



Support Command
Ministry of Defence

Master Military Strategic Studies

The Faculty of Military Sciences (FMS) is part of the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) and provides academic education in the shape of a number of initial officer training courses at the Royal Military Academy in Breda and the Royal Naval Institute in Den Helder. In addition to three accredited Bachelor's Degree programmes, the Faculty also offers a Military Strategic Studies (MSS) Master's programme in English.



Introduction

The modular part-time Master's Degree programme was developed and structured primarily for Netherlands Ministry of Defence personnel, but it also welcomes students from other governmental organisations as well as civilian students who are interested in international security, contemporary conflicts, defence policy and the use of military force. The course requires a considerable amount of individual self-study, since the lectures, given at the Royal Military Academy in Breda, are scheduled for Fridays only. This brochure provides information about the Military Strategic Studies curriculum and the intended target group.

Master programme

The multifaceted programme aims to foster understanding of the military dimension of international security. The programme explores

the relationship between politics and the multiple forms of military power, ranging from irregular warfare to the cyber threat and the possible use of nuclear weapons. Focusing on the post-Cold War period, it explores the challenges the West has faced in addressing threats to international security. Courses draw from history, security studies, political science, sociology, psychology, law, organisational studies, engineering, ethics and economics. The programme offers students the option to specialise in one of three main subjects: War Studies, Intelligence & Security, and Managing & Organizing in the Military. The programme benefits from the limitation of the number of students accepted each year (generally a maximum of 45). In the specialisation track phase, classes typically do not exceed 20 students. This facilitates discussion, active participation in discussions, engagement with the faculty and supervision and feedback in writing essays and the thesis.



Eligible candidates

The programme is intended for three categories of applicants, all of whom are required to have at least a university Bachelor's Degree:

1. officers actively serving in the Netherlands Armed Forces or in allied armed forces;
2. civilian employees of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence;
3. civilian students or employees from other ministries and, for example, NGOs that, because of the nature of their activities, cooperate with the military.

Learning from each other is a didactic pillar of the Master education. The variety of students with their different perspectives is conducive to the discussions and stimulates the expression of opinions and personal experiences during the lectures.

Career possibilities

While the programme is not related to the personnel policy of the armed services, it offers invaluable knowledge to those who are currently in a mid-level to senior level position, or are pursuing one, in the armed forces and/or in an international security organisation. It hones critical analytical and writing skills and enhances an operational and strategic level perspective on the use of force, creates awareness of legal, ethical, political and societal debates concerning modern warfare and military technologies, provides a keen insight into the dynamics of contemporary conflicts and fosters critical engagement with national and international security and defence policy development.

Focus

The main emphasis of the MSS programme lies on the Western European perspective on international security and the application of the military instrument. Grounded in academic debate and current developments in theory, the study highlights the trends in the European security environment, debates concerning defence policies, developments in modern warfare, the nature of contemporary conflicts and societal attitudes towards war. Specialised tracks allow deeper study of specific aspects of the military instrument such as leadership, defence economics, irregular warfare, peacekeeping and the functioning of intelligence organisations.

The Master's course curriculum

The two-year course consists of 9 ten-week modules of 5 ECs (study credits) each. Over the first three months, all students follow a common programme, consisting of four mandatory core modules. This provides a prerequisite knowledge base on modern warfare and looks at contemporary security issues and policies, the nature of strategy and the position of the military in western societies. The final core

A Master student's account

Major Rick:



"I chose to enrol in the Military Strategic Studies Master's programme because of my personal interest in the dynamics of international relations and international crises. Not only on a strategic or political level, but on an interdepartmental level as well. This programme has given me a broader insight into international developments, ongoing crises and political perspectives, and I have gained academic and theoretical skills useful for my career within the Ministry of Defence.

Although there is a significant workload connected to the programme, in most cases it was well balanced, and very interesting topics were addressed. Of course, I liked some courses more than others, but my overall expectations were met.

One of the great opportunities this Master's programme provides is interacting with and learning from fellow students who all have different backgrounds and levels of expertise. Anyone who is up for an academic challenge that will increase understanding of international crises and military options for crisis response and more should definitely sign up for the Master's programme."

module focuses on research methods. Subsequently, there are three specialisation tracks, each comprising four modules. Students select their preference for one of the tracks in their application for enrolment in the programme.

The War Studies track explores the theories on, doctrine for, experiences with and challenges of the use of military force in different strategic contexts, such as irregular warfare and peacekeeping. It also critically examines the legal dimension of military operations. The Managing & Organizing in the Military track homes in on the internal management processes of military organisations. This includes leadership and ethics, defence economics and the challenges of creating effective organisations and equipping, sustaining and maintaining military units. Finally, the Intelligence and Security track explores the role and the workings of intelligence services.

An elective module completes this part of the Master's programme. In the past years, courses were offered on strategic decision-making, cyber warfare, military innovation and 'selling war' (the way politicians try to enlist support for and legitimize the use of force). Students conclude the programme by writing a thesis.

The modular design of the programme allows students to deviate from the regular programme schedule if it is interrupted by external factors, e.g. deployments. Results obtained for each module are valid for six years. This modular design also invites modular students (those not seeking a full MA degree) to take part by studying a module they are interested in. These modules are concluded with an official certificate.

Fees and application

Military and civilian employees of the Ministry of Defence and military students from allied armed forces are exempt from payment of fees, when their application is supported by their military service. Other students of the Master's programme pay the statutory tuition fees set by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

For the academic year 2017-2018, the statutory tuition fee is € 2006.-. Modular students pay € 100.- per EC (study credit) amounting to € 500.- per module.

For students not yet qualified for the MSS programme, standard preparatory programmes have been developed for distance learning. They are free of charge for students exempt from payment of fees for the FMS Master's course, as stated above. Other students are charged € 30.- per EC.

Every year, students can enrol from 1 February until the last Sunday of April, but they may express their interest earlier via e-mail; master.mss@mindef.nl. The independent Board of Examiners determines the acceptance of applications.

Additional information

For additional information, prospective students are advised to consult 'Masteropleiding Military Strategic Studies' (Military Strategic Studies Master's programme) on the NLDA website (<http://www.defensie.nl/onderwerpen/defensieacademie/inhoud/opleidingen>).

If you have any questions or remarks about this brochure or the MSS programme, please send an email to master.mss@mindef.nl.

A Master student's account

Major Alison:



"The Military Strategic Studies Master's programme provided a unique opportunity to broaden my knowledge and understanding of the military instrument, especially in light of diplomatic and political considerations. After working at a tactical level for several years, I was also keen to increase my understanding of the operational and strategic level and the (inter)national political arena.

During classes, a wide variety of topics are discussed, ranging from securitization theory to the economic disadvantages of a conscript army. It takes a fair amount of time to prepare for classes and there is always a lot to read; however, the discussions between fellow classmates and professors that follow from these readings often highlight diverse perspectives and insights, which enrich each and every class. So, be prepared to read a lot throughout the whole Master's programme and be prepared to offer your own unique insights during class.

The interaction between civilian and military students during these discussions (which often continue throughout the coffee breaks) will enhance your knowledge on a variety of topics, and will not only make the experience as a whole more fun and memorable, but will add a unique quality and value to the course."



The scheme below shows the structure of the Master's programme. The two-year course consists of a number of ten-week modules of 5 ECs (study credits) each.

THESIS 15 EC		
Elective		
Managing & Organizing in the Military	War Studies	Intelligence & Security
Technology Management and the Military	International Law of Military Operations	International Intelligence Cooperation
Leadership and Ethics	Peacekeeping & Statebuilding	Methods and Analytic Concepts in Intelligence
Strategizing and Organizing	Insurgency & Counterinsurgency	Intelligence Organizations & their Cultures
Defence Economics & Performance Management	Coercive Diplomacy	Intelligence and its Environment
War, Defence & Society		Research Methods
War & Warfare in the (post)modern world		Contemporary Security and Strategy