lab – the world’s first large-scale research platform for ending slavery which is currently tracking slavery with satellite technology and ensuring businesses don’t use slave labour.

Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/world/beacons/rights-lab

You can complete this course over three years, or faster if you wish. It is designed so you can work to change this.”

There are more slaves alive today than at any point in history. Around the world, nearly 41 million people are forced to work against their will for no pay. Together, we can work to change this.”

Professor Kevin Bales

Course details
As this is a distance-learning course, the majority of content will be taught online, allowing you to access the learning resources from anywhere in the world.

All versions of this course include four 20-credit core modules which are taught online. MA and PGDip students also take two 20-credit modules taught back-to-back over two weeks of intensive face-to-face seminars in Nottingham (in the spring semester for full-time students and in the spring semester of year two for part-time students).

Career and professional development
This course will prepare you for a career in a wide range of fields relating to human rights, such as national government, international organisations and non-governmental organisations.

Graduating from Nottingham means that you have opened the door to an opportunity for an interesting and well paid career. Our students are highly regarded by employers because of the strong academic foundation and transferable skills that they gain during their degree courses.

Distance learning
Great minds grow together

Our postgraduate research community is lively and supportive, and students play an active role in the various research centres and in the activities of the school as a whole, including its governance. Reflecting the convergence of staff research agendas, the school has a variety of research centres and institutes and has the expertise to offer MRes and PhD supervision in an extensive array of research topics, including:

- Asia studies
- British politics
- China's governance and politics
- Comparative politics
- Conflict, security and terrorism
- International relations
- Political ideologies
- Political theory
- Social and global justice
- Social science research methodology

Facilities and support

Our research students are offered excellent facilities and support, including:

- two supervisors and additional support through membership of one of the school's research centres
- dedicated workspace, equipped with a networked computer
- generous photocopying and printing allowance
- opportunity to apply for funding to attend workshops and conferences

Teaching experience

Research students are encouraged to undertake some undergraduate teaching, normally during their second and third years. The Graduate School supports them in this by providing training in teaching skills.

Research training

As part of the postgraduate research programme, students are required to undergo methodological training. This takes the form of a Professional Development module, together with modules offered by the Midlands Graduate School ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership, or the school's own modules, and courses offered by the Graduate School.

Doctoral funding

We are part of the Midlands Graduate School ESRC and Midlands4Cities AHRC doctoral training partnerships, which offer funding opportunities for postgraduate students each year. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/go/phd-funding

Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/politics/research

nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/how-to-apply

Research opportunities

Applying, fees and funding

How to apply

Tuition fees

For the most up to date fee information, visit nottingham.ac.uk/fees

Entry requirements

Taught courses

2:1 (or international equivalent). For MA Social Science Research (Political Science and International Relations), this should be in a relevant arts, humanities or social science discipline.

Research opportunities

MRes applicants typically require a 2:1 (or international equivalent), while PhD candidates should have a masters (or international equivalent) in a relevant discipline, with an average of 60% or above.

For full entry requirements, please see individual course listings at nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy

EU and international applicants

At Nottingham, our global community is made up of staff and students from more than 150 countries. Staff regularly travel to meet prospective students, hosting events in China, Ghana, India, Malaysia and more. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/internationalstudents/meetus

If you need a visa to study, the University can provide all the information and advice you need. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/go/student-visa

For country-specific information including entry requirements, contact details and representatives, see nottingham.ac.uk/yourcountry

English language requirements

For applicants whose first language is not English, we require IELTS 6.5 (no less than 6.0 in any element). For MA Social Science Research (Political Science and International Relations), this should be 6.5 (no less than 6.0 in any element). For MA Social Sciences Research (Political Science and International Relations), and our PhDs, which require IELTS 7.0 (no less than 6.0 in any element). For more information and a list of the alternative English language requirements we accept, see nottingham.ac.uk/go/alternativeresources

Academic English preparation

The University offers pre-sessional courses designed to help students who have yet to meet their IELTS requirements develop the essential English language skills they need before they start their course. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/alterativealternatives

Academic English preparation and support

Accredited by the British Council for the teaching of English in the UK, the University’s Centre for English Language Education provides high-quality preparation and support. Our presessional courses take your English language and academic skills to the level you need to progress to postgraduate study without retaking IELTS or equivalent. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/cele

Home from home

We guarantee all new postgraduate students University-arranged, single-occupancy accommodation for one year to help make your move to Nottingham as simple and stress free as possible. To qualify for the guarantee, you must accept a place on one of our postgraduate courses and apply for accommodation by a specified date. Find out more about our accommodation, including the most up to date details of our guarantees at nottingham.ac.uk/accommodation

Equal opportunities policy

The University aims to create the conditions whereby students and staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, socioeconomic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.

Funding your studies

Current funding opportunities are listed on the school website at nottingham.ac.uk/politics and can also be found on the Graduate School website at nottingham.ac.uk/graduateschool

A wide range of international scholarships are available for specific countries and regions. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/go/international-scholarships

IELTS or equivalent. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/cele

nottingham.ac.uk/fees

nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/how-to-apply

nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/how-to-apply
This brochure has been drafted in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this brochure is accurate at the time of publishing, but changes (for example to course content) are likely to occur given the interval between publication and commencement of the course. It is therefore very important to check our website for any updates before you apply for the course by following nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy. Where there is a difference between the contents of this brochure and our website, the contents of the website take precedence.

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