

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION****Newcastle  
University**

<b>1 Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>2 Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>3 Final Award</b>	BA (Honours)
<b>4 Programme Title</b>	Politics and International Relations
<b>5 UCAS/Programme Code</b>	L290
<b>6 Programme Accreditation</b>	N/A
<b>7 QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	Politics and International Relations
<b>8 FHEQ Level</b>	Level 6
<b>9 Date written/revised</b>	July 2021

**10 Programme Aims**

- 1 to broaden and deepen the student's understanding of the nature and significance of politics and international relations
- 2 to develop the student's appreciation of the diversity of the discipline in terms of both content and approaches
- 3 to allow students to specialise within the discipline according to their interests and provide an opportunity for them to study outside subjects at each stage
- 4 to offer a learning environment informed by research and scholarship in which students can learn about politics and international relations from knowledgeable staff, their own study and from discussion with fellow students
- 5 to enhance students' cognitive skills, including analysing and presenting information and developing a reasoned argument; and core skills such as adaptability, planning and organisation
- 6 to equip students to undertake further academic study or a wide variety of careers in the private, public or voluntary sector.
- 7 To conform with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice.

This programme also aims to meet the requirements of the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) Benchmark Statement for Politics and International Relations and the criteria for a level 6 award laid out in the QAA's Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

**11 Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the areas outlined below. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Politics and International Relations

**Knowledge and Understanding**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- A1 Apply concepts, theories and methods used in the study of politics and international relations to the analysis of political ideas, institutions, practices and issues in the international system.
- A2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of different political systems
- A3 Understand the significance of multiple polities coexisting and the origins, evolution and contemporary dynamics of the international system.
- A4 Show an in-depth knowledge of self-selected specialisms within the two disciplines

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Core knowledge is principally imparted through lectures supplemented by handouts and sometimes by other visual media, such as videos and web sources. Seminars are intended to check and amplify students' understanding and to provide an opportunity to develop appreciation of issues through discussion and argument. Students are also expected and encouraged to develop their understanding by supplementing taught material with their own independent study. Here guidance is provided on appropriate readings and where appropriate, web-based material, in all modules. A1, A2, and A3 are developed via compulsory modules at Stages 1 and 2 while A4 is achieved through a choice of optional modules available at Stages 2 and 3

**Assessment Strategy**

Knowledge and understanding of the subject (A1-4) is assessed by a variety of methods: unseen and seen written examinations, multiple response examinations, oral examinations, essays, reports, projects and dissertations and group work including simulations, projects and presentations.

**Intellectual Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1 Question received thinking and develop independent thinking
- B2 Marshal, analyse and critically evaluate evidence
- B3 Reason critically
- B4 Argue coherently and persuasively
- B5 Present ideas in a structured form

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

B1-B5 are developed throughout the curriculum and are inherent in the nature of our subject and its teaching. Students question received thinking, collect, analyse and evaluate evidence, reason critically, argue and present ideas throughout the programme but particularly in essays, exams, projects, presentations and in seminar discussion and exercises.

**Assessment Strategy**

Intellectual skills (B1-5) are assessed via essays, reports, projects, dissertations, presentations, oral examinations (in select modules) and written examinations across the programme.

**Practical Skills**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1 Make effective use of (and appropriately reference) a wide range of information sources, including qualitative and quantitative data, library, internet and other electronic sources, and governmental and non-governmental information.
- C2 Undertake, and report upon, an independently conducted research exercise.

**Teaching and Learning Methods**

Practical skills in the effective use and referencing of information (C1) are developed through lectures, seminars, exercises and debates across all modules, but particularly in skills modules at Stages 1 and 2. Both individual and group presentations and essays require effective

collection, evaluation, analysis and presentation of information. The ability to undertake independent research (C2) is developed particularly in the requirement to undertake a research project or a dissertation in the final stage of the programme.

#### **Assessment Strategy**

The ability of students to make effective use of a wide range of information sources (C1) is assessed in all essays, projects and dissertations undertaken in the programme. The ability to undertake independent research (C2) is assessed via the requirement that all students on the programme should complete either a research project or a dissertation during stage 3 of the programme.

#### **Transferable/Key Skills**

On completing the programme students should possess and have enhanced the following skills:

- D1 Written communication: To write with clarity, relevance and effectiveness.
- D2 Interpersonal communication: To communicate clearly, relevantly and effectively and appropriately with others.
- D3 Oral presentation: To make clear, relevant and effective oral presentations to a variety of audiences.
- D4 Teamwork: To be able to recognise and identify the views, opinions and contributions of others and work constructively with them to achieve shared objectives and goals.
- D5 Planning and organisation: To be able to manage projects and meet pre-specified deadlines.
- D6 Information literacy: To be able to gather, manage and evaluate information from a variety of sources.
- D7 Problem solving: To identify, analyse, interpret and solve intellectual and practical problems.
- D8 Initiative: To be able to take action unprompted and to assume responsibility.
- D9 Adaptability: To be receptive to feedback, to manage time and resources effectively and to be self-critical and operate in a variety of environments
- D10 Numeracy: To understand and evaluate the use of quantitative evidence
- D11 Computer literacy: To be able to use information technology in a variety of ways including the word-processing, presentation software, e-mail and the Internet.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods**

Written communication (D1) is developed through essays, projects and examinations while oral communication (D3) is developed through seminars, presentations, simulations and oral examinations. Interpersonal communication (D2) is fostered throughout the programme but particularly through simulations and oral examinations. Seminar activities frequently serve to develop teamwork skills (D4) as do group presentations and projects and simulations. Planning and organisation (D5), as well as problem solving (D7), initiative (D8) and adaptability (D9) are developed throughout the programme but are particularly developed in respect of project and dissertation modules. Computer literacy (D11) and information literacy (D6) are also fostered and practiced throughout the programme but are explicitly introduced in Study Skills modules and further developed in project and dissertation modules. Numeracy (D10) is used in many modules throughout the programme but is explicitly taught in the compulsory research methods modules.

## **Assessment Strategy**

Written communication (D1), information literacy (D6) and problem solving (D7) are all skills which are assessed in seen and unseen written examinations, essays, reports, projects and dissertations. Numeracy (D10) is also frequently assessed via these methods in modules with a significant empirical content. Oral examinations serve to assess interpersonal communication (D2) and problem solving (D7). Teamwork (D4) is assessed via group projects, group presentations and simulations. Group and individual presentations serve to assess oral presentation skills (D3). Adaptability (D9) is principally fostered, rather than assessed, and takes such forms such as written feedback on essays, reports, dissertations and projects and feedback on examination performance. Similarly, planning and organisation (D5) and initiative (D8) are principally practiced rather than assessed. Computer literacy (D11) is diffusely assessed through the programme, for example, via requirements for word-processing of written work and the use of Powerpoint presentations.

## **12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**

### **Basic structure of the programme**

The programme is studied over three years full time and is undertaken in three stages (one per year of study). Each stage is delivered through two 15 week semesters over three terms. The programme is divided into modules, with the standard credit weighting for a module being 20 credits. Students study for a total of 120 credits each year. Each 20 credit module represents approximately 200 hours of student learning, activity and assessment, including a minimum of 36 hours of contact.

### **Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

- (a) The programme combines a grounding in the core discipline of Politics and core sub-discipline of International Relations. It combines the study of political theory and national systems with the study of world politics from both the system and actor perspectives and with the opportunity for comparative analysis.
- (b) The programme includes the opportunity to study abroad and to specialise and choose from a variety of specialist modules in both Politics and International Relations, including but not limited to party systems, electoral systems, interest groups and mobilisation, parliaments and legislatures, executives, public policy, representation, justice, equality, diversity and inclusion, multiculturalism, nationalism, political economy, institutional design, globalisation, environmental governance and ethics, institutionalism, rational choice theory, cultural theory, feminism and gender, and critical theory, international organisations, regimes, globalisation, international political economy, conflict analysis, peace research, political violence, human rights, foreign policy analysis, area studies (i.e. Africa, China and the Middle East), security studies, critical international relations theory, regional integration, nationalism, realism and neorealism, liberalism, institutionalism, Marxism, social constructivism, post-structuralism, and postcolonialism.
- (b) Students are not required to undertake a dissertation and may instead demonstrate research skills by means of a research project or community based research module which addresses a genuine gap in the knowledge/understanding of policy-makers/practitioners in the North East of England.

### **Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

[L290 Programme Regulations 23-24](#)

## **13 Support for Student Learning**

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

### Generic Information

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

#### *Induction*

Politics also sends pre-registration information to both new and returning students. The Politics Department also organises its own programme of meetings and events for Induction Week some of which is specific to individual degree schemes and some of which involves whole cohort. The main features of the Induction Week for all students (new and returning undergraduates) are:

- availability of personal tutors to advise on module selection and take an overview of students' performance
- student registration for the academic year
- students' selection and registration of module choices
- welcome, information and advice meetings specifically for each stage of each degree

In addition, the following is provided in a more intensive induction programme for new undergraduates:

- a meeting outlining the structure and character of their degree programme and expectations of students and staff
- a meeting outlining the curriculum and assessments in stage 1 Politics and International Relations modules
- self-directed tours of the Library

## **14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning**

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

### Generic Information

#### *Accreditation reports*

N/A

#### *Additional mechanisms*

In addition to the mechanisms noted above, a system of peer observation of full-time and part-time teaching staff operates. Feedback is provided to the individual teacher and subject level reports on peer observation reported to School Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

## **15 Regulation of assessment**

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

### Generic Information

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/degrees/#subject>

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/> )

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.