



Programme specification 2016/17

SOAS, University of London

The following information forms the programme specification at SOAS, University of London. It gives definitive information relating to a programme of study and is written for a public audience, particularly prospective and current students. It is also used for other purposes such as initial programme approval, and is therefore produced at the start of the programme development process. Once approved, it forms the base-line information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

Programme title	MSc Violence, Conflict and Development Pathway 1: MSc Violence, Conflict and Development with special reference to Palestine Studies
Final award	MSc
Intermediate awards	N/A
Mode of attendance	Full Time (one calendar year) or part time (two or three years)
UCAS code	N/A
Professional body accreditation	N/A
Date specification created/updated	July 2016

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

Why study at SOAS?	SOAS is unique as the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The School also has the largest concentration of specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas at any university in the world. SOAS is consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in the UK and the world and it also offers a friendly, vibrant environment for students in a diverse and close-knit community.
What is special about this programme?	As the pioneering programme of its kind internationally, the MSc Violence, Conflict and Development programme develops detailed empirical knowledge and analytical skills for understanding the complex linkages between violent conflict and development, both historically and today. It enables students to explore these linkages both within specific country and regional

	<p>contexts and in the context of global interdependencies and the ways these affect peace, war, and non-war violence.</p> <p>MSc Violence, Conflict and Development with special reference to Palestine Studies Pathway:</p> <p>Students taking the Palestine Studies pathway will gain a thorough grounding in these debates, and will further develop a specialist understanding of VCD issues in the context of Palestine studies. SOAS' recognised strengths in this area, including the establishment of the Centre for Palestine Studies, makes this a unique and exciting opportunity for those interested in Palestine.</p>
<p>Who would it suit?</p>	<p>The programme would suit development practitioners, activists, and students with a scholarly interest in the patterns of violence internationally, in how violence affects development, and in how the uneven processes of development themselves may both generate violence and generate mechanisms for containing violence.</p>
<p>Programme structure</p>	<p>Two core courses with 20 weekly lectures of two hours each and 19 weekly seminars of one hour each, and two optional courses with 10 weekly lectures of one or two hours each and 9 or 10 weekly seminars of one hour each, and a dissertation of 10,000 words. The dissertation traditionally relies upon secondary sources, but some students have also chosen to conduct related fieldwork.</p> <p>MSc Violence, Conflict and Development with special reference to Palestine Studies Pathway:</p> <p>For students taking the Palestine Studies pathway, the programme is structured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four compulsory core courses: the two VCD core courses AND the two (10 week) courses Critical Approaches to Palestine Studies I and II offered in Terms 1 and II respectively. • A 10,000 word dissertation

<p>Assessment summary</p>	<p>Core course The Political Economy of Violence, Conflict and Development has a two hour examination (50%, two unseen questions), two assessed essays (3000 words, 15% each) and a group project resulting in a presentation and report (20%). In an innovation for SOAS, the core course of the MSc reduces the share of final grade (and the length) of the exam and introduces a case study project in which groups of 5/6 students are assessed as a group for their preparation and presentation of the case study.</p> <p>Other core courses: Political Economy of Development has a three hour examination (60%, three unseen questions) and two assessed essays (3000 words, 20% each). Theory, Policy and Practice has a three hour examination (50%, three unseen questions) and two assessed essays (3000 words, 25% each).</p> <p>Optional courses are mostly assessed 40% by essay (4000 words) and 60% by two hour examination.</p> <p>MSc Violence, Conflict and Development with special reference to Palestine Studies Pathway:</p> <p>For students taking the Palestine Studies pathway, each of the two additional core courses (Critical Approaches to Palestine Studies I and II) are assessed on the basis of two essays (2,500 - 3,000 words) each worth 50%.</p>
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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for an undergraduate degree and these can be viewed at (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/ug/entryreq/>)

PROGRAMME AIMS

What will this programme give the student an opportunity to achieve?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a thorough analytical grounding in understanding of violence and conflict, especially relating to developing countries; • To encourage development of specialised knowledge of particular case studies, as well as overall trends. |
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PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

What will the student learn?

Knowledge

- Understand main theories of the origins, dynamics, and consequences of social violence and violent political conflict;
- Knowledge of sources of data on incidence of civil war, military spending and trade, sexual violence, etc;
- Awareness of main international institutional responses (analytical, policy and financial) to violence and conflict in developing countries;
- An understanding of range of policy implications; combine theoretical knowledge with building up case study knowledge;
- Around the knowledge and understanding through the core course, develop specialized knowledge and understanding through choice of other taught courses (e.g. in law/human rights, regional economics, political economy of development, etc.), dissertation, and case study project.

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- Students should become precise and cautious in their assessment of evidence, and understand the strengths and weaknesses of different datasets, claims made on the basis of various kinds of evidence, and methodologies for arriving at substantive claims;
- Students should question interpretations, however authoritative, and reassess evidence for themselves. They should also be able to engage in contemporary policy debates in relevant fields (e.g. on aid and conflict, on 'post-conflict' reconstruction policy in Afghanistan, Angola, Sri Lanka, etc.);
- Students should develop an interest and confidence in thinking in interdisciplinary ways, drawing insights, questions and evidence from a variety of perspectives;
- Students should be able to formulate research questions and to work independently towards addressing those questions.

Subject-based practical skills

The programme aims to help students with the following practical skills:

- Awareness of data problems in developing countries, particularly in conflict affected countries, and on data problems specific to understanding social and political violence;
- Awareness of different research methodologies, including case studies, quantitative analysis, surveys, etc. Development of skills in asking critical questions of commonly used datasets and evidence-based claims;
- Understanding roots of conflicting estimates and interpretations. Knowledge of main relevant data sources. Write good essays and dissertations;
- Retrieve, sift and select information from a variety of sources;
- Present seminar papers;
- Listen and discuss ideas introduced during seminars;
- Practice research techniques in specialized research libraries and institutes and by drawing on data and analysis available on the web;
- In the core course, work professionally in teams;
- Develop initiative and capacity to define own dissertation research question/hypothesis, and to adjust hypotheses and approach in the light of work

undertaken for the dissertation;

- Reading regularly and rapidly a variety of types of report/paper, incorporating different types of evidence, methodology and disciplinary perspectives;
- Understand unconventional ideas and question common evidence-based claims about social and economic development and especially about the relationships between development and violence/conflict;
- Use a wide range of written and digital materials, in libraries and research institutes, of a kind and range that they will not have used as undergraduates.

Transferable skills

The programme will encourage students to:

- Communicate effectively in writing;
- Structure and communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing; and digest rapidly and effectively substantial amounts of reading;
- Present material orally;
- Develop capacity to work in teams.

MSc Violence, Conflict and Development with special reference to Palestine Studies Pathway:

In addition to these outcomes, students taking the Palestine Studies pathway will achieve:

1. An overview of the key development challenges within Palestine Studies and their interaction with wider regional and global development processes. This will be achieved through a thorough grounding in VCD theoretical frameworks, methodology and approaches; as well as an appreciation of the ways these intersect with various disciplinary approaches to Palestine studies.
2. A strong familiarity with Palestinian history, political structures, economic development, and issues related to Palestinian culture and society.
2. Be able to write critically on VCD issues as they relate to Palestine, and display a familiarity and understanding of different disciplinary approaches, models, and scholarship towards the study of Palestine.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of the main development actors (local and international NGOs, governmental organizations, International Finance Institutions, etc.) that are present in Palestine, and an appreciation of their diverse strategies and professional challenges. They will be able to analyse the activities of these development actors within broader theoretical frameworks, and demonstrate an ability to compare and contrast their activities in other international contexts.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD

How will the student's study be structured? How will they achieve an award?

Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award

SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of undergraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes.

Details can be found at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/>

Programme structure diagram (Excluding Students on the MSc Violence, Conflict and Development with special reference to Palestine Studies Pathway):

Below is a structure diagram for the MSc Violence, Conflict and Development programme.

Level	Year of study	Course code	Course title	Credit	Status	Notes
7	1	15PDSC003	Political Economy of Violence, Conflict and Development	45 CATS	Core Course	All students must take this course
	AND ONE OF					
7	1	15PDSC001	Theory, Policy and Practice of Development	45 CATS	Core Course	Students must choose one of the three listed courses
7	1	15PDSC002	Political Economy of Development	45 CATS	Core Course	As above
7	1	15PANC090	Anthropology of Development	45 CATS	Core Course	As above
	AND ONE OF					
7	1 (or 2 for part-time students)		Options from the list below adding up to 45 credits	45 CATS	Option(s)	One or two courses adding up to 45 credits must be taken
	AND					
7	1 (or 2 or 3 for part-time students)	15PDSC999	Dissertation in Development Studies	45 CATS	Core Course	All students must take this course

The availability of optional/elective courses may vary in a given academic session due to factors such as staff absence and student numbers. For an up to date list of courses running in a given academic session please refer to the degree structures as listed on the SOAS website for the degree programmes taught by each Department.

Optional courses (all level 7; all year 1, or 2 for part-time students)

In the department of Development Studies:

15PDSH026	Agrarian Development, Food Policy and Rural Poverty (22.5 credits)
15PDSH027	Aid and development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH023	Borders and Development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH001	Civil society, social movements and the development process (22.5 credits)
15PDSH013	Development practice (22.5 credits)
15PDSH050	Environment, Governance and Development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH048	Extractive Industries, Energy, Biofuels and Development in a Time of Climate Change (22.5 credits)
15PDSH022	Famine and food security (22.5 credits)
15PDSH017	Fundamentals of research methods for Development Studies (22.5 credits)
15PDSH010	Gender and development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH024	Global commodity chains, production networks and informal work (22.5 credits)
15PDSH051	Global Health and Development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH015	Issues in forced migration (22.5 credits)
15PDSH053	Marxist Political Economy and Global Development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH029	Migration and Policy (22.5 credits)
15PDSH031	Natural resources, development and change: putting critical analysis into practice (22.5 credits)
15PDSH054	Neoliberalism, Democracy and Global Development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH019	Problems of development in the Middle East and North Africa (22.5 credits)
15PDSH020	Security (22.5 credits)
15PDSH030	The working poor and development (22.5 credits)
15PDSH032	Understanding economic migration: Theories, Patterns and Policies (22.5 credits)
15PDSH018	War to Peace Transitions (22.5 credits)
15PDSH049	Water and development: conflict and governance (22.5 credits)

In other departments:

Economics

15PECC203	Economic development in Africa (45 credits)
15PECC334	Economic dynamics of the Asia-Pacific region (45 credits)
15PECC035	Economic problems and policies in modern China (45 credits)
15PECH004	The political economy of development in Africa (22.5 credits)

Politics and International Studies

15PPOC205	Government and politics in Africa (45 credits)
15PPOC003	Government and politics of modern South Asia (45 credits)
15PPOC017	State and Development in Asia and Africa (45 credits)
15PPOC252	Taiwan's politics and cross-strait relations (45 credits)

School of Law

15PLAC104	Alternative Dispute Resolution (45 credits)
15PLAC111	Human rights in the developing world (45 credits)
15PLAC119	International Protection of Human Rights (45 credits)
15PLAC123	Justice, Reconciliation and reconstruction in post conflict societies (45 credits)

15PLAH044 Water Law: Justice and Governance (22.5 credits)

Anthropology and Sociology

15PANH027 Therapy and Culture (22.5 credits)

South Asia Department

15PSAC291 Culture and Conflict in the Himalaya (45 credits)

15PSAC313 Imagining Pakistan: culture, politics, gender (MA) (45 credits)

Study of Religions

15PSRH049 Religions and Development (22.5 credits)

History

15PHIH023 Environmental History of Asia (22.5 credits)

Below is a structure diagram for the MSc Violence, Conflict and Development with special reference to Palestine Studies Pathway:

Level	Year of study	Course code	Course title	Credit	Status	Notes
7	1	15PDSC003	Political Economy of Violence, Conflict and Development	45 CATS	Core Course	All students must take this course
	AND ONE OF					
7	1	15PDSC001	Theory, Policy and Practice of Development	45 CATS	Core Course	Students must choose one of the three listed courses
7	1	15PDSC002	Political Economy of Development	45 CATS	Core Course	As above
7	1	15PANC090	Anthropology of Development	45 CATS	Core Course	As above
	AND					
7	1 (or 2 for part-time students)	15PNMH006	Critical Perspectives on Palestine Studies I: History and Politics	22.5	Core Course	Students taking the Palestine Studies pathway must take this Term 1 course.

	AND					
7	1 (or 2 for part-time students)	15PNMH007	Critical Perspectives on Palestine Studies II: Culture and Society	22.5	Core Course	Students taking the Palestine Studies pathway must take this Term 2 course.
	AND					
7	1 (or 2 or 3 for part-time students)	15PDSC999	Dissertation in Development Studies	45 CATS	Core Course	All students must take this course

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

What methods will be used to achieve the learning outcomes?

The following examples might provide general guidance:

Knowledge: *subject knowledge is often developed through lectures and seminars, supplemented by directed study of texts/journal articles and by assignment or project work. Assessment is generally through unseen written examinations, but most assessment methods will require some demonstration of subject knowledge and understanding.*

Intellectual (thinking) skills: *skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application are often practised and demonstrated through active learning processes involving assignments or projects, and group learning activities (seminars/tutorials, workshops, fieldtrips etc). Assessment might utilise written examinations or problem-based exercises. Independent project work or research dissertations might be used to demonstrate subject-specific intellectual skills.*

Subject-based practical skills: *this will vary from discipline to discipline, but will generally require development through opportunities to practise the activity in an appropriate learning context (for example in a laboratory, studio or work placement). Workbooks/practice manuals might also be provided. Assessment of competence in exercising a practical skill must involve demonstration of it.*

Transferable skills: *skills that are readily transferable to employment and related contexts such as communication, teamwork etc can be developed through naturally arising opportunities within the curriculum or through work placements. Written communication will be enhanced through essay/dissertation writing or writing up projects. Oral communication can be developed in presentations and group work. Team working skills may be demonstrated and assessed through collaborative projects.)*

Knowledge

- Students are required to attend all classes, study extensively on their own and prepare non-assessed work regularly. Where appropriate lectures and seminars explore limitations of available data in conflict (and development) research, using the extreme case of conflict (collapsing registration systems and statistical services, politicization of information, etc.) to introduce critical thinking about sources and reliability of development data in general.
- Through core course lectures and seminars plus assessed work.
- Through lectures, seminars and assessed work for other taught courses and dissertation. Students have choices of taught courses (except the core course): they choose one of three 'development' courses (political economy of development; theory, policy and practice of development; anthropology of development); and they have a wide range of option courses from which to choose, in the development studies department and in other departments. Students form their own groups of five or six and through an iterative process with staff help select the group case studies they will carry out.

Assessment:

Through unseen examinations, long essays, course work and a dissertation. In an innovation for SOAS, the core course of the MSc reduces the share of final grade (and the length) of the exam and introduces a case study project in which groups of 5/6 students are assessed as a group for their preparation and presentation of the case study.

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- These are fostered in all courses offered in the Programme, in that all courses introduce information that needs to be assessed critically and demonstrate how conflicting interpretations arise from the same information.
- Students are encouraged not simply to summarise evidence and arguments but through application of critical questioning to develop their own assessments of the relative value of a range of arguments/sources of evidence.
- Through the structure and content of the core course, which has a core political economy identity but is interdisciplinary and draws on ideas and readings in history, economics, political science, anthropology, psychology, etc.
- Students carry out independent dissertation work, including refining a broad 'topic' into a narrower, manageable and more precise research question/hypothesis.

Assessment:

Through unseen examinations, course work, long essays and a dissertation; and in the core course through the group assessed case study project.

Subject-based practical skills

- Through the writing of long essays and dissertations.
- Through essays, dissertation and core course group case study project.
- Through regular seminar presentations.
- Through seminar discussion.
- Through independent work for dissertations.
- Through group case studies.
- Through work on own, departmental dissertation guidance notes and meetings, meetings with supervisor.
- Through required regular readings for weekly seminar discussions.

Assessment:

By unseen examination, dissertation, long essays and course work, and in core course through group assessed case study presentation.

Transferable skills

- Through long essays, course work and dissertation.
- Through seminar presentations, discussions and essays.
- Through demonstration in lectures, through discussion in seminars, through questions in exams.
- Through preparation of group case study presentations and through supervised work on dissertations.
- Classroom participation in seminars.
- Group case study project work (involving division of labour, collective prioritization of issues/evidence, development of a common perspective and interpretation).

Assessment:

Through unseen examinations, dissertation, long essays and course work, and group case study.

REFERENCE POINTS

What has been the basis for the design of this programme?

1. School learning and teaching strategy
2. Staff research and lessons of consultancies and other practical development work done by core course teaching staff for government and international organizations in relevant fields.
3. QAA framework for higher education qualifications

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

SOAS has internal procedures to assure the quality of provision to be offered to students and to enhance the quality in the light of experience following delivery, taking into account the input of external experts and students. The procedures are set out in the School's Quality Assurance Handbook and can be viewed at (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/>).

SOAS is also subject to periodic external review from bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and relevant professional and statutory regulatory bodies.

The procedures described in the Quality Assurance Handbook are in place to provide a high quality student experience for those choosing to study at SOAS, and student input and evaluation of their experiences is greatly valued. Students make an input to the ongoing development of their programmes, and the environment in which they operate, in a number of ways, including:

- formal student evaluation as part of the annual programme review;
- student representation on School committees at various levels (through the Students' Union) where many relevant issues are discussed;

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement](#)
- [Development Studies Postgraduate Handbook](#)
- [Degree Regulations](#)
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](#)
- [QAA website](#)