

Programme Specification

A Programme Specification provides a concise summary of the main features of a programme and its intended learning outcomes. It is intended to be used by prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers.

Programme Title:	
BA (Hons) Politics and International Relations BA (Hons) Politics and International Relations with Foundation Year	
Programme (AOS) Code(s):	BB1PIR1 – 3 years FT BB1PIR4 – 4 years FT with Foundation Year
UCAS Code:	L243 – 3 years FT L244 – 4 years FT with Foundation Year
Name of Final Award:	Bachelor of Arts with Honours, BA (Hons)
Level of Qualification:	Level 6
Regime of Delivery:	Attendance
Mode(s) of Delivery:	Full Time
Typical Length of Study (Years):	3 years 4 years with Foundation Year
Professional Body Recognition / Accreditation (including specific requirements where applicable):	N/A

Brief Description of the Programme

This programme provides students with a rich, diverse and employability-focused curriculum, covering a range of historical and contemporary issues and themes in politics and international relations.

Students will learn about political systems, major global institutions, and be able to historically contextualise the way in which politics has shaped the world today. The programme will also provide a holistic understanding of how political strategies and policies are formed, addressing issues around economic development, the environment, media and civil society, enriching their political perspective with multi-disciplinary insight from social sciences and humanities.

The programme will allow students to assess how power is deployed through national and international political institutions, and provide commentary on how new social movements and ideas challenge and re-draw issues of identity, community and political participation. They will gain further depth of knowledge and perspective by analysing how technology, surveillance and communications reshape political imagination for today and the future.

Students will engage in critical thinking, and be encouraged to approach their assessments through a solutions-focused lens, actively addressing political issues of national, regional and international concern. Students will also learn how to conduct formal political science research, using archives and a range of other methods. The learning, teaching and assessment for this programme is specifically curated to provide students with employability skills needed to enter into careers in politics and international relations.

The programme will provide students with a significant set of transferable skills, including report-writing, policy-making, presentation, group-work, materials design and research. The learning outcomes of the programme will ultimately increase students' knowledge, social awareness, leadership skills and creativity in the world of politics and international relations, preparing them for a career confronting and solving future challenges and crises.

Programme Aims

1	To provide students with advanced knowledge and critical perspectives on a range of topics in Politics and International Relations
2	To give students working knowledge of political institutions and systems at national, regional and international levels
3	To allow students to historically contextualise themes, issues and crises that characterize the modern world and identify the driving forces of political, economic and socio-cultural change
4	To equip students with solutions-based approaches to political, economic and socio-cultural problems using research skills and knowledge of policy
5	To prepare students for entry into careers in politics and international relations and related sectors through the development of written, oral and digital skills

Programme Learning Outcomes

The Bucks Graduate Attributes focus on the development of innovative leaders in professional and creative capacities, who are equipped to operate in the 21st Century labour market and make a positive impact as global citizens. The attributes are developed through the programme.

ID	Learning Outcome
On successful completion of the programme a graduate will be able to:	
Graduate Attribute: Knowledge and its application (K)	
K1	Write research papers in the field of politics and international relations based on critical evaluation of contrasting arguments and evidence
K2	Apply knowledge of policy-making processes to articulate solutions to political issues at a national, regional and international level
K3	Persuasively articulate political positions on a number of themes and issues using a combination of theoretical framing, historical knowledge and critical thinking
K4	Produce original research using formal methods in political science and specialist material or digital archives
Graduate Attribute: Creativity (C)	
C1	Design and develop creative/visual/digital political communications materials
C2	Critically assess visual forms of persuasion and differentiate between techniques of persuasion
Graduate Attribute: Social and ethical awareness and responsibility (S)	
S1	Demonstrate the importance of social and ethical awareness and responsibility in policy-making, related to issues in civil society, development and the environment

Graduate Attribute: Leadership and self-development (L)

L1	Apply knowledge of case studies of international crisis to articulate definitive positions and solutions to practical issues faced by leaders in politics and international relations
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Programme Structure

Programmes are structured in stages. The number of stages will vary depending on the mode (e.g. full-time, part-time), duration and location of study which will be detailed in the Programme Handbook.

Modules are set at a specific academic level and listed as either core (compulsory) or optional. The level indicates the relative academic difficulty which will increase through the programme. Passing modules will reward you with academic credit. The amount of credits will depend on the complexity of the module and the level of effort required, which is measured in 'notional learning hours'.

Our [Academic Advice webpages](#) provide more information on the structure of taught awards offered by the University. *Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. Other option modules may also be introduced at a later stage enabling the programme to respond to sector developments.*

Foundation Level (Optional for students on degree programmes)

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
FY026	Preparing for Success: Knowledge and Creativity	N/A	Core	Yes
FY027	Preparing for Success: Self Development and Responsibility	N/A	Core	Yes
FY028	Inquiry Based Learning	N/A	Core	Yes
FY008	Ways of Learning about the Social World	N/A	Core	Yes

Level Four

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
IR401	British Politics	15	Core	Yes
IR402	World Politics	15	Core	Yes
IR403	Introduction to Political Thought	15	Core	Yes
IR404	Media, Communications and Politics	15	Core	Yes
IR405	Comparative Politics	15	Core	Yes
IR406	International History	15	Core	Yes
IR407	Introduction to Political Research	15	Core	Yes
IR408	Politics and the Environment	15	Core	Yes

Level Five

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
IR501	Political Sociology	15	Core	Yes
IR502	US Politics	15	Core	Yes
IR503	Resistance, Rebellion and Revolution	15	Core	Yes
IR504	International Political Economy	15	Core	Yes
IR505	Political Research Project	15	Core	Yes
IR506	Art, Culture and Politics	15	Core	Yes
IR507	Politics of the Middle East	15	Core	Yes
IR508	Politics of Global Development	15	Core	Yes

Level Six

Code	Module Title	Credit	Core / Option	Compensable (Normally Yes)
IR601	Dissertation	30	Core	No
IR602	Emerging Powers	15	Core	Yes
IR603	The European Union, Democracy and its Discontents	15	Core	Yes
IR604	Politics, Surveillance and Technology	15	Core	Yes
IR605	Uncertain Futures: Politics in the 21 st Century	15	Core	Yes
IR606	Global Governance	15	Core	Yes
IR607	Diplomacy and Statecraft	15	Core	Yes

Learning and Teaching Activities

Please see the [Academic Advice pages](#) for a description of learning and teaching activities that are recognised by the University. Detailed information on this specific programme is outlined below:

The majority of learning and teaching activities will involve attendance-based learning through lectures, seminars, supervisions, project workshops and visits to political institutions and archives, though students will be expected to fulfil independent study through readings, group work and engaging with digital learning resources. Two modules have been designed with Flexible Learning in mind, to be supported by an appropriately designed set of digital learning resources and formative assessments, and enhanced personal supervision through tutorials.

Lectures

Students will be expected to attend module lectures that will cover topics stated in the indicative syllabus. The lectures are designed to provide an overview of the topic and impart the areas where learning outcomes can be met. Students will be encouraged to enhance their knowledge of the information and perspectives provided in lectures through further readings.

Seminars

Seminars are compulsory learning activities and students will be expected to actively contribute to the learning experience through prepared questions and contributions to discussions and debates

over key topics identified in the indicative syllabus. Students should arrive prepared having undertaken the required readings, and be prepared to engage in substantial questions regarding theory, policy, history and contemporary politics. Seminars will also be used to prepare students for their assessments, with learning outcomes re-iterated and expectations of assessment disseminated

Tutorials

Students will have up to 4 individual tutorials per module, allowing students to further clarify substantive topics with their tutor, review assessments and discuss issues related to their progression and achievement. These sessions may also be used to highlight pastoral issues and ensure the university provides the correct level of support.

Project Supervisions

Some modules will include project supervisions for both individual and group assessments, where students and tutors can engage on relevant feedback and guidance necessary for achievement on that assessment. Students can determine a relevant plan of work, and receive formative feedback on the progress of their project

Demonstrations/Practical Classes and Workshops

Demonstrations, practical classes and workshops will be used in some modules where the assessment requires a further new skills component to be introduced, particularly for research, creative and visual-based assessments. Students will receive a focused masterclass to provide them with the knowledge and skills to use certain materials, techniques and digital software.

Fieldwork

Research projects at Levels 4, 5 and 6 will involve allocated time for students to conduct their research and gather primary evidence needed for successful achievement in their assessment. Examples include material and digital archive visits, surveys, interviews or participant observations. Students will receive instruction and guidance on how to conduct fieldwork during demonstrations, practical classes or workshops.

External Visits

External visits are used to enrich a student's understanding, knowledge and skills related to their module and assessments. Relevant external visits will include political institutions, archives, and external lectures or seminars where appropriate

FLEXIBLE & DISTRIBUTED LEARNING

The Level 5 module IR505 Political Research Project and Level 6 module IR606 Global Governance will be delivered through a flexible model which replaces formal lectures with a blended approach to be primarily conducted using the University's virtual learning environment. Enhanced digital resources will be made available, and online exercises will allow students to receive real-time formative feedback on their progress.

Students will still attend seminars, but these will be used to review student progress and undertake assessment tasks, including group-work. The learning and teaching method used for these modules is intended to stimulate independent study and solution-creation.

Additional Course Costs

There are costs associated with all studies, additional to the tuition fee, which require consideration, when planning and budgeting for expenditure. Costs are indicative and for the total length of the course shown unless otherwise stated and will increase with inflation; depending on the programme

they may include equipment, printing, project materials, study trips, placement activities, DBS and/or other security checks.

Texts: ~£100-£150 per year

Printing: ~£30-£50 per year

There may also be some additional costs associated with study visits arranged. These will vary depending on the nature of the visit.

Contact Hours

1 unit of credit is the equivalent of 10 notional learning hours. Full time undergraduate students study 120 credits (1200 hours) and full-time postgraduate students study 180 credits (1800 hours) per year or 'stage' of the course.

Course Stage	Scheduled Activities (Hours)	Guided Independent Study (Hours)	Placement / Study Abroad / Work Based Learning (Hours)
Foundation Year	348	852	N/A
Year One	281	919	N/A
Year Two	270	930	N/A
Year Three	196	1004	N/A

Assessment Methods

The [Assessment and Examination webpages](#) provide further information on how assignments are marked and moderated, including a description of assessment activities. These also include further information about how feedback on assessed work is provided to students, including our commitment to ensure this is provided to students within 15 working days (the 'three-week turnaround').

The following assessment methods will be used during the programme. All of these methods are *summative* and are designed to allow students to address the learning outcomes of individual modules and the overall programme. Other, ungraded *formative* assessments, may be included within each module, designed to provide feedback and ensure a successful learning journey. Typically these will be shorter and may include online quizzes, notes and multiple choices

Formal Assessment Methods

- Research Essay
- Group Presentations
- Written Examination
- Group Projects
- Structured Debate
- Digital Analysis including creative output
- Political Science Research Project
- Media and Communications Portfolio
- Online Blogging
- Creative Digital Project
- Literature Review

- Learning Notebook
- Case Study Analysis
- Archive Analysis
- Live Political Exercise (UN Security Council)

Classification

Calculation of final award: Level 5 - 33% / Level 6 – 67%

For full details of assessment regulations for all taught programmes please refer to our [Results webpages](#). These include the criteria for degree classification.

Admissions Requirements

Please see the [Application webpages](#) for more information on how to apply, including a statement on how we support students from a variety of backgrounds. Please also see our [general entry requirements](#) for taught programmes. Applicants who do not meet our published entry requirements are encouraged to contact our admissions team for further advice and guidance.

Typical applicant profile and any programme-specific entry requirements

Students who apply for this course will demonstrate a keen interest in both national and global politics, history, culture and society. The programme has a large component of written assessments, involving a significant amount of reading, independent research and theory. Students who have studied history, English literature, government and politics, economics, business studies and sociology will all be suitable for this programme, though these are not requirements. Candidates will be expected to show an interest, enthusiasm and willingness to encounter alternative political arguments, ideas and positions to their own.

Do applicants required a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check? No

Opportunities for students on successful completion of the programme

Following successful completion of the programme, students will be prepared for further studies and research in political and international relations. They will also have the skills and knowledge relevant for careers in the foreign and civil service, national and local government, international political and economic organisations, think-tanks, research institutes, print media, digital political media, and policy-making. Other relevant sectors include charities and non-governmental organizations, international business and teaching. Students may also undertake further professional qualifications in areas such as law and urban planning.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Previous study, professional and / or vocational experiences may be recognised as the equivalent learning experience and permit exemption from studying certain modules. Please refer to our [Credit Accumulation webpages](#) for further guidance.

Student Support

During the course of their studies, students will be supported in the following ways:

- At the start of their studies all students will receive a full **induction** to the programme which will include introduction to the staff responsible for delivering the course, and access to library and IT facilities
- The **Programme Handbook** will outline the exact nature of the course and how it is structured, including the availability of option modules
- Each student will be allocated a **Personal Tutor** who will support their academic development, be able to advise and guide them with their studies and, where necessary, give advice on study options
- Students will be able to access our full range of **support services**, including the Learning Development Unit for skills and study support, the Library, the Careers and Employability Team, Student Finance Team, Accommodation and Counselling Services

Programme specific support (if applicable)

None

Appendices

Quality Assurance

Awarding Body:	Buckinghamshire New University
Language of Study:	English
QAA Subject Benchmark Statement(s):	Politics and International Relations 2015
Assessment Regulations:	<i>Academic Assessment Regulations</i> , accessible via the Academic Advice webpages (https://bucks.ac.uk/students/academicadvice)
Does the Fitness to Practise procedure apply to this programme?	No
Ethics Sub-committee	
Date Published / Updated:	September 2019
Date programme re-approval required:	2025

Other awards available on programme (Exit Qualifications)

Please refer to the *Academic Qualifications Framework* for Exit Qualifications recognised by the University and credit and module requirements.

Name of Exit Qualification:	Ordinary Degree
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	BA Politics and International Relations
Credits requirements:	300 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 and all 120 Credits at Level 5, PLUS 60 credits from four of the following Level 6 modules: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IR602 Emerging Powers • IR603 The European Union, Democracy and its Discontents • IR604 Politics, Surveillance and Technology • IR605 Uncertain Futures in the 21st Century • IR606 Global Governance • IR607 Diplomacy and Statecraft
Learning Outcome	
Demonstrate a broad and comparative knowledge of policy-making processes to articulate solutions to political issues at a national, regional and international level	
Persuasively articulate political positions on several themes and issues using a combination of theoretical framing, historical knowledge and critical thinking	
Design and develop creative/visual/digital political communications materials	
Apply their subject and transferable skills to employment contexts requiring personal responsibility, initiative and decision-making	
Apply knowledge of case studies of international crisis to articulate definitive positions and solutions to practical issues faced by leaders in politics and international relations	

Name of Exit Qualification:	Diploma of Higher Education (DipHE)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	DipHE Politics and International Relations
Credits requirements:	240 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4 ALL 120 Credits at Level 5
Learning Outcome	
Demonstrate a basic understanding of the key underlying concepts associated with politics and international relations	
Appreciate the importance of political positions on several themes and issues	
Communicate the results of their work accurately and reliably, and with structured and coherent arguments	
Demonstrate the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment, including the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making.	

Name of Exit Qualification:	Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE)
Full name of Qualification and Award Title:	CertHE Politics and International Relations
Credits requirements:	120 Credits
Module requirements:	ALL 120 Credits at Level 4
Learning Outcome	
Demonstrate a broad and comparative knowledge of the policy-making processes to articulate solutions to political issues at a national, regional and international level	
Persuasively articulate political positions on several themes and issues using a combination of theoretical framing, historical knowledge and critical thinking	
Design and develop creative/visual/digital political communications materials	
Apply their subject and transferable skills to employment contexts requiring personal responsibility, initiative and decision-making.	