

# MASTER OF ARTS IN THE FIELD OF SECURITY POLICY STUDIES - ONLINE

A master's degree in security policy studies can open doors to future employment in the security policy institutions of the federal government, in the private sector, in international organizations such as NATO, and in the many nonprofit institutions engaged in security policy work. Security policy studies is a policy-oriented program focusing on international security issues and the policy responses to those issues, with particular emphasis on emerging transnational threats. These threats include weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, regional and ethnic conflicts, international crime, and the security implications of a globalized economy.

The program also examines the national and international policy responses to these problems, including the operations of the intelligence community, the military, diplomats, and international economic policymakers. The curriculum provides a strong grounding in the national security and defense policy-making process. Students choose from four specific concentrations: U.S. national security; transnational security; conflict resolution; and science and technology. The program also offers students the option of completing their MA degree fully online with a concentration in U.S. national security only.

Students also have the option of emphasizing a particular geographic region—such as East Asia, the Middle East, or Latin America—by taking elective courses with a regional focus. Program faculty include internationally recognized authorities in defense policy and resources, foreign policy, the national security policy process, and regional and transnational security issues. In addition, an outstanding array of adjunct faculty is drawn from the many research institutions and policy organizations in the nation's capital.

Visit the program website (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/academics/graduate/sps/>) for additional information.

## ADMISSIONS

**Admission deadlines:** Fall: January 7th - Fellowship & Application Deadline

Spring: October 1st - Fellowship & Application Deadline .

Applications for admission will continue to be accepted on a rolling basis after the fellowship deadlines have passed, but students will not be considered for fellowships

**Standardized GRE/GMAT test- optional test scores:**

**Recommendations:** Two (2) letters are required. Applicants should submit one (1) academic letter from a professor and one (1) professional reference.

**Prior academic records:** Transcripts are required from all colleges and universities attended, whether or not credit was earned, the program was completed, or the credit appears as transfer credit on another transcript. Unofficial transcripts from all colleges and universities attended should be uploaded to your online application. Official transcripts are required only of applicants who are offered admission and choose to enroll.

If academic records are in a language other than English, English language translations must be provided. The English translations alone should be uploaded into the online application. Official transcripts and certified English translations will be required of applicants who are offered admission and choose to enroll.

**Statement of purpose:** All applicants are required to submit an essay of approximately 500 words that answers one of the two questions below:

State your purpose in undertaking graduate study at the Elliott School. As part of your statement of purpose, describe your academic and research interests, career objectives, how a degree from the Elliott School will enable you to achieve your goals, and what unique skills, talents and/or perspectives you will bring to your program. Please be specific.

- OR -

Please discuss an issue of international importance you wish to address in your professional career. Please include how the Elliott School and the academic program to which you have applied will prepare you to address this global issue.

**Additional requirements:** A resumé or curriculum vitae is required. Resumés/CVs must include dates of employment (if applicable) and date of degree conferral or expected degree conferral.

**International applicants only:** International Applicants may be required to submit official English Language tests scores with their application. Please see the Elliott School's English Language Requirements for guidance on whether you need to take the TOEFL/IELTS/PTE. Please send official TOEFL scores to institution code 5246.

The minimum English Language Test Requirements can be found below:

Eligible for Admission & requires EAP Courses:

- IELTS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.0

- TOEFL- 100 (internet test) 600 (paper test)

- PTE- 68

Eligible for Admission & Exempt from EAP Courses\*\*:

- IETLS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.5

- TOEFL- 105 (internet test) 650 (paper test)

- PTE- 72

\*\*Spring applicants must receive at least these scores to be considered for admission.

Please review International Applicant Information carefully for details on required documents, earlier deadlines for applicants requiring an I-20 or DS-2019 from GW, and English language requirements.

**Supporting documents not submitted online should be mailed to:**

Office of Graduate Admissions  
The Elliott School of International Affairs  
The George Washington University  
1957 E Street, NW, Suite 301  
Washington, DC 20052

**Contact for questions:**

esiagrad@gwu.edu ~ 202-994-7050 (phone) ~ 202.994.9537 (fax)  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday

## REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be fulfilled: 40 credits, including 6 credits in core field courses, a 4-credit capstone sequence, 0 to 3 credits in tool requirement courses, 15 credits in U.S. national security concentration courses, 3 credits in professional skills courses, and 9 to 12 credits in elective courses. Students may choose to fulfill the tool requirement by demonstrating language proficiency\*.

See notes regarding special topics and skills courses, the capstone sequence, and the thesis option\*\*.

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Required</b>		
Core field courses (6 credits)		
IAFF 6161	International Security	
IAFF 6162	Security Policy Analysis	
Capstone (4 credits)		
Students complete a two-course capstone sequence that most closely matches the thematic area of their project. The capstone sequence includes a 2-credit capstone workshop taken before the 2-credit capstone seminar. Students must have completed at least 18 credits of coursework prior to starting the capstone sequence. The two 2-credit capstone courses must be taken in consecutive semesters.		
IAFF 6898	Capstone Workshop	
IAFF 6899	Capstone Course	
Tool requirement courses (0 to 3 credits)		
Students may choose either a language or an appropriate analytical option to fulfill the research tool requirement.		

Language option—The language option may be completed by fulfilling the language proficiency requirement for ESIA’s non-regional programs. Additional information about the language proficiency requirements is available from the academic advisor. \*

Analytical option—This option may be fulfilled by demonstrating proficiency with a minimum grade of B in one of the following graduate-level methods courses. Other courses may count toward this requirement with approval of the Program Director:

IAFF 6118 Special Topics in International Affairs (Applied Qualitative Methods)

IAFF 6216 Analytic Tools for Global Policy

IAFF 6501 Quantitative Analysis for International Affairs Practitioners

U.S National Security concentration (15 credits)

Required

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (U.S. National Security)

12 credits in courses selected from the following:

IAFF 6165 Fundamentals of Intelligence

IAFF 6173 Security and Development

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cybersecurity)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cyber Threats and Policy)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Emerging Threats)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Insurgency and Counterinsurgency)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (NATO’s Strategic Challenges)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Risk Analysis)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Russia and International Security)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Terrorism Today)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Transnational Security and Illicit Finance)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Transnational Organized Crime)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Understanding U.S. Special Operations)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (U.S. Grand Strategy)

IAFF 6222 Special Topics in International Policy and Practice (Foreign Policy)

Other courses may count toward concentration requirements with approval of the program director.

Professional skills courses (3 credits)

Three 1-credit professional skills courses taken under IAFF 6502 and/or IAFF 6503.

### Electives (9 to 12 credits)

At least three 3-credit courses from the list below. No course can be double counted toward the concentration requirement.

IAFF 6138 Special Topics in International Development Studies (Bottom-up Development)

IAFF 6138 Special Topics in International Development Studies (Gender and Development)

IAFF 6171 Introduction to Conflict Resolution

IAFF 6173 Security and Development

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cybersecurity)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Political Risk Analysis)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Russia and International Security)

IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Terrorism Today)

IAFF 6222 Special Topics in International Policy and Practice (Monitoring and Evaluation)

Other courses may count toward elective requirements with approval of the program director.

### Optional thesis

Students who wish to continue to a PhD program or to pursue a research-oriented job may consider writing a thesis in addition to the capstone requirement. The thesis is an independent, in-depth research project that takes a year or more to complete. To pursue the thesis option, students must have a minimum GPA of 3.5 after 18 credits of graduate work and the approval of the full-time faculty member they wish to have serve as their thesis director. Thesis students also must complete at least one research methods course. Thesis credits are counted as elective or specialization/concentration credits with program director approval. The two required thesis courses (below) must be taken in consecutive semesters.

Required for the thesis option

IAFF 6998 Thesis

IAFF 6999 Thesis

\*The language proficiency requirement may be fulfilled in one of the following ways:

- Having a minimum grade of *B* in a sixth-semester university-level advanced language course completed no more than three years prior to matriculation in the Elliott School's master's degree program.
- Having a minimum grade of *B* in a sixth-semester university-level advanced language course at GW, or in an approved course taken at another institution of higher learning, including Elliott School exchange partner institutions, while enrolled in the Elliott School master's program.
- Passing the Elliott School-administered language proficiency reading and speaking examination at the currently-required level of proficiency (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/foreign-language-proficiency-requirement/>). The Elliott School administers language proficiency examinations once in the fall and once in the spring semesters. Students should plan to take the language proficiency examination as soon as possible following their matriculation in the program. Students have three opportunities to pass the examination. Failure to pass the examination for a third time results in dismissal from the program.
- Achieving the required proficiency level in a reading and speaking examination administered by an Elliott School-approved language assessment institution, at the student's expense, while enrolled in the Elliott School's master's degree program.

\*\*Specific subject matter covered in special/selected topics courses varies by semester. Consult the Schedule of Classes (<http://my.gwu.edu/mod/pws/>) for each semester's offerings. Topics courses not listed here may, with permission of the program director, be used to fulfill program requirements.

Additional information regarding skills courses (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/professional-skills-courses/>), the capstone (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/global-capstone/>), and the thesis (<https://elliott.gwu.edu/thesis/>) is available on the Elliott School website.