

Lancaster
University



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International Relations
Undergraduate Degrees 2026



Welcome

We live in a rapidly evolving global landscape. Foreign policy, security threats, international cooperation and rivalry all take place across international borders.

Studying international relations at Lancaster will develop your ability to think in global terms – and to understand the nature of the political, economic and environmental challenges that confront us in the twenty-first century. Guided by academics who shape national and international policy, you'll emerge inspired and confident to tackle the challenges of our times.

How do AI and cyber technologies change our understanding of politics, security and war? How are emerging powers altering the global order? Can international institutions address global poverty and environmental crises? How is the continued rise of China reshaping the global balance of power? Is the Global South an invention of the North?

International relations at Lancaster will give you the skills necessary to address these questions and tackle some of the most pressing challenges of our times. You'll gain a comprehensive understanding of contemporary international relations from top experts in the field, and acquire the necessary skills for a career in local and international politics.

You'll have the opportunity, via work-based learning, our Richardson Institute Internship Programme, or a placement year, to gain experience which will prepare you for your career and to develop skills that will make you more employable. You may also have the opportunity to travel abroad, visiting countries you could be studying as part of your degree, either for short-term visits or for a full year on a study abroad degree.

Many of our students choose to combine the study of international relations with politics, history or economics. We hope that this booklet provides useful material to inform your own choice, but if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.



Degree title		Degree (Hons)	UCAS code	Course duration (years)	Typical A level offer
International Relations		BA	6T99	3	ABB
International Relations (Placement Year)		BA	6T91	4	ABB
International Relations (Study Abroad)		BA	6T92	4	ABB
Politics and International Relations		BA	L250	3	ABB
Politics and International Relations (Placement Year)		BA	L251	4	ABB
Politics and International Relations (Study Abroad)		BA	L252	4	ABB
History and International Relations		BA	VL12	3	AAB
History and International Relations (Placement Year)		BA	VL13	4	AAB
History and International Relations (Study Abroad)		BA	VL14	4	AAB
Economics, Politics and International Relations		BA	LL22	3	AAB
Economics, Politics and International Relations (Industry)		BA	LL20	4	AAB
Economics, Politics and International Relations (Study Abroad)		BA	LL19	4	AAB

Visit our website for more information on degree options, scholarships and entry requirements (such as BTECs)
lancaster.ac.uk





Made for *learning*

We employ a diverse range of teaching methods designed to foster active engagement, critical analysis, and independent learning. Our aim is to equip you with the critical thinking skills, in-depth knowledge, and analytical tools necessary to navigate the complexities of global politics, so throughout your studies you will encounter the following learning and assessment methods:

Lectures and workshops: provide foundational knowledge and encourage interactive engagement.

Seminars: foster critical discussion of readings and diverse viewpoints.

Games and simulations: apply theory to real-world scenarios.

Guest lectures: offer practical insights from experts.

Case studies: analyse specific events and policies to understand the complexities of our time.

Collaborative presentations: enhance teamwork and communication skills.

Your learning will be assessed through a variety of methods designed to evaluate different skills and levels of understanding, as well as preparing you for a career in the field of politics and international governance. These range from essays and policy reports, security briefs, reflective journals and case-study analysis, to statistical analysis and independent research projects.

“

I've been able to experience what it's like working in the political and public sector whilst studying.

”



Charlotte, second year

BA Hons Politics and International Relations

My time so far at Lancaster University has been the most amazing experience. Having taken a couple of gap years figuring out what and where I wanted to study my degree, I am so glad I picked Lancaster as my university.

I have been lucky enough to partake in the Richardson Institute Internship, where we are paired with one of the partnered NGO's or think tanks to help with their policy work. Currently I am working with a Canadian NGO called Archipelago of Design where I am helping out with their marketing and social media strategies in promoting their latest securitised board game designed to help military and security personnel to prepare for multi-layered political dilemmas.

Furthermore, I have also been on a trip to Parliament, run by the University, where we were able to watch the current developments in both Houses as well as speaking to our local MP and other parliamentary staff. These incredible experiences have allowed me to experience what it's like working in the political and public sector whilst still studying for my degree, as well as helping me to build on my presenting skills and gaining more confidence with public speaking.

I truly can't recommend Lancaster University enough for studying politics and international relations, I have thoroughly enjoyed my degree here so far and I am looking forward to what opportunities my third year will hold.



Gain *real-world* experience

We know you want to graduate confident and ready to progress towards your career. That's why we make it easy to incorporate work experience into your time at Lancaster.

Your ambitions are important to us, and we will help you build the skills you need to succeed by offering a range of placement and internship opportunities.

Placement year

You can opt to study your degree with a placement year (also known as a year in industry). On this degree you spend your third year working in a graduate-level, professional job in a sector of your choice before returning to complete your final year at Lancaster University. Securing a placement is a competitive process and we support you with personalised coaching and professional guidance.

Richardson Institute internships

Our School is home to the Richardson Institute, which undertakes cutting-edge peace and conflict research. Research themes include transnational repression, human rights, conflict resolution, and identity and belonging. Typically, the Institute offers 30 competitive internships per year to our students to undertake research projects for external organisations.

Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Internship Scheme

You'll gain sector-relevant work experience and get paid for it with these internships. Apply in all years of study for opportunities such as research and policy intern, business development strategist, or assistant events producer. The scheme is delivered by our faculty employability team who are here to support your access to direct work experience while you study.

The Lancaster Award

The Lancaster Award is a non-academic certificate developed in partnership with employers to help you make the most of your time at Lancaster and to demonstrate the skills you have developed along the way. It is designed to reward the wide range of volunteering activities and placements undertaken by many of our undergraduates. Potential employers increasingly value a profile that includes more than just strong academic results, and the Lancaster Award recognises and validates this.



“

This placement with the Welsh Government allowed me to see what I had learnt in my degree in action.

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Welsh Government
Innovation Team

Lancaster University



Alistair, final year

**BA Hons Politics and
International Relations
(Placement Year)**

For my placement year, I worked with the Welsh Government Innovation Team in the role of Team Support. This was only made possible thanks to the support from the careers team at Lancaster University. They helped me with mock interviews, practising how to best approach questions on application forms and constantly going over my CV.

Once I'd moved to Cardiff and started my job, I discussed with my manager what I wanted to get out of this placement and experiences I was keen to have. I told her I was really interested in Public Policy and Government Business. As a result of this conversation, I wrote a speech for the Student Innovation Awards to be read out in the Senedd, as well as attending multiple policy training workshops. This was in addition to my everyday tasks of writing and researching for publications as well as helping to organise and attend events for the Innovation Team.

This placement not only allowed me to see what I had learnt in my politics and international relations degree in action but also let me utilise my writing skills that I had developed over my degree in the workplace. I would highly recommend the experience of a placement year as I gained valuable lessons in how organisations work, work culture and crucially I discovered what characteristics I will look out for in my future roles after university.



Your global *experience*

Lancaster is a truly international university, with students and staff from over 100 different countries and partner institutions around the world. Your global experience is about living and learning with people from different cultures whether through your course, your college or your students' union.

Study abroad

You can choose to study your degree with a study abroad year. On these four-year degrees, you spend your third year studying at one of our partner universities abroad. Our current partners are in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and the USA, although availability of destinations varies each year.

Living in another country and studying your subject from a different perspective enhances your subject knowledge and develops resourcefulness for life after university.

Vacation travel and overseas summer schools

You can also discover the world during your vacations. We run short trips to destinations such as China, Germany, Ghana, Malaysia and Switzerland. These trips include meeting local students and businesses as well as some academic study and cultural discovery.

In addition, you can attend summer schools at one of our many overseas partners.

Find out more at lancaster.ac.uk/your-global-experience

“

The potential for growth is unmatched.

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Carleton University,
Ottawa

Lancaster University



Ben, final year

**International Relations
(Study Abroad)**

During my undergraduate studies at Lancaster University I opted to study abroad, spending my second year studying at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. This enriching experience provided me with the opportunity of immersing myself within a new culture, climate, people, and educational environment, fostering growth in both my personal and professional development.

At Carleton, I enrolled in a variety of classes under the social sciences including a mixture of economics, politics and international relations content, tailored towards my degree. Outside of lectures and tutorials, I also secured part-time work, giving me valuable international work experience and allowing me to share my passion for everything outdoors.

I built lasting friendships with both Canadians and fellow exchange students - now I have a sofa to sleep on almost anywhere in the world! As an avid outdoorsman, I took every opportunity during reading weeks and holidays to explore the country's natural beauty. From hiking and camping to ice-skating, fishing, kayaking and photography, I immersed myself in Canada's incredible landscapes and outdoor lifestyle.

I'm incredibly grateful to both Lancaster and Carleton for making this possible. To those considering embarking on a similar journey, I could not recommend the experience enough as the potential for growth is unmatched.

International Relations

BA (Hons)

This degree equips you with a unique understanding of global dynamics and the analytical tools necessary to navigate complex international issues.

Your first year provides a comprehensive grounding in the discipline, focusing on the core foundations and origins of international relations, the analysis of contemporary global challenges, and an exploration of fundamental political thought. This crucial stage equips you with the essential tools for advanced study.

As you progress to your second year, you'll have the opportunity to tailor your degree to align with your specific interests. Specialisation pathways allow you to focus on key areas such as international security, in-depth regional studies, or the complex mechanisms of global governance. This focused learning builds upon your first-year knowledge, enabling a deeper engagement with your chosen field.

Your final year culminates in the development of advanced research skills and intellectual independence. You'll undertake a dissertation project, allowing you to contribute original research and demonstrate your understanding of international relations, preparing you for future academic or professional pursuits.

Enhancing your curriculum

We continually review and enhance our course curricula to ensure we are delivering the best possible learning experience, and to make sure that the subject knowledge and transferable skills you develop will prepare you for your future. Information within this publication with respect to courses and modules is correct at the time of publication, and the University will make every reasonable effort to offer courses and modules as advertised. In some cases, changes may be necessary and may result in new modules or some modules and combinations being unavailable, for example as a result of student feedback, timetabling, staff changes and new research.

Year 1

Core Modules

Origins and Foundations of International Relations

Discover the core concepts, theories and historical contexts that shape the field of International Relations. In this module you will gain an understanding of the state system, sovereignty, power, anarchy and other key concepts that underpin the discipline.

Global Challenges in World Politics

Gain an understanding of the forces driving change in the international system and their impact on global order and human security. Move beyond traditional state-centric perspectives to explore the complex interplay of actors, structures, and processes shaping our interconnected world.

Global Governance and International Institutions

Explore global governance and the role of international institutions in tackling today's challenges. Study the historical development of the international system and the evolution of world order, setting the stage for an analysis of key actors in global politics.

Political Theory in a Troubled World

Explore how the history of political thought can help us make sense of contemporary crises. This module will examine topics such as political instability, economic crises, deepening inequalities, environmental degradation and technological disruptions, whilst debating political-economic order using historical perspectives.

Critical Perspectives on Global Politics

Challenge traditional views of international relations by exploring critical theories such as Marxism, poststructuralism, feminism, queer IR and postcolonialism. Understand how these perspectives contrast with positivist approaches that emphasise objective facts and values in explaining world order.

Thinking Globally

What does it mean to think in and about the world? This module will draw on disciplines from across the School of Global Affairs to think about the very different ways in which the world can be imagined.

Year 2

Core Modules

Reshaping Global Order

Explore the profound transformations reshaping the contemporary international system. This module will build on your knowledge of foundational theories and concepts to examine the dynamic interplay of power shifts, globalisation and evolving security landscapes.

Understanding Political Research

In this module, you'll gain skills for independent research in international relations. Design your own project, learn qualitative and quantitative methods and analyse a large political dataset to test for statistically significant relationships using various techniques.

Plus one from:

Employability, Purpose and Social Impact

Global Challenges and Collaborative Solutions

Cultural Diversity and Professional Contexts

Taking an Idea and Making it Happen

Optional Modules

+ War, Peace and Modernity

+ Global Capitalism and its Discontent

+ Authoritarianism, Repression and Resistance in the 21st century

+ Global Superpowers

+ Politics of the Global South

Study abroad degrees

You will study abroad at a partner university in your third year. The grades you achieve at your host university will be translated back and be credited to your Lancaster degree.

Placement year degrees

In your third year you will undertake as core the 'Placement Year Work Based Learning Module'.

Final Year

Core Modules

International Relations Dissertation

Investigate an international relations topic of personal interest through a detailed research project. Your chosen subject may stem from previous modules or reflect a unique area you're passionate about beyond your coursework.

Plus one from:

Technology and Social Justice

Queer Futures

People Power, Community Engagement and Collective Action

Confronting the Climate Crisis

The Power of Ideas

Artistic Fusions

Futures Beyond Borders

Optional Modules

+ Critical Studies of War and Security

+ Environment and Development

+ Security, Strategy and Technology

+ The Politics of Crises and the Future of Governance

+ Politics of the Middle East and Asia Pacific

+ Politics of Latin America and Africa

+ Russia and China

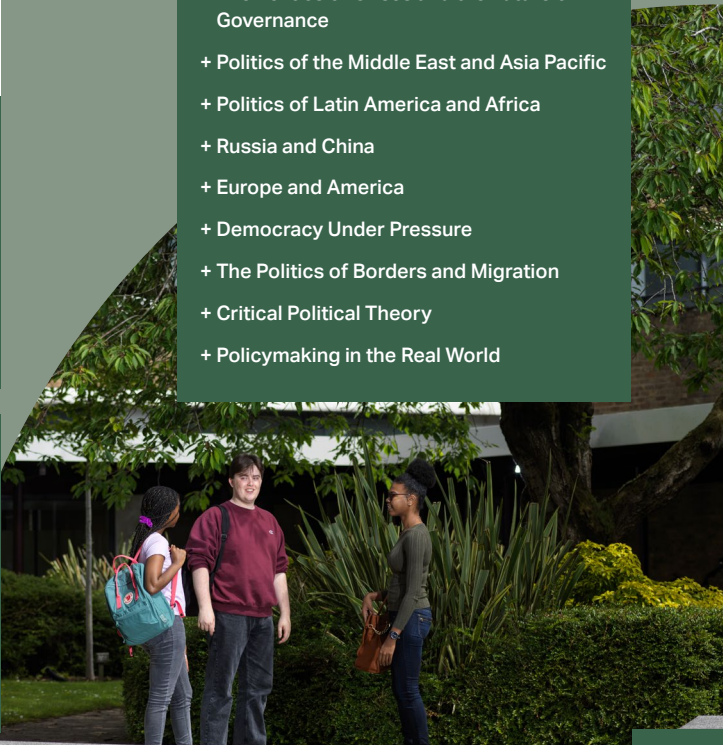
+ Europe and America

+ Democracy Under Pressure

+ The Politics of Borders and Migration

+ Critical Political Theory

+ Policymaking in the Real World



History and International Relations

BA (Hons)

Explore the complex interplay of past and present and gain a deep understanding of the forces shaping our world today.

- + What is the impact of new technologies on war and conflict?
- + What are the economic and cultural consequences of globalisation?
- + How can we address the challenges of global inequality and climate change?
- + Do international institutions protect and advance human rights?

Delve into these questions and engage in many other exciting debates on this degree.

The course offers a unique perspective on the rapidly changing global landscape, taught by influential academics shaping policy at the local and global levels.

You will explore the past, from ancient civilizations to modern times, and develop the critical thinking skills to understand the present. Through this degree, you will gain a deep appreciation for the complexities of human societies and will learn how to tackle the critical challenges shaping our world from top experts in the field.

Study abroad degrees

You will study abroad at a partner university in your third year. The grades you achieve at your host university will be translated back and be credited to your Lancaster degree.

Placement year degrees

In your third year you will undertake as core the 'Placement Year Work Based Learning Module'.

Year 1

Core Modules

Origins and Foundations of International Relations

Discover the core concepts, theories and historical contexts that shape the field of international relations. You will gain an understanding of the state system, sovereignty, power, anarchy and other key concepts that underpin the discipline.

Revolutions in History

Explore a concept fundamental to history: historical change. We discover what it looks like and how it happens. You will investigate a series of political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural events that have been identified as revolutionary.

Controversy in History

Why do historians disagree about how to interpret the past? What issues divide them and why? You will study real-life examples of historical debate introduced by our experts and you'll learn to build and articulate your own persuasive arguments.

Global Governance and International Institutions

Study the complex landscape of global governance and the role of international institutions in addressing contemporary challenges. You will explore the historical development of the international system, the evolution of world order and the key actors in global politics.

The Modern World

Explore the lived experience of peoples and nations in the modern age through the emergence of new ideas – including nationalism, capitalism, imperialism, racism, and feminism. Discover how these were shaped by individuals, political movements, and events in diverse regions of the world.

Thinking Globally

What does it mean to think in and about the world? This module will draw on disciplines from across the School of Global Affairs to think about the very different ways in which the world can be imagined.



Year 2

Core Modules

Reshaping Global Order

Examine the profound transformations reshaping the contemporary international system. You will explore the dynamic interplay of power shifts, globalisation and evolving security landscapes. You'll analyse the changing distribution of power and explore alternative visions for international cooperation.

War and Transformation

Discover how wars drive historical change and transformation. You'll examine war as a result of complex forces. You will learn how war has changed over time, how it has been shaped by ideas and how it's led to technological changes.

Understanding Political Research

Gain the skills you need to complete independent research in international relations. Direct your own learning by developing a research project on your chosen topic. The skills you develop will be a useful asset when seeking employment.

Plus one from:

Employability, Purpose and Social Impact
Global Challenges and Collaborative Solutions
Cultural Diversity and Professional Contexts
Taking an Idea and Making it Happen

Optional Modules

- + War, Peace and Modernity
- + Authoritarianism, Repression and Resistance in the 21st Century
- + Global Capitalism and its Discontent
- + Inventing Rights
- + Information and Misinformation

Final Year

Core Modules

International Relations Dissertation

Investigate an area of international relations that is of particular interest to you. You'll carry out a detailed research project, supported and guided by an academic supervisor who will have some familiarity with your chosen topic.

The Use and Abuse of History

Why does history matter? This module challenges you to consider how history as a discipline is applied and what it contributes. You'll discover the wide range of roles historians play in society and articulate the significance of history in our world.

Plus one from a selection including:

Technology and Social Justice
Confronting the Climate Crisis
Futures Beyond Borders

Optional Modules

- + Vikings and Sea-Kings: The Irish Sea Region, 794–1079
- + From Rebellion to Revolution: The War for the Throne, 1199–1265
- + Participation, Splendour and Violence: The Italian City-States, c.1100–1350
- + Intelligent Design? Science, Religion and the Idea of Design in Nature, 1450–1800
- + Paradise Lost: Colonisation and the Jamaican Environment, 1655–1838
- + The East India Company: Merchant State, 1600–1857
- + Critical Studies of War and Security
- + Environment and Development
- + Security, Strategy and Technology
- + Policymaking in the Real World
- + The Politics of Crises

See website for further optional modules.

Careers and employability

Our international relations degrees equip you with a versatile skill set that prepares you for a wide range of exciting careers.

Throughout your studies, you will develop strong analytical, research, and communication skills, as well as a deep understanding of global issues.

We emphasise critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to work effectively in diverse teams.

Careers service

Our careers service has connections with top graduate recruiters, high growth businesses and employers across diverse sectors. There are regular careers fairs, workshops and networking opportunities.

You can be matched with an employer or a graduate for one-to-one advice and take part in workshops such as writing a CV, developing a LinkedIn profile or succeeding at psychometric testing. We have a vast range of online resources as well as an exclusive job search portal. Our team of friendly, experienced careers professionals are always on hand to help and advise.

Graduate destinations

Whether you are passionate about international relations, global politics, security issues, or politics, you will gain the knowledge and skills to make a difference in the world across different sectors, including:

- + Government and public sector
- + Civil service: work at the heart of government policymaking, contributing to shaping national and international strategies.
- + Diplomatic service: represent your country abroad and engage in international diplomacy.
- + International organisations: work for organisations like the UN, EU, or World Bank to address global challenges.
- + Non-profit and NGO sector.
- + International aid and development: work with NGOs to alleviate poverty, promote human rights, and address global inequalities.
- + Humanitarian organisations: respond to crises and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need.
- + Advocacy and campaigning: advocate for social and environmental justice and influence public policy.



“
Being in the same room as high-profile international stakeholders was inspirational.
”



Jack, final year

School of Global Affairs student

I undertook an internship as a Project Assistant for The International Network Against Accusations of Witchcraft and Associated Harmful Practices (TINAAWAHP) Conference.

Working with Lancaster University researchers on this project, I learnt a lot about the ongoing fight for human rights globally and the legal challenges faced in certain hotspots of witchcraft-related harm. Many stories heard were harrowing, but it was reassuring to hear - and meet - those who are dedicated to changing things.

I gained skills in administration and using MS Word and Excel in professional contexts. I was tasked with emailing all delegates to chase up outstanding information for the conference. Keeping a check as to which information I had received from who, as well as sending formal emails, was a great professional experience to gain.

This was also one of the first times that I had communicated with high-profile individuals. Changing communication techniques (such as addressing everyone with their full title, for instance) soon became the norm when contacting or speaking to the conference delegates. My communications skills have developed a lot!

The conference itself was an eye-opening day. Being in the same room as high-profile international stakeholders on this issue (such as UN delegates, barristers and human rights advocates from around the globe) was inspirational.



lancaster.ac.uk/international-relations

The information provided in this publication relates primarily to 2026 entry to the University and every effort has been taken to ensure the information is correct at the time of printing in June 2025. The University will use all reasonable effort to deliver the course as described but the University reserves the right to make changes after going to print. You are advised to consult our website at: lancaster.ac.uk/study for up-to-date information before you submit your application. Further legal information may be found at: lancaster.ac.uk/compliance/legalnotice.