

MAIA (Master of Arts in International Affairs)

The standard MAIA degree is completed by spending two years as a full-time student at SAIS Europe. The MAIA degree may also be undertaken by attending SAIS Europe for one year and one of our partner programs for one year. In some cooperative programs, students will be able to earn a double degree; in others, students will be able to earn the [SAIS Europe Diploma in International Studies](#) for their first year in Bologna and a Master's degree from the partner university. A list of partner programs and their respective requirements is available in the "MAIA Cooperative Degree Programs" document (also available on BCWeb).

Students who choose the two-year program at SAIS are eligible to apply for semester-exchange programs available to MAIR students through SAIS DC. Information on the application procedure is sent to all students by the Office of Academic Affairs in DC, usually in the spring term.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MAIA DEGREE

These requirements are valid for students entering the program in AY 2024-25

Courses and Thesis Option

Two-year MAIA program at SAIS Europe

Two-year MAIA students are required to successfully complete the requirements in one of two options:

1. Thesis option:

- Complete 14 non-language courses (56 credits) with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.67 (B-).
- Attend the "Writing for International Affairs" course in the fall semester of their first year.
- Attend the "Research Methods" course in the fall semester of their second year.
- Participate in four 90-minute MAIA Thesis Research Design workshops in the Spring semester of their first year. They subsequently prepare a Thesis Proposal (see the 'MAIA Thesis: further details' document) for submission, by 30 April, to a Thesis Supervisor of their choice. Candidates may select a Thesis Supervisor from among SAIS Europe Resident or Adjunct Faculty. If the proposal is accepted by the Thesis Supervisor of their choice, they will prepare and defend a Long Thesis of 15,000-20,000 words (including footnotes and bibliography), which carries 8 credits. For additional information on the thesis option see the "Thesis Option: Further Details" document (available on BCWeb).
- Thesis writers are advised (but not required) to attend the course on "Theories of International Relations" in their first year
- All speakers of English as a second language wishing to write a thesis must pass the English Proficiency Writing exam in the September session.

OR

2. Short thesis + 2 courses option:

- Complete 16 non-language courses (64 credits) with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.67 (B-).
- Prepare a short thesis (a substantial research paper) of about 8,000 words.

- The short thesis can be completed as a requirement for one of the elective courses provided the student reaches an agreement with the course instructor to allow them to present a short thesis in lieu of, or in addition to, any or all of the existing requirements (mid-term exam, final exam, or other).
- Students must submit the “MAIA Short Thesis” form, signed by the relevant course instructor, to the Registrar (form available on BCWeb > Administration > Registrar > Forms) to prove fulfillment of this requirement.
- Short-thesis writers are advised (but not required) to attend the course on “Writing for International Affairs” in their first year.

All 2-year MAIA students are advised to take four classes (16 credits) in their third semester at SAIS Europe, particularly if they plan or are required to write a thesis. But those who wish to take three classes in their third semester and three classes in their fourth semester may do so.

While not required, MAIA students who have not previously studied IR at undergraduate level are advised to take at least one of the following four courses:

- Theories of International Relations
- Comparative Politics
- Evolution of the International System
- American Foreign Policy since World War II

Cooperative degrees (1 year at SAIS Europe)

Assuming cooperative degree students have completed the established number credits at the partner program, they will be required to successfully complete the requirements of one of two options:

- **Thesis option**
 - Complete at least six non-language courses (24 credits) with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.67 (B-).
 - Attend the “Writing for International Affairs” course in the Fall semester of their first year.
 - Attend the “Research Methods” course in the fall semester of their first year. Students subsequently prepare a Thesis Proposal (see the ‘MAIA Thesis: further details’ document) for submission, by 30 October, to a Thesis Supervisor of their choice. Candidates may select a Thesis Supervisor from among SAIS Europe Resident or Adjunct Faculty. If the proposal is accepted by the Thesis Supervisor, they will prepare and defend a thesis of 15,000-20,000 words (including footnotes and bibliography), which carries 8 credits. For additional information on the thesis option see the “Thesis Option: Further Details” document (available on BCWeb).
 - Thesis writers are advised (but not required) to attend the course on “Theories of International Relations”.
 - All speakers of English as a second language wishing to write a thesis must pass the English Proficiency Writing exam in the September session.

OR

- **Short thesis + 2 courses option**
 - Complete at least eight non-language courses (32 credits) with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.67 (B-).
 - Prepare a short thesis (a substantial research paper) of about 8,000 words.
 - The Short Thesis can be completed as a requirement for one of the elective courses provided the student reaches an agreement with the course instructor to allow them to present a Short Thesis in lieu of, or in addition to, any or all of the existing requirements (mid-term exam, final exam, or other).

- Students must submit the “MAIA Short Thesis” form, signed by the relevant course instructor, to the Registrar (form on BCWeb > Administration > Registrar > Forms) to prove fulfillment of this requirement.
- Short-thesis writers are advised (but not required) to attend the course on “Writing for International Affairs” in their first year.

MAIA students planning to spend their second year at a partner university must make sure they fulfill all the requirements for the MAIA degree while at SAIS Europe.

Long Thesis Option for students who entered the program in AY 2023-2024

2nd year students wishing to write a Long Thesis

Long Thesis option:

- Complete 6 non-language courses (24 credits) with a grade point average (GPA) of at least 2.67 (B-).
- Attend the “Research Methods” course in the fall semester of their second year. Students subsequently prepare a Thesis Proposal (see the ‘MAIA Thesis: further details’ document) for submission, by 30 October, to a Thesis Supervisor of their choice. Candidates may select a Thesis Supervisor from among SAIS Europe Resident or Adjunct Faculty. If the proposal is accepted by the Thesis Supervisor of their choice, they will prepare and defend a Long Thesis of 15,000-20,000 words (including footnotes and bibliography), which carries 8 credits. For additional information on the thesis option see the “Thesis Option: Further Details” document (available on BCWeb).

International Economics Requirements (all MAIA students)

The economics requirement for the MAIA program is:

<p>Choose ONE of the following:</p> <p>International Economics I Essentials of International Economics I</p>	AND	<p>Choose ONE of the following:</p> <p>International Economics II Essentials of International Economics II</p>
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International Economics I and II is considered the standard economics track. Incoming MAIA students are advised to follow that track. Students who choose ‘the essentials track’ may not be able to take higher level economics courses. Students who enrol in Essentials I or II are allowed to take International Economics I and/or II subsequently if they wish. Any combination of International or Essentials I or II will meet the overall economics requirement. International Economics I & II will be the prerequisites for other international economics and finance courses.

There is no waiver exam for the essentials track. Students who select that option select the courses in the fall and spring terms. Students can waive out of International Economics I by passing the Int’l Trade waiver exam and International Economics II by passing the Int’l Monetary Theory waiver exam. In order to be eligible for those waiver exams, students must have received a B- or equivalent grade on an equivalent course in their previous university. Students who have taken intermediate Micro- and/or Macroeconomics previously should enrol in International Economics I and II.

Students who waive out of both Trade and Monetary theory are not required to take additional economics courses, although they are advised to take advantage of any courses which may be useful for their future career.

Language Requirement (all MAIA students)

The following chart describes the minimum levels that MAIA students must attain in order to fulfill their language graduation requirement:

LANGUAGE	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Arabic	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)	Optional: Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)
English	Superior (ACTFL), or C2 (CEFR)	Advanced High (ACTFL), or C1(CEFR)	Superior (ACTFL), or C2 (CEFR)	Superior (ACTFL), or C2 (CEFR)
French	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)
German	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)
Italian	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)
Russian	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)	Optional: Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)
Spanish	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate High (ACTFL), or B1.2 (CEFR)	Intermediate Mid (ACTFL), or B1 (CEFR)

Speakers of English as a First Language are required to pass a proficiency exam in one of the modern foreign languages offered at SAIS Europe prior to graduation from SAIS. The modern foreign languages offered at SAIS Europe are Arabic, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

Speakers of English as a First Language who join SAIS from a partner program should have reached a full CEFR A2 or ACTFL Intermediate-Low level in any of these languages before beginning their year of study in Bologna.

Speakers of English as a Second Language must pass the English proficiency exam prior to graduation.

At SAIS, a Speaker of English as a First Language is a person who meets at least TWO of the following criteria:

1. English is the main language of communication between you and one of your caregivers.
2. English is an official language in the community where you grew up (before high school).
3. English is the language of instruction in the high school you attended.

MAIA students planning to spend their second year at a partner university where students are awarded both the MAIA degree and a degree of the partner institution must make sure to fulfill the language requirements for the MAIA degree while at SAIS Europe.

[Switching from the Diploma or MAIR to the MAIA program](#)

First-year MAIR or Diploma students at SAIS Europe may apply to switch into the MAIA program. The following rules and procedures apply:

- Students must submit the Degree Change Form on BCWeb (Administration > Registrar > Forms)
- The first deadline to switch into the MAIA program is the **drop/add deadline in the fall semester of their first year** (5 October 2023). Students switching into the MAIA program by this deadline will enjoy the full rights and privileges of all 2-year MAIA students, that is, thesis option and eligibility to apply for a cooperative degree in their second year.
- The final deadline to switch into the MAIA program is 1 February of the student's first year, i.e. the student's second semester. Students switching into the MAIA program by 1 February are required to attend the general "Academic Writing Sessions" offered in the spring (of their first year). Students switching into the MAIA program by the final deadline will however **not be eligible** to write a thesis or apply for a cooperative degree.

- Important: If students have been awarded financial aid for a second year in a different degree program, they should be aware that certain named fellowships may not be transferred to the MAIA program.

Graduation deadlines

Students who attend both years at SAIS Europe are expected to complete the requirements by the end of the second year. Cooperative degree students are expected to complete all requirements for the degree in one academic year at SAIS Europe. If a candidate has not completed the requirements, an extension may be given until the next graduation session (late August/September). In any case, MAIA candidates are required to complete the degree no later than one year after the end of their final semester of enrollment. Students who do not meet this deadline may be dismissed from the program.

Fred Hood Research Fund

The Fred Hood Research Fund was created to support research activities of PhD and MAIA students at SAIS Europe, contributing towards research costs such as travel to conferences or the purchase of research publications. Funds are limited, but students who need support to complete their research may apply. More information about Fred Hood can be found here: <https://europe.jhu.edu/FredHood/index.cfm>.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis and funds will be allocated to students each academic year until all available funds for that year are distributed. Interested students should address their application to the Director (sais.eu.director@jhu.edu) with the First Reader and the Academic Director of MAIA program in cc, including a brief description of the project that they will undertake, a detailed budget of expected expenditures, the amount of funding they are requesting, and a letter from their supervisor supporting their request. The Director, in consultation with the faculty, will allocate funds and inform the students of the award.

Students who receive funding are expected to submit receipts for reimbursement and provide a brief report, to be shared with the donors, explaining how the funds were used.

Human Subject Research

Any SAIS student undertaking research involving human subjects must apply to the Johns Hopkins Institutional Review Board for approval. This process takes at least 12 weeks, so students are advised to begin the application process as early as possible. More information can be found here:

<https://homewoodirb.jhu.edu/>