

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

About International Relations

As international connections, communication and collaboration become increasingly important across all areas of life, it's unsurprising to find a corresponding increase in demand for graduates from the field of international relations. The most-coveted **international relations careers** – such as positions in high-profile international organizations – are hotly contested, and studying a specialized **Masters in International Relations** is a definite asset, particularly if combined with international experience.

Demand for IR has existed throughout recorded history – for as long as distinct human communities have sought ways to communicate, to control or conquer one another, and to trade and collaborate. But the field was only formally established as part of the higher education portfolio within the last century. The first dedicated department for international relations was founded in the UK at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in 1924.

Today, common **international relations topics** and specializations include conflict and peace-making, comparative foreign policy, environmental policy, human rights, trade and financial regulation, international law, diplomatic tools and processes, migration and refugees, international security and the role of international organizations such as the European Union.

Programs on Offer

A wide-reaching and interdisciplinary field, international relations is explored through a variety of program types. A Masters in International Relations may be offered as either a Master of Science (MSc) or Master of Arts (MA), and the subject may be referred to as international relations, international affairs or global affairs (to name just a few variations). Often, international relations is paired with a related field or specialization, such as diplomacy, governance, politics, business, law, conflict resolution or development. As detailed in the “specializations” section of this guide, a growing number of highly focused programs are also available.

Entry requirements

In accord with the subject's broad range of specializations, international relations programs tend to attract students from a fairly diverse range of academic backgrounds. However – while it is possible to cross over from the natural or life sciences or technology – it's fair to say that the majority of applicants are from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Some Masters in International Relations have more specific requirements. For instance, students may be required to have completed at least some basic courses in Economics before enrolling. And for some programs, standardized tests such as the GRE are required.

Professional experience may also be considered, especially if acquired in a relevant role. However, many international relations programs focus mostly on assessing applicants' academic background, considering grades attained and relevant skills and knowledge acquired. The exact set of criteria will depend on the individual institution, as well as norms in the country a student wishes to apply and study.

Who employs international relations graduates?

As the broad scope of the subject should imply, international relations careers are as varied as they come. Common employers of IR graduates include national bodies (such as governmental ministries and departments, civil services, think tanks and policy advisory groups); embassies and consulates;



international organizations (such as UN agencies, EU departments, the World Health Organization and the World Economic Forum); charities, campaign groups, aid agencies and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The private sector is also a major employer of international relations graduates, particularly within companies which operate internationally. Some graduates will pursue communications-based careers such as journalism, PR and other media roles. Others follow career paths which call for strong analytical skill sets, such as banking, financial services and corporate consultancy. In part, this may be determined by the international relations topics selected throughout undergraduate and graduate studies, and the corresponding skillsets acquired – but generally it's fair to say that an IR degree should leave multiple options open.

Of those graduating from graduate international relations programs offered by members of the Association of Professional Schools of International Relations (APSIA), around 35% go on to work in the public sector, 30% in the private sector, 30% in NGOs and 5% elsewhere.

Growth areas for international relations careers

Areas likely to see significant growth in coming years include:

International development

Here there's demand for graduates to combine multiple roles – research, project management, business development and policy analysis – and to support the movement away from service delivery and towards capacity building.

Energy and sustainability

Like all of the present generation, IR graduates will also find emerging roles in the energy and sustainability sectors, with various positions relating to international regulations, policy, negotiation and security.

International communications

IR graduates with an interest in international communications will be particularly well-placed to meet growing demand for employees combining multilingualism and digital prowess, along with an understanding of cross-cultural communication in the modern media landscape. IR graduates who have an interest in graphic design, online content or social media will find a wide range of employers seeking their skill set.

Science & technology

Technological and scientific developments offer opportunities for IR graduates to contribute to developing policies and strategies designed to help nations keep pace with the rate of change, as well as identifying and resolving potential conflicts.

Intelligence & security

Technological change also underlies many careers in the field of intelligence and security. Here, IR graduates will find new challenges for their analytical skills, with the opportunity to contribute to potentially planet-changing recommendations taken on board by governments, business leaders and the military.

Higher education

Finally, there's growing demand from within the higher education sector itself, as universities increasingly prioritize internationalization in its various forms. Positions here could focus on specific goals such as international marketing, recruitment and student support, or on high-level strategy and vision.



For the most-coveted international relations jobs – particularly those in well-known international organizations and non-profits – relevant work experience is often essential. This can be acquired through formal internships, as well as through participation in student organizations, campaign groups and voluntary work. For research-focused and highly specialized roles, a PhD may be required, or a significant asset.

TOP UNIVERSITIES

1. Harvard University, USA
2. University of Oxford , UK
3. London School of Economics and Political Science
4. Sciences Po Paris , France
5. University of Cambridge , UK
6. Australian National University, Australia
7. Yale University ,USA
8. Princeton University , USA
9. University of California Berkley, USA
10. Columbia University , USA
11. International University in Geneva, Geneva
12. Geneva School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Geneva
13. University of Business and International Studies, Geneva
14. Graduate institute of International and development studies, Geneva

