

MA International Relations: A Manual for Students

This “manual” is intended to help you find your way around in the MA International Relations. To convey suggestions, requests, or other feedback please send an email to Peter Mayer (prmayer@uni-bremen.de), Klaus Schlichte (kschlich@uni-bremen.de), or Marco Verweij (m.verweij@jacobs-university.de).¹ Note that there are updates from time to time, so it may be wiser to bookmark rather than print the manual.

1 – What is the MAIR?

The MA International Relations: Global Governance and Social Theory (MAIR) is a two-year International Relations Master’s program, which is jointly offered by Jacobs University (JU) and the University of Bremen (UB). Both universities contribute an equal share of the modules (which, as a rule, consist of one seminar).²

In the course of the program, you attend thirteen modules, all of which are mandatory. In each of the first three semesters, you take four modules. In the fourth semester, you write your MA thesis while attending the “Thesis Seminar”, which is intended to support you in this endeavor. Together, the thesis and the thesis seminar form the concluding “Master Thesis” module.

[Here](#) is an overview of the curriculum. The page also provides access to the “Module Catalogue” (describing the content and requirements of the various modules) and to the most recent seminar outlines (syllabi).

2 – When do classes start and end?

The semester dates of the MAIR are a compromise of the (unfortunately diverging) term schedules of the two cooperating universities: The fall term (i.e. classes) starts in early October and ends in mid-January. The spring term starts in early to mid-March and ends in mid-June.

¹ Peter Mayer is the “lead author” of this manual. Klaus Schlichte and Marco Verweij are currently the chairs of the program.

² The exception to this rule is the concluding “Master module”, which consists of two (obligatory) parts: the master thesis and the (ungraded) Master Thesis Seminar. While it is often possible to use “module” and “seminar” interchangeably in the context of this program, the two categories are different. From the administrative point of view, you receive grades and credits (“credit points” - CP) not for attending and contributing to seminars, but for passing “module exams”, for which you must have registered in due time (see [below](#)). Moreover, as noted [below](#), each of the twelve modules you are expected to take in the first three semesters comes in a small and a large version, from which you will have to choose; at the same time, this choice does not affect the seminars you will attend: students who opted for the large module version and students who chose the small version participate in the same seminar.

The precise dates and locations of the seminars are stated in the course catalogues of the two universities. (In addition, the chairs will inform students via email as soon as they are known.) The section “The Program” of the [program website](#) contains (at the bottom) a link to the catalogue of the current semester.

3 – What is my status at the two universities?

As an MAIR student you are a member of both universities. For practical and legal reasons, however, the program administration (application, enrollment, keeping student records, etc.) is handled exclusively by one of the two partner institutions. Currently, the UB bears this responsibility. As a result, you have the formal status of “guest students” at JU, although you are entitled to make full use of the resources of both universities (libraries, electronic course platforms, canteens, etc.).³

To claim these rights a few steps have to be taken: After enrolling at the UB you will receive your university papers, which include your student identity card, a proof of immatriculation, your UB email address (and login data), and the semester ticket.⁴ In addition, you should obtain a Mensa Card (see [here](#)) and a Library Card (see [here](#)) early on. To be able to use the JU resources, you should pick up your Campus Card and login letter at the [Registrar Services](#) (Maureen Trinder).

4 – How do I learn about the seminar requirements?

The module catalogue (which is accessible [here](#)) includes the standard requirements for each module. As you will notice, the module catalogue contains each module (except for the Master’s thesis module) in two versions, a small one worth 6 CP (credit points) and a large one worth 9 CP.⁵ In the course of the program, you are required to take one half of the modules in the large version and the other half in the small version (thus accumulating 90 CP). Which modules you study in the large version and which modules you study in the small version is your choice. For a given module the decision is made when registering for the module exam via PABO (see sec. 8 [below](#)). Students who opted for the large version and students who opted for the small version attend the same seminar. The two versions differ only in the “size” of the exams students have to pass. The module catalogue specifies the sets of exams (course requirements) that are offered in the respective seminars in order to cater to the needs of both types of participants: those who chose the large module version and those who selected the small one.⁶

³ According to German law, students can only be formally enrolled at one domestic university.

⁴ Make sure you keep the *Sekretariat für Studierende* (Student Office) informed about your mailing address. You can communicate a change of address to the Student Office via MOIN.

⁵ CP are a measure of the estimated workload tied to a module. The CP value also determines the weight of the module grade in the calculation of the GPA (grade point average).

⁶ The “duplication” of the twelve thematic modules into small and large versions is a product of the 2019 program reform. Students who enrolled into the MAIR before 2019 and chose not to switch to the new examination policy continue to study the modules in the original, middle-sized version earning them 7.5 CP.

While the module catalogue contains essential information on the modules and hence on the seminars that embody them in practice (see sec. 1 [above](#)), it is not the best place to learn about the procedures and requirements of the seminars that you attend. For this purpose you should consult the seminar outline (syllabus), which the instructor has made available to you via the electronic course platform they are using for the seminar (see sec. 6 [below](#)).⁷ Not only is the seminar outline more specific than the module description and includes essential information that is entirely absent from the former (such as dates, venues, session topics, and required readings), instructors may vary the requirements outlined in the module catalogue for individual seminars (without altering the estimated workload).

The [module catalogue](#) includes the standard requirements for each module. Instructors may vary these requirements for individual seminars, however. Hence, the place to look for reliable information on the seminar requirements is not the module catalogue but the syllabus of the seminar you are taking. Instructors make the seminar outlines (syllabi) available via the electronic course platform they are using for the seminar (see [below](#)). In addition, seminar outlines can be downloaded from the [program website](#) (sec. “The Program”).

Usually, you are required to take two to three variably-sized “exams” per seminar (including presentations, written exams, seminar papers, and other formats).⁸ The specifics (e.g. word number for seminar papers), weights, and deadlines of requirements are stated in the seminar syllabus. While for in-class examinations (including final take-home exams) the deadlines and dates will vary across seminars (and sometimes, e.g. for presentations or position papers, between students as well), there is a common deadline for term papers: in the fall term final papers are due on 1 March (first semester seminars) and 15 March (third semester seminars), respectively; in the spring term final papers must be handed in no later than 31 August.

Class participation is not graded and there are no sanctions for absenteeism.⁹ Nonetheless, leaving aside periods of sickness, students are expected to prepare and come to class every week and contribute to the discussions in class. A seminar is a cooperative enterprise, the success of which critically depends on the participants’ active and ongoing commitment.

5 – How is my performance graded and how do I learn about the results?

The MAIR uses a grading system that is defined by the following rules:

⁷ In addition, seminar outlines can be downloaded from the [program website](#) (under “The Program”).

⁸ In this manual “exam” (or “examination”) is used in the broadest possible sense referring to every piece of written or oral work that is graded or in other ways relevant for one’s passing or failing a module.

⁹ Obviously, this “immunity” does not apply to in-class examinations. Thus, if a student fails to show up for a presentation or a written exam without an adequate excuse (i.e. disability to work confirmed by a doctor’s note), the partial grade for this requirement will be “5” (see [below](#)).

- There are five grades: 1 (“very good”), 2 (“good”), 3 (“satisfactory”), 4 (“sufficient”), and 5.0 (“insufficient”).
- More fine-grained assessments can be made by adding or subtracting 0.3 (e.g. 1.3, 1.7 etc.).
- However, 1 is the best possible grade (there is no 0.7), and there is no differentiation below 4 (i.e. the grades 4.3, 4.7, and 5.3 are not used).
- Consequently, to pass an exam the (average) grade must be 4.0 or better.

To pass a module you must achieve at least the grade 4.0 in each partial exam.¹⁰ The overall module grade is determined by the partial grades and the weights attached to them in the seminar outline.¹¹

Missing a deadline does not automatically result in a “5”. More specifically, if you submit a final paper or a final take-home exam later than required, the instructor will downgrade your work as follows:

- As for final papers, submission within a week after the deadline will be punished by depreciating the (partial) grade (for the paper) by 0.3/0.4, and submission during the second week after the deadline comes at the price of a 0.6/0.7 deduction. Beyond this point, papers are no longer accepted and will be graded “5”.¹²
- As for take-home exams, an analogous penalty regime is in place, with “days” replacing “weeks”, however. In other words, a delay by up to 24 hours is punished by lowering the grade by 0.3/0.4, a two days’ delay costs you 0.6/0.7, and exams that are handed in later still are no longer accepted.

The [chairs](#) of the program will grant an extension of the deadline for the final paper(s) at the request of a student who provides them with a doctor’s note testifying his or her temporary inability to work. To be relevant the note must refer to a period after the end of classes (i.e. a period during the semester break).

¹⁰ By contrast, the 2017 predecessor of the current examination policy included the so-called “compensation principle”, according to which partial exams a student failed can be offset by sufficiently good grades in the remaining partial exams and all that matters for passing is the (weighted) average of the partial grades achieved in the module (which must be 4.0 or better). Students for whom the 2017 examination policy continues to be valid will be given the choice whether or not the compensation principle is applied to their results should they fail a partial exam in a seminar.

¹¹ Often the calculation will not result in a value (V) that corresponds to any of the possible grades (1.0, 1.3, etc.). In such cases rounding off will be done according to this formula: $V \leq 1.15 \rightarrow 1.0$; $1.15 < V \leq 1.50 \rightarrow 1.3$; $1.50 < V \leq 1.85 \rightarrow 1.7$; $1.85 < V \leq 2.15 \rightarrow 2.0$; $2.15 < V \leq 2.50 \rightarrow 2.3$; $2.50 < V \leq 2.85 \rightarrow 2.7$; $2.85 < V \leq 3.15 \rightarrow 3.0$; $3.15 < V \leq 3.50 \rightarrow 3.3$; $3.50 < V \leq 3.85 \rightarrow 3.7$; $3.85 < V \leq 4.00 \rightarrow 4.0$; $4.00 < V \rightarrow 5.0$ (see [Allgemeiner Teil der Masterprüfungsordnung](#) § 16 (3)).

¹² The *mode* of submission may vary across seminars. Some instructors are fine with digital copies, others may ask for a printout in addition or instead. In any case, the seminar syllabi will specify their expectations in this regard. Note that final papers must be provided with a completed and signed copyright declaration (for the form you are expected to use as well as some background information see [here](#)). To make sure you are fully aware of what constitutes plagiarism and hence must be strictly avoided in all scientific work, please read the relevant section in the [MAIR Stylesheet](#).

The grades you achieved in a seminar are reported to the UB registrar (*Zentrales Prüfungsamt*) (or rather, to its website PABO) via the secretary at InIIS¹³ who supports the module coordinator, i.e. the faculty member who is in charge of the module (*Modulverantwortliche/r*).

Module	Coordinator	Support
Actors, Institutions, and Global Governance (IR-A1)	Marco Verweij	Nicole Henze (substitute: Peter Arnhold)
International History (IR-B1)	Julia Timpe	Claudia Herold (substitute: Tina Menge)
Modern Social Theory (IR-C1)	Martin Nonhoff	Peter Arnhold (substitute: Nicole Henze)
Research Design (IR-D1)	Peter Mayer	Tina Menge (substitute: Claudia Herold)
International Political Economy (IR-A2)	Marco Verweij	Nicole Henze (substitute: Peter Arnhold)
Transformation of the State (IR-B2)	Kerstin Martens	Nicole Henze (substitute: Peter Arnhold)
Social Theory and International Relations (IR-C2)	Roy Karadag	Claudia Herold (substitute: Tina Menge)
Advanced Quantitative Methods (IR-D2)	Adalbert Wilhelm	Peter Arnhold (substitute: Nicole Henze)
War and Peace (IR-A3)	Klaus Schlichte	Claudia Herold (substitute: Tina Menge)
Legalization and International Law (IR-B3)	Manfred Hinz	Tina Menge (substitute: Claudia Herold)
Normative Theories of International Order (IR-C3)	Peter Mayer	Tina Menge (substitute: Claudia Herold)
Advanced Qualitative Methods (IR-D3)	Adalbert Wilhelm	Peter Arnhold (substitute: Nicole Henze)

¹³ “InIIS” stands for “Institute for Intercultural and International Studies”. The [InIIS](#) is a research institute, where most of the UB-based faculty of the program are located.

The grading periods are March and April for exams taken in the fall term and September and October for exams taken in the spring term, i.e. the instructors are expected to convey your results to the secretary who supports them by the end of April and by the end of October, respectively. In addition, they will inform you directly about your grades via email or in some other way. Whether or not you are happy with your grade, it is strongly recommended to make an appointment with the instructor to receive his or her detailed feedback on your work (unless, of course, extensive comments were already included in the email and made sense to you).

6 – How do I obtain course materials (syllabi, required readings, etc.)?

At JU and UB different electronic course platforms are in use for distributing course materials and communicating with the students. JU uses CampusNet, while the UB relies on Stud.IP. Although MAIR faculty have access to both systems, instructors will as a rule use the system they are more familiar with, i.e. the one that is used at their “home” university. At the beginning of a course you will be told which platform will be employed.

This is how you subscribe to a course that uses Stud.IP (typically seminars that take place at the InIIS belong to this category):

- 1) Go to: <https://elearning.uni-bremen.de/>
- 2) You may switch to the English version of the website by clicking the Union Jack.
- 3) To log in enter your username (= the part of your UB email address left to @) and your password.
- 4) To select the seminar apply "course search", enter the name of the course (e.g. "Modern Social Theory") and select the seminar. Note that you may have to adjust the semester, before you do the search.
- 5) On the page that opens select (on the left hand side) “go to course”. Once you have done this, you are informed that you have been provisionally enrolled in the course.

The next step is for the instructor to accept your request. Once they have done this, you have access to the resources available on the course site (files, further information, etc.). The course appears under “(My) Courses”, which contains all your pre-selected courses and enables you to enter directly the sites belonging to these courses. So when you access Stud.IP next time, select “(My) Courses” and then click on the name of the respective seminar.

Alternatively, you can subscribe to courses using Stud.IP via your JU address. This is what you do if you choose this option:

- 1) Go to: <https://elearning.uni-bremen.de/>
- 2) You may switch to the English version of the website by clicking the Union Jack.
- 3) Click “Login via Shibboleth”.
- 4) When asked to choose (“wählen”) your identity provider, select Jacobs University clicking the respective “Auswahl” (= choice) button.
- 5) Use your CampusNet Account data to log in.

Now you can register for a course following steps 4 and 5 above. For this procedure to work the instructor must have accepted applicants with a Jacobs domain. So if you experience persistent problems you should ask him or her whether s/he has remembered to click the relevant acceptance box.

This is how you subscribe to a course that uses CampusNet (typically seminars that take place at JU belong to this category):

- 1) Login it to CampusNet via <https://campusnet.jacobs-university.de/>
- 2) Go to "Courses" and then "Course Registration".
- 3) To register click the "Register" button on the right side of the registration overview and follow the instructions.

Make sure you register as an *auditor* – a (misleading) technicality that reflects the fact that the administration of module exams in the program is the UB’s exclusive responsibility.

7 – How do I take a seminar or module?

“Take” can mean two different things here: it can refer (i) to the signaling of your intent to attend a seminar (which includes having access to the course materials provided via CampusNet or Stud.IP) or (ii) to the formal registration for the module, which is a prerequisite for taking exams and receiving grades and credit points.

Normally (i.e. when the course is part of the [MAIR curriculum](#)), you will take both steps, i.e. you will (i) subscribe to the seminar via Stud.IP or CampusNet (depending on which system is used by

the instructor) (in order to have access to readings, to receive circular emails directed at seminar participants, etc.),¹⁴ and you will (ii) register (within a specified period of time) for the module via the UB registrar's website PABO (see [below](#)).

You may attend other seminars at the two universities (e.g. language classes), which, at your request, may be displayed on your diploma or final transcript as “additional courses”, but do not count towards your GPA.¹⁵ For such (non-MAIR) seminars offered at JU, you will have to register via CampusNet (using your JU login credentials); by contrast, (non-MAIR) classes at the UB you wish to attend will most likely use Stud.IP as their course platform but will not require formal registration.¹⁶

8 – How do I register for an exam?

To register for the exam in a seminar (which usually consists of several parts: a paper, a presentation, etc.) you have to access the registrar's website PABO.¹⁷

1) Go to PABO: <https://www.uni-bremen.de/zpa.html>

2) Click on “PABO-Login”. This takes you to a site providing you with access to “Flexnow”, the interactive software that PABO uses for its registrar services. At this point, you may switch to English.

3) To log in to FlexNow, use your UB login credentials (i.e. the ones you use for MOIN, Stud.IP or your UB email account).

4) In FlexNow, click “Examination (De)Registration” on the left hand side.

¹⁴ Note that if the seminar is based at JU and uses CampusNet you have to subscribe to the course within a specified period of time. You are informed about this “add/drop period” in due time by the Registrar Services via email. As already mentioned it is important that you register as an auditor (because, in the MAIR, module exams are administered by the UB no matter where the seminar takes place).

¹⁵ The form to be used to request the recognition of such “additional courses” (*Zusatzleistungen*) can be found [here](#) (“Application for recognition of credits” under “General forms”). If you run into difficulties, turn to Klaus Schlichte (kschlich@uni-bremen.de), who is the person in charge of recognizing additional courses (*Anerkennungsbeauftragter*) mentioned in the form.

¹⁶ At the UB, formal registration (via PABO) is confined to modules which are part of the student's program-specific curriculum; for any additional courses they choose to take, they will receive a small certificate (called “Schein”). The *Schein* specifies the CP and grade they achieved in the course and is to be submitted to the registrar (*Prüfungsamt*) before graduation. MAIR students who took a (non-MAIR) class at JU that they wish to be listed as an “additional course” in their final transcript must inform Maureen Trinder, the member of the Registrar Services at JU responsible for graduate students.

¹⁷ The acronym stands for “Prüfungsamt Universität Bremen Online” (virtual registrar of the University of Bremen).

5) “Search” the modules which you would like to sign up for (i.e. where you would like to take exams).

6) Move the selected modules to a “basket” by choosing the relevant “date” (i.e. semester in which the exams take place).

7) Check whether the basket contains precisely the modules you had intended to select, and make changes if necessary. (By clicking “remove from basket”, you can undo your choice of a module.)

8) When you are happy with the content of the basket, click “send” to communicate your choice to the *Prüfungsamt*.

Subsequently, you will be taken back to the starting page, where you are shown the modules you have selected. In addition, you will receive an email confirming your choice. (This may take a couple of minutes.)¹⁸

In an analogous manner, you can withdraw from an exam.

Remember that, in the MAIR, each module (save for the “MA Thesis module”) comes in a large and a small version (see sec. 4 [above](#)). So when putting modules in the basket make sure you pick the right version. The two versions are distinguished by the CP (6 or 9) that are attributed to them. Moreover, lower case letters – “a” (for the large version) and “b” (for the small version) – are added to the “module code” (*Modulkennziffer*) to mark the difference. (For example, the code of the large version of “Actors, Institutions, and Global Governance” is IR-A1a and the code of the small version of “International History” is IR-B1b.)¹⁹

Note that (in the case of the MAIR) PABO does not distinguish between partial exams, even though seminars/modules of the MAIR, as a rule, include several smaller and larger requirements (partial exams). Thus, by subscribing to a (module) exam you automatically register for all partial exams of the seminar/module. Similarly, dropping a module exam affects all partial exams; it is not possible to withdraw from just one or two of them.²⁰

Modules cannot be added and dropped at any time but only during certain periods. These add/drop periods are described in a so-called Examination Schedule (*Prüfungsplan*) that the ZPA publishes

¹⁸ For additional information see the ZPA’s [“Infos A to Z”](#), which includes the keyword “Registration for an Examination”.

¹⁹ Students for whom the 2017 examination policy is still valid continue selecting from the original 7.5 modules (whose codes do not include “a” or “b”).

²⁰ As noted [below](#), if you fail a module exam, only those partial exams with “insufficient” grades must (and can) be made up in a later semester. So in such cases the (re)registration de facto applies exclusively to the partial exams where your previous grade was below 4.0.

every semester on its website. Unfortunately, however, this schedule is in German, and it is misleading in parts. You should therefore consult the document “Registration for Exams” instead, which is available on the [program website](#). This document complements the present manual with information on registration and cancellation periods that change from semester to semester.

Note that if you failed to register (or canceled your registration) within the relevant period you cannot take the exam in the present semester.

9 – What can I do if I have failed a class?

If you failed at least one (partial) exam in a seminar (i.e. the grade is worse than “4”), you have failed the corresponding module.²¹ This is unpleasant, but not the end of the world. As a matter of fact, a student who has failed in his or her first attempt to pass a module exam is allowed four (!) additional (and successive) semesters to finish the incomplete course.

Only those parts of the examination (i.e. only those seminar requirements) which were graded “insufficient” (5) may be retaken. For example, if the seminar requirements are an oral presentation (20%), a book review (20%), and a term paper (60%) and the partial grades achieved by a student are 3.0 (presentation), 3.7 (review), and 5.0 (paper), respectively, they must write another final paper (on a new topic) in one of the subsequent semesters. Meanwhile the other two grades are kept on record (with the secretary supporting the module) and will contribute to the overall grade for the module, once the student has submitted a term paper which is awarded at least the grade “sufficient” (4).

Only if you fail to mend an incomplete module within the additional four semesters have you definitively failed the module. Every module being obligatory, this also means that you cannot continue with the program and will not receive a diploma.

A couple of further rules govern the retake of exams:

- A student who has passed a module is not allowed to retake it in order to improve the grade. In other words: “complete” modules are not re-opened.
- Students with an incomplete may retake the respective exams once every semester. For example, in the case above, the student who did not submit the term paper or submitted one that was of insufficient quality does not have to wait until the seminar is offered again to get the chance to make up the exam but will be allowed to make a new attempt (i.e. write

²¹ Students for whom the 2017 examination policy continues to apply may opt for the compensation principle being applied to their results should they fail one or more partial exams in a module (see sec. 5 [above](#)).

and submit another paper) in the following semester (although they may choose not to make use of this option).²²

- Students who intend to retake a (partial) exam in a semester must re-register for the module via PABO. If they fail to do so, they are not allowed to take the exam. For example, if the student with the missing term paper submits one in the next semester without re-registering for the module, the paper will neither be read nor graded. (Shortly after the add/drop period has expired, the supporting secretaries send instructors and module coordinators a list of the students who have registered for their module[s] in the ongoing semester. So they know who registered for the exam, and who didn't.)
- Instructors may switch to another form of examination for the makeup exam. For example, if a student who failed a module (inter alia) did not show up for their oral presentation, they may be assigned a different kind of task (say, write a take-home exam) within the makeup exam.

²² Students with an incomplete are not required or expected to attend the seminar again even when it is on offer, although they may choose to do so.