



International Security Studies

Student Handbook 2024-2025

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Overview



This handbook provides details regarding the policies and procedures relevant to the International Security Studies (ISS) program offered by the School of Government and Public Policy (SGPP) at the University of Arizona.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the general requirements and information on transfer of graduate credit from other institutions, off-campus graduate study, scholastic standards, forms that the student must submit to the Graduate College, and the time limit for the completion of requirements for graduate degrees.

Mission Statement

The mission of the ISS program is to educate the next generation of analysts, scholars, and practitioners in the security problems faced by governments in today's international environment. The program is tailored to students who work full-time and need a flexible curriculum that offers a wide range of courses designed for a variety of practical and intellectual interests. The program is fully online, with courses taught by University of Arizona faculty with expertise in international security-related topics. The program therefore provides a highly flexible professional curriculum taught by experts in their field. Courses are designed to be rigorous and demanding, and to give students the skills and background to seek a career in governmental, non-government, corporate, and academic fields.

Learning Objectives

The learning objectives of the ISS program are to enable students to:

1. Identify the central themes of modern security studies, especially as related to the student's concentration and interests. This may include:
 - Traditional security threats, such as war and violence.
 - Non-traditional security threats, such as the environment, resource management, and human security.
 - Foreign policy, including foreign policy creation, the influence of important foreign policy actors, and areas of foreign policy (such as democracy promotion).
 - The influence of globalization.
2. Demonstrate the ability to comprehend and explain international security phenomena as well as the broad theories and principles of international security studies.
3. Demonstrate critical thinking skills in the analysis and evaluation of the modern security environment and foreign policies.
4. Build and present arguments relating to international security by conducting original research, generating arguments, and communicating those arguments through academic writing.

Tuition

All ISS courses are \$700 per unit, plus any mandatory fees dictated by the University of Arizona for all students enrolled in academic programs through Arizona Online. The [Tuition Calculator](#) provides a breakdown of the cost to complete the M.A. degree and the graduate certificate.

The [Bursar](#) provides information about how and when to pay tuition.

Policies

ISS Policies

Maximum Enrollment

Students are limited to 9 units of enrollment per term. This is equivalent to 3 3-unit substantive courses. Students may take 10 units if they are in their final term and need to complete the 1-unit colloquium to graduate. Students who wish to enroll in the maximum number of courses may take 1 course in session 1 and 2 courses in session 2, or 2 courses in session 1 and 1 course in session 2. Students may request an exception to this policy if they face extraordinary circumstances or pressures.

Additional Policies

Catalog

- [Acceptability of Graduate Transfer Credit](#)
- [Continuous Enrollment for Graduate Students](#)
- [Credit for Prior Learning](#)
- [Credit for U.S. Military Service and Training](#)
- [Grade Appeal](#)
- [Grades and the Grading System](#)
- [Graduate Academic Standing, Progress, and Probation](#)
- [Graduate Credit for Seniors](#)
- [Leaving the University](#)
- [Non-Degree Seeking Students](#)
- [Readmission to the University](#)
- [Time Limits on Graduate Course Work](#)

Dean of Students Office

- [Code of Academic Integrity](#)

Graduate College

- [Grievance Policy](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Retroactive Withdrawal](#)

The University of Arizona

- [Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy](#)

Admissions

Admissions Requirements

	Graduate Certificate	Master of Arts
Undergraduate Degree	Bachelor's of any major from an accredited institution	Bachelor's of any major from an accredited institution
GPA	2.75 or higher	3.0 or higher
Standardized Tests	None	None
International Students	Must demonstrate <u>English language proficiency</u>	Must demonstrate <u>English language proficiency</u>

Application Materials

Application

The applications for both the M.A. and graduate certificate programs are available online through the University of Arizona's Graduate Admissions Application, [UA GradApp](#). After you enter your personal details and educational history, choose “Arizona Online” as the campus and “International Security Studies” from the list of either Master's or Certificate programs.

Transcripts

You will need to supply unofficial transcripts of all undergraduate and graduate coursework with your application. If you are offered admission, you will need to have official transcripts delivered to the Graduate College, either **electronically** or through the post, at:

**Graduate College
The University of Arizona
Administration Building, Room 322
PO Box 210066
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0066**

Résumé

Your résumé should include all relevant professional and academic experience.

Statement of Purpose

Your statement of purpose should overview your future goals and career objectives, and how the ISS program will fit in with your future plans. The questions below will help you get started on this requirement.

- 1.What are your career objectives?
- 2.How has your undergraduate education and work experience contributed to your degree objectives?
- 3.How will this graduate program help advance your career?
- 4.Please provide any other information that you think will be helpful to the admissions committee.

Recommendation

You are required to provide one recommendation from an outside contact, either professional or academic, who can speak to your ability to succeed in graduate work. Please note this is not a traditional letter of recommendation. Instead, your contact will be prompted to use the Graduate Application system to answer three questions:

- 1.How long have you known the candidate and in what capacity?
- 2.Do you feel the candidate is capable of completing graduate work?
- 3.Do you have any concerns or comments?

Applicants with a Low GPA

M.A. applicants with a GPA below 3.0 may still have a chance to join the program. There are two possible courses of action for this scenario:

GPA Waiver

In exceptional circumstances, the ISS program will consider submitting a GPA waiver for students who completed their undergraduate degree with a low GPA, but have since accrued significant work experience. If the ISS program decides to pursue a GPA waiver, the applicant needs to provide two additional application materials:

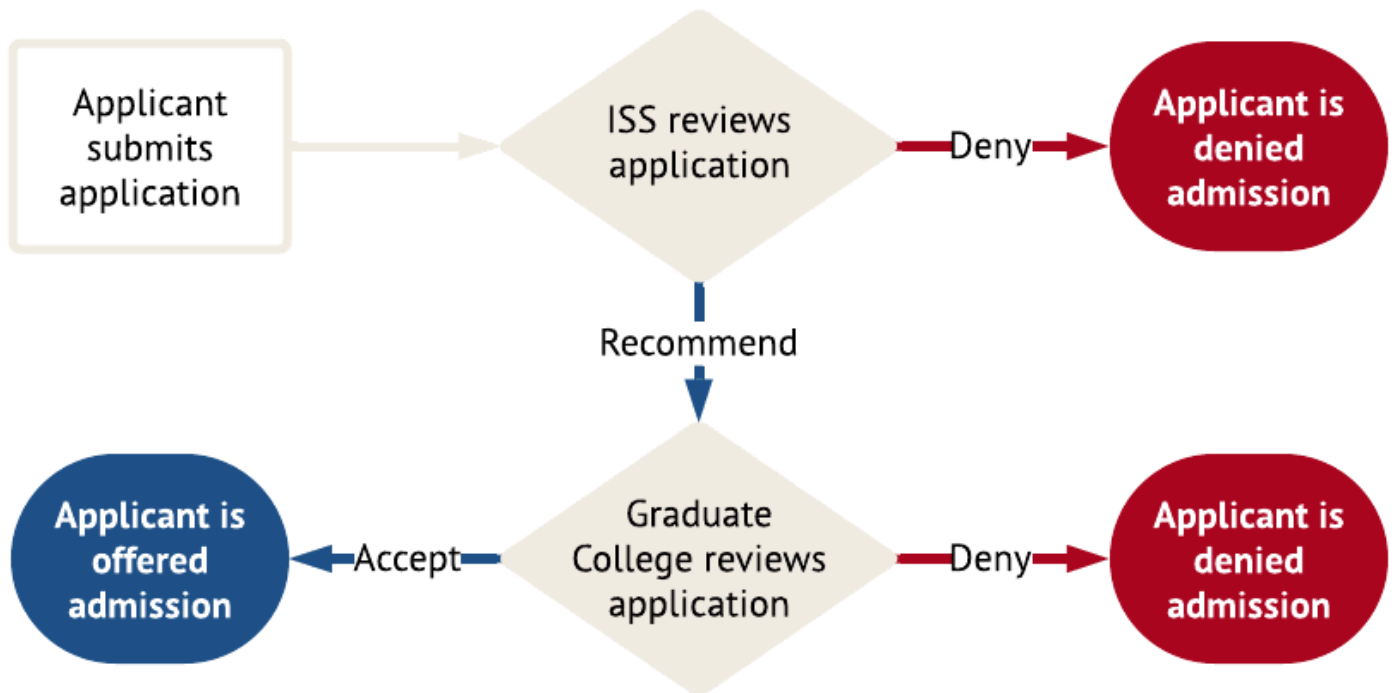
- 1.A statement from the student explaining the low GPA and why they believe they will be successful in graduate school.
- 2.A letter of recommendation, testifying to their ability to successfully complete graduate work, from somebody able to make that judgement.

Non-Degree Seeking

- 1.More commonly, the ISS program will recommend the applicant reapply to the university as a “Non-Degree Seeking Graduate Student” since this application does not have a minimum GPA requirement. Once admitted under a non-degree status, students may enroll in ISS courses and reapply to the M.A. program after completing 3 or 4 courses with a grade of “B” or higher. Non-degree students may apply up to 12 units of ISS course credit towards their M.A. degree if and when they are admitted to the program.

Admissions Process

Admissions Process



Academic Advising

The ISS program coordinator serves as the academic adviser to all ISS students. Students may [email the program coordinator](#) for any advising assistance.

Class Enrollment

- Students may enroll themselves in substantive courses by going to [UAccess Student Center](#) > **Enrollment**.
- The ISS program coordinator must enroll students in any non-substantive courses, including POL 593: Internship, POL 599: Independent Study, POL 695A: Colloquium Project for ISS Students, and POL 910: Thesis.

GradPath

- Before they may graduate, ISS students must submit a series of forms through GradPath by going to [UAccess Student Center](#) > **Advising** > **GradPath** > **GradPath Forms**.
- To learn how to complete GradPath forms, students should refer to the [ISS GradPath Tutorial](#).
- Note: Forms must be completed in a specific order; if the button to create a new form is greyed out, that's because another form must be completed before you will have access.

GradPath Forms

Form	Completed By	Certificate Students	M.A. Students
Responsible Conduct of Research Statement	Student	✓	✓
Plan of Study	Student	✓	✓
Master's/Specialist Committee Appointment Form	Student		✓
Master's/Specialist Completion Confirmation	Program Coordinator		✓

Courses

Substantive Courses

All substantive courses are worth 3 credits.

Course Number and Name

POL 501A	International Security
POL 502A	International Strategy
POL 511A	The Psychology of Group Conflict and Cooperation
POL 516A	Strategic Nonviolent Conflict
POL 519	Terrorism and Counterterrorism
POL 520A	How Terrorism Ends
POL 521A	Transnational Organized Crime and National Security
POL 523A	Immigration and Border Security
POL 530A	Dynamic of Civil Wars
POL 540A	Global Political Economy
POL 542	European Politics and Society

POL 544A	International Relations of Sub-Saharan Africa
POL 545A	Security in New Democracies
POL 546A	Politics of Islamism
POL 547A	Crime and Violence in Latin America
POL 551	Russian Foreign and Security Policy
POL 553A	Media and International Affairs
POL 554A	Constitutional Law and American Foreign Policy
POL 555	American Foreign Policy
POL 556A	Issues in Cybersecurity and Cyberwar
POL 557A	The Politics of Cybersecurity
POL 558A	Politics in the Digital Age
POL 559A	Democracy Challenges in the MENA Region
POL 561A	Concepts of Human Rights and Security
POL 563A	Gender and International Security
POL 564	International Relations of East Asia
POL 565A	International Politics of the Middle East
POL 567A	Emerging Powers in the Global System

POL 569A	Armed Conflict
POL 578A	Geospatial Intelligence
POL 579	Intelligence and U.S. National Security
POL 580A	National and Civil Security in Mexico
POL 581A	Domestic Politics and U.S. Foreign Policy
POL 582A	International Law and Organizations
POL 583A	Global Health Security
POL 588A	The Politics of Energy Security
POL 589A	Arming the State: The Global Arms Trade

Internship

Course Number and Name

POL 593	Internship
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Students can substitute a substantive course for an internship, equal to 3 credits. To be eligible for credit, the internship must meet the following conditions:

- It is a formal internship and not part of the student's existing job
- It lasts a minimum of 135 hours
- It is approved by the program director

Once the internship is approved, the student must complete the following to gain credit:

- Before beginning the internship, students must sign a Letter of Agreement that overviews the work to be completed
- Once the internship is finished, two Evaluation Forms must be completed. (These forms are available in the Appendix.)
- An essay must be completed. This is the student's opportunity to evaluate the internship by drawing connections to their completed classwork and detailing what was learned during the internship. The essay should be around 1,500-2,000 and must be submitted to the program director.

Independent Study

Course Number and Name

POL 599 Independent Study

Students can also substitute a substantive course for independent study. Independent study is typically worth 3 credit hours, but can be reduced to 1 or 2 credit hours if necessary due to circumstance. Independent study will only be granted if a student has a desire to engage in an in-depth research project. Independent study must be approved by the program director.

Capstone Projects

Colloquium

Course Number and Name

POL 695A Colloquium Project for ISS Students

The capstone project for the M.A. program is the colloquium. The colloquium course counts for 1 unit and consists of a portfolio that summarizes the student's academic achievements. The objectives of this course are:

1. For students to consider and synthesize what they learned in the program, including how their studies have added to their knowledge of international security topics, overall worldview, and how education can contribute to professional advancement
2. To provide students with tools to advance in the professional world, including writing a professional bio, updating their resume, and producing writing samples. Students also have the option to create a personal website that can be shared with employers.

Thesis

Course Number and Name

POL 910 Thesis

Select M.A. students may be interested in pursuing a thesis project in place of the colloquium. The thesis is worth 4 units; as a result, students who opt for the thesis need to complete only 30 units of substantive course work.

The thesis is a minimum 25-page (6,500 words) academic research project, with at least 15 different scholarly or refereed sources. To be eligible for a thesis, students must:

1. Have completed at least 9 courses
2. Have a GPA of 3.8 or higher
3. Gain approval from an ISS faculty member to serve as their thesis advisor
4. Have the advisor and project approved by the program director

A successful thesis proposal should include the following elements:

- The question to be asked in the paper. Your research question should address something that is puzzling and should generally be phrased as “why” question. For example, “We expect (based on the following theories or patterns) to see this, but we see that; Why do we see this rather than what we expected?”

- A 1-2 paragraph statement of the significance of this question for the study of international security such as what theoretical questions, debates, or controversies will answering your question help to resolve? If it's not obvious, a brief explanation (1 or 2 sentences) of why answering your question is of substantive or policy importance.
 - Your proposed answer to the question (necessarily preliminary, but you must have an informed hypothesis at this time).
 - A list of major alternative hypothesized answers to the problem, which you will generate by drawing on common sense and on political science/international relations theories you encountered in other ISS courses.
 - An explanation of how you will evaluate the merits of your own proposed answer versus the competing hypotheses. What evidence (data) would support or refute your argument and competing hypothesis? Try asking yourself, "What evidence in the world would convince me that my theory is wrong?"
 - A bibliography indicating where you will get the primary and secondary data that you need to test your argument against alternative hypotheses (the bibliography is not included in the page limit).

The thesis committee will be made up of two faculty members and the program director.

Master of Arts

The Master of Arts (MA) in International Security Studies requires 34 units of course work.

The ISS Program is designed to be flexible for students, to take courses at their own pace and to focus on subject areas that are most relevant and interesting to them. As a result, there are no core classes or required concentrations. Students have 6 years to complete the degree based on their schedule and needs; most students finish their degree within 2.25 years.

Students must finish the ISS program by completing one of our capstone options. The majority of students complete the professional colloquium (POL 695A), which is considered the standard capstone option, worth 1 credit-hour. However, select students can pursue the thesis option, worth 4 credit-hours. As the thesis option is considered a deviation from the normal ISS plan, students must seek approval from the program director before they can pursue this option. The 2 options are summarized in the tables below.

Option 1

Course Type	Units
Substantive Courses	33 Units
+	+
Colloquium	1 Unit
<hr/>	
Total	34 Units

Option 2

Course Type	Units
Substantive Courses	30 Units
+	+
Thesis	4 Units
<hr/>	
Total	34 Units

Although the program is designed to be completed in a maximum of 18 months, it is not required for students to maintain a full-time status (9 units/term). Students can take 2 courses per term (one per session) and skip the summer term, in which case it would take 3 years to complete the degree. Students are encouraged to graduate within 4 years, but can take up to 6 years if necessary.

Accelerated Master's Program

The ISS program offers exceptional undergraduate students in select majors the opportunity to earn both a bachelor's degree and master's degree in as few as 5 years. The Accelerated Master's Program (AMP) is for the top undergraduates in participating majors who plan to continue with their post-graduate education in the online M.A. in International Security Studies. The AMP is only open to students from the following (online) undergraduate degree programs:

- Bachelor of Arts, Law
- Bachelor of Arts, Political Science
- Bachelor of Applied Science, Intelligence and Information Operations
- Bachelor of Science, Criminal Justice Studies
- Bachelor of Science, Public Affairs

Only students who are enrolled in one of these undergraduate degree programs are eligible to apply to the AMP. The advantage of the AMP is that students can earn both undergraduate and graduate credits simultaneously as the ISS graduate course work counts for both the undergraduate and graduate degree requirements. For more information, visit the [**ISS AMP website**](#).

AMP Admissions

Completion of at least 75 undergraduate units are required at the time of application; completion of at least 90 undergraduate units are required at the time of entry into the AMP. If the student's GPA falls below 3.3 by the time they have completed 90 units, the student will not be admitted into the program. Courses taken for audit may not be included in the total number of units counted for eligibility or admission.

AMP Sample Plan

Years 1-3

- Complete undergraduate coursework

Year 4

- Complete undergraduate coursework
- Complete 4 ISS courses (12 units)

Year 5

- Complete ISS coursework (22 units)

Non-Degree Certificate Program

The Certificate in International Security Studies is a 12-unit program. Students may take any four of the substantive ISS courses towards the certificate. Students cannot apply transfer credit, independent studies, or internship credits to the certificate. There is no capstone project for the Certificate.

Transfer to MA Program

Certificate students are eligible to transfer to the MA program if they are interested in expanding their studies and they have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the certificate program. Up to 12 credits taken as a certificate student may be transferred to the M.A. program.