UNIVERSITY OF BATH

Programme Specification

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Programme title	MSc in Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development
Awarding Institution//Body	University of Bath
Teaching Institution	University of Bath
Programme accredited by (including date of accreditation)	
Subject Benchmark Statement*Subject Benchmark Statement:*	N/A
Date of Specification preparation/revision	
Applicable to cohorts	
Programme Approved by	

Synopsis and academic coherence of programme

The Masters in Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development offers an innovative educational experience that combines in-depth knowledge, intellectual challenge, and orientation to humanitarian and development practice. The programme is structured to enhance part-time students' learning and professional career development. It directly addresses several core global challenges relating to the need to reduce conflict and promote peace, whilst providing sustainable policy solutions that address the needs of those displaced by conflict and natural disaster. It is designed for those pursuing or seeking careers with development or humanitarian NGOs, the United Nations and other inter-governmental organisations, or in conflict/humanitarian advisor roles in government departments such as DFID.

An flexible programme of mixed residential and distance-learning is delivered part-time over two years. Its content and delivery are specifically tailored to professionals employed or planning to work full-time in humanitarian policy, practice and advisory roles. The programme offers:

1) course content that enables participants to develop, deploy and critically reflect on their professional experience as an integral part of the programme.

2) a structure for delivery and assessment that offers high quality and challenging teaching and learning on all main issues relating to humanitarian action, conflict and development in a way that responds to students' needs.

The programme structure is explained below. Key features are:

- *Structured blend of online delivery and short residentials in Bath* with diverse range of learning opportunities; networking with senior practitioners and guest- speakers; access to unique learning opportunities (e.g. practice-based scenarios).
- *Unique optional practice-based residential in Amman* with opportunities for in-depth critical reflection on humanitarian practice with policymakers and experienced professionals.
- *Opportunities for in-depth focus according to students' professional interests* in specific areas of conflict and development or issues of humanitarian aid and practice.
- *Learning and assessment supported by case study materials* on diverse conflicts and issues in a range of settings.
- *Comprehensive range of assessments in professionally relevant formats* that blend rigorous engagement with academic research, independent research work, and the development of professional and transferable skills for humanitarian and development practice.
- *Strong cohort identity* , with annual programme entry, residentials, and robust student support and proactive student engagement throughout the programme.
- *Regular online support for critical independent learning* so that students can explore material independently and in depth according to their professional and practice interests.
- *Flexible delivery of units* to assist students' ability to undertake the programme from different time zones, and while in employment, but maintaining cohort identity and coherence of learning over the programme as a whole.
- *Focused assessments* to enable students to plan their learning with professional commitments while also maintaining expectations of Masters-level learning outcomes with high standard requirements.

Structure and content of the programme (including potential stopping off points)

The programme is organised in three stages. All units are compulsory and run consecutively, corresponding to development of intellectual skills and increasing topic specialisation through the programme (see below for progression and relation to assessment regulations NFAAR).

All units use both residential and online learning, and offer diverse learning opportunities, including the integration of content and skills development with their professional experience and knowledge and critical reflection on their professional practice and knowledge. When possible, an optional practice-based residential co-hosted by an international partner will provide opportunities for students to learn directly from experienced policymakers and practitioners, and to enhance their understanding of how contemporary humanitarian and development-related issues play out in specific contexts. For the Bath residentials, students pay for transport, accommodation and some subsistence; when the optional practice-based residential is available, all costs except transport are included in the course fee. Students will be exposed to professional settings in residential and other units so that those without relevant professional experience are not disadvantaged.

STAGE ONE (exit: PG Cert)

Foundational units covering key theories, approaches and models shaping humanitarian and development policy and practice in conflict, post-conflict and peace-building contexts.

STAGE TWO (exit: PG diploma)

Advanced units covering the role of human rights discourse, policy and practices in diverse contexts, and critical reflection on how to negotiate the field, in humanitarian action and practices from the ground up.

STAGE THREE (exit: Masters)

The dissertation is supported by separate specialist tutorials and online learning resources from month 12, and more intensively in the Y2 residential in Bath (month 18). Students are assigned individual supervisors at the beginning of Y2. Students undertake an independent piece of research, which can involve generation of new data. The dissertation involves synthesis of knowledge and understanding from existing studies and theories, and their application to a specific conceptual, empirical or practice-based problem in conflict, humanitarianism and development.

Educational aims of the programme

This comprehensive and flexible programme provides:

- An outstanding educational experience that combines in-depth knowledge, critical reflection, and orientation to humanitarian aid and development practice, conflict response and development, structured to enhance part-time students' learning and professional career development.

- Critical and in-depth knowledge, understanding and analytical skills to tackle the political, ethical and practical tensions and challenges involved in humanitarian and conflict response

- Enhancement and deepening of students' skills in reviewing, analysing, applying and evaluating a range of conceptual perspectives and analytical tools for conflict response and humanitarian action across diverse settings/contexts.

- Enhancement and deepening of students' practical knowledge of issues and challenges in humanitarian and development policy and practice and the elaboration of durable professional networks for continued knowledge exchange and career development.

• Knowledge & Understanding:	By the end of the **PG Certificate stage** of the MSc Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development, students will have the following skills: • Comprehensive knowledge and advanced understanding of key concepts and theories that underpin interdisciplinary perspectives on humanitarianism, conflict and development • In-depth knowledge of contemporary humanitarian, conflict and development problems and how these emerge at sub-national, national and supra-national levels, and how these levels are linked • critical understanding of contemporary humanitarian, peacebuilding and development policy and practice. • critical understanding of the complex linkages between processes of violent conflict, and development, and how this relationship plays out across a range of contexts.
• Intellectual Skills:	By the end of the **PG Certificate stage** of the MSc Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development, students will have the following skills: • Critically interpreting and evaluating research information, evidence, outcomes and debate on topics related to humanitarianism, conflict and development • Systematically reviewing, interpreting and deploying research to identify a problem in humanitarian aid and development policy and practice, and developing problem-based recommendations/interventions in response By the end of the **PG Diploma stage** of the MSc Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development, students will have the following skills (in addition to the above): • Designing and undertaking a research project, including specifying strengths and weaknesses of data sources, and selection and application of appropriate methods.
• Professional Practical Skills:	By the end of the **PG Certificate stage** of the MSc Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development, students will have the following skills (in addition to the above): • Plan, design, and evaluate humanitarian, peacebuilding and development interventions and strategies for effective practice in complex real-world contexts • Select, apply and assess a diverse range of tools and methods used in humanitarian, peacebuilding interventions and strategies • use, interpret and challenge research from diverse sources, perspectives and paradigms to make a persuasive case By the end of the **PG Diploma stage** of the MSc Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development, students will have the following skills (in addition to the above): • Apply enhanced skills in the integration of research and systematic argumentation to critically review peacebuilding and humanitarian policy and practice.

• Transferable/Key Skills:	By the end of the **PG Certificate stage** of the MSc Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development, students will have the following skills (in addition to the above):
	• Synthesise a wide range of conceptual and empirical material in a coherent and structured way in a range of formats • Clearly communicate complex evidence and arguments in an ethical, rigorous and critically reflective way for a variety of professional audiences.
	• Critically interpret different sources of research and evaluate their relevance, strengths and weaknesses in relation to policies and practice
	By the end of the **MSc stage** of the MSc Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development, students will have the following skills (in addition to all of the above):
	• Plan, timetable and undertake an independent project of research relating to interventions, policy or practice.

Summary of assessment and progression regulations

NFA - fully compliant

Progression Regulations and Awards

The programmes assessment and progression regulations are covered by the university's "New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/nfa/nfaar-pgt.pdf

The programme is a 3-stage programme. Students who for academic or personal reasons are unable to complete the programme may therefore be offered an exit award.   Overall, the progression structure is as follows.

Stage one: students must **achieve an overall average of at least 40% across both units** (programme progression requirement) in order to progress to stage two. This reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the programme, with significant weighting to foundational units, so that overall performance across both elements of programme stage one needs to be secured before moving to stage two.

Stage two: students are required to achieve an overall **average of at least 40% across stages one and two** in order to progress to stage three (programme progression requirement to pass to the research stage).

Details of Work Placements Requirements / Work Based Learning / Industrial Training Requirements

N/A

Details of Study Abroad Requirements

N/A

Details of Professional Accreditation

Admissions Criteria including APL/APEL arrangements

Typically a 1st or 2:1 Honours degree (or its international equivalent) in an allied subject such as development studies, human or political geography, sociology, area studies, politics, political economy, economics, international relations. Applications are also encouraged from students with degree qualifications at a similar level but in other subjects, with sufficient relevant professional experience.

English Language requirements (certificates must be dated to within two years of the start of the programme of study):

•   IELTS 6.5 (with no less than 6.0 in each of the four components)

•   PTE Academic of 62 with no less than 59 in any component

Applications from current undergraduate students should provide a transcript of the subjects they are taking in their final year, even if they do not have all their results at the time of application. Two references, usually at least one academic.

Credit may be awarded in the form of an exemption from an individual unit where the Accreditation of Prior Learning or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning procedure has produced evidence that the student has successfully achieved the learning outcomes of that unit. In all cases the university's QA procedures will be followed, namely 'QA45 Accreditation of Prior Learning'.

Details of Support Available to Students

This programme offers a structured model for supporting blended-learning.

Introduction

Support and guidance for students on the MSc in Humanitarianism, Conflict and Development is provided within the framework of the Department's overall strategy for student-centred support, and is underpinned by the University's Quality Assurance Guidelines in the area.

SPS provides support and guidance to students from first enquiries to graduation and is the first point of contact for students requiring support. Staff also guide students to the appropriate part of the University's central support network when necessary. Students are also made aware of this central support network through the Programme Handbook.

As a blended learning programme, it is especially important that the structure of student support is clear and that students receive the highest quality intellectual and academic support as well as pastoral guidance. The following learning support structure is adopted.

The Director of Studies (DoS). An academic member of staff who leads the programme admissions, content, delivery and review. The DoS is responsible for quality assurance in all aspects of the programme, including students' learning and academic standards. The DoS leads and co-ordinates structure and content of residentials.

Academic Tutor(s) (AT). An academic member of staff who is the main academic and learning contact for students. The AT monitors, moderates and engages in web-forum and study-group discussions. The AT maintains general and proactive contact with students to monitor and encourage participation (e.g. through regular webinar/web-forum discussions), normally on a weekly basis and where relevant more frequently. The AT also collates more specific queries for unit convenors to answer (and check this is done).

Unit convenors Academic members of staff who design, organize and prepare all teaching materials, activities and assessment. They provide additional scheduled structured points of contact for students every 4-6 weeks (via interventions in web-forums, formative feedback, webinars, skype meetings, or the residentials) for informal formative assessment and additional learning contact point for students.

Personal tutor (PT) An academic member of staff assigned to each student to provide pastoral support. They are responsible for monitoring and supporting the individual academic progress and general welfare of their students.

Study group (peer-to-peer). Students are assigned to a study group in the pre-induction period, and this is the main peer-to-peer forum for students' online learning and discussion. Through the study group, students experience a high quality and challenging learning experience, and also develop a supportive and motivating learning community over the progression of the programme.

Programme administrator is an administrative member of staff and provides first point of contact for students. They 'triage' queries as academic, pastoral or technical, and are the administrative contact point for students in relation to assessment, and residentials.

The Director of Studies and designated support staff are available to provide information and advice to potential students whether local or overseas. Advice will be provided at this stage for students whose first language is not English on the most appropriate and convenient way in which they can test for the required IELTS score and on the language support available within the University.

Careers Information and Guidance

The University's Careers Service provides central student support. Outcomes for students are professional development in post-conflict development practice, humanitarian action and a further academic qualification. As an advanced-level programme aimed at professionals, the programme includes significant and structured opportunities for students to network with senior professionals, and peer-to-peer networks.

University Equality and Diversity Policies and Practices

The University operates Equality and Diversity Policies and Practices. More information can be found here: http://www.bath.ac.uk/equalities/policiesandpractices/

Receiving Examination Results

Students can access their assessment results on-line following approval by Boards of Study. A formal written transcript can be provided on request. Students receive written feedback on marked coursework.

Department and Programme Specific Support Information

Pre-arrival support is provided by introductory emails, including an information sheet and FAQs about the start of the programme.

- The Programme Handbook is circulated in early summer, which students are expected to read.
- Students will also receive case notes on 3 empirical cases that will consist of around 10 pages of written text providing background on the context, plus a list of further readings and resources. The cases would provide a resource for students to draw on in their assessments, and be used by lecturers in the delivery of units 1-4.
- A scheduled personal/virtual contact with the Academic Tutor and/or Director of Studies by mid-July.
- Following this 'meeting', students are provided with two pieces of introductory reading to be read prior to the first residential.
- Before the first residential, students will be divided into online study groups.

The programme support officer provides practical information for the residential. International students also receive a centrally produced Pre-Arrival Handbook. For all students who have not had recent experience of a UK-type HE system, pre-sessional writing skills session is available.

Induction

The induction process follows University guidelines, tailored to the needs of blended-learning students. Induction forms part of the first residential, which takes place around mid-September. It includes introductions to:

- Format and content of the programme, structure, and assessment
- Online learning environment, and how to make effective use of programme tools
- Expectations of online engagement and behaviour
- Hints, tips and additional tools for collaborative online learning and work
- Physical layout of the Departments and the campus and academic and social contact with programme staff.
- Library/Learning Centre resources introduced by the Faculty librarian;
- Wider University support relating to finances and welfare.

- Supplementary quantitative data analysis skills sessions for students without under-graduate level or professional experience of using quantitative data.
- Student cohort and study group through learning and social activities.

Academic Guidance and Tutorial Support

The Handbook provides an essential source of reference for students, particularly in relation to assessment criteria, procedures for submitting work and obtaining feedback, contacting relevant lecturers, and accessing SPS and University facilities. In addition, the handbook provides useful practical information about the programme, residentials, additional online learning resources.

During each unit students have the opportunity of receiving feedback on their progress via individual tutorials and group work. The Academic Tutor plays an important role in maintain proactive contact with students to engage them with the programme and reading. Students receive detailed feedback from their dissertation supervisor present their dissertation outline and when draft dissertation chapters are submitted.

Continuous improvement in the provision of academic support and guidance is assured through formal discussions at the postgraduate Staff/Student Liaison Committee. This committee has student representatives as part of the formal membership. In addition, any suggestions from the appointed external examiner(s) are considered and responded to.

Pastoral and Welfare Support

The Academic Tutor for the programme acts as the main source of guidance and support for the student in relation to the academic content of the programme, but this does not affect their ability to receive feedback and support from other members of the academic staff, in particular their personal tutor.

Requests from students for extensions to deadlines for the completion of work are considered by the Director of Studies, and each case is decided in a consistent manner on its own merits. University-wide regulations regarding the consideration of exceptional circumstances – known as Individual Mitigating Circumstances – can be applied where a student's performance may have been temporarily affected by factors such as illness and certain personal issues.

There also a range of specialist student support services that offer information and advice to support these staff working with their students, as well as take referrals to work more directly with the students. Students can also self-refer to these services. These services can provide information, advice and support in relation to accommodation, emotional difficulties, assessment of needs and provision of support relating to disability, student funding, general welfare, academic problems, student discipline and complaints, careers, international students, spiritual matters, part time work, security and personal safety. The Students' Union can also provide advocacy for students. Further information about these services is available on-line.

During the residencies, there are also Medical and Dental Centres, and a Chaplaincy on campus that are very experienced in meeting the needs of a student population, as well as a University nursery and vacation sports and/or arts activity schemes are sometimes available for older children during the school holidays.