

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	Politics (Research)
5	Programme Code	4026 F/P
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Last updated	December 2024

10 Programme Aims

- 1 To meet the aims of the ESRC's postgraduate research training guidelines by providing high quality research training at Master's level
- 2 To provide learning opportunities to enable graduates to acquire the knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in the social sciences generally and political science specifically
- 3 To provide high quality research training to an increasing number of postgraduates and to enhance their skills and employability
- 4 To offer a research-informed environment in which students can learn about at least one area of the discipline of Politics from knowledgeable staff, their own study and from interaction with fellow students
- 5 To develop the students' experience of, and skills in, conducting self-designed research papers and dissertations and provide an opportunity to undertake a major research project for their dissertation in Politics. To enhance students' skills in processing, analysing and presenting information
- 6 To offer a research-informed environment in which students can learn about at least one area of the discipline of Politics from knowledgeable staff, their own study and from interaction with fellow students.
- 7 To produce graduates who can proceed to careers in research in universities, in the public sector, the private sector, the voluntary sector and the media
- 8 To meet the needs of stakeholders
- 9 To provide a programme which meets the requirements of FHEQ at Masters level 7

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the social sciences, information skills, concepts and methods in politics, theories and approaches to the study of politics, qualitative and quantitative methods in political science.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1** have an advanced knowledge and understanding of ESRC recognised research methodologies

A2	an advanced knowledge and understanding of political science methods and techniques required to carry out advanced research in politics
A3	have a foundation of specialist knowledge and research skills from which they can embark upon careers with significant research responsibilities or pursue a postgraduate research degree in any field of politics
A4	have the theoretical and practical skills that will enable them to successfully complete an MA dissertation
Teaching and Learning Methods	
The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding is seminars in Politics and as part of the HASS Faculty Research Training Programme (A1-A4). Throughout the MA programme students are strongly encouraged to engage in independent reading for which they are given extensive support and guidance on reading materials and their appropriate use. Students are strongly supported by staff in their completion of self-designed research projects.	
Assessment Strategy	
Research skills are tested by a variety of techniques including individual and group presentations, research exercises and papers, and ultimately, the dissertation (A1-A4).	
Intellectual Skills	
On completing the programme students should be able to:	
B1	Effectively disseminate research findings to specialist and non-specialist communities
B2	Effectively communicate in writing and in oral presentations
B3	Effectively manage research including design of research proposals, planning of research projects and their timely completion
B4	Work effectively as a team member in both subject specific and multi-disciplinary settings
Teaching and Learning Methods	
The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding is seminars in Politics and as part of the HASS Faculty Research Training Programme (B2-B4). Students receive explicit training in qualitative and quantitative methods, information skills, and in reflective approaches to research problems and issues in such seminars and are engaged in individual and group projects (B1).	
Assessment Strategy	
General research skills are assessed by means of coursework research and reflective projects and ultimately the MA dissertation (B1-B2). Other modes of assessment include the construction of a bibliography, incorporating bibliographic search strategies and professional design and layout (B3). IT skills are assessed by the bibliographic exercise and data practicals (B3). Students will also receive ethics training and complete a jointly produced 6000 word research article with the aim of it being published in an appropriate journal (B1, B4).	
Practical Skills	
On completing the programme students should be able to:	
C1	Select and apply appropriate methods of data collection with knowledge and understanding
C2	Understand the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of data and develop a critical use of sources
C3	Understand the use of methods and tools to analyse data
C4	Demonstrate proficiency in a range of qualitative and quantitative data analysis

Teaching and Learning Methods
Skills of data collection and management are imparted through seminars and through practical exercises in several HASS faculty FRTP modules and in the Politics module, <i>Doing Political Research</i> (C3). Critical skills are developed through independent reading and encouraging active participation individually and in groups in seminar settings (C1-C2). Reflective exercises in research design and the appropriate use of data reinforce seminar and group learning (C4).
Assessment Strategy
Students complete a range of assessments including research projects and the dissertation. Other assessment modes include short reflective exercises, bibliography preparation, and short answer tests (C1-C4).
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: D1 Take responsibility for his/her own learning and personal professional development D2 Manage time and prioritise tasks by working to deadlines D3 Communicate effectively to others when working in seminar group settings. D4 Make effective use of appropriate electronic resources including journals, databases and the internet and undertake effective word processing
Teaching and Learning Methods
Student self-learning and time and task management is encouraged in weekly seminars and one on one research supervision sessions. Communication is practiced in weekly seminars. Students are directed to appropriate journals and provided information concerning appropriate internet usage.
Assessment Strategy
Self-learning is assessed in the context of the timely submission of research projects and completion of unseen examinations (D1-D2). Effective use of electronic resources is assessed in the context of their analysis and correct presentation in research projects and presentations (D3-D4).

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
One year full time or two years part time. 180 credits (110 coursework, 70 dissertation) 70 credits (compulsory) in HASS FRTP 20 credits (compulsory) in Politics modules 20 credits (optional) in Politics module 70 credits (compulsory) dissertation.
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
ESRC recognised training programme which equips students with generic and subject-specific skills that enable students to undertake advanced research in the social sciences and in Politics in particular.
Programme regulations (link to on-line version)
Programme Regulations 2025-26

13 Support for Student Learning
Generic information regarding University provision is available here .

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning
Generic information regarding University provision is available here . <i>Accreditation reports</i> This programme is recognised by the ESRC under its 1+3 system for funding postgraduate studies and UK-resident applicants are eligible to be considered for ESRC funding. <i>Additional mechanisms</i> N/A

15 Regulation of assessment
Generic information regarding University provision is available here .

In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:
Degree Programme and University Regulations: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/ The Degree Programme Handbook

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.
