



LAAS GEEL

Academy of International Relations

LGIR Handbook 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Profile

The Laas Geel Academy of International Relations is a premier institute in Somaliland dedicated to world-class teaching, training, and research in international relations, diplomacy, and security. Through innovative research, the Institute produces strategic research papers, briefings, and in-depth analyses on key political, economic, and security issues to offer actionable insights to Somaliland's policymakers. By fostering international collaboration through dialogues, workshops, and seminars with global partners, the Academy fosters cross-cultural exchange and elevates Somaliland's voice in global discourse. Committed to excellence, integrity, and inclusiveness, its mission is to cultivate skilled professionals and deliver multidisciplinary research on critical areas such as climate change, migration, geopolitics, infrastructure, and regional security, thereby serving as a beacon of knowledge, innovation, and development for Somaliland and the wider Horn of Africa.

1.2. Vision

To become a leading institution for international relations and diplomacy, and custodian of in-depth policy analysis in Somaliland and the wider region.

1.3. Mission

To produce high-quality professionals whose primary objective is to serve the nation and preserve the national interest of the Republic of Somaliland and deliver multidisciplinary research and strategic solutions in infrastructure, climate change, migration, geopolitics and regional security to meet the country's development and social stability aspirations.

1.4. Values

1. Excellence
2. Inclusiveness
3. Integrity
4. Respect
5. Commitment

2. Institute's Academic and Training Programs

2.1. Diploma in International Relations

The Institute offers a “Diploma in International Relations” to produce competent and confident graduates who can serve the country and preserve the national interest of the Republic of Somaliland. The Diploma program equips students with a broad range of communication career opportunities with the analytical, creative, practical, and problem-solving skills required to thrive in a global business environment, both in the private and public sectors.

It allows trainees to grasp dynamic international relations issues such as globalization, human rights, conflict, piracy, and transnational crime, such as human and drug trafficking, terrorism, environmental degradation, etc. The implementation of this program in Somaliland will positively impact the nation's overall work performance, and shape and rebrand the image and stature of the nation on the national and international scene.

Further, the program delves into the multifaceted political dynamics and challenges that impact the security and well-being of individuals and communities across the region and the African continent. By critically examining historical, socio-economic, and geopolitical factors, it prepares

trainees for a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between political structures, governance mechanisms, and the broader concept of international relations, foreign policy, and diplomacy in the region.

Furthermore, the program focuses on security challenges both at regional and global levels. Political violence and resources and climate-induced conflicts are among the main challenges facing the Horn of Africa in the post-Cold War era. The program employs a multidisciplinary critical approach reflecting on how states can work to improve the lives of the millions of people living under the threat of insecurity as challenges within the context of both regional and global order.

The Diploma in international relations aims to:

1. Train and capacitate actual and potential leaders who would enable Somaliland to rebrand and assert itself in the sub-region and international forums,
2. Prepare all-rounded and committed professionals who can teach courses in international relations, diplomacy, political economy and related areas;
3. Train individuals who can conduct research in the broad fields of international affairs, diplomacy, political economy, security and conflict studies;

4. Produce graduates who can undertake critical political, economic and security threat analysis, and suggest strategies for foreign policy and diplomacy;
5. Promote positive understanding, skills and attitudes related to global affairs and human security issues in general;
6. Contribute towards the development of a culture of mutual interest and global understanding.

2.2. Training

The Institute aims to become an academic-research-training ecosystem for international relations, diplomacy and international security. It offers various training courses on the practice of international relations and diplomatic protocol and etiquette delivered by experts and experienced practitioners in the diplomatic circle both from the region and beyond. The training is aimed at enhancing the capacity of the Somaliland citizens with the view of making it a center of strategic importance to the development of the Nation and the region and developing and enrich trainees' negotiation and persuasion skills in international forums and platforms.

In addition, the Institute offers training courses in social science research methodology, with a particular focus on building foundational skills in both qualitative and quantitative techniques. These short-term programs are designed to equip participants with essential, practical tools for rigorous research.

3. Program requirements

3.1. Admission requirements

The Diploma Program in International Relations is aimed at promoting foreign policy and diplomacy of Somaliland through education in the wider community. The field is relevant for professionals who are interested in international affairs-oriented education policy, development discourses, global political economy, and so on. Thus, admission to the Diploma Program will be open to a limited number of qualified students who have completed a Somaliland's GCSE or equivalent with excellent grades (e.g., specific subjects like English/Literature, History, Geography) at an accredited education institution, and a passing mark in an entrance examination prepared for that purpose. Relevant diplomas (e.g., in Arts-based courses) can also grant entry.

3.2. Duration of the Program

The program leading to a Diploma in International Relations runs 24-month of full-time study and shall consist of coursework and article writing.

3.3. Attendance requirements

The student is expected to attend all sessions (teaching classes) and assessments. Any student who does not attend may have their studies terminated. Therefore, it is a requirement to read and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct policy and the Student Handbook available at the Institute.

3.4. Graduation requirements

The candidate is expected to complete the courses (with a minimum CGPA of 3.00) and a final article before proceeding to graduate. The candidate is entitled to graduate if and only if he/she completes the courses successfully and receives a minimum grade of 'Good' in the final article.

3.5. Diploma's nomenclature

The Diploma is known as the 'Diploma in International Relations'.

3.6. Program Management and Coordination

The program is run by the Institute with a designated academic coordinator and his/her assistant. There is an Academic Commission chaired by the Director of the Institute, which oversees whether the program runs smoothly and in line with the Institute policy. It further makes sure that the entry, and exit strategies, governance, and management are in line with that of the Institute system. Moreover, there is a Student Handbook, which was prepared based on the Institute Legislation and Graduate rules and good practices elsewhere. The Handbook is distributed to the students to make them aware of the academic governance, program structure and code of conduct at the Institute so that they know their rights and responsibilities and enjoy their learning experience.

3.7. Teaching Staff and Resources

The program is conducted by well-experienced lecturers at the Institute together with other staff from regional and global higher education institutions. In addition, there are a number of expert speakers and invited guests coming to the Institute every term, which enriches the learning experience of the students. Furthermore, there are competent and adequate numbers of ICT and support staff to run the program smoothly.

The Laas Geel Academy of International Relations uses high ranking experts with affiliations in academic institutions within and outside of Somaliland who

hold relevant experience suitable to this IR program and will deliver the courses both in-person and online.

In addition, teaching and learning resources (soft and hard) will be available at the Institute's library. This includes the latest reference books for teaching and research. Students are expected to spend much of their time and energy reading and writing to improve their analytical, creative, practical and problem-solving skills.

3.8. Instruction, Assessment Methods and Grading System

The program is based on in-person approach, where teaching, learning, and assessment take various forms in the Diploma's Program. The Program envisages appropriate teaching and learning methodologies that significantly departs from the traditional lecture method. The program aims to utilize student-centred learning methods that focus on developing students' analytical, reading and writing skills. It combines lectures with discussion methods and encourages the active use of teaching aids. This includes lecture/presentation, debate, group work, field trip and reporting, case studies, problem-solving, individualized feedback sessions, and continuous evaluation.

In addition, the program will institutionalize a mechanism of continuous assessment. Periodic student presentations and attendance, individual and group assignments, research papers and final examination, a successful completion of an essay, form the basis of performance evaluation. Whilst the assessment is generally based on these requirements, the specific format and schedule of the assignments will depend on the individual course. Furthermore, and very importantly, students, in turn, evaluate the learning process, the learning materials, and their course lecturers based on the standard Institute evaluation form at the end of each course.

At Laas Geel Academy, the grading system is typically divided into four grades, A, B, C and F. Each letter grade corresponds with a grade point average (GPA) and a numerical range. While the Institute aspires to become a center of excellence in international relations and diplomacy, the student needs to receive a letter grade between A and C to pass a class, often the numerical equivalent of 60 percent or higher. The student coursework is evaluated by letter grades, assigned by the lecturer with a value based on a 4-point scale as shown below:

Grading Guide							
Numeric	Letters	Points	Quality	Numeric	Letters	Points	Quality
90%-100%	A	4.00	Excellent	65%-69%	C+	2.33	Satisfactory
85%-90%	A-	3.67	Excellent	60%-64%	C	2	Satisfactory
80%-84%	B+	3.33	Very Good	55%-59%	C-	1.67	Unsatisfactory
75%-79%	B	3	Good	49%-Below	F	0	Fail
70%-74%	B-	2.67	Good		I	I	Incomplete

Courses for which the grade I (incomplete) is awarded must be completed by the end of the subsequent semester or another grade.

Research and term papers will form part of the course evaluation. The research paper's evaluation will have two major components: a preliminary assessment or content of the research paper which consists of problem formulation and methodology, data presentation and interpretation, literature coverage, format and overall organization. This component carries about 70 percent of the total marks of the paper. The second component is the oral presentation of the paper which carries 30 percent of the total marks of the paper. This includes findings presentation, and response to questions raised by the lecturer, students, guests or other examiners. This evaluation also applies to the final essay assessment and evaluation.

1. Preliminary Assessment/Content of the Research Paper (70%)

S/No.	Categories	Percentage
1.	Problem formulation and Methodology	20%
2.	Data Presentation and Interpretation	25%
3.	Literature Coverage	20%
4.	Format and Overall Organization	5%
Total		70%

2. Oral Presentation (30%)

S/No.	Categories	Percentage
1.	Findings Presentation	20%
2.	Response to Questions	10%
Total		30%

3.9. Quality Assurance

The Laas Geel Academy is striving to maintain the program's quality. The Institute will conduct periodic reviews, evaluation, assessment or otherwise check, examine or ensure the quality of the program delivered by the institute and research undertaken. To realize this, graduates, employees, current students, teachers and other stakeholders will be engaged in workshops and seminars. Also, assesses the performance of the students using the quality of essays, examinations and the competence of the teachers.

4. Courses Profiles

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hours
First Semester		
Phil 101	Introduction to Critical Thinking	3
IRD 102	Theories of International Relations	4
IRD 103	Research Methodology	4
Second Semester		
IRD 211	International Law and Global Governance	3
IRD 212	Foreign Policy and Diplomacy	4
IRD 213	Geopolitics and Regional Security	4
Third Semester		
IRD321	Politics of Public Policy	3
IRD 322	African Politics and Society	3
IRD 323	Global Political Economy	4
Fourth Semester		
IRD 421	Climate Justice and Diplomacy	3
IRD 422	Migration, Social Change and Development	3
IRD 423	Article Writing	4
Total Credits		52

4.1. Courses Descriptions

The description of each course is presented below. Research Methodology course and Theories of International Relations course are prerequisites for other courses. Satisfactory completion of all the courses is a prerequisite to start preparing for graduation.

IPhil 101: Introduction to Critical Thinking

This course is designed to equip students with the foundational tools and techniques of critical thinking, empowering them to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape. The course moves beyond abstract theory, focusing on practical skills to deconstruct and evaluate the reasoning encountered in everyday life, from media reports and advertising to professional documents and personal beliefs. Students will learn to systematically identify the core components of argumentation—distinguishing premises from conclusions—and to analyze the logical structure that connects them. A significant portion of the course is dedicated to evaluating evidence, teaching students to assess the credibility, relevance, and sufficiency of supporting information while recognizing the pervasive influence of cognitive biases.

IRD 102: Theories of International Relations

This course aims to introduce students to the foundations of international relations. The focus will be on students familiarizing themselves with the major theoretical approaches in IR by reading, writing about, and, in group discussion, by way of comparing some of the major theoretical approaches to the study of IR. The course stresses student interaction with primary texts, instead of the frequently second-hand nature of many textbook-based theory courses. Throughout the course, readings, lectures, presentations, and discussion will be directed at understanding the link between theory and practice, to highlight the complexities of contemporary global politics- the so-called 'New World Order' - and familiarize themselves with a theoretically informed understanding of the same.

IRD 103: Research Methodology

This course essentially builds on the philosophy of science, to formulate research problems; the research process and research design, methods of data collection and data analysis, and research ethics. Further to this, the course

has a particular focus on developing the students' theoretical knowledge and applied skills in conducting qualitative and quantitative research in social sciences with a particular focus on international relations and diplomacy. The course is expected to discover answers to questions through the application of scientific procedures and help students find out the truth, which is hidden, and which has not been discovered as yet.

IRD 211: International Law and Global Governance

The course explores a wide range of issues within international law and global governance. The course aims to assess pertinent issues such as the process of making and unmaking of international organizations; recognition and statehood, diplomatic immunities and privileges of international organizations; jurisdiction and immunities from jurisdiction, humanitarian law, state responsibility vs. individual responsibility, and accountability of non-state actors; role of diplomacy in the functioning of international organizations; settlement of disputes, humanitarian law principles and diplomacy in armed conflicts and the like. The central objective of this course is to enhance student's understanding of the role of diplomacy in international law and global governance and the extent to which diplomacy plays an important part in its functioning, achievements and establishment of treaties – both bilateral and multilateral.

IRD 212: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

This course is designed to provide training in skills related to Foreign Policy (FP) and diplomacy to the leaders and citizens of Somaliland. It is the major course in IR that covers the nuts and bolts of foreign policy and diplomacy. It includes FP as a public policy, the Concept of National Interest in Foreign Policy formulation, theories/approaches and Models of Decision-making, conditioning and/or influencing factors of foreign policy formulation, actors influencing FP Making, tools/instruments for Foreign Policy Implementation such as Diplomacy and related issues.

Diplomacy is the art and science employed by both state and non-state actors while pursuing their interests. It includes theories and practices of Diplomacy that would help trainees learn and appreciate the diplomatic engagements, the rationale for establishing diplomatic relations, communications, and the role of non-state actors known as informal/track II diplomacy that involves the academic, private sector, prominent individuals, civil society, etc.

Diplomatic training builds the trainees' capacity to master the basics of diplomatic protocols and etiquette and get a better understanding of multicultural manners. Revolutions in communications technology such as Artificial Intelligence and other software devices enabled Heads of State, Ministers, and high-level government dignitaries to undertake what is called summit diplomacy.

IRD 213: Geopolitics and Regional Security

Geopolitical factors and the geostrategic location of the Horn of Africa are the leading factors that have made both super and middle powers interested in the Horn region. It is crucial to understand and analyze how a region that has a decades-long history of tragic tales of endemic social conflict and political fragmentation can benefit from its significant location on the globe. The course primarily focuses on examining the current trends in the shift of political economy, geopolitics and in the world that have repercussions on domestic and foreign factors that possibly contribute to the region's alignment, security concerns, and fragilities with a particular focus on Somaliland and its geostrategic partners.

IRD 321: Politics of Public Policy

This course provides students with an excellent presentation in the public sector including policy making, policy analysis, and decision making. The course extensively examines how the policy is made and implemented in the Republic of Somaliland. The course will equip the students with tools and mechanisms for analyzing policies and strategies. The students will learn the differences between democratic and non-democratic institutions around the world with a particular focus on Africa. Upon the completion of the course, students are expected to apply the concepts to specific policy areas and present them as final assessments for the course.

IRD 322: African Politics and Society

This course is designed to explore the complex interrelations between the African states and their citizens with a particular focus on the state-society relationships which have both economic, social as well as political dimensions. It examines the common themes, issues, and trends that shape the politics and development of African countries. The central objective of the course is to provide students with an overview of the nature of the African state structures,

the economy as well as the societal composition of the African states.

IRD 323: Global Political Economy

Global Political Economy has traditionally brought together the study of the global economy with that of national and global politics to shed light on their mutual influences. It is a reality that the global north has been leading the global political economy and was the cradle of science and technology. Since the end of the Second World War, the global north has shown tremendous economic performance, which makes it the most developed and industrialized part of the world. Development has not only affected the industrial sector but also reached every aspect of human life, from health and education to the military.

The course exposes students to various issues of global political economy and the challenges facing the world today, in particular, the developing countries, including limited accessibility to global financial institutions, weak governance institutions, climate change, land grabbing from multinational corporations followed by environmental degradation and desertification, and conflicts on scarce resources and allocation, to name but a few.

The rise and expansion of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and the emergence of the G20 have recently been juxtaposed with financial crises in the US and the EU to suggest that the poles of global economic power are shifting. As a result of this shift, policymakers are increasingly required to consider issues in contemporary international relations from a variety of non-Western standpoints. All these issues in one way or another have political, economic and social dimensions that confront the contemporary economy of the African nations.

IRD 421: Climate Justice and Diplomacy

Climate change is a global issue and one of the most serious challenges in the twenty-first century endangering the lives of many people. The disproportionate share of climate change and variability experienced by Africans threatens the lives of rural communities - both pastoral and agricultural - which are the region's most vulnerable section of society. Climate change remains one of the major challenges facing Somaliland and needs a particular way to deal with it in collaboration with international partners and institutions. This course is the response to these multifaceted challenges and enables students to think differently and shape how Somaliland institutions can collaborate with global

institutions to respond and address this challenge collectively, which is not only facing Somaliland but also challenges the entire region. Furthermore, the course explores the global efforts made by developing countries by employing multilateral diplomacy under the auspices of the UN to force the powerful industrial emitter to pay compensation to the developing countries under the Polluter-Pays Principle.

IRD 422: Migration, Social Change and Development

Migration is not a new phenomenon, but it is important to study the dawn of deepening globalization and the advance of science and technology. Migration has both negative and positive implications for human beings, where it has emerged in the last few years as a critical political and policy challenge in matters such as integration, displacement, safe migration, and border management. In the most recent times, migration has been a very common news item both in newspapers and television where stories about migration and its consequences are everywhere, and so are the mixed reactions from the world. Boat refugees from Africa, dead bodies washed up on the Mediterranean shores, and migrants, illegally crossing the southern border of the United States of America, to name but a few examples present well-known migration scenarios.

The purpose of this course is to explore theories and concepts associated with migration studies and security issues. It is designed to have students critically think and assess the socio-economic and political drivers of migration and how this relates to national security and development discourses. The course also examines migration processes at global, regional and national levels, with emphasis on the social and development determinants and consequences as well as historical perspectives of the processes; and changing dynamics of migration with historical and contemporary examples. Students will gain a comprehensive understanding of the root causes, diverse actors, and methodological approaches often associated with migration and how governments may address such fundamental challenges.

5. Research

The Laas Geel Academy aspires to become a world-class research-intensive and policy analysis ecosystem in Somaliland and the Horn of Africa region. International relations, regional security, political instability, environmental change, migration, democracy and development discourses remain at the heart of any discussion concerning the Horn of Africa region. The Institute fills that

gap and engages in in-depth analysis, thus producing reports that inform the policy and decision-making circles and contribute to the country's foreign policy strategy and safeguarding national security.

The Institute focuses on a wide range of topics and issues within international relations. These topics include but are not limited to foreign affairs, geopolitics and regional security, infrastructure and development, climate change, migration, state and society and democracy. The research themes of the Institute therefore drive its ambition to tackle the complex local, regional and global challenges and empower the Institute's researchers to drive solutions with impact.

5.1. Collaborative Research Projects

The Institute strives to involve collaborative research projects and partnerships with like-minded institutions across the world. This collaboration will raise the profile of excellent research being conducted in Somaliland.

6. Publications

The Institute has its own platforms to publish pertinent academic articles, policy papers and briefings written by the academic staff and the students at the institute. The following are the platforms of the Institute:

6.1. Laas Geel International Relations Journal

The Laas Geel International Relations Journal (LGIRJ), an annual peer-reviewed publication by the Laas Geel Academy of International Relations, advances critical analysis of pressing national, regional, and global issues. Its interdisciplinary focus covers foreign policy, geopolitics, security studies, infrastructure development, climate resilience, migration trends, governance, and democratization. As a premier platform for rigorous academic inquiry, the journal bridges scholarly research and policymaking, fostering collaboration among academics, policymakers, and practitioners. Committed to innovation and relevance, it publishes cutting-edge analyses to inform policy debates, address contemporary challenges, and promote equitable solutions. By elevating diverse perspectives and regional expertise, the journal aspires to become the definitive voice in international affairs scholarship within the Horn of Africa and beyond, driving informed decision-making and contributing to a more just and stable regional and global framework.

The LGIRJ is a member of Crossref and has obtained the ISSN for both its online and print versions, ensuring its accessibility across international scholarly platforms.

6.2. Laas Geel Briefing

The Laas Geel Briefing is a platform and channel intended to convey the key findings of any research to the policy and decision-making of the country, the region and beyond.

The paper has obtained International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN) for both its print and online editions, making it accessible and searchable on major international scholarly platforms.

6.3. Laas Geel Papers

The Laas Geel Papers, is another publishing arm of Laas Geel Academy. It is committed to advancing scholarly discourse by publishing high-impact research. Every submission undergoes a rigorous peer-review and editorial process to ensure the integrity, originality, and quality of the work we share with the global academic community. The paper has obtained International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN) for both its print and online editions, making it accessible and searchable on major international scholarly platforms.

7. Laas Geel Events

The Laas Geel Events is a platform intended to disseminate the knowledge and research outputs produced by the institute. Through this platform, the institute organizes public forums, workshops, seminars, debates, and community dialogue regarding the social, security and economic issues affecting the state and society together. The platform will also host regional and international conferences on the thematic areas of the Institute. This will provide opportunities for scholars, researchers and the academic community to inform policy and decision making. This engagement will construct linkages and networks between citizens and with the Government institutions.

8. Article Writing and Submission

Guidelines are designed to assist students to prepare and write an academic article in an appropriate scholarly style as part of their studies. All articles are subject to peer-review by experts who specialize in the themes of the study. Therefore, the article should be arranged in the following sequence:

1. Title: the author should select a title that communicates the contents of the article and is memorable.
2. Abstract: the author should write an abstract which summarizes the major findings of the article with a particular emphasis on objectives of the ar-

ticle, the methodology used, the major findings, and the conclusion with recommendations. The abstract should not be more than 300 words.

3. The article should have keywords between six to ten words.
4. Context or the scope of the problem: this part is connected to the literature review of the article and is the bridge that connects the title with the major findings of the article and its conclusion. This section should explain the importance of the article and the problem under scrutiny and aims to convince the reader of the necessity of writing this article.
5. Major findings or results: this section contains the most detailed explanation of the major findings and what steps to be taken to address the gaps identified.
6. Reference format (both in-text citation and reference): this section contains the reliable sources that you have used throughout the writing process of the article. The writing format of the reference including in-text citation should be the American Psychological Association (APA) style.

In addition, the author should adhere to the following requirements:

1. Word limits: the article should be submitted in not less than 5,000 words in length (including references) and a maximum of 6,000 words.
2. Spacing and alignment: the text should be justified and make sure that spacing on all pages is consistent.
3. Font size and name: Use Lato with font size 11 and must be consistent throughout the article including the title.
4. The article must be typewritten on A4 metric size paper. Space between paragraphs should be single-space.
5. Manuscripts should be submitted in Microsoft Word format.
6. The article must be original and has not been published elsewhere.
7. Footnotes/endnotes, references/bibliographical entries, long quoted passages and items in lists and tables may be single-spaced.

9. Further Information

The Institute is an environment free from the influence of Tobacco products, Khat, and other types of drugs, and is expected not to use or possess such substances within and outside the institute premises. The staff and students must contribute to a safe institute environment, free from fear and acts of

violence, and the possession of any weapon on institute grounds is thus strictly prohibited except by the authorized security personnel of the Institute.

Staff and students are advised to read and adhere to the following policies:

1. Academic Integrity Policy
2. Research Ethics and Integrity Policy
3. Students Code of Conduct Policy
4. Grievances Procedure and Handling Policy
5. Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy
6. Health and Safety Policy
7. Ethics Policy
8. Anti-Fraud and Whistle-blowing Policy
9. Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy



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