Master of Studies in International Relations

Admissions Criteria

Entry to the course is a very competitive process and we normally receive roughly 4 applications for every place. In addition to those with the standard entry requirement of a 2i or above in their first degree, we welcome applications from students from 'unconventional' backgrounds and whose professional experience and expertise may be more relevant than a distant degree in an unrelated discipline or, in a few cases, from those with no formal Higher Education record.

In all cases we take extremely seriously, the research proposal and references as well as an applicant's academic and professional record. Our criteria for admission are that a student should show evidence that they can think analytically and in a structured manner, and will be able to cope with the demands of the course.

In addition, the topic proposal must be one that can produce a suitable 25,000-word thesis that can be supervised and examined within our system. Thus the availability of academic expertise in Cambridge is a key part of the consideration of applications. This also means that it is very helpful if applicants are precise in describing their proposed topic. For example, 'The internet and international relations' may not be as helpful to us as 'The legal and commercial implications of the growth of e-commerce; the case of....' or 'NATO security and cyber-warfare, 2010-2020'. The admissions process can therefore take some time whilst efforts are made to allocate students to the right supervisors and to ensure that supervisors' loads are not such as to diminish the quality of supervision.

Please note there is no standard template for the thesis submission, as the students' ability to present their ideas in a scholarly fashion, is an important element of the application.

Some applicants may be asked to submit samples of written work and/or will be interviewed. This may be with a Course Director or other member of the teaching staff via Zoom/Skype where appropriate. All applicants with no previous degree-level qualification or one below the standard threshold, but whose application seems otherwise viable must be interviewed in order to satisfy a University requirement for their admission. We may, in addition, interview applicants where we wish to seek further evidence of their academic interests , their aptitude for the course, their time-commitment, and their reasons for applying. This may also be an occasion when we discuss a research proposal more fully.

Evidence of language proficiency is a University requirement, and rigorously applied. Even those applicants who may have obtained previous degrees in English may be required to take a language test, as the University's regulations are time-dependent. It is imperative that applicants check in advance, and if necessary, arrange for appropriate testing, as they must be in compliance before taking up any offer of admission.

Please note that it can take several months for applications to be processed as approval is required by various committees. Offers will start going out from our Admissions Team in June 2021.