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The University of Manchester



Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute Careers Guide



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Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute Careers Guide

The Humanitarian and Conflict Response's work is committed to inspiring the next generation of humanitarian practitioners and researchers. This guide is dedicated to helping you decide which programmes to study and obtain the right career after you have completed your studies.

Studying at the HCRI will give you a wealth of career options due to our multidisciplinary approach to our teaching, research and fieldwork, as well as our many partnerships with organisations such as UK-Med, MSF and Save the Children. Our community includes medical students and humanitarian professionals who have gone into an incredibly wide range of fields.

The most popular sectors among our students, and therefore what we will be focusing on are:

-  **NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and Charities**
-  **Policy and Government**
-  **Humanitarian Healthcare**
-  **Research**

The University of Manchester Careers Service website: www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/services is an excellent resource, to support you to navigate your next steps. It offers a flexible service to students and graduates by offering appointments and events via a mixture of online and on campus delivery.

NGOs and Charities

What is an NGO?

The term NGO stands for Non-Governmental Organisation, meaning that it is independent of government control that operates on a not-for-profit level. This includes charities. There are a lot of NGOs both in the UK and across the world. Here are some examples of issues that NGOs and charities can work to deal with:

- Conflict Prevention and Resolution / Peace Building
- Diplomatic / International Organisations / Foreign Affairs
- Humanitarian Aid/Emergency Relief Work
- Civil Liberties and Human Rights
- Social Justice
- Minority rights
- Refugees / Migration
- Children's and Women's Rights
- Security and Intelligence

Roles within an NGO and charity are also very diverse and depend on your skills and expertise. Examples include:

- Management / Administration / Operations
- Personnel and Human Resource
- Marketing, Communications and Campaigning
- Volunteer Management
- Policy Development and Research
- Fundraising
- Grants Officers/Advisers

Pathways to a Career with NGOs and Charities

There is often no set route for gaining employment for an NGO as it is dependent upon what your desired role is. However, there are important qualifications and types of experience that can set you apart from other applicants, including degrees, short courses and training opportunities.

HCRI Undergraduate Programmes

The International Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response BSc will allow you to develop an overall theoretical knowledge of the many issues that NGOs across the world are seeking to address, as well as build a critical understanding of the process and practises of humanitarianism. Develop knowledge about the causes and impacts of disasters, as well as how we can address contemporary global issues surrounding such events. Build a critical understanding of the process and practises of humanitarianism. Explore the causes of contemporary conflicts, as well as the current debates about peacebuilding. Gain valuable transferable skills for your future career through work placements. And you will have the opportunity to undertake fieldwork in emergency preparedness and response, recovery and reconstruction.

The option to study the IDMHR BSc with another language is a great way of boosting your chances of employment with an NGO, particularly if you are looking to work abroad or with non-English speaking groups. You can study with the IDMHR BSc as a joint honours with Arabic, Chinese, French or Spanish. Other options for studying a language are:

- Careers Service:
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/study/languagecourses/
- The University Language Centre offers the opportunity to learn a language through the Language Experience for All Programme (LEAP)
www.langcent.manchester.ac.uk





HCRI Postgraduate Programmes

Studying a master's programme is a great way of specialising in a certain field, which will make you even more attractive to NGOs. HCRI run a wide variety of postgraduate programmes which suit different specialisms. These include:

- Global Health MSc/PGDip/PGCert (online)
- Humanitarian Practice MSc/PGDip/PG Cert
- Humanitarianism and Conflict Response MA
- International Disaster Management MSc
- International Disaster Management MSc (online)

Experience

It is not unusual for people to start by undertaking volunteering/work experience/internships, and these are an important way of developing practical work skills, discovering whether a career path is right for you and increasing chances of employment. Through HCRI's partnerships with various NGOs and the University of Manchester's resources, we offer different opportunities to gain experience:

PEP (Professional Experience Project)

This optional course unit can be taken as part of the International Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response BSc. It offers students the opportunity to undertake group work as enquiry-based learners on a 'real world' project, typically proposed by the external organisation.

Some of the organisations we partner with are:

Rethink Rebuild Society, RE:ACT, Inua Kike, Women Asylum Seekers Together (WAST) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

To find out more, head to

www.hcri.manchester.ac.uk/study/work-placements.

Volunteering

Volunteering alongside your degree is also a great way of obtaining more experience and creating connections with employers. There are a wealth of opportunities through The University of Manchester Volunteer Hub:

<https://find-volunteering.manchester.ac.uk>

The Manchester Leadership Programme (MLP) **www.manchester.ac.uk/mlp** which is a combination of an academic unit and volunteering allows you to learn directly from leading Manchester academics and high-profile leaders from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

To find out about different NGOs and charities, head to:

- ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) – Global network of human rights, humanitarian and development NGOs
- The World Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (WANGO) – a directory of Worldwide NGOs
- Charity Choice – a directory of all registered charities within the UK and worldwide.

Alumni

Case Studies



Mei Morrish

HR Officer for Middle East at
Mines Advisory Group (MAG)
MA Humanitarian and
Conflict Response

What course did you study and why?

I studied the Humanitarianism & Conflict Response MA. I really wanted to work in the third sector, and I had an open MA fast-track place with UoM after completing my undergrad, but I wasn't sure how I wanted to go about it – I attended the HCRI lecture "What Inspires Humanitarian Action?" with Jane Cocking and enjoyed it so much that I decided to fully commit to a taught MA with the department.

What is your current role and what do you enjoy most about it?

I currently work as an HR Officer for the Mines Advisory Group (MAG). I enjoy working in a sector that's affecting real change around the world and the interconnectedness of the teams means I get to join in on some fascinating projects.

How has the course helped with your current role/career progression?

The course gave me a strong theoretical basis for practice – in real terms, it demystifies the 'why' behind a lot of internal processes, as well as introduces a lot of key issues that you need to be aware of. Developing independent research methods and familiarity with humanitarian standards was also very helpful. Aside from this, being able to debate big, sensitive topics in a classroom setting is a great way to hone your capacity for tolerance.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

I find that I draw on the Humanitarian Protection and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support courses quite regularly in my work – I am not sure if the Protection course runs annually but try the MH course, it is so helpful for confronting some serious limitations to the work NGOs can do. Also, attend the HCRI lecture series – you can get to know some key figures in the NGO world without needing to track them down to their offices.



Emilia Mikunovic

UK Media Officer for
The ONE Campaign

**BSc International Disaster
Management and Humanitarian
Response**

What course did you study and why?

I studied the BSc International Disaster Management & Humanitarian Response, with Arabic as a minor. I chose the course because of its interdisciplinary nature. It allowed me to think creatively in exploring how seemingly unrelated theories may work with one another to explain events. I was also keen to undertake courses where the reading lists included voices from the Global South as opposed to the same, recurring European (male) names.

The choice to study a language as a minor subject is fantastic. I knew that it would open many doors if I could speak Arabic – or at least make for a more enriching experience were I to travel to an Arabic-speaking country at any point in my life!

What is your current role and what do you enjoy most about it?

I'm the UK Media Officer for The ONE Campaign. I love how exciting PR can be. Meeting with journalists to explain policy products can be fun, and I'm lucky to have entered an organisation at a time where amplifying African voices has been one of the main objectives. The best part of my job is working with African colleagues on getting stories and policy products out to UK media.

What is one of the most challenging parts of your role and why?

PR is a challenge, but I enjoy it because it wasn't something I considered or studied at university. I started fresh out of university, with a breadth of knowledge, thinking everyone would be on board in supporting the many discourses and development issues that I studied. The reality of my job is trying to communicate policy to the public and the government. Tailoring policy and messaging for a mostly right-wing audience is difficult, but I've understood that by working in the third sector, maintaining the visibility (and credibility) of large organisations means balancing idealism with practicality.

How have the skills and knowledge gained on the course helped you in your current role/career progression?

I wanted to learn about the different solutions to problems caused by politics, the environment, and so on. I felt like studying Politics or History would have left an open end to my university experience, and I would have ultimately wanted to learn how people wanted to mitigate crises caused by these subjects. This course allowed me to provide practical solutions and other ideas for my job.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

At university, I highly recommend getting involved in something on the side, be it volunteering or campaigning for something you feel passionate about. Although unpaid, you gain a huge amount of practical skills that workplaces ultimately seek when choosing applicants for positions.



Simba Machingaidze

Development Intern at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Bureau

MA Humanitarian and Conflict Response

What course did you study and why?

I studied the MA in Humanitarianism and Conflict Response. I was looking for a program that dealt practically with the various technical skills required in the humanitarian sector. At HCRI, I found a high level of detail in class themes discussions looking at both the policy and field levels of humanitarian work.

What is your current role and what do you enjoy most about it?

Currently, I am the Development Intern at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Regional Bureau for Southern Africa housed within the External Engagement Pillar and based in Pretoria, South Africa. In the Development Unit I work to build bridges with development partners, governments in the region, the private sector and other stakeholders to advocate for the inclusion of our persons of concern (predominantly refugees, IDP's and stateless persons) in development programs. I love how my unit is specifically addressing the challenges of protracted crises. The humanitarian development nexus challenged me while working at the field level, in the frustrations echoed by the communities we served. It is meaningful to me to be part of a wider movement in the sector to address the long-term aspirations and development outcomes of these communities.

What is one of the most challenging parts of your role and why?

In my experience, it has been the transition from the field to the policy level. The end goals are the same, but a different set of skills are required, networking and relationships I find hold more importance at this level rather than just the name of the organization one carries. This has also been exciting, as well as growing my understanding of how the policy world links to the practical work I saw in the field.

How has the course helped with your current role/career progression?

I have found that the course tackled many foundational concepts in humanitarian work, and I have had to draw on these understandings developed through lectures and discussion in my day-to-day work even in one-on-one sessions with my colleagues. Specifically, there are policy documents we discussed that I still refer to regularly. HCRI is well-resourced with staff that have served in the sector for a wide range of organizations and drawing on their experience and guidance (particularly of specific organizations) has been truly helpful.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

I would say that one thing that may not be spoken of often is the importance of having mentors. These individuals can be from several different working areas in the sector, they not only provide guidance but give you a window into what working in a particular area of operation is like without you having to necessarily experience it yourself. These individuals can be people you have a call with every couple of weeks or once a month and they will help shape your path even down to your course selection and thesis topic. Through them, you can build your network and pivot quickly when new opportunities arise. It seems daunting at first, but when people are genuine, I have found they love to talk about what they do and to work with passionate young people.



Juliette Flach

Policy and Public Affairs Officer and
Marketing and Project Support Officer
for Christians Against Poverty

**BSc International Disaster Management
and Humanitarian Response**

What course did you study and why?

I started at The University of Manchester studying Adult Nursing, but having done this for a year, I realised I wanted to find out more about helping to prevent disasters rather than to continue to 'put a plaster on the wound'. So I then began my BSc degree in International Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response.

What is your current role and what do you enjoy most about it?

I am in fact currently doing 2 part-time roles that make up a full-time week. So I spend half of my time as a 'Policy and Public Affairs Officer' and the other half as a 'Marketing and Project Support Officer' for Christians Against Poverty (CAP). This is a charity that provides free FCA-accredited debt help, job clubs, money management courses, and life skills sessions, alongside doing upstream approaches to tackle the systems and structures that are trapping people in poverty.

I like being involved in not only facilitating the support that we can offer to people who are in financially difficult positions, but that I can also help to address some of these causes to prevent people from being pulled into these situations in the first place. And I enjoy that I'm not alone in this, I am surrounded by a fantastic team of enthusiastic colleagues and a network of great supporters who enable us to actually make real impact rather than just talk about it!

What is one of the most challenging parts of your role and why?

One of the most challenging parts of my role is the current state of affairs in this country, which makes for some difficult timetabling! We have to remain alert to the quick changing nature of politics and the continuous flow of information that is coming out about factors that are feeding into the cost of living crisis. As a result, a priority and plan one minute may have to change based on factors out of our control.

How has the course helped with your current role/career progression?

Systems Thinking was definitely a skill that I developed on the course which has been pivotal in my career progression. Before my current positions, I worked as a Systems Thinking Research Assistant for the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and ALNAP, a role that would not have been possible if I had not done my degree. And it didn't end there, I still use my Systems Thinking mindset and tools alongside the general principles I developed through my degree in every day ideation and decision making within my current role.

Career progression?

I would advise you to not fool yourself, it is hard. I loved my course so I threw everything at it, doing all the recommended reading and joining in every seminar, but the hard work doesn't end there. I had to apply to over a hundred jobs to get one 'yes' at the start of my career journey post-university. So don't fool yourself into thinking it is guaranteed to be easy. For some people it is, and I am happy for them, but for many others, it isn't. Getting onto the right career path for you can be really disheartening and challenging, but keep going. Get lots of experience, use the free CV checkers, reach out to people in the industry, systematically look through a range of job sites, take on board feedback, and just keep going!

Advice from the top

Gareth Owen OBE

Humanitarian Director at
Save the Children UK

Honorary Research Fellow at HCRI



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I believe hope, purpose and human connection lie at the heart of humanitarian action. Humanitarian work demands emotionally intelligent leadership – it needs a curious mind, thin skin and a strong spine. The curious mind creates powerful human connections – you will find yourself connecting deeply with all manner of people in all sorts of situations if you display a genuine interest in them. The thin skin allows you to feel emotion – your own and that of others. It creates a high degree of empathy, which again helps with the human connection. We are often told "don't be so emotional" about things, which is nonsense. All human behaviour is driven by emotion and your ability to tune in and develop self-awareness is one of the most powerful things you can do to develop as a human. A strong spine is necessary to make difficult decisions, overcome doubt and be guided by our moral compass. It is the source of courage and humility that helps us put up the best possible fight against the many challenges life throws at us. //



Government and Politics

The Public Sector and Government include a variety of opportunities, including influencing, creating, researching or delivering policy at the local, national or intergovernmental level, or supporting the work of political organisations.

Areas of work within government and policy:

- Governmental departments and Parliament
- Universities and Research Institutions
- Think Tanks
- Local Authority
- Local/national charities
- NGOs
- Civil Service
- The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO)
- The Commonwealth
- EU Institutions
- NATO
- Organisation for Security & Co-operation in Europe
- United Nations
- Armed Forces/Ministry of Defence Careers
- The Security Service
- The Secret Intelligence Service
- GCHQ

Here is a list of different roles according to different specialisms and skills again, not exhaustive:

- Analyst of specialist area (e.g. Intelligence)
- Assistant Economist
- Civil Service
- Communications / Media / Press Officer
- Consultant
- Local Councillor
- Local Government Officer
- Member of Parliament
- NHS Graduate Management Training Scheme
- Operational Researcher / Analyst
- Policy Advisor / Officer / Researcher
- Politician's Assistant

Pathways to Careers in Government and Policy

There is no set path into many roles in government and policy, due to the wide range of skills within the area, and the sector is highly competitive. Volunteering and internships are important assets to entering this field. See our section on NGOs and Charities for more on this.



Alumni

Case Studies



Ben Gittens

PhD in Humanitarianism
and Conflict Response

Internships are a great way to gain experience and learn about whether a career in government and politics is right for you. A former HCRI student Ben Gittens, took some time out of his PhD in 2019 to intern with the Cabinet Office's Open Innovation Team.

Can you tell us about the purpose of the Open Innovation Team (OIT)?

The OIT was established to fill a gap in government and policy building. It uses academic expertise to support teams across the Civil Service. Where academic insight may be useful, but a certain team doesn't have the capacity or time needed to research a topic, that's where the OIT and its staff come in handy.

What were you involved in during your internship?

The work was client-focused. We were sent requests from officials across the Cabinet Office and other departments to research a variety of projects, and my role was to work with officials to see if we could provide academic insight into their work. We would create a scoping document for each project after some initial research, which included identifying key academics and/or publications that were relevant, and then present this back to our clients within Whitehall.

In addition to the scoping work, I was also involved with organising OIT workshops, co-writing documents with policy-makers, and writing outputs that drew together the expertise I'd sought: the breadth of projects we researched varied from obesity to terrorism, to Brexit.

How has that placement contributed to your studies moving forward?

The pace and demands of having to collaborate with others on academic research, which I had no prior knowledge of, was a valuable experience and has shaped the way I examine literature for my PhD. During this placement, I was required to write engagingly and clearly to ensure the research findings were easily digestible. Learning to write in this way has made me rethink how I explain my research and present my findings to different audiences. After completing my studies this year, I'm interested in returning to the Civil Service and using my research skills to influence policies affecting humanitarian and development issues.



James Crozier

Emergency Planning and Community Resilience Officer, Oxfordshire Country Council

BSc International Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response

What course did you study and why?

I studied International Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response back in 2016 – 2019. Back then I didn't know what I wanted to do with my career and was torn between the Armed Forces and going to University with the hope to get into international aid work. However, most other courses in the UK only looked at domestic emergency response and lacked the international framing I wanted and this is ultimately what pushed me to do the BSc at The University of Manchester.

What is your current role and what do you enjoy most about it?

My role is an Emergency Planning and Community Resilience Officer for Oxfordshire County Council / Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service which looks at domestic emergency management and response and I've been in the post for almost 3 years. The element I enjoy most about the job is the variation. In the past 3 years, I've had a hand in establishing temporary places of rest in COVID, providing specialist advice on Managed Quarantine Hotels, relocating Afghani refugees in Oxfordshire and even chairing the tactical groups for this amongst lots of other local responses and my usual workstreams.

What is one of the most challenging parts of your role and why?

The intensity can be quite gruelling and I have to remind myself frequently to take breaks and take holidays or spend time doing other things that are separate from the work that I do entirely. For example, the temporary places of rest response to COVID were roughly a 6-month piece of work which demanded between 8-12 hours a day in the first 4 months. As with any job, burnout can creep up on you without you realising it and so it is important to take care of your mental health and manage your time, workloads and relationships with your professional colleagues well. .

How has the course helped with your current role/career progression?

As I mentioned above, when I chose the BSc at UoM it was one of the only internationally-focused BScs around and this has enabled me to bring different insights into the domestic sphere of domestic emergency response. A good example of this was during the response to the Afghanistan evacuation where I was able to offer insights and advice to tactical and operational groups between multiagency partners and voluntary organisations around how we could best help those coming to our County. The Anthropological aspects of the course which looked at how different cultures have experienced disasters and emergencies throughout history helped me here. Other elements which I have found particularly useful have been knowing how the humanitarian sphere operates and this has helped me to engage constructively with voluntary agencies in response situations.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

University can be a daunting experience for many, especially in the current climate. The advice I'd give to anyone who wants to follow the same career path as me is to not overburden yourself! While getting the degree is important, it is also important to enjoy your time at University and become a more rounded young adults. If you have free time to volunteer with the various organisations offering opportunities then by all means do so, but if you can't then don't worry – there are plenty of ways to develop yourself and make yourself stand out for jobs.



Liam O'Brien

Project and Policy Officer for
Resilience, Greater Manchester
Combined Authority

**MSc International Disaster
Management**

What course did you study and why?

For my MSc, I studied International Disaster Management. I found that disaster management is a worthy pursuit. It enables us to preserve and protect life in very real sense. As climate change accelerates, it is expected that catastrophic events and hazards will become increasingly frequent and severe, as such we must do all we can to work to mitigate the negative outcomes.

What is your current role and what do you enjoy most about it?

I am a Project and Policy Officer for Resilience within the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum/Unit, within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. This role has opened an entire world to me of the ways in which disasters, hazards, and crises are prepared for and responded to. What I enjoy most is the challenge, and the knowledge that what I am doing has value for the city I was born and raised in. In my day-to-day work I feel that I can practically apply all of the skills and lessons I learned throughout my studies in a way that is fulfilling.

What is one of the most challenging parts of your role and why?

The biggest challenge thus far in my role is that it is an entirely new position for both myself, and the GMCA. The role is being shaped and moulded as I work within it. This has been quite exciting in a sense, but also presents challenges in terms of carving out a space in which my work can provide support and utility to other members of the team, alongside intense workstreams which necessitate a high degree of focus and attention.

How has the course helped with your current role/career progression?

The inter-disciplinary structure of my master's programme prepared me well for the structure of the work I do now. Whether there are matters of public health, security, local politics, or research, I can draw a clear line between my ability to engage with these issues and tasks and what I have learned through my course. Also, one of the advantages the course provided me with was being able to connect the global aspects of disaster management to the regional and national level. Specifically, being able to look at the Sendai Framework or MCR2030 (Making Cities Resilient 2030) and see how these international policies translate at a regional level has been useful in terms of developing my knowledge and ability to navigate the structures I work within.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

"Think global, act local" as they say. Before going onto the world stage, consider how you can make a difference at a local or regional level. At the GMCA we are responsible for a large metropolitan area, and really, the effects of any international humanitarianism will always be local to someone, somewhere. Ultimately the best skills I would advise prospective humanitarians to develop within themselves are adaptability and personal resilience. The final thing I would say is that when you find things difficult, to remind yourself of the reasons for choosing to pursue a career in humanitarianism. Whatever those reasons may be, hold onto your focus and determination because in the end it will serve you and those you seek to help.

Advice from the top

Luke Kelly

HCRI Academic and
Government Researcher



I worked on the Knowledge for Development (K4D) programme. K4D provided independent evidence related to overseas aid to the UK government. This usually took the form of reports, written to answer a question asked by civil servants, which would summarise the evidence in a concise, policy-focused manner. Reports that I and other K4D researchers produced covered topics including humanitarian access, health programmes, air quality, airport security, counter-terrorism, peacebuilding, climate change and others. They were used to inform UK aid programming.

Governments and charities are increasingly looking to ensure their aid programmes are evidence-based and evaluated rigorously. The kind of multi-disciplinary critical analysis you learn at HCRI is a great starting point for anyone looking to provide this sort of evidence for the humanitarian sector. HCRI's ability to link rigorous academic research with the needs of leading humanitarian organisations with such as UK-Med, Save the Children, FCDO and MSF mean it is a great place to understand how to use evidence effectively in the humanitarian sector. //



Humanitarian Healthcare

Working in humanitarian medicine or healthcare means applying your skills as a doctor, nurse or another clinical professional in humanitarian situations. Humanitarian crises involve many challenges for public health interventions and research. Working in humanitarian healthcare is vital to providing aid to many humanitarian crises, as a wide range of health issues can occur. They can also cause sudden and widespread disruption to health services and the broader health system, and limit domestic access to human, financial and technical resources, creating a need for assistance from outside the country:

Here are examples of some humanitarian healthcare roles:

- Medical Doctor
- Nurse
- Medical Coordinator
- Health Programme Manager
- Community Health Workers
- MHPSS (Mental health and psycho-social support) Advisor
- Councillor
- SRH (Sexual and reproductive health) Technical Advisor
- Pharmacist
- Medical Logistician
- Capacity Building Manager

Pathways to Humanitarian Healthcare

There is no set path into many roles in government and policy, due to the wide range of skills within the area, and the sector is highly competitive. Volunteering and internships are important assets to entering this field. See our section on NGOs and Charities for more on this.

MSc Global Health

The MSc Global Health has been developed in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Aimed at both those new to the humanitarian sector and professionals who want to update their skills, this course offers a practical means of study.

- Study the worldwide improvement of health, reduction of disparities and protection against global threats.
- Cover topics such as emergency medicine, disaster management, community health, anthropology, and sociology of health and illness.
- Benefit from insights from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), collaborators on the content of this course.

MSc/PGDip/PGCert Humanitarian Practice

A flexible course designed by humanitarians, for humanitarians, it allows professionals to study alongside working in the field.

The programme is delivered jointly by the Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at The University of Manchester and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) in partnership with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF).

- Critically reflect on your humanitarian work and gain the relevant academic background to inform decisions made in practice.
- Strengthen your leadership skills, helping you to grow into a management or coordination position within a humanitarian organisation.

Intercalating Medical Students

We offer three intercalated degree courses, all of which bring together the disciplines of medicine and humanities, as well as the expertise of academics and practitioners. Intercalating medical students benefit from the comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach in teaching and research, as well as individual tutorial and supervision from academics from a wide range of disciplines including Emergency Medicine, Political Science, International Relations, History, Medical Anthropology, Disaster Management and Global Health.

Clinical Academic Training Programmes

HCRI hosts a range of clinical academic trainees at different stages, for shorter or longer-term placements. NIHR Academic Clinical Fellowships are speciality training posts that incorporate academic training. These Academic Clinical Fellows (ACFs) spend 75% of their time undertaking specialist clinical training and 25% undertaking research or educationalist training.

NIHR ACF posts are only available to medically qualified candidates and are aimed at those who, at the early stages of their speciality training, show outstanding potential for a career in academic

medicine or dentistry. The duration of an ACF is usually a maximum of 3 years (4 years for GPs). During this time, alongside clinical training, ACFs will be able to develop their academic skills and be supported in preparing an application for a Research Training Fellowship (to undertake a higher research degree) or an application for a place on an educational programme (leading to a higher degree). HCRI has been supporting Emergency Medicine ACFs for several years, we have also had ACFs from Intensive Care Medicine.

Humanitarian Healthcare Organisations

- UK-Med
- Médecins du Monde
- Save the Children
- International Committee of the Red Cross
- International Medical Corps
- Médecins San Frontières
- CARE International
- Action Aid
- Oxfam
- World Health Organization



Alumni

Case Studies



Barbara Deck

Paediatric Nurse and Medical Project Coordinator, Médecins San Frontières

MSc Humanitarian Practice
(LEAP Programme)

What course did you study and why?

I have graduated from the LEAP (Leadership Education Academic Partnership) Program. It is a collaborative partnership between HCRI, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and MSF. I was looking for an opportunity that would facilitate professional growth and development, and enhance my capacity as a medical professional within the humanitarian sector. The LEAP Program and its flexible programming seemed like the perfect program for me, as it provided the unique opportunity to build my academic pathway focusing on a range of topics of particular interest to me. The flexibility of the programming also allowed me to continue working within the humanitarian sector, balancing my studies with time in the field.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

I am a paediatric critical care nurse by background, however, since 2016 I began dividing my time between working as a bedside nurse in Toronto, Canada, and working in the field with Médecins Sans Frontières. I began working with the organization in nursing roles but as my career has

developed, I have transitioned into leadership positions, both within the medical department as well as operations. Generally, my work involves coordinating a team of national and international staff on program activities, development and implementation of medical and operational strategy, and liaising with stakeholders. Collaborating with my team to achieve our objectives is one of my favourite parts of the job. Working in the humanitarian sector presents the opportunity to engage with people from a wide variety of backgrounds and professional profiles, so there is always someone to learn something from and exchange ideas with.

What is most challenging and why?

Understanding and accepting your sphere of influence is one of the biggest challenges I find in the field. Sometimes some factors are simply beyond your control and coming to terms with these, and supporting your team to do the same, can consume a lot of energy. Instead, it is important to focus on and capitalize on those factors that are within your sphere of influence to affect and implement change, as these always outnumber the few things that are completely beyond your control.

How has the course helped with your current role/career progression?

Courses exploring concepts such as complex humanitarian emergencies, as well as courses on conducting rapid health assessments and emergency medical interventions, and healthcare management, all directly contributed to building my capacity as a medical humanitarian professional and leader. I was able to directly draw upon concepts and tools I studied during my coursework and apply them to my work in the field. Since joining LEAP, I have coordinated medical and humanitarian interventions in Northeast Syria, the Central Mediterranean, and Eastern Ukraine.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

Take the time to explore what interests you and don't be afraid to try something new. The humanitarian sector has so many opportunities and avenues for engagement, and you may be surprised where you find yourself! Capitalize on the expertise of those around you and don't be afraid to ask for help or advice. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, take advantage of the chance to learn from the experiences of others. Your peers and colleagues are one of your best assets!



Suzanne Damman

Senior Fellow, 'Conflict Resolution,
Negotiation and Mediation,
The Clingendael Institute
MSc Global Health

What inspired you to study this course?

At the time, I was working at the Red Cross and I was looking for a way to gain in-depth knowledge about health in emergency settings to complement my practical experience in the Philippines. A colleague of mine was already taking the course and recommended it to me. Initially, I was thinking of only getting the certificate, but once I had started I realised the course was too valuable not to pursue until the MSc level.

At the same time, my husband was pursuing his MBA at Manchester Business School, so he was the one who gave me the confidence that combining a full-time job with a part-time degree (through distance learning) was possible.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

Halfway through the course I left the Red Cross and joined the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. My focus shifted from healthcare and disaster response/preparedness to conflict resolution. I found the course perfectly adaptable to both contexts as it covered global health in various settings, including disasters and conflicts.

I am currently responsible for managing and supporting our Asia operations together with our Regional Director. It is a regional role that involves a lot of different country contexts, diverse teams, and frequent travel, which I enjoy very much.

How has the course helped with your current role/career progression?

Although I now have a general programme management role and therefore do not deal with technical issues around global health anymore. I have found studying for an MSc next to a full-time job offered so many other skills that may be less evident initially, but that I still use daily. For example, time management, as combining a full-time job and a part-time degree is not always easy and requires constant dedication and commitment. However, by planning well ahead and managing my time well it is certainly doable and I still benefit from this experience daily. Moreover, I found the experience of going back to university after having worked for many years not only very rewarding but also helps to further develop analytical and critical thinking skills again. Skills I found are not honed and developed as much once you start working, but which you do require in most jobs daily.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

I would recommend taking this course once you have at least 5-10 years of work experience already. The course is very applicable to various contexts, but you'll get the most out of it if you can apply it to your existing or previous work settings. I found that the biggest difference between my first and second degrees, this time around was not mere theory anymore and you know better what knowledge benefits you most, so you choose your paper topics accordingly and can thereby ensure work and study complement each other perfectly.

Please also know that if you do work full-time, be prepared to spend at least (part of) one weekend day or a few evenings on this course, as it does require dedication, commitment and the sacrifice of a bit of free time. However, as it is all online, it is extremely flexible at the same time, which is a big benefit. If you are open to that this course is for you!

What advice would you give someone considering MSc in Global Health?

I can certainly recommend taking this course as it offers not only in-depth knowledge about global health if you are looking to deepen your knowledge, but it also helps you develop more general skills such as teamwork, critical writing, time management, project management, research skills, and online content management.

Advice from the top

Tony Redmond OBE

Founder of UK-Med, one of the HCRI
Founders, & Emeritus Professor of
International Emergency Medicine



For healthcare professionals, I ask them to:

1. Understand that when they look to provide humanitarian assistance, they must first establish that what they are providing is something that those affected lacks. You need to give what they need not just what you have.
2. Consider that humanitarian crises are best addressed where help is given by those already experienced and not by those simply looking to gain experience.
3. Complete their specialist training before looking to deploy. That way they will have something concrete to contribute.
4. Study the background of humanitarian crises. For example, by doing a masters in global health, international development, humanitarian and conflict studies. A masters in public health is very useful as are the diplomas in tropical medicine/nursing.
5. When they first deploy do so with a large well-known organisation that can provide the support and experience they will need when just starting out. //



Academic Research

Academic research is another great way of doing humanitarian work, contributing to important research that changes the way humanitarians work in the future and allows you to specialise in an area that can help transform your future career.

A PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) is a doctoral research degree and the highest level of academic qualification you can achieve. A PhD degree normally takes between three and four years of full-time work to complete. You'll research and write a thesis offering an original contribution to your subject.

Our three-year structured Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programme is inspired by the need to conduct rigorous, in-depth research and analysis on the impact and outcomes of contemporary and historical crises. Bringing together the study of applied medicine and the humanities our structured PhD programme is driven by a desire to inform and support policy and practice, to optimise joint working between partner organisations, and to foster increased understanding and debate within the field of humanitarianism and global health.



Alumni

Case Studies



Panagiotis Karagkounis

PhD in Humanitarianism
and Conflict Response

What is your PhD about?

My dissertation seeks to examine the entanglement between humanitarian aid and state-building endeavours in Greece, and the broader Near East from the early 1920s to the late 1940s. Contrary to the bulk of the relevant literature, my focus is shifted towards refugees and their participation in state-building as active agents. The basic goal of my thesis is to reconstruct the 'voices from below, shed light on humanitarian activities, and understand the wider spatial and political transformations in the south-eastern Mediterranean. .

What attracted you to doing a PhD

A PhD is foremost a journey in research. It is a dynamic procedure and a transformation, from being a student and reader to being a researcher and actual producer of scientific knowledge. Ostensibly, this vague position does not say much. I prefer however to understand my selection to do a PhD as a stepping stone towards being a professional researcher and pursuing an academic career. I was not forced to apply for a PhD – by the job market's competition, or my close environment. It was mostly a personal choice, which made me enjoy it more.

What do you enjoy most about your academic career?

Again, an academic career – if I can call it such in these early stages – is a journey. I do love this fluctuating procedure, which has many stressful moments, but also many happy times. I enjoy academic engagement and debates at conferences, social meetings with colleagues, and academic discussions of different ideas with people from different fields.

What are the positives of researching at HCRI?

My background is interdisciplinary (BA in Political Science and History, MSc in Theory and History of International Relations), and my PhD does not differ from this. HCRI is the right place to study. It is a meeting point for social scientists, historians, medicals, geographers, and others. The interdisciplinary perspective allows me to problematise my topic through different lenses. When I first applied here, I was intrigued by the idea of an institute, focused mostly on humanitarianism.

Do you have any advice for people wanting to follow in your footsteps?

I do not have many things to say, because I am still an active student. Due to the high competition in the job markets and the structural pressure to gain more qualifications, I would recommend 'do not do things, because you are supposed to do them. Instead, prefer to enjoy the ride, and do things, because you want them, and you are satisfied with the result. In my eyes, the 'academic world does not need more qualifications, but most people, enjoy their work, love to think critically, and be engaged with the idea of 'the common good.'



Dr Nicola Jones

**Policy and Campaigns Officer at
Terrence Higgins Trust**

**PhD in Humanitarianism and
Conflict Response**

How has your research shaped your work at Terrence Higgins Trust?

Since 2019, I have been working with Terrence Higgins Trust as a Health Promotion Specialist. I now do this role part-time alongside a position in the policy team: Policy and Campaigns Officer, which involves working on anti-discrimination campaigns related to HIV.

The research that I conducted for my PhD has greatly influenced my approach to sexual health promotion. It has placed stigma reduction at the forefront of my work and encouraged me to adopt innovative approaches that challenge traditional top-down and risk-based behavioural change initiatives. Behavioural-focused approaches are problematic because they place the responsibility for HIV prevention and improved sexual health directly onto individuals, whilst overlooking structural and social factors that contribute to poor sexual health and wider health inequalities. This was a key finding from my PhD research, which I used to obtain funding for a co-production project – Breaking Barriers – with Terrence Higgins Trust and African Families in the UK (AFiUK), a community interest company. In March 2022, we launched six community-led health promotion videos, which were developed with women of African and Caribbean heritage.

How did Breaking Barriers begin?

When I joined Terrence Higgins Trust, my role involved working with African and Caribbean communities to raise awareness of HIV and sexual

health services. I was primarily working with a local women's group – WOW space – run by AFiUK. At first, I delivered presentations online that set out to encourage HIV prevention through behaviour change. However, at the same time, I was also writing up my PhD findings, emphasising the importance of community-led health promotion initiatives and I was acutely aware of my hypocrisy. Following some open conversations with Jacqui and Nicole, who had set up the women's group, we agreed an alternative approach was needed. Together we conceived the idea for Breaking Barriers and I put together a funding proposal, using some key findings from my PhD research. Our project was funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

The goal of Breaking Barriers was to work collaboratively with women of African and Caribbean heritage to identify and respond to the structural and social barriers that prevent access to HIV and sexual health services. Findings included a perception that HIV was in the past, fatigue with being targeted by "problem-focused" health campaigns, language barriers, lived experience and trauma relating to HIV and AIDS in the 80s and 90s, cultural taboos, motivations to break the stigma, and distrust in services, influenced by colonisation, white saviourism, and inequality.

The central element of the Breaking Barriers project was meaningful participation. Throughout the project, we worked closely with those who had participated in a focus group or interview, hosting regular feedback sessions. During these sessions, we fed back the key findings from the data collection, ensuring they had been interpreted and relayed accurately and fairly, as well as discussing what the videos would focus on, who would feature in them, and where they would be used.

What are your plans for research?

At the moment, I am currently working on a co-authored paper with the Breaking Barriers project team and Oxford Brookes University to share learning from the Breaking Barriers project, as well as working on publishing some papers from my PhD thesis. I am keen to keep developing my research skills and learn more about the field I work in. For now, this will likely involve a shift towards policy research, which is central to my new role at Terrence Higgins Trust. I am currently designing a short research project to identify outstanding areas of HIV discrimination in the UK to inform our future policy work.



Advice from the top

Dr Birte Vogel

Senior Lecturer in Humanitarianism,
Peace & Conflict Studies at HCRI



I never started my PhD thinking that I want to become an academic. I always wanted to be a journalist. Later, I was working for the German Development Cooperation, I was interested in engaging more with the issues underlying the work around peacebuilding and state-building when the opportunity for a PhD scholarship came up. 10 years later, I am still in academia. I love the research part of my job. I enjoy working with different 'stakeholders' and working on 'translating' knowledge between students, policymakers and academics. If you think research is for you, there are a few things to consider:

1. There are different 'types' of research jobs. Academia is just one of them. They often overlap, and people are switching between them. So, think about what interests you about research: concepts, theories and broader debates? Academia might be for you! Policies and political change? There are plenty of great Think Tanks like ODI, and many big charities and NGOs have their research departments that

actively engage in policy-relevant research (for example MSF, Save the Children or International Alert). Or would you like to do research that supports direct change of a humanitarian, disaster or peacebuilding programme? Most organisations have MEAL positions (monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning) where staff looks at the impacts of specific programmes and makes sure there are lessons learnt from them.

2. What qualifications do you need? For some of the above jobs, you need a PhD, for others you don't. You possibly only need a PhD for the academic route. So read some job profiles for the different positions to understand what it is you need to bring to the job.
3. Engage with your research methods course (and take some extra)! Research methodology, methods and ethics are an important part of doing research and knowledge production, and they will in many cases determine what you know (and what you don't know). It's a really important skill for any of the above research jobs. The University offers a lot of short research skill courses that can train you in using certain research tools or methods. Check our Methods@Manchester for example.
4. Be passionate and curious about something. The best researchers are those driven by a genuine interest in the problem they want to understand. That is particularly true if you are considering a PhD. 3-4 years (in the UK system, often longer elsewhere) is a long time to work on a subject, so make sure you pick something that fascinates you. //

Planning my Humanitarian Career

**What type of career would
I like to develop?**

**What are my current strengths
bearing in mind my career
goals (qualifications, skills,
experience, knowledge etc.)?**

What options are available to enhance my strengths (education, work, internships, volunteering etc.)?

Considering the answers above, what steps would I like to take next?

Useful Humanitarian Job Sites

- www.bond.org.uk/jobs
- www.reliefweb.int/jobs
- www.gisf.ngo/vacancies
- www.charityjob.co.uk/ngo-recruitment-jobs
- [www.humanitariancareers.com/ humanitarian-health-jobs](http://www.humanitariancareers.com/)
- www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning
- <https://careers.un.org>
- <https://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/ngos>
- <https://jobs.thirdsector.co.uk>
- www.fcdoservicescareers.co.uk
- www.english.nira.or.jp/directory
- www.w4mpjobs.org
- www.wango.org/resources.aspx
- www.charity-works.co.uk

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