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 but are not limited to 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

Recommendations (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.

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eligible for Admission &amp; requires EAP Courses:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- IELTS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>- TOEFL- 100 (internet test) 600 (paper test) - PTE- 68 Eligible for Admission &amp; Exempt from EAP Courses**:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- IELTS- 7.0 overall score, no band score below 6.5 - TOEFL- 105 (internet test) 650 (paper test)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- PTE- 72</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**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 research tool courses, 15 credits in U.S. national security specialization courses, 3 credits in professional skills courses, and 9 to 12 credits in elective courses. Students may choose to fulfill requirements that demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language (see below).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Core field courses (6 credits)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6161</td>
<td>International Security</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6162</td>
<td>Security Policy Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capstone (4 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IAFF 6898</td>
<td>Capstone Workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAFF 6899</td>
<td>Capstone Course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research tool courses (0 to 3 credits)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students may choose either a language or a statistical skills option to fulfill the research tool requirement.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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. Students who fulfill the tool requirement without taking any additional coursework will have 3 extra credits to apply to their electives.

Statistics option—This option may be fulfilled by demonstrating proficiency with a minimum grade of B in one of the following graduate-level statistics courses:

- IAFF 6118 Special Topics in International Affairs (Applied Qualitative Methods)
- IAFF 6216 Economic Tools for Global Policy
- IAFF 6501 Quantitative Analysis for International Affairs Practitioners

U.S national security specialization (15 credits)

Required

- IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (U.S. National Security)
- 12 credits in courses selected from the following:
  - IAFF 6163 Transnational Security
  - IAFF 6173 Security and Development
  - IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Civil-Military Relations)
  - 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 (Grand Strategy)
  - IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Insurgency and Counterinsurgency)
  - 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 (Weapons of Mass Destruction and Arms Control)
Special Topics in International Policy and Practice (U.S. Foreign Policy)

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

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. Students who fulfill the tool requirement without taking any additional coursework must take 3 additional elective credits. No course can be double counted toward the specialization requirement.

IAFF 6108 International Development Policy
IAFF 6138 Special Topics in International Development Studies (Bottom-up Development)
IAFF 6138 Special Topics in International Development Studies (Gender and Development)
IAFF 6163 Transnational Security
IAFF 6171 Introduction to Conflict Resolution
IAFF 6173 Security and Development
IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Civil-Military Relations)
IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Cybersecurity)
IAFF 6186 Special Topics in Security Policy Studies (Emerging Threats)
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)
IAFF 6222 Special Topics in International Policy and Practice (U.S. Foreign Policy)

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

Other courses may count toward specialization 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, which 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 and the approval of the faculty member they wish to have serve as their thesis director. The thesis must be completed in addition to the capstone requirement. 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.

Thesis credits are counted as elective or specialization credits with program director approval.

Required for the thesis option

IAFF 6998 Thesis
IAFF 6999 Thesis

*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.

**The foreign 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 foreign 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 foreign 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 foreign language assessment institution, at the student's expense, while enrolled in the Elliott School's master's degree program.

• Demonstrating the required foreign language proficiency level in a foreign language professional skills course offered through the Elliott School. The instructor tests the student during the course (https://elliott.gwu.edu/foreign-language-proficiency-requirement/) to determine if the required proficiency level has been achieved.