

Programme Specification: Global Development MA

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER

Course record information

Name and level of final award	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Master of Arts - Global Development <p>The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible</p>
Name and level of intermediate awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Global Development• Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - Global Development
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Primary: Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	Politics and International Relations Social Policy
Professional statutory or regulatory body	
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global Development MA, Full-time, September or January start - 1 year standard length• Global Development MA, Part-time day, September or January start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2026/7

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information. For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements. More information can be found here: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply>.

Aims of the programme

A sustainable future for all, is the basis of just global development. Global challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation and conflict have increased as have the number of collective and creative efforts to find solutions from a range of actors including governments, civil society, community based organisation, multinational companies and academia. In this context, the MA in Global Development offers students with coherent, inter-disciplinary and critical knowledge and understanding of the key challenges relating to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as vital insights and training in ethical development practice. The programme covers the core aspects of development theory, policy and practice and is designed to empower students with the following: i) a transformational learning experience; ii) core sustainability competencies iii) thought leadership on global development for different professional sectors

The year-long programme of study approaches global development through three inter-related knowledge areas: development, social justice and sustainability, with inter-disciplinary training from political economy, political sociology, international relations and human geography. This programme will be delivered by a diverse team of scholars and practitioners – who have experience in the academic and practise realms of development - something that is crucial to offering a comprehensive and critical approach to the study of global development. The course's teaching methods and learning experiences aim to enable students to become effective and ethical development practitioners by combining professional skills and sustainability competencies with a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary and critical understanding of development challenges. This will be done through classroom teaching and interactions with professionals from the development sector, with opportunities for field visits where possible. Students will receive advanced analytical skills and research methods training alongside practical skill-based training on problem-solving, collaborative work and policy analysis.

The programme will strive to encourage and empower underrepresented groups (students from BAME backgrounds, those from the Global South, women, and the LGBTQ community) to develop the competencies and access the opportunities for careers in global development, public policy and in further international fields that draw on essential skills and knowledge in research and advocacy, programme management and social communication. Staff on the MA in Global Development aim to build trust and a supportive and safe learning environment, in which students can expand their knowledge and information while getting the opportunity to become co-creators of their experiences, broaden their understanding of Global Development, and acquire skills that will enable them to contribute to this sector regardless of their background or skills.

Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. career/employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses
- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students
- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision
- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

This MA course is primarily aimed for those with an interest in taking up careers in international development and public policy to work in areas such as research and advocacy, programme management and social communication, within and outside the UK. We have designed this programme with extensive consultation with employers from the development sector, for those aiming to secure employment, or who are already employed, in governments, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, corporate social responsibility entities, commercial or academic organisations.

The programme is premised on the principle that to become an effective and ethical development practitioner or researcher, professional skills and competencies need to be combined with a comprehensive, inter-disciplinary, and critical understanding of development challenges. The programme, therefore, aims to offer the latter alongside a stream of professional development activities that provide regular engagement with professional bodies and policy makers and offer opportunities for development of empirical insights, research and professional skills and competencies as well as internship and placement opportunities. In line with this, the programme will facilitate partnerships with development organisations such as the United Nations, International Organization of Migration, civil services of the UK, EU and other countries, NGOs and private organisations.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements of what successful students have achieved as a result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Cognitive Skills, are learning outcomes that help build conceptual understanding that is necessary to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems and comment on research.

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- 001 Demonstrate a deep and systematic understanding of the theories and concepts that underpin the ethics, politics and economics of sustainable global development and its relationship with other fields. (KU)
- 002 Identify the relationships between environmental, social and economic systems at the local, regional and global levels, applying theories and methodologies from various inter-related disciplines (KU CS)
- 003 Form reasoned arguments using evidence, including data, that may be incomplete or contradictory and to evaluate the appropriateness and relative benefits of the chosen approaches. (CS)
- 004 Design investigations and formulate research questions arising from the theory and practice of global development, and design and undertake research and inquiry to address those questions. (KTS CS)

- 005 Creatively apply knowledge, theories and concepts in a variety of contexts, both familiar and unfamiliar, and synthesise ideas and information from diverse sources (KTS CS)
- 006 Work collaboratively as a member or leader of a team to solve problems in a participatory manner (PPP KTS)
- 007 Demonstrate strategic thinking competency by identifying the root causes of unsustainable development, including environmental, social and economic factors and identify changes to practices that have a negative impact (CS)
- 008 Recognise and critically reflect on the colonial and post-colonial aspects of the development discipline, policy and practice. (PPP SS)
- 009 Maintain the normative competency to reflect on your own values, perceptions and actions on sustainable development and those of other stakeholders in contexts where there is conflict of interests, trade offs, uncertainty and contradictions. (PPP)

How will you learn?

Learning methods

Learning on the course will be inclusive, accessible and challenging. We are committed to removing barriers to success and contributing to social justice. We welcome and greatly value our diverse student body and the multiple perspectives they bring. The wellbeing of our students is our priority and underpins our learning and teaching provision. We are also committed to working in partnership and co-creating the curriculum where feasible. We believe in students as 'change-makers'.

To make our teaching and learning provision accessible and flexible, we have adopted digital and technology enhanced learning alongside on-site teaching. All learning materials including recorded lectures and other course materials are systematically archived on Blackboard and readings lists are accessible online.

The learning methods used in the course are designed for active and authentic learning, as we extend classroom-based learning to field-based learning where possible. Students will be exposed to real-world settings through case studies and field visits, and learn through workshops, policy labs and community engagement supported by our University partners (e.g. Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation and Democratic Education Network). Students will also get the opportunity to train in professional skills such as communication, strategic thinking and team work through a variety of learning activities and assessments.

We will strive to enable students from every background from different parts of the world to develop into resilient graduates with expertise in Global Development who will respond flexibly and creatively to future challenges. Learning activities and assessments on the course are designed to ensure equality of opportunity and for furthering social inclusion and career advancement within and beyond the university. Students will have access to a range of additional support like academic writing, career development and personal development through our Academic Learning Development Centres and Library Services. The University recognises that Generative AI tools can be useful for some aspects of learning, but there will always be important parts that require students' own original and distinctive input, such as: demonstrating understanding and critical thinking, structuring and refining an argument, reflecting on practice and personal experience, keeping up to date with research, and accurate referencing and citations.

We are committed to an inclusive, accessible, decolonising and diversifying curriculum. Students will be encouraged to think critically about development and approach development from a truly 'global' prism. Staff who teach on the programme, will continuously review their module reading lists, course materials and teaching methods to cover voices and perspectives of scholars and communities who are marginalised from the mainstream debates. We expect students to interact with staff and other students with respect and, in so doing, build a learning community based on trust to enable learning through vigorous study and vibrant discussion and debate.

Teaching methods

We are committed to providing personalised and flexible teaching in technology enhanced classrooms and blended learning formats. We predominantly teach in small seminar groups and tutorials, and employ active and authentic learning pedagogies as we know students find such teaching and learning more engaging and effective. A variety of learning, teaching and summative and formative assessment formats are used across modules to cater for students' varied backgrounds and learning styles. All our modules allow for blended learning, with tools for teaching face to face and online.

Students will participate in both academic, classroom-based learning and practical activities to encourage enquiry-led, experiential and collaborative learning.

Classroom-based learning will be mainly composed of interactive lectures, workshops and seminars where students are

engaged in learning key topics, theories and their application and are encouraged to take part in debates and discussions. Module sessions will require students to demonstrate their ability to apply a range of analytical frameworks to problems, policy issues, case studies, presentations and team-based activities. Students will learn how to solve complex problems in a systematic way, informed by relevant knowledge, tools and techniques.

Practical learning will include workshops and policy labs with policy makers and representatives from professional bodies as well as professional skills and competency development sessions and where possible, field trips.

Towards the end of the course, students will work independently on a substantial research project, under academic (or professional, if relevant) supervision, culminating in the submission of either an academic dissertation, or Applied Research Project (ARP). Other teaching methods include case studies, simulation exercises and group activities at workshops on digital platforms like Padlet and Blackboard Collaborate.

Assessment methods

In line with the course team's inclusivity strategy, the assessments are intended to provide flexible ways for students to demonstrate that they meet the learning outcomes. The modules across the programme are designed to incorporate authentic learning methods, which requires students to apply their knowledge and skills to 'real world situations'. The assessments, depending on the module will be in written or oral formats and include different coursework like: policy and executive briefs, portfolio report, reflective journal, academic essay, group presentation and independent study projects like Dissertation or Applied Research Project.

The overall aim of the various assessment methods is to challenge students to consolidate and synthesise the theoretical and practical insights on global development and demonstrate advanced and critical understanding of research methods and conceptual frameworks. Through a range of assessment types, students will be able to enhance their knowledge and skills, particularly: analytical and writing skills; critical engagement and reflective writing; presentation delivery and engagement with diverse audiences; evidence-based research; policy analysis and reporting; and, independent study and enquiry skills. The assessments develop the range of essential transferable skills required for diverse career paths, within and outside the UK, including research and advocacy, programme management, policy development and communications.

Feedback on the assessments is an important part of the learning process of students, and we strive to provide this iteratively through both formative and summative feedback. Formative feedback of 'work in progress' is offered in various modules, in the form of small group activities and informally through tutor and peer feedback. Summative assessments will contribute to the final mark on the module, and will have specific guidelines and instructions on the assessment criteria. Feedback will be provided on an assessment rubric covering key development areas, with specific and actionable information to help students manage their learning and areas of improvement.

Graduate Attribute	Evident in Course Outcomes
Critical and creative thinker	001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 009
Literate and effective communicator	004, 005
Entrepreneurial	006
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	008, 009
Socially, ethically and environmentally aware	001, 007, 008, 009

Course Structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules

Level 7

The MA in Global Development requires full-time Postgraduate students to study 180 credits per year. All Core and Optional modules (except Dissertation) are for 20 credits and run over a semester. The Dissertation is a 60 credit year-long Core module. In semester 1 and semester 2 students will select 2 core modules and 1 Optional module. One of the 5 core modules is an 'Optional Core', which means that students can select one Core module from a choice of two modules. These modules are: **Global Politics of Energy and Climate Change** and **Governance, Policy Practice and Sustainable Development**. Students can choose 1 Optional module from the course structure for each semester.

Module Code	Module Title	Status	PT Year (where applicable)	UK credit	ECTS
7DVST009W	Development Policy and Practice	Core	Various	20	10
7DVST010W	Dissertation and Research Methods in Global Development	Core	Various	60	30
7DVST007W	Global Political Economy of Development	Core	Various	20	10
7PIRS011W	Global Politics of Energy and Climate Change	Core	Various	20	10
7PIRS021W	Governance, Policy Practice and Sustainable Development	Core	Various	20	10
7DVST006W	Just Development Futures: Ideas, Concepts and Debates	Core	Various	20	10
7PIRS002W	Contemporary Controversies in International Security: Intervention, Terrorism and Self Defence	Option	Various	20	10
7PIRS003W	Controversies in United States Foreign Policies and Processes	Option	Various	20	10
7PIRS031W	Gender, Sexuality and International Relations	Option	Various	20	10
7PIRS010W	Global Change: Toward a New Non-Western Order?	Option	Various	20	10
7PIRS012W	Governance of the European Union	Option	Various	20	10
7DVST008W	Migration and Development	Option	Various	20	10
7PIRS023W	Regional Dimensions of Energy Security	Option	Various	20	10
7PIRS024W	The European Union as an International Actor	Option	Various	20	10
7PIRS026W	The State, Politics and Violence	Option	Various	20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

Professional body accreditation or other external references

Course management

The course is hosted in the School of Social Sciences, one of the four Schools within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences on Regent Street Campus. The Course is directly managed by the Course Leaders within the School of Social Sciences. Each module on the course also has a designated Module Leader responsible for the administration and monitoring of its design and delivery. The Head of School has overall responsibility for all academic provision in the School.

The course teaching team consists of staff from the School of Social Sciences. Key members of the course team meet regularly to identify and address ways of improving the design and delivery of the course. Staff involved in the course undergo annual appraisal and peer development of their teaching practice, which is provided by the Academic Engagement and Learning Development Team within the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation (CETI). Staff also engage in their own research and/or scholarly activity. Staff teaching on the course also attend workshops organised by Academic Standards and the Teaching and Learning Groups for continuous development in teaching, learning and assessment approaches.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities and additional support available. You will be provided with a Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or equivalent. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part-time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University utilises a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard, where students access their course materials and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students. Further information on Blackboard can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard>

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. In addition to online resources in Blackboard, students can also attend Study Skills workshops and schedule one-to-one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes our libraries, each of which holds a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services.

Support Services

The University of Westminster's Student and Academic Services department provides a range of advice and guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice>.

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union>

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university, a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored annually by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that any issues that might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence from various sources, including student surveys, student progression and achievement, and reports from external examiners, to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make necessary changes.

Periodic reviews are also conducted to ensure that the curriculum remains up-to-date and that the skills acquired on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Representative students meet with a panel to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess the course's performance.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University, and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is collected in various ways.

- Through student engagement activities at the course and module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.
- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.;
- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire for each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be improved.
- Final-year undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey, which helps inform the national university league tables. Postgraduate students will be asked to complete the Postgraduate Taught Survey (PTES).

This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student may reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and Module Handbooks provided to students. Copyright in this document belongs to the University of Westminster. All rights are reserved. This document is for personal use only and may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the University of Westminster. All copies of this document must incorporate this Copyright Notice – 2025©

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