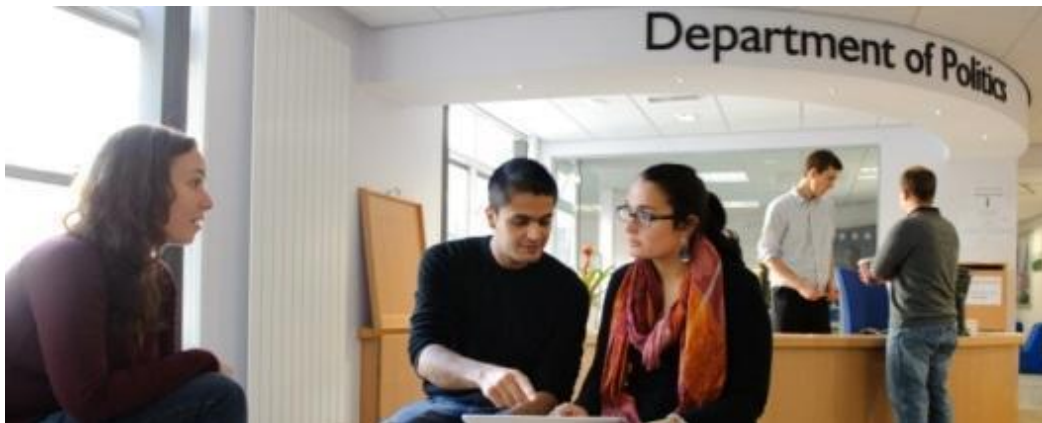


Department of Politics and International Relations

Postgraduate Taught Handbook 2023/24



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Introduction

Introduction to the department

The Department of Politics and International Relations welcomes you to postgraduate study at York. We hope that your time with us will prove enjoyable and rewarding. You are choosing to study Politics at an important historical moment. The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and its knock-on effects for food and energy prices and therefore the cost of living for ordinary people, is a timely reminder of the interdependencies that characterise contemporary global affairs. We also face a range of other complex challenges, such as a shifting balance of international power, the challenges of human rights and global development, environmental crisis, terrorist threats and the struggle for democracy in many parts of the world, as well as competing demands for liberty and security, justice and prosperity.

In choosing to join the department, you have become a member of a prestigious, lively and international community of students and staff. We are dedicated to outstanding teaching and to developing the potential of all our students in a friendly and open department that takes pride in the achievements of all its members. This handbook is intended to provide you with useful information and advice, so that you can become familiar with our procedures and make the best possible use of your time here. We hope that you, as members of the department, will take full advantage of all that we have to offer.

Together York

The University [Together York](#) community statement articulates our values, priorities and expectations, and invites all members of our community to join together in upholding and developing them.

We are a community of scholarship, where independent critical thinkers explore their area of study with passion and diligence.

We are a community of respect, fairness and compassion. We hold each other to these expectations and call out inappropriate behaviour.

We are a community of purpose that cultivates personal growth and supports each student in developing a vision for their future.

The purpose of this handbook

This handbook provides a comprehensive introduction to your department and information on all aspects of your degree programme. It outlines what you should expect of your department and what we expect from you, and clarifies the policies and procedures relevant to your area of study.

General information can also be found on the [student pages](#) of the website.

Disclaimer

We have tried to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate as of September 2023. Please check our website for any changes to this information.

Your department

Welcome to your department

Your department is made up of staff who teach, supervise and undertake research, student services staff and other students like you.

Departmental office

The Department of Politics and International Relations graduate office can be found upstairs in Derwent College, Campus West. One of the team will be available in the graduate office most days of the week but as we work flexibly you may wish to contact us via poli-graduate-office@york.ac.uk in the first instance to book an appointment.

Staff contacts

All Department of Politics and International Relations staff contact details can be found on the "[Our people](#)" section of the University website.

If you wish to speak to a member of staff directly you can find Academic staff office hours and contact details on their individual profile pages.

Communicating with you

Our main point of contact with you is through your University of York email address, so you must check this account regularly.

You may also be contacted via the VLE. The VLE is the central online platform where you will find information about all the different components of your programme and it is a key area for communication between staff and students. Your Programme Leader and Module Leaders will post information here such as reading lists, assignments, and lecture slides.

Please ensure that you include your Student ID number in the email subject line of any communication to help with efficiency in electronic record management and to ensure we can respond as quickly as possible.

Seminar rooms and offices

Your seminars will take place in buildings across campus however most of the staff offices are based in Derwent College, please consult the [online campus map](#) for details of where to find particular seminar rooms. Rooms at the University are referred to by a letter and number system. The letter is the first letter of the College in which the room is located; the first figure is the floor, and the three figures together are the number of the room itself.

Health, safety and security

See more information about the [University's Health, Safety and Security policy](#).

Your supervisor

Your department will allocate you an academic supervisor who offers support and advice throughout your degree programme.

You will meet your supervisor twice in semesters 1 and 2 (with an additional three engagement points through the summer), to discuss your academic progress and to check that all is well with you and your studies. This is an important point of academic contact for all students. Your supervisor will encourage you to develop your academic and personal skills and can also act as a referee for any applications you might make in the future. They can advise what to do if things go wrong and refer you to the right people in the University for help with more personal matters.

If you are experiencing problems that are affecting your ability to study for your degree, your supervisor can also be contacted for advice. If you want to see your supervisor about an urgent problem, there is no need for you to wait for your meeting at the start of each semester. Each supervisor will also have weekly Feedback and Guidance Hours, a specific slot in their timetable where they will be free to meet students. Even if you do not feel the need to discuss such problems with your supervisor, it is important to keep them informed of what is going on. If these problems lead you to miss a deadline for one of your assessments, you should discuss your exceptional circumstances request with your supervisor.

Finally, should you wish for any reason to change your supervisor, it is possible for you to do so. You do not have to explain why you want to make the change, although we advise that you discuss this matter first with the Programme Leader for your degree or with the Director of Postgraduate Taught Programmes before you make a final decision. Any requests for a change should be reported to the Politics and International Relations Graduate Office via poli-graduate-office@york.ac.uk.

Departmental committees

All teaching in the Department, undergraduate and postgraduate, is overseen by the Board of Studies. The Board is composed of all academic staff, plus all elected student representatives at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The Postgraduate Taught Director has overall responsibility for taught postgraduate programmes. Each Master's Degree has a Programme Leader to oversee that particular programme of study.

The Postgraduate Taught Programmes Committee is composed of the Director of Taught Postgraduate Programmes, the Graduate School Coordinator, Graduate Administrator and the Programme Leaders for each Master's Degree (any other members of the academic staff may also attend). The Committee normally meets once per semester. It initiates policy, examines issues raised by the members and discusses matters referred by the University or by outside bodies.

Each semester the department hosts Student Staff Forums for any student to attend to pass on feedback or raise any questions. These forums are hosted by the Graduate School Coordinator and the PGT Director.

The Department makes recommendations on individual student cases to Student Services, who deal with matters concerning the graduate student community at York. Student Services ensure that University regulations are up to date, and are implemented by individual departments and centres. You will find more additional information through the [Student Services website](#). You should familiarise yourself with information about the [Student Hub](#).

Course reps/ Student Action Groups

[Academic representation](#) is a partnership between the Student Unions and University departments. Together, we aim to ensure that students contribute directly to the processes of reviewing, maintaining and enhancing the quality of the academic experience here. You can go to academic reps with any feedback about best practice, concerns or suggestions about how the department or aspects of your programme are run.

There are three types of academic reps:

- **Course Reps** act as the voice of their cohort and work with staff to make improvements to their course. By gathering student opinion, Course Reps become specialists in course-based issues, helping to identify and tackle problems that arise.
- **Department Reps** take on a leadership role and support Course Reps to make positive change to the department as a whole. Department Reps are also invaluable contacts at GSA and take part in University-wide projects that improve the student experience.
- **Faculty Reps** work behind the scenes ensuring that the student voice is heard at all levels. By sitting on high-level committees, they influence University-wide decisions as well as pushing forward their own manifesto projects.

You can apply to be a course rep if you'd like to represent the views of your fellow students and have a say in how your programme is run.

Student evaluation of modules/ Student perceptions of teaching

All postgraduate students are given the opportunity to express their views on the structure, teaching, and other aspects of their individual modules and of the degree as a whole. The Department values the exercise because it enables us to check that our degrees are of the highest quality, and to make improvements.

Auditing is carried out through Qualtrics surveys on individual modules. These surveys cover the content of the module, its documentation, the lectures and the tutorials. Comments are treated confidentially. All comments are carefully considered, and may lead to recommendations for changes in the module or in the degree requirements. They are indispensable for our quality control, and will benefit future students.

Each Programme Leader is required to report the results of the audit to the Postgraduate Taught Committee the following Semester 1. These module reports feed into the Annual Programme Review conducted by the Department.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to the creation of a fair, welcoming and inclusive environment for all, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

This year the department has been awarded a Bronze Renewal Athena Swan award.

Some of the most notable achievements include the following:

- We have been highly successful in attracting women to senior positions in the department and supporting the promotion of women already here. As a result, we are now approaching gender parity in senior posts: the percentage of female professors rose to 47% in July 2023. The percentage of female Senior Lecturers rose from 38% to 47%.
- The Department Management Team is majority female. We have also maintained gender balance or near gender balance amongst the chairs of all departmental committees.
- In our Bronze submission we set out to enhance the post-maternity leave support offered by the University and we now offer flexible support options to women upon their return. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.
- One of our core aims in the last submission was to improve female PhD recruitment. This has been achieved (from 29% to 44% this year) and we have also improved the gender balance of our student population at both UG and PGT level.
- A final achievement worth highlighting is the reduction of women on fixed-term employment contracts. This has been achieved by moving them to open contracts whenever possible.

See more information about [equality, diversity and inclusion at the University](#).

Your Programme of Study

Studying Politics at York

[MA in Conflict, Governance, and Development](#)

The MA in Conflict, Governance and Development looks at contemporary debates in international development and the challenges and opportunities confronting developing countries and their citizens. It combines a strong focus on the major theories of development with empirical analysis of the experiences of particular countries and regions. By exploring these relationships you'll see the connections between violent and non-violent conflict, processes of development, and how they relate to the governance of our modern world.

[MA in International Political Economy](#)

The MA in International Political Economy concentrates on the critical comprehension, understanding, and analysis of developments in international political economy, in terms of its theories, issues and conflicts. You will be equipped with critical analytical insights into contemporary issues such as globalisation, trans-nationalisation, development, conflict and human rights. Competency will be developed in the critical theories of, and contemporary approaches, to international political economy. On completing the programme you will have a deeper understanding of the historical evolution of different approaches to international political economy, and be able to apply these approaches to contemporary issues in international political economy.

[MA in International Relations](#)

The MA in International Relations concentrates on contemporary international events, their causes and repercussions, in great depth through theoretical debates – and how those debates resonate in our international environment. You will develop expertise in your own area of interest in international relations.

MA in Peace and Conflict Studies

The MA in Peace and Conflict Studies explores the context of contemporary armed conflict and war, and subsequently how peace is forged at the local and national levels, all the time taking into account the interplay between domestic and international actors. You'll have the opportunity to undertake a fieldwork placement, where you'll apply your skills to a professional setting and conduct research to inform your dissertation. This is a unique opportunity to gain first-hand understanding of, and approaches to, conflict resolution and peacebuilding in war-affected contexts.

MA in Political Theory

The MA in Political Theory will encourage you to learn to think in different ways about the deepest questions and problems of political life. You will pursue interests in a wide range of topics in politics, philosophy and intellectual history. It provides you with the opportunity to get to grips with some of the central and enduring questions of political theory.

MA in Public Administration and Public Policy

The MA in Public Administration and Public Policy examines how governments create and deliver the policies that structure societies across the globe. You will gain an understanding of the complex issues surrounding the formation, implementation and evaluation of public policy. You will explore the international and domestic institutional contexts which shape the policymaking process and develop expertise in the theoretical and analytical tools necessary to conduct high quality research in public policy and administration.

Master of Public Administration

The Master of Public Administration programme provides professional development for those already working in the broad field of public services management, or those wishing to develop a career in that area. You learn about the organisational and governmental context within which public services are delivered, and the skills required for successful administration of public services. The programme promotes shared learning across sectors (public, private, non-profit), within an international context. The field of public administration is increasingly being shaped by a set of common global themes, which set the overall framework for the programme.

[Master of Public Administration in International Development](#)

The Master of Public Administration in International Development has been designed to support managers or potential managers of public organisations in developing countries. You focus on the environmental factors that impact on the work of public managers and the ways in which those factors shape the character of governance and the management and delivery of public policy. In order to understand governance in developing countries it is crucial to understand the meaning of development from an administrative perspective.

[Mundus MAPP](#)

This two-year international Masters programme provides a detailed understanding of how political institutions, processes and public policies operate and interact. There are two pathways on the programme: the European Public Policy pathway (on which students spend their first year at Central European University) or the Governance and Development pathway (on which students spend their first year at the International Institute of Social Studies).

Programme structure and progression

Your programme of study is made up of modules of different durations and credit values. Modules count for credits which are awarded on successful completion of assessments. To be awarded a Master's degree you must successfully complete modules worth 180 credits.

The programme includes a number of taught modules (general and specific) and an independent study module (ISM), which will require you to undertake your own project or piece of research. Details of the modules and credits for programmes of study in the department are provided in the [programme module catalogue](#).

Progression

Each Masters degree has a progression point at the end of the taught section of the programme. In order to progress, students must have been awarded all required credits for the taught section.

When we calculate your degree classification, different stages will be weighted differently. More information on this can be found under 'Your final degree classification' in the Assessment, Progression and Award section.

Modules

Each stage is made up of modules. You study and are assessed on three modules each semester and each taught module you take is worth 20 credits. You will achieve the credit for a module by passing the module assessments. Modules are assessed by a range of methods which will result in a numerical module mark out of 100.

If you fail a module there are two possible ways in which you might still be able to progress. These are compensation and reassessment, and are explained in more detail in the Assessment, progression and award section below.

Independent Study Modules (ISM) / Dissertation / Project

As well as doing all of the above, at the end of Semester 1, you will be starting to think about a topic for your dissertation/policy report. You should do some preliminary reading and think hard before you settle on your topic. This is an independent study module and, to save time, will often be referred to simply as your ISM. Whether you complete a dissertation or a policy report will depend on your Masters programme. The ISM is a major piece of work and the mark you achieve for it can go a long way to determining your overall degree classification, so it is important to take it seriously.

A lot of the work that you do on your ISM will take place during Semester 2 and over the summer. At the start of Semester 2 you will be allocated a supervisor, whose job will be to give you advice and feedback on your ISM. While it is possible for students to change topics at a later date, you will lose valuable time if you do so. It is better to start planning early in order to minimise the risk of a costly U-turn later. There will also be a separate handbook and VLE site giving more guidance on how to do well in the ISM. Please refer to the VLE for further information.

Reading lists

The VLE is the central online platform where you will find information about all the different components of your programme and it is a key area for communication between staff and students. Your Programme Leader and Module Leaders will post information about reading lists here.

You may be able to access some material from the Universities library. Please check with your module convenor if you are unsure. You can find further information on your reading lists in the Teaching and Learning section below.

Credit-weighting

Credit-weighting means that, in calculating your average mark, each module mark will be given more or less weighting in proportion to the volume of credit (i.e. workload) that is associated with it.

For further information on credit-weighting, including how you can use it to calculate your marks, consult the [Student Guide to Progression and Award](#).

Further information on calculating your final degree mark is available under 'Your final degree classification' in the [Assessment, Progression and Award section](#).

[Elective modules](#) are those offered by departments to students from outside that department. You can replace non-compulsory modules within your programme with elective modules. The number of modules that may be replaced in this way cannot normally amount to more than 40 credits.

Please note that it may not always be possible to grant your request to undertake an elective module because of timetabling or other constraints.

Global Programmes

It may be possible to work, study or volunteer abroad during your course. We offer [postgraduate global opportunities](#) through the Global Programmes team.

Problems with your programme

If you are having problems with your programme you should seek help and advice as soon as possible. In the first instance you may wish to talk to your academic supervisor.

Change your plan – leave of absence, transferring or withdrawal

There are many occasions when personal circumstances may make it necessary for you to change aspects of your course. However, the decision to [make changes to your course](#) should not be taken lightly and it is essential that you understand the implications that any changes may have. You should discuss any proposed changes with your supervisor.

Transferring to another programme of study

If you are unhappy with your programme of study, you should talk to your supervisor and discuss the options available to you. One option is to [transfer to a different programme of study](#) within the University. Transfers cannot be guaranteed, and are dependent on you meeting the academic requirements of the new programme and there being space on your preferred programme. If you are considering transferring, you should speak to your supervisor as soon as possible.

We can also advise you if you wish to transfer from York to a programme of study at another university.

Leave of absence

A [leave of absence](#) allows you to take an authorised break in your studies for a maximum of one calendar year in the first instance. This can be on a variety of grounds including medical or compassionate grounds.

Withdrawal

[Withdrawal](#) is the term used when a student decides to leave the University permanently prior to completion of the award for which they are registered, whether for personal or academic reasons.

Teaching and Learning

Studying at university

At university we expect you to take responsibility for your own learning. This means being self-motivated and independent when it comes to your studies and your personal development.

Teaching methods

Each module hosts a seminar a week, with the topic being covered differing each week. The VLE site for each Politics module will detail the seminar topics, provide a list of questions to be discussed in each weekly seminar, as well as providing a list of sources that you will have to read before the seminar. Once you have read these sources, you will be expected to discuss this material in seminars and use it to answer the questions that have been posed in advance. The number of sources that you are required to read for each seminar is likely to be greater than your experience at undergraduate level. The material may also be more challenging, meaning that you may have to spend a bit more time making sure that you fully understand it.

Code of conduct – teaching sessions

You will have already had to develop good academic skills as part of your undergraduate degree. However, the expectations we have of taught postgraduate students differ somewhat from the undergraduate level, and it is worth taking a moment to highlight what these differences are.

Perhaps the key difference is we expect you as postgraduate students to take more responsibility for your own learning. This is partly demonstrated in terms of contact time: the amount of teaching time you will have is likely to be less than you experienced during your undergraduate degree. However, this emphasis on independent learning can also be seen in the teaching methods employed at the Masters level. Most seminars usually begin with a mini-lecture or presentation from the module tutor, which will introduce the topic under debate and provide information designed to facilitate the discussion that will follow. But the emphasis is less on tutors providing information from the 'top-down', and more on students learning for themselves through debate, argument and reflection. Members of staff are there to 'enable' that learning process, to give students feedback and help them to fulfil their academic potential.

Although the contact time you have each week with tutors may be less than you experienced during your undergraduate degree, this does not mean that your workload is lighter. What it does mean is that the emphasis is on you to do more yourself (i.e. independent learning). Typically, you will be engaged in the following activities in the Semester 1 and 2 (in the Summer, you will be engaged full-time on your Independent Study Module (ISM)).

Attendance

You should attend all scheduled teaching sessions that we set for you, either in person or online, and use the student Check-In system. Regular attendance is vital to succeed in your degree programme.

[University Regulations](#) state that you should be present at any time at which teaching or other academic engagements have been arranged for your programme (including Saturdays).

Absence

If you are ill during teaching weeks, please notify the University via your [e:Vision](#) account (in the "Your Support" section). You can self-certify for a maximum of ten days in any one academic year, with a maximum of seven days for any one period of illness.

An absence of more than seven days, but no longer than four weeks, can be approved by your Chair of the Board of Studies. Any longer absence requires the approval of the Special Cases Committee. See the information on taking a [Leave of Absence](#).

If you stop attending scheduled teaching sessions without saying you are withdrawing and do not respond to our efforts to make contact with you within a specified time-scale, the Board of Studies will assume that you have [withdrawn from your studies](#).

In addition, the University requires us to confirm at two checkpoints during the year that all students are fully engaged with their programmes of study (those on a student visa will require further checkpoints). We will review the attendance data we have collected, as well as using other indicators such as whether you have completed assessment and examinations, in order to take a view on your engagement with studies. The attendance monitoring and checkpoint recording are carried out using systems that have been developed specifically to help us identify and support students who are having difficulties with their study.

Feedback on Learning and Assessment

Feedback at a University can be understood as any part of the learning process which is designed to guide your progress through your programme by providing commentary on your work to date. We aim to help you to reflect on your own learning and help you feel clearer about your progress through clarifying what is expected of you in both formative and summative assessments.

The University guidelines for feedback are available in the [Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback](#). You can expect to receive feedback on assessments within 25 working days of submitting them.

The feedback you receive on your formative and summative assessments is governed by the following principles:

- Feedback should be developmental, i.e. facilitate improvement through reflection and promote learning.
- Students should receive feedback at opportune moments to help them improve their performance.
- Feedback should be provided in both oral and written forms on a student's performance throughout their degree.
- Feedback comments do not constitute a basis for challenges to a mark. Students are not entitled to challenge the academic judgement of the markers.

You will receive feedback from module tutors which relates to your performance on a particular module. Its purpose is formative: to provide guidance on how to improve your performance on that module or to raise your level of performance in the summative assessment for that module. This feedback is given in a variety of contexts and forms:

- In seminars
 - You will be able to see how your tutor receives your contributions in the seminars, and may speak to the tutor briefly at the end if that is convenient. If not, you should make use of the tutor's Feedback and Guidance hours.
 - Seminars also provide opportunities for peer feedback
- In tutors and leaders' Feedback and Guidance hours
 - All module tutors and leaders keep Feedback and Guidance hours. If you are in any doubt about a module's learning outcomes and objectives or your academic achievement, you should meet your tutor or Module Leader during Feedback and Guidance hours.
- From Supervisors during Supervision Meetings and/or Feedback and Guidance Hours
 - Feedback from Supervisors focuses on your overall academic development, including your broader intellectual development in the discipline of Politics and your development of appropriate academic skills.
 - All supervisors keep Feedback and Guidance hours during Semester time. You should meet your supervisor to discuss concerns about your academic development and study skills. For instance, if a module tutor's feedback on a piece of formative work raises concerns about your essay writing skills, you should discuss this with your supervisor and develop a strategy to address this.
- In scheduled ISM (dissertation/policy report) supervision meetings

- In written feedback from markers on summative assessments, including essays and examinations
- In markers' Feedback and Guidance hours in which markers are available to discuss written feedback

Marks from summative assessments allow you to judge your performance in examinations and assessed essays, and the extent to which you are achieving the learning outcomes of your modules. In addition comments are provided by markers on feedback forms for assessed essays.

Provisional marks and feedback are available to view on e:vision once the internal marking process has been completed. An average mark for each module will also be published so students will have a sense of how they are getting on compared with their peers. You will receive an email from the Department when these are available to view. You will have a chance to discuss your feedback with one of the markers at a personal feedback session. You should also discuss the feedback with your supervisor.

What do I need to do to succeed in my programme?

The [Student Guide to Rules for Progression and Award](#) explains what you need to do to progress through your degree programme and how you can calculate your current classification marks along the way.

The Department of Politics and International Relations also expects all their students to attend and engage with their teaching, to keep on top of the communications sent out by the University and Department, and to be in regular contact with their supervisor. For Visa students the Department also expects they meet all their Visa requirements.

Academic integrity

[Academic integrity](#) represents a set of values and behaviours which members of the academic community abide by. To be a trusted member of this academic community you must understand and demonstrate academic integrity in your studies and the work you produce. Such values include honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Online Academic Integrity Tutorial

You are required to successfully complete the University Online Academic Integrity Tutorial, preferably within the first few weeks of your programme. The tutorial relates to your individual programme so you must complete it even if you have studied at York before.

The tutorial is on the VLE and will take you through key principles around integrity and how to avoid things like plagiarism and collusion. If you do not uphold the values and conventions of academic integrity, you may be subject to the University's academic misconduct procedures.

Referencing

Referencing is a key aspect of academic writing and is used to clearly identify information and ideas that come from source materials. It is essential to acknowledge other people's ideas in this way so that you can avoid committing plagiarism. Incorrect or non-existent referencing can constitute misconduct.

The Department's preference is for the [Harvard system](#) of referencing but it also accepts the [Chicago system](#). Guides to these referencing systems are available on the [Library web page](#).

Turnitin

Turnitin is a text-matching software designed to help students integrate material into assignments correctly. All students can use Turnitin once you complete the online Turnitin tutorial on the VLE.

Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct means breaking the rules of academic integrity and this is why we regard any form of academic misconduct as a very serious offence. See the University policy for what we consider to be [academic misconduct](#).

Our guidance on [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) use in assessment](#) states that we expect you not to use AI to generate assessment answers, unless you have been explicitly told that you may or must do so.

Students facing academic misconduct issues can contact the [Graduate Students' Association Advice and Support](#) service for help.

Human Subjects Research Ethics Review

If you wish to conduct research with people (“human subjects”) for your Independent Study Modules (ISM)/Dissertation/Project—or other research associated with the University—you must submit your proposed research for ethical review and receive approval before you begin research. Please see the ISM handbook for more information and relevant dates.

Study skills and support

Departmental study support

Induction resources: Before your programme of study starts, you can do some reading to prepare yourself. The following resource pages have been collated by students:

- [International Relations, Peace & Conflict, Conflict Governance and Development and Applied Human Rights.](#)
- [Public Administration and Public Policy and Masters in Public Administration](#)

Weekly Academic Skills Workshops: As well as the academic content of your programme of study, the Department of Politics and International Relations provides weekly Academic Skills sessions in which you will develop your academic writing, improve your critical thinking skills and gain confidence as an independent researcher. These skills are essential elements of a master’s qualification, but they are also highly valued by graduate employers. For further information see the Academic Skills for Department of Politics and International Relations module on the VLE or email Louise Frith on louise.frith@york.ac.uk.

Weekly Shut-up and Write sessions: Department of Politics and International Relations runs weekly Shut-up and Write sessions aimed at providing a productive and supportive environment for students to work on their assignments. Academic staff attend each week to answer questions and give students feedback on their writing.

Bookable one-to-one academic skills tutorials: Students in the Department of Politics and International Relations can book one-to-one academic skills appointments to get feedback on their work, or to discuss any element of their studies which is causing them concern.

Managing your workload through independent study

You are responsible for researching, studying and managing your own learning. You will need to plan your time carefully and be aware of timescales and deadlines for assessments, projects and exams.

Your tutors and supervisor can advise and we have further support in place through the [Academic Skills Community](#) to help you gain any additional skills you might need with maths, academic writing, referencing, IT skills and languages.

Online resources – IT facilities, VLE and others

The IT Support Office is your first point of contact with IT Services, providing information and advice on IT issues, and basic software support. They are available by phone 9am - 5pm Monday to Friday 01904 323838, or by email at itsupport@york.ac.uk.

[IT classrooms and study areas](#) are provided throughout the campus. This includes several [communal areas](#) around Derwent College including an individual soundproof pod in reception for virtual meetings or quiet study.

Multi-function printers, copiers and scanners are provided in each college and academic building.

Your University email account is provided via Google Apps for Education, with 25Gb of email quota. Your email address is based on your username, eg: abc500@york.ac.uk.

Taught postgraduates can benefit from [online training materials and hands-on workshops](#).

See information on the [facilities and services IT Services provides](#).

Library

The University Library provides a vast array of high quality online resources, books, and spaces to work. Staff are here to help, whether that's in person at the Help Desk or via email, phone, chat or social media. Find out more about where to start with the [Library Essentials guide](#). This includes information on using the library catalogue, your library account, online induction resources and opening hours. For general help, contact the [Library Help Desk](#).

Your reading list

Your online [reading lists](#) are designed to help you get started with reading for your module. Your lecturer might have structured your lists by topic or by week to help you navigate them more easily, and you'll find that items are tagged as essential, recommended or background so that you know which to read first.

The online system provides information about where items are in the Library and it also tells you if books are out on loan. If we have electronic resources they will link directly to the reading so it is really easy for you to access it.

Your Academic Liaison Librarian

Your Academic Liaison Librarian is Martin Philip. They can help you to search effectively for resources, understand how to use and evaluate these and how to reference your work correctly. They can be contacted at lib-politics@york.ac.uk. Further details on your Academic Liaison Librarian and your subject guide can be found on the [Politics Library Liaison subject guide](#).

Study spaces

There are over 1000 places to work across the three sections of the Library: the Morrell, the Fairhurst and the Burton. These include a variety of quiet and silent areas, IT rooms, and bookable group and individual study rooms. There are study areas designed especially for postgraduate students in the Morrell and the Fairhurst; ask at the Library Help Desk to get access to these spaces. There is also library space on the 1st floor of Piazza Building on Campus East, and a 24/7 Library Study Area in Vanburgh (V/N/058).

Study skills

Our [Academic Skills Community](#), based in the Fairhurst Library, helps students develop their academic and communication skills to a high standard. Through online resources, workshops and one-to-one consultations, academic skills staff work with students to develop skills in:

- transitioning to a different learning culture
- planning academic assignments, dissertations and theses
- maths and statistics
- languages
- integrating sources and data effectively into their writing
- developing a more critical stance and developing academic argument.

Skills guides

Learn how to follow good academic practice and develop your digital skills for effective reading, note-making, essay writing and problem solving. Consult our online [skills guides](#) to find tips and interactive resources.

Digital skills training

We offer [workshops to help you enhance your academic and digital skills](#). Training includes reference management, critical skills, presentations and digital creativity.

Writing Centre

The [Writing Centre](#) offers academic writing guidance and online resources for all students. They offer face-to-face and online appointments throughout the year.

Maths Skills Centre

The [Maths Skills Centre](#) offers mathematics and statistics guidance and resources for all students. They offer drop-in sessions during semester time or you can book an appointment for more in-depth guidance.

Languages for All (LFA)

The University's [Languages for All](#) courses are a perfect opportunity to broaden your horizons and learn about a new culture. Courses are available in 14 different languages and at different levels so you can take part whether you are a beginner or nearly fluent. There may be a charge for these courses.

Assessment, progression and award

Guide to assessment

The University's [Guide to Assessment Standards, Marking and Feedback](#) contains the University's formal procedures relating to the conduct of assessment. It provides clear and detailed information on each aspect of student assessment and is a useful resource if you want to know more about how your work is assessed.

Assessment methods

You will encounter two types of assessment during your time at University: formative and summative.

Formative assessment is there to help you develop. While it does not contribute to your final degree mark, it will help you to learn more effectively – you will be provided with feedback which will help you to review and improve your performance.

Summative assessment indicates the extent of your success in meeting the assessment criteria and how well you have fulfilled the learning outcomes of a particular module or programme. The marks from this type of assessment will contribute to your final degree result or towards progression decisions.

Formal examination requirements

See the [Students Guide to Examinations](#). Individual examination arrangements may be approved for students who are unable to sit formal University examination conditions as a result of a disability or other condition. It is important to note that such arrangements must be in place at least eight weeks prior to the exam in question, so it is essential that students requiring individual arrangements contact [Disability Services](#) as soon as possible to ensure that adjustments can be made.

The assessment requirements for each module are set out on the module's VLE site. The Department of Politics and International Relations uses a range of methods to assess the understanding, knowledge, and wider qualities of its students: written assessments, presentations, book reports, group work and simulations. All taught modules include some formative work on which feedback, both oral and written, is given. Most taught modules are summatively assessed by means of an extended essay of no more than 4000 words.

Assessment format and submission of work

All work formally submitted for assessment in the Department of Politics and International Relations should be double-spaced. As all essays are marked anonymously, candidates should ensure that their names do not appear on any part of their work. Instead, their exam number should be included on each page of the essay. They must also read and sign a Plagiarism Declaration form when they submit their work, this is done when submitting via the VLE. Candidates must submit an electronic version of assessed Politics work completed as part of the formal requirements of every taught module to submission points on the Politics Graduate School Assessment Submission VLE site. Students are responsible for checking the functionality and readability of the file they have submitted.

IMPORTANT: Summative assessment submissions take place via Turnitin. It can be used to check issues of plagiarism and referencing. All submissions must be made through the relevant module folders on the Politics Graduate School Assessment Submission VLE site.

The Politics Graduate School Assessment Submission VLE site contains extensive guidance on how to submit your work successfully. If you are in any doubt about how to submit your work through the VLE submission site, you are strongly advised to contact the Graduate Office (poli-graduate-office@york.ac.uk) in advance of the submission deadline.

For all Master's degrees, late submission of essays will result in the deduction of penalty points, this includes weekends and bank holidays. More information can be found in the section titled "Penalties" below.

You may be asked to take an online examination. This means the paper will be uploaded to the VLE and emailed to you at a certain time and you upload your answers before a specified deadline. See our [guidance for online exams](#).

Penalties

Knowing how to manage your time, write succinctly and provide a complete and comprehensive piece of work to a strict deadline are skills you will develop at university. In the interests of fairness, transparency and to be equitable we have strict rules around deadlines and the quality or quantity of work submitted, and have clear penalties where these rules are not followed.

All work submitted late, without an approved extension of [Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment](#), will have a percentage of the available marks deducted for each day (or part of each day) that the work is late, up to a total of five days, including weekends and bank holidays, e.g. if work is awarded a mark of 30 out of 50, and the work is up to one day late, the final mark is 25.

After five days, the work is marked at zero. The penalty cannot result in a mark less than zero.

Submitted	Penalty
Up to one hour late	5% deducted from mark
1 day	10% deducted from mark
2 days	20% deducted from mark
3 days	30% deducted from mark
4 days	40% deducted from mark
5 days	50% deducted from mark
Over 5 days	Work marked at zero

Failure to submit

If you, with no approved claim of Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment, fail to submit an assessment by the deadline after five days or fail to attend an examination, a mark of zero will be awarded. You may be given the opportunity for reassessment – see ‘Feedback on Learning and Assessment’ in the Teaching and Learning section above. However, the zero will be used to calculate your degree classification, and if the examination or assessment missed is already a resit or re-assessment to redeem an initial failure, no further re-assessment opportunities will be available without proof of exceptional circumstances.

If you are struggling to meet deadlines, submit a piece of work or will miss an exam due to personal circumstances you will need to inform the University as soon as possible and apply for [Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment](#).

How is my work marked?

All assessed work is anonymous during the marking process; individuals are identified only by their University examination number. First markers who have supervised the essay may know the student's identity. Markers cannot identify students via their candidate numbers.

All submissions for a taught module are marked by a first marker. The marks are then moderated. The moderator reviews a representative sample of submissions and feedback to ensure that standards of assessment are rigorously maintained and applied equitably.

The moderator considers a representative sample of coursework or examination material, as follows:

- Top mark
- Example mid distinction level mark
- Borderline merit/distinction marks
- Example merit mark
- Borderline pass/merit marks
- Example pass mark
- Borderline pass/marginal fail marks
- Example marginal fail mark
- Fails
- Worst mark

The moderator assigns a mark to the pieces of work in the sample. The first marker and the moderator then discuss all of the original marks in the light of the marks and comments received from the moderator. Two decisions are then possible. Either (i) the moderator agrees with the marks in their entirety (even if there are slight deviations in marks for individual scripts) and no marks are changed, or (ii) the module organiser and moderator decide that a consistent adjustment to all of the original marks is warranted. In this latter case, a further sample of work for that module is assessed by the moderator to confirm that the adjustment was the appropriate course of action. The first marker and moderator then agree on the final consistent adjustment to reach a final set of marks.

Independent study modules are double marked rather than moderated. The first examiner marks the dissertation and completes a feedback form, both of which are passed to the second examiner. The second examiner marks the work, and the two examiners then confer and agree marks and provide feedback.

Where markers disagree significantly (for example, where marks of a different class are given or are borderline), this disagreement is usually resolved through reference to the published marking criteria, which is structured around a delimited range of marks using the full range of the mark scheme. If this proves impossible, the disagreement is referred to the Examinations Officer in the first instance and to a third marker as appropriate. The first marker's written comments form the basis for the written feedback which is given to students on all summative assessments but may be supplemented by comments from the second and/or the third marker if applicable.

In addition to the two markers appointed from within the Department, External Examiners are appointed by the University to ensure that the Department is applying national standards in its programmes of study and that students are treated consistently and fairly. External examiners check the quality and the marking of summative assessment. Samples of all classes of work are sent to the external examiners where possible, to ensure they are satisfied that our standards are appropriate and that we are applying our marking criteria consistently and equitably.

Provisional marks and feedback for taught modules are released within 6 weeks of submission. These marks are provisional until ratified at the Progression Board in Summer.

Independent study module marks and feedback, together with the final results of the degree, are available shortly after the Final Examinations Board in November.

Assessment Administered in Other Departments

Arrangements for assessments administered in other Departments are subject to the procedures operating in those departments. It is the students' responsibility to familiarise themselves with these procedures.

What happens if I fail a module?

There are two possible ways in which you may still be able to pass your taught modules and progress to the next stage.

Compensation

For Masters level modules, the pass mark for module assessments is 50. However, if your mark for a module is in the 40 – 49 range, you may still be able to get the credits for the module if your performance in other modules is good enough to compensate. In other words, 'marginal' failure in one module may be compensated by achievement in others.

Reassessment

If you get a module mark below 40, or if you have too many modules with failing marks to be allowed to compensate them all, you will have to be reassessed. However, there is a limit to the number of credits in which you can be reassessed.

If you need to be reassessed to pass a module, it is important to note that it will be your mark on your original attempt that will be used to calculate your degree classification. We will not use your resit mark.

Please note that not all modules can be reassessed or compensated. For further information on compensation and reassessment, see the [Student Guide to Progression and Award](#).

Resits, repeats and readmission

If you make a successful claim that an assessment is affected by medical or compassionate circumstances, you may be permitted to sit the assessment again 'as if for the first time'. This means that the original attempt will not be considered for progression decisions or your degree classification.

Repeat study will only be considered in cases where a student can show that they had truly exceptional circumstances which did not allow them to benefit from the teaching on their first attempt, and that there was a good reason why the student could not have informed the University of the circumstances at the time.

You will need to submit evidence of mitigating circumstances to qualify for resits and repeats. See further information on [resits, repeats and readmission](#).

Programme extensions and termination

A programme extension can be recommended where a student cannot complete the programme within a normal timescale because of exceptional circumstances. If you find yourself in this situation, talk to your supervisor.

In some circumstances, the Board of Studies can recommend that your programme is ended before its normal end date. This may be due to reasons such as poor attendance (without good reason) or through having failed so much of the programme that it is no longer possible to graduate.

See further information on [programme termination, extensions and transfers](#).

Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment

Sometimes things happen beyond your control that either have an impact on your performance during an assessment or prevent you from undertaking the assessment at the scheduled time. If these events are truly exceptional, i.e. serious, unusual and unpredictable, they may be classed as exceptional circumstances and you may be able to defer or resit an assessment.

There are three possible ways to claim exceptional circumstances:

Student Support Plans (for students with a disability) sometimes have the option to request an extension on a piece of work as part of their Plan's adjustments or to defer an examination attempt.

Self-certification can be used for short-term, acute illnesses or short-term unforeseen circumstances prior to submission of an open assessment or commencement of an examination. Students may use self-certification for a maximum of 3 assessments per academic year. (This is not to be confused with [self-certification of illness](#) if you are ill during semester time and miss teaching).

You can apply to the Exceptional Circumstances Committee for assessments where the start time (exams) or deadline (open assessments) has passed or where the self-certification may not be possible due to the severity of the circumstances/impact on assessment.

If such exceptional circumstances do occur, you must seek support from your supervisor and provide evidence as soon as possible at the time they occur. You can find the [Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment](#) claim form online, along with further information on submitting a claim.

Submitting an appeal

You can [submit an appeal](#) if you can establish there was a procedural error in arriving at an academic decision, or on the basis that you can provide evidence that you had exceptional circumstances which you could not have raised at the time. You cannot appeal against academic judgement of your work. Seek support from your supervisor and/or the [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Advice and Support](#) service before deciding whether to submit an academic appeal.

For information on making a complaint, see the Rules and responsibilities section below.

External examiners

External examiners in Politics are academic members of staff from other Universities who are appointed by the University of York to monitor standards in relation to assessment processes in the Department of Politics. They perform a variety of different roles in relation to assessment, including advising on the drafting of assessment tasks; scrutinising the marking of assessment to ensure that it accords with Departmental and University guidelines, and is comparable with marking in other institutions; and ensuring that the way in which the Board of Examiners runs is fair.

External examiners are appointed by the University's Standing Committee on Assessment on behalf of the Senate, and are asked to assume specific responsibility for designated modules. Potential candidates for appointment as external examiners are suggested by individual academic members of staff to the Chair of the Politics Board of Studies who recommends candidates they consider suitable to the Standing Committee on Assessment.

External examiners are usually appointed for a period of three years. Their term may be extended by a further year. They will usually be senior academics holding positions at the level of professor or reader, or otherwise be recognised as an authority in their field. They must, in addition, meet all qualifications and requirements prescribed by the University for external examiners. These are set out in the [University's Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback](#).

Your final degree classification

The University applies the following mark scale to postgraduate work:

- Distinction: 70-100
- Merit: 60-69
- Pass: 50-59
- Marginal fail (potential to compensate): 40-49
- Fail: 0-39

For information on calculating your degree classification, see the [Student Guide to the University's Rules for Progression and Award](#).

Rules and responsibilities

Regulations and student discipline

When you enrol, you agree to accept and abide by the [University Regulations](#). You should make sure you are familiar with [Regulation 7: Student Discipline](#), and the associated procedures, which details the sorts of behaviour which are unacceptable in our community and explain our procedure for taking disciplinary action. We aim to maintain a community of respect in which students and staff can study, work and live safely together. We hope that your time at the University will not be affected by problems of [student misconduct](#).

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with your experience of a service you have received as a student you should let us know. In the first instance you should speak to someone within the department or service where the issue occurred.

If you are dissatisfied with their response, you can find more information on [how to make a complaint](#) on our website.

Data protection

The University collects, uses, stores and shares certain types of personal data, in various formats, about its current and past students in order to fulfil its functions as an education provider and to maintain its lifelong relationship with its alumni community. In doing so, it complies with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. See further information on [how the University uses your data and the various rights you have](#) on our website.

Support and wellbeing

We offer a range of [help and support](#) so all students can get the most out of their university experience.

Your department

In addition to your supervisor, your department has a Department Community Coordinator (DCC) to work with department staff, student societies and student reps in order to help build departmental learning communities.

[Sarah Cunnold](#) is the department student wellbeing officer and can be contacted for information, guidance and support.

If you are in a crisis now help is available [here](#).

Your college

York is one of a handful of UK universities with a college system. Your [college](#) provides you with a support network and a calendar of events and activities to help you settle in, develop your skills and explore your interests.

Each college has College Life Coordinators and Advisers to provide confidential pastoral care. They are a team of trained students who live in college and help resolve issues or point you to specialists. Whether you are an on-campus resident or not, your college is ready to listen.

Students' Unions

There are many opportunities at York to get involved with societies and extra-curricular activities both related and unrelated to your course. Those of interest to Politics students can be found on the Sports Clubs, Societies, and Volunteering A-Z [lookup](#).

See a full list of [societies and activities](#) provided by YUSU.

The Graduates Students' Association also runs various networks with regular events. Membership of Postgraduate Networks is free - see the [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Network Guide](#).

Student Hub

The [Student Hub](#) is a first point of contact for support and advice. Chat to our Student Support and Advice Team about issues regarding finance and money, private sector accommodation, health concerns, immigration advice, academic progress issues and more.

Financial support

If you face financial difficulty, you may be eligible for [assistance funding](#) in the form of an emergency loan and/or a non-repayable award.

Accessibility and disability support

[Disability Services](#) can provide support, advice and guidance for those with a diagnosed disability, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD, autism, visual and hearing impairment, physical disabilities, medical conditions and mental health difficulties, amongst others. All students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the service to discuss your individual needs and to recommend academic adjustments in a Student Support Plan (SSP). Contact Disability Services even if you have had a previous SSP at York or other university.

Please let your department know as soon as possible if you have a disability and may require support. You can discuss this with your supervisor.

Each department has a disability representative. Details of how to contact the relevant member of staff in the Department of Politics and International Relations can be found on our [disability webpages](#).

You may also require individual arrangements for formal examinations. See the information provided on formal examinations in the Assessment, progression and award section for further information.

Support for international students

Our [International Student Support](#) team provides immigration advice as well as support for issues many international students can face when living and studying in the UK.

Open Door

[Open Door](#) provides a range of self-help materials to aid your personal development and wellbeing as well as a professional confidential one-to-one service for students experiencing mental health issues.

24/7 support

Download the [TalkCampus](#) app to talk with other students from around the world about the ups and downs of student life or if you're struggling and worried about your mental health.

Campus Safety

[Campus Safety](#) staff are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and they are a first response for everyone on campus. All officers are first aid trained and part of the Mental Health First Contact network. They provide security advice, facilities management and aid the emergency services on campus.

Faith contacts

Our chaplains will speak in confidence with any student, regardless of faith or belief. They have a [network of contacts](#) with other faiths and provide spaces for prayer and reflection on campus.

Sexual Violence Liaison Officers

Our [Sexual Violence Liaison Officers \(SVLO\)](#) can work with you one-to-one to talk you through support options and reporting options, both within the University and externally. They will support you through whatever choices are right for you.

Report + Support

[Report+Support](#) is the University's tool to report student misconduct and to find support both within and outside the University on issues such as bullying and harassment, discrimination, domestic abuse, hate crime, sexual harassment and sexual violence. You can choose to report anonymously.

Personal development and employability

Careers

Our [Careers and Placements](#) team can help you with career planning, getting experience, developing your skills and strengths, job hunting and making applications, preparing for interviews and aptitude tests, as well as providing information about further study and funding.

Our [Career Journey](#) helps you build a portfolio of skills and experience by outlining a timeline of activities we offer. Our unique [York Strengths](#) programme helps you understand both what you are good at and what you enjoy doing, so that you can focus on a career that suits you. You can apply for the [York Award](#), the University's certificate of personal and professional development, to demonstrate that you have taken a proactive approach to your time at university.

We also organise careers fairs and events, [volunteering](#) opportunities, [internships](#) and support for [enterprise](#) to ensure you progress with a competitive edge.

Working during your studies

Our [Careers and Placements](#) team can help you to find a part-time job and provide information on your legal rights and obligations. We advise that you work no more than 20 hours a week during the semester as anything over this may interfere with your studies and affect your health and wellbeing. If you are a [Student visa holder](#) you will need to be aware of any working restrictions placed on you by your visa.

Graduation and beyond

After you submit all your final assessments, your overall degree classification will be agreed and ratified by your departmental Examinations Board and then approved by University Senate. You will receive an email from the University's Progression and Awards Team confirming that your results can be viewed on [e:Vision](#).

When the time comes, we will contact you with full information about [graduation](#), including ceremony dates and important deadlines. It is important to keep your information up to date on [e:Vision](#), including your personal email address.

Access to University services

Your borrowing rights at the University Library end on the last day of your studies.

Access to most IT Services facilities (including email) are automatically withdrawn approximately 90 days after you finish your studies. The data in your University Google account and your files in your personal filestore are saved for one year after expiry. IT Services recommend you save or transfer account data before they close - see [IT information for student leavers](#).

References and transcripts

If you require a reference, you should contact your Academic Supervisor or an academic member of staff who is familiar with you.

You can [purchase transcripts and other documents](#) from the Transcripts Office.

Keep in touch

Join the [York Global Alumni Association](#) to connect with other graduates, stay in touch with York, access careers support and other services.