

## The International Studies MA Program at UNBC: Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

### GENERAL QUESTIONS

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#### ***What can I do with a degree in International Studies?***

An International Studies (INTS) MA is an ideal preparation for further interdisciplinary – or in some cases disciplinary – study at the doctoral level. But it is also an excellent preparation for many fields of work. Many of our students enter the workforce upon graduation, working in NGOs and community organizations, government (local, provincial, and federal), and private industry.

#### ***Whom should I contact with questions?***

To start, please read the webpages and these FAQs carefully. We hope you will find answers to most of your questions here! If you still have questions, please contact Dr. Gabrielle Daoust, Graduate Coordinator, Department of Global and International Studies ([gabrielle.daoust@unbc.ca](mailto:gabrielle.daoust@unbc.ca)).

#### ***Is the International Studies MA offered online?***

The INTS MA is a face-to-face offering. No online degree is offered. The degree is normally offered at the Prince George campus of UNBC.

#### ***How do I find a supervisor?***

Our program admits students directly to the coursework program. If you are interested in completing a major research paper or a thesis, you can approach a prospective supervisor and include their name in your statement of interest, but you are not required to identify a supervisor before applying. Please enter “Dr. Gabrielle Daoust, Graduate Coordinator” in the supervisor field if you are prompted to enter data here.

We occasionally admit students directly to the thesis stream. If you wish to apply directly to the thesis stream, please indicate this in your statement of interest. You should approach a faculty member with whom you wish to study prior to your application and identify this prospective supervisor in your statement of interest. We may offer you admission to the coursework stream or the thesis stream.

**Note:** After completing their first year of coursework, students may apply to transfer into either the research paper or the thesis stream. See [here](#) for more information. Transfer is awarded based on performance in coursework. Should you apply for and be awarded transfer, an appropriate supervisor will be assigned based on your research interests.

### APPLICATIONS AND ADMISSIONS

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#### ***What are the requirements for admission?***

The requirements for admission to graduate programs are listed [here](#). In addition, please see the tips [here](#). For admission, the INTS MA program requires a completed Bachelor’s degree, preferably in the Social Sciences. While the minimum GPA for admission to UNBC is 3.0, we generally look for GPAs of 3.5 or higher – though all admissions decisions are based on assessment of each candidate’s application as a whole. Exceptions may be made in the case of mature-student admission where a candidate is more than five years past the degree and has significant experience in international relations or development. (Please see below for further information on this admission pathway.)

***Are GRE scores required for application?***

No.

***Can you review my documents before I apply to let me know whether I am likely to get in?***

We receive applications from all over the world, making the assessment of documents and calculation of GPAs a complex matter. GPAs are carefully calculated by UNBC administrative staff with expertise in this area. At the program level, we assess all candidates for admission in a given semester at once, with all members of the program contributing to the assessment based on the application as a whole. Therefore, we cannot pre-approve candidates.

***How long should my statement of interest be?***

Your statement of interest should be between 500 and 750 words long. The most effective statements detail the applicant's educational and professional history, academic interests and educational goals, and professional aspirations. Your statement of interest should also detail 1) how you believe UNBC's INTS MA aligns with your goals and 2) the specific coursework and research you hope to undertake whilst completing the program. It is critically important that the Statement of Interest is written in your own words and expresses your own unique goals and ideas. Do not use any writing software or generative AI to produce the statement.

***Can someone from the program review or proofread my statement of interest before I submit it?***

The program will not review or proofread statements of interest. In fact, as stated above, you should submit a candid and clear statement that is entirely your own work. This will help us to assess your application and will make your application unique.

***How do I know if my degree is appropriate for admission?***

As an interdisciplinary program, the INTS MA program considers any social-sciences degree an appropriate preparation for admission. However, as part of the admission process, we consider the candidate's preparation in relation to their statement of interest and proposed program of study. For some students, a natural-sciences or humanities degree may be an appropriate first degree depending on the proposed area of study.

***My first degree is not in the Arts or Social Sciences. Can I apply?***

For some students, a degree in the natural, physical, or applied sciences may be a very appropriate preparation for an INTS MA. For example, a student interested in studying sustainability, global environmental change, or climate-change policy may be very well served by an undergraduate degree in Biology, Environmental Science, or Ecosystem Science. When you draft your statement of interest, however, make sure to articulate how your first degree has prepared you for study in INTS, with particular attention to skills that are translatable to our program.

***I am a mature student. Do I qualify for mature student conditional admission?***

Conditional admission as a mature student is an exceptional pathway to entry offered to candidates who have weaker academic records but who possess significant professional or volunteer expertise in the area of development or global studies.

Academic regulation 1.4 of the [Graduate Calendar](#) stipulates that “Five years after completion of a Baccalaureate degree as defined in 1.3.1, applicants whose academic record is such that they would not be admissible to a Master’s program may be admitted conditionally as mature students, provided they are recommended by the appropriate Program. Such recommendations must be made in writing by the Program and approved by the Vice Provost Student Recruitment or

designate. The minimum grade point average for admission to a Master's program as a conditionally admitted mature student is 2.67 ("B-").

***I'm from a country where English is the main language of instruction. Do I need to submit proof of English-language proficiency?***

Students from certain countries and institutions where English is the language of instruction do not need to submit proof of English-language proficiency. Please check UNBC's [guidelines](#) and [list of exempted countries and institutions](#).

***Will unofficial transcripts suffice for admission evaluation?***

Please see the admissions information listed [here](#). Note that "For the purpose of the UNBC online application, applicants are welcome to upload unofficial transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended as they can be used for evaluation, however, you need to make arrangements to have official transcripts sent directly from the issuing institution to UNBC by the application deadline."

## **COSTS, BUDGETING, AND FUNDING**

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***How much is tuition, and how much will my degree cost?***

Tuition for international and domestic graduate students can be [found on this webpage](#). Please be aware that the tuition charge for our program is covered under "Basic Graduate Tuition." Note also that the listed tuition charge is per semester. The minimum charge for a Master's degree is three semesters' tuition. Students completing a coursework degree should expect to pay this much *if* (and only if) they complete all requirements within three semesters. All students also pay additional service fees every semester. These fees are detailed on the [same webpage](#) as the tuition amounts.

***How much does it cost to live in Prince George?***

It is very difficult to estimate standard living costs, but the cost of living in Prince George is comparable to costs in other regions of Canada.

[Housing on campus](#) is convenient and economical and may be a good option for single students (there is no family housing on campus). Off-campus housing in Prince George may be slightly cheaper than in cities such as Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, or Toronto. Vacancies are advertised online. You can search for off-campus housing [here](#). There is also, for example, a student housing [Facebook group](#) that advertises available properties. *Note that UNBC has no relationship with this Facebook page—this is a community group unaffiliated with the university and the university takes no responsibility for the postings.*

Bus service is free to students with the [U-Pass](#), which is included with student fees. The U-Pass also allows access to city swimming pools.

The cost of food is highly dependent upon each student's preferences, budgeting abilities, and cooking skills. There is also a [meal plan](#) available to students.

***Is funding available?***

[Funding](#) is available on a competitive basis. The department also offers a small number of teaching assistantships every fall and winter term. These are advertised [online](#) every semester. Students who have been admitted for an upcoming semester should consult this webpage and apply for any appropriate assistantships. Most of our students fund their own education through a combination of personal savings, scholarships, teaching assistantships, and paid part-time

employment. Our faculty also sometimes have research opportunities for skilled graduate students.

***I'm an international student. Am I eligible for funding?***

International students are eligible for some but not all of UNBC's scholarships, including the [Graduate Entrance Research Scholarships](#). In addition to the scholarships listed [here](#), please review the "graduate awards" listed [here](#). International students are also eligible for teaching assistantships.

***Is it possible to find a job in Prince George while completing my degree?***

Student employment is quite accessible in Prince George. Most students are able to find suitable part-time employment, if desired.

***Will I study during the summers, or can I work during the summer semesters?***

Coursework students are generally able to work during the summer semesters, since few courses are offered. Students in course-based degree programs where there is no course offering available in the summer semester are not required to register for the summer. Thesis students must maintain registration continuously unless on an approved leave and are expected to make progress on their research during the summers. All students should consult with their supervisors and/or the Department Chair concerning summer registration and employment.

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## **DEGREE COMPLETION**

***How many credits is the INTS MA degree?***

The INTS MA degree comprises 25 credit hours, in the case of the coursework-only or coursework-and-research-paper streams; or 28 credit hours, in the case of the thesis program.

***How long does it take to finish the MA INTS degree?***

The coursework degree may be completed in as little as four full-time semesters, though completion in five semesters is more common. A research paper or thesis degree may be completed in six or seven semesters, though some students have completed theses within five semesters, and some students find eight semesters more realistic. The time required for any degree pathway is highly individual and dependent upon the personal circumstances of each student.

***How do I transfer into the research-paper or thesis stream?***

Upon completing Stage 1 (Required coursework—16 credits) of the program, students may apply for transfer into either the research-paper or thesis streams. Transfer will be granted on the basis of academic achievement or excellence. For transfer into either stream, a GPA of A- or 3.67 will normally be required.

***Can I transfer graduate credit from another university into my INTS MA program?***

At the graduate level, acceptance of transfer credit is rare and done at the discretion of the department in exceptional cases. While there is a possibility of transferring coursework, the final decision in such cases is only made after your transcripts and application package are received and reviewed. For further information, please see regulation 4.1.6 [here](#).

***What is the grade requirement for graduation?***

According to UNBC regulations, a student's graduating GPA can be no lower than B- (2.67).