UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Department of Politics and Public Administration

Postgraduate Handbook 2025-26

Faculty of **Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences**
Dámh na **nDán, na nDaonnachtaí agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta**

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IMPORTANT NOTICES

University of Limerick Regulations

University regulations are regularly updated. The information contained in this handbook is accurate at the time of writing. Should UL regulations conflict at any time with information contained in this handbook, then UL regulations take priority.

Module Availability

This handbook contains details of the range of postgraduate modules offered by the Department of Politics and Public Administration. Students should note that we cannot guarantee that each module is offered every year for reasons of faculty availability and student numbers.

KEY DATES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025	
Autumn Teaching Term	08/09/2025 to 28/11/2025
Autumn Examinations	06/12/2025 to 19/12/2025
Spring Teaching Term	26/01/2026 to 24/04/2026
Easter Break (Students)	30/03/2026 to 07/04/2026
Spring Examinations	05/05/2026 to 18/05/2026
Dissertation submission deadline	13/08/2026 at 12 Noon

You can find the University's Academic Calendar here:
Academic Calendar | University of Limerick (ul.ie)



A WELCOME MESSAGE FROM
Conor Little
(Chair, PPA Graduate Committee)

Welcome to the Department of Politics and Public Administration. This handbook is intended to help you to navigate your programme of study and our Department.

Postgraduate students are an important part of the Department's diverse community, which comprises students, staff, and alumni, and which has local, national and international links to communities, policymakers, and researchers.

We offer the following taught postgraduate programmes, which are supported by the research expertise of our faculty:

- MA in Community Research +
- Professional Diploma in Community Engagement
- MA in European Studies
- MA in European Politics and Governance
- MA in International Studies
- MA in Peace and Development Studies
- MA in Politics
- Master's in Public Administration
- Graduate Certificate in Public Administration and Law

We also offer postgraduate research programmes: a Structured PhD in Politics, a traditional PhD programme (the PhD in Politics and Public Administration), and an MA by Research in Politics and Public Administration, and we supervise students on our Faculty's International Structured PhD programme.

We urge you to participate fully in the life of the Department. We hold a weekly research seminar at which faculty, PhD researchers, and visiting scholars present their research. You are encouraged to attend these seminars to learn about and discuss new and emerging research within and beyond the Department.

Students also contribute to the running of postgraduate business in the Department. A representative is elected from each programme and from among the postgraduate research students and they take part in the Graduate Committee that meets each semester.

If you cannot find an answer to a question or problem in this booklet, you should feel free to contact your Course Director or any other faculty member, or your student representative on the Graduate Committee.

We wish you a very happy and productive academic year.

Conor Little
E: conor.little@ul.ie

KEEPING IN TOUCH

The PPA website www.ul.ie/ppa is where you can find information about your courses, your lecturers and events within the Department. You can also find us on BlueSky (@politics-ul.bsky.social), X (@POLITICSUL) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/PPALimerick/).

The Department Administrator is contactable by email (Elaine.Berry@ul.ie) 9am-4pm Monday to Friday and the Department Office is located in the Foundation Building at F1-018.

All members of faculty hold weekly office hours during which they are available to students. These times differ each semester as a result of timetabling changes; you can find an up-to-date list in the Department office.

You can contact your lecturers directly by email. The UL address pattern is usually: **Firstname.Familyname@ul.ie**.

Each taught postgraduate programme and the Structured PhD in Politics has a Course Director, who has overall responsibility for the running of the programme. You should contact the Course Director for your programme about any problems or queries that you have regarding your studies that you cannot resolve with your lecturers. The Course Directors are:

- **MA Community Research + Development**
- **Professional Diploma in Community Engagement**
  Maura Adshead **(Maura.Adshead@ul.ie)**

- **MA European Politics and Governance**
  Frank Häge **(Frank.Haege@ul.ie)**

- **MA in European Studies**
  Michaela Schrage-Frueh **(Michaela.Schrage-Frueh@ul.ie)**

- **MA International Studies**
  Neil Robinson **(Neil.Robinson@ul.ie)**

- **MA Peace and Development Studies**
  Emma Dolan **(Emma.Dolan@ul.ie)**

- **MA in Politics**
- **Structured PhD in Politics**
  Conor Little **(Conor.Little@ul.ie)**

- **MA in Public Administration**
- **Graduate Certificate in Public Administration and Law**
  Bernadette Connaughton **(Bernadette.Connaughton@ul.ie)**

HAVING YOUR SAY: THE GRADUATE COMMITTEE

The Department has a Graduate Committee to help us to manage the activities of taught and research postgraduate students. Every year, each taught postgraduate programme selects a student representative to sit on the Committee, as do the postgraduate research students.

FUNCTION

The Committee has four main functions:

- To formulate policy in accordance with the Department's and the University's teaching objectives;
- To evaluate and monitor postgraduate teaching and research student supervision;
- To respond to external processes that impact on postgraduate education;
- To exchange information.

The Committee determines policies on Graduate matters and procedures, etc. Sometimes its decisions are subject to approval by Head of Department, or the Departmental Committee, or by the University.

COMPOSITION

The Committee is normally comprised of:

- The Chair;
- Directors of all the postgraduate programmes administered by the Department;
- Head of Department (all *ex officio*);
- One student representative from each taught postgraduate programme, and a representative from the research student community.

These are the full and permanent members, who are expected to attend. In addition, every full-time member of staff, and any member of the Department staff teaching a graduate level module, is entitled to attend.

The minutes are sent to all staff in the Department, and copies are available on the Department's Sharepoint portal.

The student representatives are elected each academic year. A person may serve more than once. If no candidates put themselves forward for election, the representative can be co-opted. The Committee should always include at least one female representative from the postgraduate student body.

Meetings are held at least twice a year, with at least one meeting each semester.

Responsibilities of the Graduate Committee

The Chair takes the lead in revising policies or initiating new policies. In this capacity the Chair should always put up full and detailed papers for discussion, and require others to do so as well. The Chair has to report decisions of the Committee to relevant bodies such as the Department meeting.

The Committee also has an important role in exchanging information. It gives the Chair the chance to publicise practices and procedures he/she wishes to promote. It is also one of the formal channels for student complaints. Information given in the Committee circulates throughout the Department via the minutes.

The Committee, through the Chair, is responsible for surveying postgraduate students on their experience each year, and for reviewing all postgraduate modules taught in the Department on a periodic basis. Results of these surveys should be reported to the Head of Department and to the Departmental Committee.

The Role of the Student Representative

The Class Rep's task is to represent the views of students on his or her programme to the Course Director and the Graduate Committee. This involves attendance at the Committee meetings and acting as the formal means of contact by which Faculty will seek to gather information and/or opinions from the students on each programme. It also involves acting as the spokesperson for the students on the programme, channelling their concerns to the Course Director and Graduate Committee, and occasionally canvassing student opinion. The Class Rep may also be asked to help with the organisation of any study trips organised, although the Course Directors take primary responsibility for this.

DEPARTMENT FACULTY



Andrew Shorten BA (York), MA, PhD (Manchester)
Head of Department
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Andrew Shorten is a political theorist who works mainly on topics in contemporary political philosophy and is especially interested in issues related to minority rights and the accommodation of religious, linguistic, national and moral diversity. His work has appeared in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Political Studies*, the *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, the *Journal of Social Philosophy*, *Nations and Nationalism* and the *European Journal of Political Theory*, amongst others. He is author of *Multiculturalism* (Polity, 2022) and *Contemporary Political Theory* (Palgrave, 2016), and co-editor (with Jonathan Seglow) of *Religion and Political Theory* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019).



Maura Adshead BA, MA (Limerick), PhD (Liverpool)
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Maura is Associate Professor in the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Limerick, and Head of Community Engagement at UL. Prior to her appointment in Limerick, she carried out research and taught in the universities of Dundee, Liverpool, Essex, Galway and Dublin. Her research interests focus on Irish politics and public policy, comparative studies of public policy, policy change, and EU involvement in the policy process in European states. She is author of Developing European Regions? Ashgate, 2002, co-author (with Jonathon Tonge) of Government and Politics in Ireland. Unity and diversity on a two-polity island, Palgrave,; and co-editor (with Michelle Millar) of Public Administration and Public Policy in Ireland: theory and methods, Routledge 2003 and (with Peadar Kirby and Michelle Millar) Contesting the State: lessons from the Irish case, Manchester University Press, 2008 . She has published articles in Electoral Studies, Policy and Politics, Public Administration, Public Policy and Administration, West European Politics and the Irish journal Economic and Social Review and has carried out commissioned research for Combat Poverty, the HSE and the NESF.



Neil Robinson BA (CNAA), MA, PhD (Essex)
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Before coming to Limerick, Neil taught in the Department of Politics at the University of York, and the Department of Government at the University of Essex. Research interests include the political economy of postcommunism; state formation in Russia; the political economy of reform in Russia and the former USSR. His publications include: Ideology and the collapse of the Soviet system, (Edward Elgar, 1995); Post-communist politics, (co-author, Prentice Hall, 1997); Institutions and political change in Russia, (editor, Macmillan, 2000); Russia: a state of uncertainty, (Routledge, 2002); Reforging the weakest link: global political economy and post-Soviet change in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, (editor, Ashgate, 2004); State-Building (co-editor, Routledge, 2007), The Sage handbook of comparative politics, (co-editor, Sage, 2009), The political economy of Russia (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), Contemporary Russian Politics (Polity, 2019), Comparative European Politics (co-editor, Oxford, 2024, second edition), chapters and articles in a variety of books and journals including Review of International Political Economy, Europe-Asia Studies, Communist and Post-Communist Studies, Russian Politics.



Bernadette Connaughton BA, MA, PhD (Limerick)
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Bernadette is an Associate Professor in Public Administration. Her teaching and research interests include Europeanisation and Ireland's relationship with the EU, public policy process, environmental policy implementation and politico-administrative relations. She has published on those areas in authored, co-authored and edited books including *The Implementation of Environmental Policy in Ireland*: *Lessons from translating EU directives into action* (MUP 2019), and journals such as *Public Administraton*, *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning, Regional and Federal Studies*.



Rory Costello BA (UCC) MA (UCC) PhD (TCD)
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Rory Costello specialises in electoral and legislative politics in Europe, with a particular focus on Ireland and on the European Union. Before coming to UL in 2011, Rory worked at the University of Twente in the Netherlands and at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He has published on topics such as election pledge fulfilment, party politics in the European Parliament, the division of power among EU institutions, bicameralism, political representation, and coalition formation. His research has appeared in a variety of international journals including (among others) Party Politics, European Union Politics, Journal of European Public Policy, Electoral Studies, West European Politics, and American Journal of Political Science.



Scott Fitzsimmons B.P.A.P.M., M.A. (Carleton), PhD. (Calgary)
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Scott Fitzsimmons B.P.A.P.M., M.A. (Carleton), PhD. (Calgary), specializes in the behaviour of armed forces and the use of force in contemporary conflicts, and foreign policy decision-making. Before joining the University of Limerick's Department of Politics and Public Administration in 2013, he was a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. He has also taught at the Universities of Victoria and Calgary. His primary research interests include developing and testing theories of how armed forces behave in conflict zones, combat operations involving mercenaries and private security companies, public attitudes toward defence spending and the use of force by the Government of Canada, government responses to terrorism, and the influence of leaders' personality traits on their foreign policy decisions.



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Frank Haege's research interests are in the areas of Legislative Politics, Policy-Making, Historical Political Economy, and Research Methods. Substantively, his research focuses on the European Union and Germany. He has published on legislative decision-making and political attention in the Council of the European Union, agenda-setting by the European Commission, rapporteurship allocation and policy-making networks in the European Parliament, inter-institutional negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council, political conflict dimensions in pre-WWI Germany, the application of fuzzy set methods in comparative case study research, and the measurement of foreign policy similarity in quantitative studies of international relations. He is the author of Bureaucrats as Law-Makers: Committee Decision-Making in the Council of the European Union, published by Routledge. His work also appears in a number of peer-reviewed international academic journals, including the British Journal of Political Science, European Journal of Political Research, European Union Politics, Journal of Common Market Studies, Journal of European Public Policy, Party Politics, Political Analysis, and West European Politics.



Conor Little BA (UCD), MA (UCD), MRes (EUI), PhD (EUI).
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Conor Little's research interests are in environmental policy and politics, party politics, and comparative and Irish politics and public policy. Before coming to the University of Limerick, he worked at University College Dublin, Keele University, and the University of Copenhagen; he also spent five years working in politics and government in Ireland. His research interests include political parties, policy agendas, the comparative politics of climate change, and Irish politics. His work has been published in journals including *Environmental Politics,* the *International Political Science Review, Irish Political Studies, the Journal of European Public Policy, Party Politics, Political Studies, Scandinavian Political Studies,* and *West European Politics*. He has initiated the Irish Policy Agendas Project as part of the international Comparative Agendas Project (https://www.comparativeagendas.net/) and he contributes to the Political Party Database (https://www.politicalpartydb.org/). He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Political Studies Association of Ireland (https://www.psai.ie/).



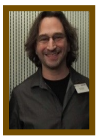
Patrick Doyle PhD (Manchester)
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Patrick Doyle is Lecturer in Irish Politics and Community Development in the Department of Politics and Public Administration. Patrick's interests cover Irish political history as well as the historical relationship between capitalism and religion. Before joining the University of Limerick he was a Hallsworth Research Fellow in Political Economy at the University of Manchester where he examined the relationship between Catholicism and economic development in Ireland. Patrick's first book *Civilising Rural Ireland* examines the history of the co-operative movement and its role in Irish state-building and was published by Manchester University Press in 2019. Other publications have appeared in *History of European Ideas, Journal of Social History,* and *Irish Studies Review*. He is also a member of Ireland's Social and Solidarity Economy Network and interested in the application of democratic principles in social and economic development.



Owen Worth BA, MA, PhD
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Owen Worth (BA, MA, PhD) Since arriving at UL in 2003, Owen has taught courses in International Relations, International Political Economy, Development Studies and European Politics at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. His research interests focus on the nature of power, class and in particular the role of hegemony in Global Political Economy and in Global Political Society. He is the author of Hegemony, International Political Economy and Post-Communist Russia (Ashgate, 2005), Resistance in the Age of Austerity: Nationalism, the Failure of the Left and the Return of God (Zed Books, 2013), Rethinking Hegemony (Palgrave, 2015) and Morbid Symptoms: The Global Rise of the Far Right (Zed Books). He has a chapter in the book Post-capitalist Futures and published work in a number of journals across the spectrum of Global Politics having also co-edited a number of other books. He also currently chairs the editorial board (Managing Editor) for the journal Capital and Class.



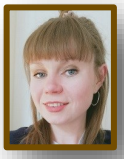
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Brian Milstein is an Associate Professor in Political Theory. Before joining the UL community in Fall 2021, he held postdoctoral positions in Berlin, Frankfurt, and Paris, and was a Research Associate at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt's Research Centre "Normative Orders." His research interests centre on critical and democratic theory, theories of crisis, capitalism, and cosmopolitanism. He is author of *Commercium: Critical Theory from a Cosmopolitan Point of View* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), and he edited a volume of dialogues between Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi entitled *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory* (Polity Press, 2018). He has published articles in *Political Theory*, *Contemporary Political Theory*, *Danish Yearbook of Philosophy*, *Zeitschrift für Politische Theorie*, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, *European Journal of Political Theory*, and *European Journal of Philosophy*.



Nita Mishra BA (Delhi University), MA (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi), M.Phil (JNU), PhD (UCC))
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Nita Mishra (https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3343-1056) is a researcher, practitioner and educator on International Development. Nita has extensive experience of working at the grassroots level with civil society organisations, funding bodies and research institutions in India, Vietnam and Ireland. Her research has been published in peer-reviewed journals. Her first co-edited book is -- McCann, G, Nita Mishra and P. Carmody (eds) 2022. COVID-19: The Global South and the Pandemic's Development Impact. Bristol: Bristol University Press. Her research interests lie in understanding women's empowerment processes, rights-based approaches, sustainable environmental development, peace studies, non-governmental organisations, feminist research methodologies. and decoloniality. Nita's poems have been published in migrant anthologies, Irish migrant reports, feminist journals such as Hypatia, and have been critically acclaimed as the future of Irish feminism by critics. Dr Mishra, previously Chair of the Development Studies Association of Ireland, convenes its Gender Study Group, and is now Vice President (Education & Training) of the European Association of Development Research & Training Institutes (EADI).



Emma Dolan MA, MSC, PhD
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Emma is an Associate Professor in Peace and Development Studies. Before coming to the University of Limerick, she held a Teaching Fellowship at the University of Aberdeen, having completed her doctorate in Politics & International Relations in 2019. Her research and teaching focus on the areas of gender and politics, critical peace and conflict studies, and the global politics of inequality/ development. Specifically, she has conducted research on political apologies delivered by state actors, conflict-related sexual violence, war commemoration and critical military studies. Her work has been published in journals such as *International Feminist Journal of Politics, Gender, Place and Culture* and *Childhood*, and her first monograph was published in 2022 as part of Routledge's 'Gender



Chris McInerney BA (UL), MSc (University of Bradford), PhD (UL)
Email: chris.g.mcinerney@ul.ie

Chris is an Associate Professor in Public Administration since August 2011. Prior to this he worked as a programme specialist at the Tipperary Institute / LIT, lecturing in the fields of social and community studies. He has also worked in a variety of national and international development organisations including the United Nations Development Programme in East Timor, the Community Workers Co-operative and Trocaire. His main research interests lie in the areas of democratic participation, civil society, as well as the role of public administration in deepening democracy and promoting social inclusion. Chris' publications include The Challenge of Community Participation in the Delivery of Public Services: Exploring Local Participatory Governance in Ireland, co-authored with Maura Adshead, as well as chapters in a number of books on local and community development in Ireland and internationally. His current research focuses on the contribution of public administration to the achievement of social objectives and his book on this theme '*Challenging Times, Challenging Administration'* was published in March 2014.



Jonathan Arlow BA Honours (Maynooth University); MA (DCU); PhD (DCU)
Telephone: TBC
Email TBC

My field of research is comparative politics and Irish politics. I am interested in how radical political movements interact with the institutions of liberal democratic states. My PhD, completed at Dublin City University, examined how the European libertarian movement has influenced policy change within mainstream right-wing parties. Beyond this, I have published on radical left activism, the far right in Ireland, youth unemployment policy, and the role of the 'revolving door' in politics.I previously held a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Liverpool. My current research investigates Sinn Féin's transformation into an electorally competitive force on both sides of the Irish border since the Great Recession. It compares Sinn Féin's operations in the North to the South and contrasts its unusual all-island position (i.e., one party, two jurisdictions) to other anti-systemic parties of the left. Alongside this, I continue to research and publish on the broader themes of political radicalism, party competition, and policymaking in Europe.

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

This page provides links to further information about programmes offered by the Department of Politics and Public Administration. If you have questions about a programme, you are welcome to contact the Course Director.

Politics Postgraduate Programmes

All taught postgraduate Politics programmes include Graduate Research Methods as a core module in Autumn and Spring. In addition, they involve the following core (obligatory) modules:

MA in European Politics and Governance. Course Director: frank.haege@ul.ie

- Autumn: Graduate Seminar in Institutions and Policies of the EU
- Spring: Graduate Seminar in European Governance

MA in International Studies. Course Director: neil.robinson@ul.ie

- Autumn: Graduate Seminar in International Relations
- Spring: Graduate Seminar International Cooperation and Conflict

MA in Peace and Development Studies. (Available full-time and part-time.) **Course Director: emma.dolan@ul.ie**

- Autumn: Graduate Seminar in Development
- Spring: Graduate Seminar in Peacebuilding

For these programmes, students select three elective modules from the list on page 16, one in Autumn and two in Spring. The availability of elective modules may change from year to year.

MA in Politics. Course Director: conor.little@ul.ie

The MA in Politics has no core modules other than Graduate Research Methods. Students select five elective modules during the MA in Politics: two in Autumn and three in Spring.

Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Programmes

Interdisciplinary programmes draw on core and elective modules led by the Department of Politics and Public Administration and from other disciplines. Click on the programme link below to find out more about the structure of these programmes.

Master's in Public Administration. (Available full-time and part-time). **Course director: bernadette.connaughton@ul.ie**

Graduate Certificate in Public Administration and Law. (Online) Course director: bernadette.connaughton@ul.ie

MA in European Studies (two-year double degree programme). **Course director: michaela.schrage-frueh@ul.ie**

MA in Community Research +. Course director: maura.adshead@ul.ie

Professional Diploma in Community Engagement. **Course director: maura.adshead@ul.ie**

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Structured PhD in Politics. Course director: conor.little@ul.ie

The Structured PhD in Politics involves core modules Research Methods and Contemporary Political Theory in the Autumn and Comparative Politics in the Spring, as well as working with a Proposal Approval Panel to develop their research project in both terms. Students also select three elective modules: one in the Autumn and two in the Spring. These are drawn from the modules listed on page 16, but can also include additional modules in research methods offered within our Faculty.

PhD in Politics & Public Administration

Master's by Research in Politics & Public Administration

For postgraduate research enquiries, contact a potential supervisor in our Department or conor.little@ul.ie.

MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

Information on the structure of each programme is available via the Postgraduate page of the PPA website. Most postgraduate programmes are made up of core modules, including research methods modules, and elective modules, although some interdisciplinary programmes (e.g., the Master's in Public Administration) do not include elective modules. The following modules will be offered by PPA in the Academic Year 2026/27. Some programmes also offer modules from other departments (e.g., additional modules on research methods as part of the SPhD in Politics).

***Modules are subject to change. Not all modules are offered every year.**

AUTUMN SEMESTER 1 2025/26

PO5004	**Graduate Seminar in Development**
PO5005	**Graduate Research Methods**
PO5015	**Graduate Seminar in Contemporary Political Theory**
PO5016	**Graduate Seminar in International Relations**
PO5017	**Graduate Seminar in Institutions and Policies of the EU**
PA6011	**Public Administration Theory & Practice**
PA6021	**Public Administration Theory & Practice (Online)**

SPRING SEMESTER 2 2025/26

PO5006	**Graduate Seminar in Peacebuilding**
PO5007	**Graduate Seminar in International Co-operation and Conflict**
PO5009	**Graduate Seminar in Comparative Politics**
PO5010	**Graduate Seminar in European Governance**
PO5112	**Russian and Post-Soviet Politics**
PO5252	**Comparative Climate Politics and Policy**
PO6032	**Gender & Politics**
PA6032	**Collaborative Governance & Leadership**
PS5131	**Research Methods**

MODULE DESCRIPTIONS

PO5004 Graduate Seminar in Development

This course introduces students to a variety of contemporary issues, debates and controversies associated with 'development' in social science, public policy and advocacy. Lectures and readings will explore development as a process of historical change linked to ideas about modernization, colonialism and race. Students will be asked to consider how colonialism has come to shape not only social and economic differences across regions, but also how we view development organisations and policies. Thematically, the module will examine a range of important current topics such as foreign aid, gender, land and resources, 'good' governance and tourism. Finally, the module will critically consider the notion that economic growth is essential to development and will examine this claim in light of various debates including post-development, sustainability and dependency.

PO5005 RESEARCH METHODS

This module is designed to familiarise students with alternative approaches to the conduct of research in social sciences. By providing a series of introductory lectures on alternative research methodologies and approaches, the main aim of this course is to give students a comprehensive understanding of key issues surrounding the logic of explanation and research design, in order to facilitate and support more advanced study in their own area of research specialism and dissertation study. The course is an essential part of students' preparation for their MA dissertations (or PhD for students on the structured PhD programme). Students will use their own potential MA dissertation topics to develop appropriate research methods and strategies for investigation.

PO5006 Graduate Seminar in Peacebuilding

This module introduces students to the general principles and norms of peacebuilding, a key activity of the international community since the end of the Cold War. It positions peacebuilding within specific political and historical developments of the 20th Century to the modern day and introduces the practice both in terms of its liberal ideals and its practical challenges/complexities. Students will be encouraged to look critically at the theories behind liberal peacebuilding as well as the strategies, means, and actors involved. We will also investigate how economic recovery, democracy, security, state building, and justice/reconciliation are central for building peace after violent conflict, discussing these components in light of diverse global case studies. Students will be able to practically implement their knowledge not only through a module essay, but also in the form of a group-based policy brief.

PO5007 Graduate Seminar in International Co-operation and Conflict

This module develops students' understanding of the theories and methods used in the empirical study of International Relations. Substantively, the module focuses largely on questions of international cooperation and conflict. The module presents the main theoretical approaches to the study of interstate conflict, describes the role, functions, and decision-making structures of international organizations (with a particular focus on the EU and UN), and discusses a range of related topical issues, such as the role of trust for establishing cooperation, the democratic peace thesis, military interventions, and international terrorism.

PO5009 Graduate Seminar in Comparative Politics

This module introduces students to research themes and methods in the field of comparative politics. Students will become familiar with issues involved in research design in comparative politics, such as the use of case studies, small-n comparative research, case study selection and selection bias. They will also study key debates over substantive issues (such as institutional design, democratization etc) in comparative political studies to see how different scholars use comparative research to study political development. Finally students will consider their own research work and how perspectives from comparative political studies can help them formulate their own research questions, hypotheses and arguments.

PO5010 Graduate Seminar in European Governance

"The aim of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the structures and processes of representative democracy and public administration in a variety of European countries. The course will have a focus on the national level but will also apply a multi-level governance approach by focusing on the relationships between different levels - local, regional, national and EU. The module will have two central strands. The first strand focuses on the role of citizens in shaping public policy through elections (both at the national and EU levels). The second strand focuses on governance and will explore models and traditions of public administration to understand the convergence, divergence, and persistence in features of European governance. Students are also encouraged to explore the implications of issues like Brexit, migration, economic crisis, Covid-19 on these features of governance, how member states respond to policy challenges and address reform."

PO5015 Graduate Seminar in Contemporary Political Theory

This module surveys key debates in contemporary political theory, focusing on evolving interpretations of core concepts such as freedom, justice, democracy, and sovereignty. It also addresses pressing issues including race and reparations, the digitization of the public sphere, colonialism, and the climate crisis. Students will learn to think logically and systematically about politics and political theory, to critically evaluate competing interpretations of key concepts, and to reflect on what is at stake when we argue about politics in theoretical terms. Readings will be drawn from Isaiah Berlin, John Rawls, Philip Pettit, Charles W. Mills, Sheldon Wolin, Carole Pateman, Jürgen Habermas, Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt, Achille Mbembe, Nancy Fraser, and others.

PO5016 Graduate Seminar in International Relations

This module introduces students to a range of theories and issues associated with international relations. Specifically, it outlines several of the major theories that may be used to analyze and understand international relations, including realism, liberalism, constructivism, and feminism, theories linking domestic politics with international affairs, and theories that purport to explain why certain armed forces are more successful in war than others. In addition, this module critically assesses several contemporary political issues, such as human rights, ethnic conflict, terrorism, and humanitarian intervention. With this in mind, by the end of this module, students should be able to: understand the most influential theories of international relations; critically assess a range of international issues; and communicate their opinions about theories and issues in international relations both verbally and in their writing.

PO5017 Graduate Seminar in Institutions and Policies of the EU

The aim of this module is to develop students' understanding of how the legislative system of the European Union works. Special attention is given to the roles and organizational structures of the different institutions involved in the EU policy-making process. The first part of the module discusses theories of integration and policy-making, presents the internal organization, functions, and powers of the main EU institutions, and describes the most important inter-institutional decision-making procedures. The second part takes a closer look at EU policy-making in different policy areas. This part highlights the differences in content, rules and procedures of decision-making processes across policy fields.

PO5112 Russian and Post-Soviet Politics

The purpose of this course is to discover why the Soviet Union collapsed and to look at the key dilemmas confronting its successor states. This module looks at the states of the former Soviet Union, specifically Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and the states of Central Asia. All of these states emerged from the USSR at the start of the 1990s but have stalled economic and political transitions. We will examine how they come into being as states, the legacies of the USSR for them and their reform trajectories, the regimes that they have produced since the collapse of communism, the problems that they face and the pressures on their future development. Most of the course focuses on Russia as a paradigm for change against which the other states of the area can be compared in the last weeks of the course.

PO5252 Comparative Climate Policy and Politics

Climate policy and politics is central to addressing the problem of climate change, and in recent years there has been rapid expansion in the study of climate policies and politics in a comparative and cross-national perspective. It has aimed to answer a range of questions. Do national policies matter for a global policy problem like climate change? How can we compare, rank and measure national climate policies, policy effort, and ambition? How can we explain differences and variation in national climate policies? What is the role of institutions, ideas and interests in producing climate policies? What is the role of the public and their representatives in the political system? What role do international factors play in shaping national climate policies? This module focuses on these questions. It aims to provide students with an appreciation of the main components of climate policies, factors that drive cross-national similarities and differences in climate policy, and the nature of climate politics.

PA6011 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

PA6021 PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION THEORY AND PRACTICE (ONLINE)

The modules serve as an advanced introduction to Public Administration. PA6011 is offered on campus and in -person. PA6021 is offered online only through live and recorded classes. Both modules identify key ideas and theoretical perspectives for this academic field (public administration, public policy, public management, governance) and relate them to principles, debates and themes addressed in the daily work of public administrators - often working within complex networks with other public, non-profit, and private sector organisations. The module(s) will increase students' understanding of the complexities within public organisations and their evolving role in politics and society.

PA6032 Collaborative Governance and Leadership

Collaborative Governance & Leadership introduces students to general principles and practices about leadership, with an emphasis on collaborative working within and beyond the public administration system. The leadership styles and approaches in public administration are examined, values as the basis for collaboration, and the implications of collaborative approaches on leadership in the public sector. The module content is supported by illustrative case studies and aspects of public sector leadership in Ireland, more broadly in Europe and in the USA.

PO6032 Gender & Politics

This module introduces students to a variety of Feminist debates in the context of Global Politics. Responding to an increasing focus on 'mainstreaming' of gender-based issues across political institutions, the module connects theory and practice in various contexts. In particular, it introduces students to intersectionality and the overlapping power structures of gender, race, class, and sexuality. We will discuss not only women's diverse experiences of politics (as victims, combatants, representatives, peacekeepers, migrants etc.), but also the role of masculinities within political cultures and institutions. The module prioritises reflexive practice, asking students to apply Feminist principles of reflection in preparation for future responsible work/study.

PS5131 Research Methods

This module supports MA students in progressing their dissertation work. As well as developing a research proposal under faculty supervision, successful completion of the module requires participating in workshops and receiving feedback on work-in-progress from both peers and academic faculty.

THE UL GLUCKSMAN LIBRARY

Reading lists will be provided for each module. These lists will indicate material that should be read to generate a solid overall understanding of the issues covered on the module, and insights into the specific subjects of each weekly session. These reading lists are not intended, however, to be exhaustive. Part of the transition to postgraduate study is about being able to demonstrate your ability to locate, critically use, and evaluate your own sources of information.

The UL Glucksman library (www.ul.ie/library) holds many useful sources of information, including books, journals, databases, current affairs magazines/newspapers and specialist material such as that held by the European Documentation Centre.

In common with many universities, UL has placed increasing emphasis on electronic resources. The Library has catalogues and databases which can be searched for material. The Library also subscribes to various services which can be used to locate and download academic articles.

Postgraduate students are allowed to borrow 10 items from the Library at any one time. The standard loan period is 28 days. A short-loan collection is located on the first floor. Items can be borrowed from this collection for a three-hour period, and must be consulted in the Library.

Material not available in the UL library can be accessed via Inter-Library Loan. Postgraduate students are allowed five Inter-Library Loan items each academic year. You can request an Inter-Library Loan on the UL Library website.

The Librarian for the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (in which PPA is a Department) is Ms Pattie Punch (Pattie.Punch@ul.ie). She will be pleased to help you with queries about library resources.

Resources in languages other than English or Irish can be found at the Language Resource Area, which specialises in helping students and faculty learn other languages. For details of their services, visit their web page: Language Resource Hub.

PLAGIARISM AND REFERENCING

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is academic theft. It is the stealing of other people's ideas, and then claiming those ideas as your own. A common form of plagiarism is the copying out of whole sections of someone else's written work into an essay. Another form of plagiarism ('auto-plagiarism') is the submission of the same essay to two different assessments (e.g., in two different modules). A third form is the submission of text generated by Artificial Intelligence: PPA considers the submission of AI-generated text a form of plagiarism. In each case, the student is trying to get academic credit without doing the work required. The UL student handbook classes plagiarism as academic cheating (along with cheating in an exam), and consequently it is deemed a major offence. The punishment for a major offence can be as much as a twelve month suspension from the University.

Plagiarism is easily avoided. Always use speech marks when using a direct quote, and always cite an author when using someone else's ideas. Facts in the common domain need not be cited, however. Here are a few examples of what is and is not plagiarism:

EXAMPLE I: STEALING A TEXT WORD FOR WORD

The following is a quote from David Held:

> **There is nothing more central to political and social theory than the nature of the state, and nothing more contested.**

The correct ways to incorporate this into your essay is either to quote it directly, or to put the idea in your own words while making reference to the author:

> **According to David Held there "is nothing more central to political and social theory than the nature of the state, and nothing more contested." (Held, 1983: 1).**

OR

> **David Held believes that, while the nature of the state is central to the theory of politics, it is also the most contested concept in the discipline (Held, 1983: 1).**

This, however, would be plagiarism:

> **I believe that there is nothing more central to political and social theory than the nature of the state, and nothing more contested.**

One of the most common, and serious, forms of plagiarism is when a student hands in an essay which has been copied out, word for word, from another work. Avoid cutting and pasting text in your essay directly from online sources, unless you are quoting directly. Even if you are only using short phrases from your sources make sure that you always place these in quotation marks and include a reference. If you fail to put direct quotations in quotation marks this will be detected by our plagiarism software and is likely to lead to your essay being sent for investigation as a case of plagiarism. *Note: it is still plagiarism if you have the author's permission to use their work word for word! Copying out a friend's essay and submitting it as your own work is still plagiarism, and can get both of you into serious trouble.*

Example II: stealing someone else's idea

The anarchist writer Pierre-Joseph Proudhon believed that there was a difference between property and possession. Something was your possession when you made use of it. By contrast, something was your property when you owned it, but someone else made use of it and you raked in the profit from its use. This led him to declare that property was theft. Stealing Proudhon's idea would look something like this:

> **It is possible to make a distinction between property and possession. A possession is something that someone owns and uses. Property is something that someone owns, but does not use. Instead they rent it out to someone else to use. An example of this would be a factory, in which the owner does not work in it, but hires workers to work it for him. The factory owner then lives off the work of the factory workers. This is theft.**

To avoid plagiarism this passage should read:

> **Proudhon made a distinction between property and possession. A possession is something that someone owns and uses. Property is something that someone owns, but does not use. Instead they rent it out to someone else to use. An example of this would be a factory, in which the owner does not work in it, but hires workers to work it for him. The factory owner then lives off the work of the factory workers. This, according to Proudhon, is theft (Proudhon, 1890, ch. 5).**

Sometimes students accidentally leave out a reference in an essay. *Do not worry! You will never be penalised for a genuine error. But the only way that anyone will know you've made a genuine error is if you have in general been good at providing references.*

Example III: information in the common domain

It is *not* plagiarism if you quote a commonly known idea or argument that is not specific to any writer or set of writers. You may, for example, read in a book on Irish politics that the Irish flag is a tricolour consisting of green, white and orange vertical stripes. *Obviously you do not need to reference this as this is something that is in the common domain.* You would only need to add a reference here if you decided to take a direct quote. For example:

> **According to article 7 of the Irish constitution the "national flag is the tricolour of green, white and orange".**

It would also be fine to write, without any reference:

> **The Irish flag consists of green, white and orange vertical stripes.**

Similarly, there are certain words and phrases, invented by writers in the past, which have passed into the language and do not need to be referenced (mainly because they have become commonly used expressions, or because people already know where they come from). This is particularly true of many expressions from Shakespeare's plays or from common translations of the Bible (especially from the King James Bible). So you would *not* need to reference Shakespeare in this passage:

> **The prevailing attitude at the government meeting could be summarised as neither a borrower nor a lender be.**

Even though the phrase "neither a borrower nor a lender be" comes from a speech by Polonius in *Hamlet*, it is now considered common domain. Similarly:

> **It is easy to criticise with the benefit of hindsight. The people who advocated and executed the government's economic policy saw the problems of the country through a glass, darkly.**

The phrase "through a glass, darkly" is a quote from the King James translation of I. Corinthians 13.12. It has entered the language as a common expression, and *does not need to be referenced*.

In sum, you do not need to reference everything you read, but only those quotes or ideas that are clearly the intellectual property of another. If you are not sure it is wisest to err on the side of caution and add a reference anyway. No one is going to penalise you for being over-cautious. On the other hand, it would be absurd to reference *every* point you make just in case.

Example IV: Coming up with the same idea independently

Human history is full of examples of people who came up with similar or the same ideas without realising it. The theory of evolution, for example, was developed by a number of researchers independent of each other, and a debate still rages about whether or not it originates with Charles Darwin. It is *not* plagiarism if you come up with an idea, only to find out later that someone else has already written it down. It is only plagiarism if you knowingly steal it. Having said this, if a student was to submit an essay in which they claimed the whole of Karl Marx's theory of surplus value as their own the lecturer would obviously not believe it!

The bottom line here is that you do not have to worry, when making claims in your essay, that someone else may have already said it. If you write an essay claiming that the power of the state is necessary to control our violent natures, only to find out later that Thomas Hobbes had already said it in the seventeenth century, this is not plagiarism. It would, of course, be plagiarism if you had read Hobbes previously, or if you quoted directly from Hobbes without referencing him.

PLAGIARISM AND REFERENCING (CONT.)

All work must be the author's own. All submitted written work and supporting materials will be screened using plagiarism detection software. It is an academic offence to use the work of others (whether written, printed or in some other form) without acknowledgement. Plagiarism may lead to you being expelled from the University for a year. Grade points will be deducted for poor referencing. PPA considers the use of AI-generated texts in assignments to be a form of plagiarism and will treat it accordingly.

You are reminded that it is an academic offence to use the work of others (whether written, printed or some other form) without acknowledgement. Where a judgement is made that the work has been used with the intention to deceive the assessors or examiners as to the authorship or origin of the work in question, plagiarism will lead to your being expelled from the University for a year. Penalties will be deducted for poor referencing.

Cases of poor referencing or suspected plagiarism include:

- Failure to identify the source of an idea or quotation;
- Failure to paraphrase or distinguish a direct quote from a paraphrase (even when you have referenced the source);
- Sloppy citation and poor integration of sources.

A SHORT GUIDE TO REFERENCING

A bibliographical reference should contain sufficient information for someone else or yourself to trace the item in a library. Inadequate referencing can lead to suspicions of plagiarism. It is therefore very important to be consistent and accurate when citing references. The same set of rules should be followed every time you cite a reference.

The Department of Politics and Public Administration requires you to use the Harvard system (also known as the 'author, date' system) to compile the reference list for your assignment. Quotations and other items drawn from specific locations in a text should be accompanied by a page number ('author, date, page number'). Citations in the text should give the author's name with the year of publication and then all references should be listed in alphabetical order at the end of the paper/dissertation.

A detailed guide to the Harvard system, and the principles of referencing, can be found at https://libguides.ul.ie/citeitright and in the "Cite it Right" booklet, which you can also find at that webpage.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOFTWARE

You may find it helpful to use bibliographic software as you work, such as 'RefWorks', 'Zotero', or 'EndNote'. These programmes allow you to create and store your own database of records. Guidance on Endnote can be found here: https://libguides.ul.ie/referencing-endnote/endnote-online

SUMMARY: A CHECKLIST FOR AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

- Always put direct quotes (sections of text that you are quoting word for word) in inverted commas or quotation marks and always add an appropriate reference to the work cited at the end of the quote.

- If you are using someone else's idea in an essay, and that idea is not in the common domain, always add a reference to the author of the idea. It is also often helpful to point out, in your text, that the idea is someone else's (e.g., "Marx believed that…")

- Never submit AI-generated text.

- Never copy out a piece of text from a book or article and hand it in as your own work. It is too easy to get caught. The writing style of the plagiarised text may give you away, and also there is a good chance that the lecturer already knows the passage that has been stolen.

- Never hand in the same essay for two different modules, or reuse blocks of text from an essay in a dissertation.

- Never allow another student to take one of your essays and hand it in as his or her own work. If this is discovered both of you will face disciplinary action.

- Students have been known to download whole sections of text from the web, and to hand it in as their own work. Plagiarism detection software will detect this, and lecturers will also check it themselves.

- At the end of the day, the work necessary *to get away* with plagiarism (setting aside the risks involved) adds up to the amount of work you would need to write your own non-plagiarised piece of work in the first place! In addition, you have come to University in order to learn. Writing your own essays is part of the learning process. Plagiarism undermines that learning process.

- Finally, if you are in doubt about whether something is plagiarism or not you can always consult a lecturer during their office hours. There is no harm in making sure.

You must make sure that you familiarise yourselves with the plagiarism guidelines. We take both poor referencing and plagiarism very seriously. If you are uncertain about any aspect of referencing please seek advice from your lecturer or register with the Regional Writing Centre. Contact writingcentre@ul.ie to seek individual tuition and support with any aspect of referencing as well as with more general efforts to improve your academic writing.

You can find UL's Academic Integrity Policy here.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Postgraduate Students' Association
ULPSU – Postgraduate Students' Union

Postgraduate Academic Charter
Postgraduate Student Charter – ULPSU

Careers Service
Career Services | University of Limerick - Cooperative Education & Careers Division (ul.ie)

Student Computing Services
https://ulsites.ul.ie/itd/student-computing-services-information

Counselling Services
Counselling Service | University of Limerick (ul.ie)

UL Global (International Education Division)
https://www.ul.ie/international/

Disability Support Services
https://ulsites.ul.ie/disabilityservices/

Student Learning Support (Centre for Teaching and Learning)
https://www.ul.ie/ctl/what-we-do/support-centres

Language Resource Area
https://ulsites.ul.ie/llh/

Research Ethics (University Guidelines)
https://ulsites.ul.ie/researchethics/
https://www.ul.ie/artsoc/ethics

For the latest UL Covid advice visit https://www.ul.ie/covid

UL clubs and societies: https://ulwolves.ie/

Local information/events: https://www.limerick.ie/discover/whats-on; https://www.ilovelimerick.ie/; https://www.limerickleader.ie/

UL 'Thesis in Three' Competition (PGR students): https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKgY7L1AjE90NgWaiG3NXTg/playlists

Postgraduate Research Forms Postgraduate Research Forms | University of Limerick (ul.ie)

AHSS Postgraduate Research pages https://www.ul.ie/artsoc/our-research/postgraduate-

UL Doctoral College Handbook researchhttps://www.ul.ie/media/48890/download?inline=

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS ON PG TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

THE DISSERTATION: SUPERVISION AND GOOD PRACTICE (TAUGHT MASTER'S PROGRAMMES)

The dissertation is an important part of your Master's programme. It gives you the opportunity to investigate an issue that you find interesting and to explore it in some depth. It provides training in, and experience of, academic research.

The word limit for the dissertation is 10-15,000 words. The submission deadline for this year is **13 August 2026 at 12 noon**. Unless an extension has been granted by the relevant course director, late submissions will be penalised at a rate of 3% per working day. MA dissertation grade descriptions and mark sheet are included in the Appendix.

We offer modules in research methods during both semesters, the goals of which are to equip students to undertake their dissertation work successfully. Dissertations must follow the same referencing conventions as coursework assignments.

It is important that you start thinking about possible topics for your dissertation, and approaching possible supervisors, at an early stage in your studies. You can speak to your Course Director or lecturers about this at any stage in your studies. Supervisors are formally allocated in January, but as each Faculty member can supervise only a limited number of students it is a good idea to secure a supervisor and inform your Course Director as soon as possible. The section of the handbook on PPA Faculty members' expertise and research interests should help you with this.

Below you will find a 'supervision contract' which sets out the responsibilities of students and Faculty regarding dissertation supervision.

DISSERTATIONS: WHAT FACULTY EXPECT FROM STUDENTS

a) A clear proposal including hypothesis, research questions, methodology, chapter breakdown and proposed schedule of research;

b) Regular contact – every fortnight, even if only via email, to provide updates on progress;

c) To be informed of any significant problems or changes;

d) Regular drafts of work, submitted on time (one complete draft OR three draft chapters and plan for remainder of dissertation);

e) Evidence of students' capacity to undertake their own research, e.g. locating their own sources, developing their own contacts etc.;

f) You may wish to agree with your supervisor that you will summarise by email the main points agreed or discussed at each formal meeting.

Dissertations: What Students can Expect from Faculty

a) To ensure their project is suitable in terms of scope and feasibility (providing points (a) and (c) above are adhered to);

b) To be able to contact supervisors regularly via email or during their office hours;

c) Constructive criticism on any submitted drafts, normally within a fortnight of receipt;

d) Face-to-face meetings to discuss the dissertation and/or draft sections of it;

e) Comment on either a draft dissertation OR three draft chapters and a plan for the rest of the dissertation;

f) Permission to contact other members of Faculty about the project and/or supervision problems (Course Director or Head of Department).

NB: Dissertations must be well in train before the start of the summer vacation.

FROM DISSERTATION TO DOCTORAL RESEARCH

Many students wish to undertake further study after their MA. Since it is not possible to transfer directly from a taught MA programme to registration as a doctoral student, the most useful way to prepare for further study by research is to use your MA dissertation to start exploring the ideas, literature and methods that you are likely to need in your PhD. This will show dedication and an ongoing research agenda to anyone assessing your application for PhD study. It will also allow you to make contacts who may be able to help with fieldwork, if appropriate. Since the MA dissertation is much shorter than a doctoral thesis, you should see it as the opportunity to focus on a particular aspect of the issue that interests you. You should speak to your Course Director and dissertation supervisor for specific advice about how to design your MA research with doctoral study in mind. PPA Faculty will be very happy to encourage and support you in applications for further study and for research funding. The Department provides internal review of draft applications for the Irish Research Council's Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship if they are submitted to the Department six weeks before the Scholarship's deadline for applications; the scholarship deadline is usually in October.

DISSERTATION GUIDELINES

Students are required to comply with the following MA regulations in completing the MA dissertation. Failure to observe these regulations may constitute grounds for rejection of the MA dissertation and a delay in graduation. Students cannot qualify for the degree of MA without obtaining a pass grade in their dissertation.

LENGTH

Content should be 10,000 – 15,000 words excluding footnotes, appendices, and bibliography.

FORMAT: FONT SIZE AND TYPE

The main body of the text should use Times New Roman, font size 12.

PAGINATION

Pages should be numbered consecutively throughout the text, including those pages incorporating photographs or diagrams that are included as whole pages.

Appendices should be named alphabetically, and each appendix paginated consecutively but separately from the main text and from each other. Page numbering should be Arabic.

Page numbers should be located centrally at the bottom of the page and approximately three-quarters of an inch above the edge of the page.

SPACING

All manuscripts are to be typed with double spacing between lines (footnotes are to be single spaced). Typing is to appear on only one side of each page.

MARGINS

All copies must have uniform margins as follows (i) the left-hand margin must be one and one-half inches throughout, (ii) the right-hand and bottom margins must be one inch throughout and (iii) the first page of the text and all first pages of chapters must have margins of two inches at the top.

LAYOUT

The dissertation should include a title page, abstract (short 200 word summary of the argument), table of contents, list of tables, list of figures, acknowledgements, abbreviations, glossary at the beginning of the text. Page numbering should be in lower case Roman (i, ii, iii) (the title page should be numbered). Arabic numbering from "Introduction" onwards (1,2,3).

FOOTNOTING

Footnotes should be numbered consecutively throughout each chapter. A double space should be left between footnotes and footnotes must be single-spaced. If placed on the same page a two inch line should separate the footnotes from the text.

SUBMISSION

An electronic copy should be submitted to the relevant Brightspace page. The front cover should include title, author's name, student ID, date and degree title (e.g., MA in International Studies etc.) Students are also welcome to submit a hard- or soft-bound copy, but this is not required.

THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS (TAUGHT PROGRAMMES)

The assessment process has two main stages. In stage one, your module lecturer sets you work – essays, class presentations, exams, tests etc – and this work is graded. You will receive a mark for all the work that you are set and should receive some feedback on it. At the end of each module you will receive a grade (from A1 to F). There are procedures for having this grade rechecked if you think that it is wrong (see 4.2.9 and 4.2.10 of University Handbook of Academic Regulations for details).

The purpose of stage one of assessment is twofold. It is both formative (it gives you a chance to learn by doing, helps you develop certain skills by setting specific tasks etc, and provides you with advice on how to do things better) and summative (it tells you how well you have done something via a grade and this plus your other grades will sum up how you have done overall).

In stage two, an external examiner reviews the work that you have done during your course. The purpose of this exercise is very different from the assessment in stage one. The brief of an external examiner is to make sure that the marking across a module and across all of the modules in a degree scheme is equitable and that the standards set are appropriate for an MA degree scheme, i.e., that the standard you attain on your degree for a particular award is comparable to the same standard being achieved by a student on a cognate course at another university.

The purpose of external examination is not, therefore, a pedagogic one – external examiners are not employed to give you advice on how to improve your work. The purpose is quality assurance – they guarantee that your degree is worth the same as a degree from any other reputable university. The job undertaken by an external examiner does, however, have an influence on summative assessment. To ensure equity within a degree scheme and that standards are appropriate for the level of qualification external examiners raise and lower marks allocated by lecturers. Since their job is to ensure fairness and act as the final guarantors of a degree's status their decision is accepted as final.

Stage two of the assessment process takes place after all other assessment processes have ended. This means that you will have been set work, been allocated a mark for it, perhaps asked for that work to be rechecked, and may even have appealed against the recheck result before the external examiner looks at your work at the very end of your degree and after you have submitted your final dissertation. Thus, you should not take any grade you have been given during the year as fixed until you receive your final results. The external examiner may change any and all marks, no matter what semester the module was taken in.

It is important to emphasise that all marks and grades, whether given to you by a lecturer or posted on a website, and no matter that you may have asked for and been granted a recheck or an appeal, are provisional until they have been reviewed by the external examiner and ratified by a University Examinations Board and by Academic Council.

I GRADES

The aim of the University is to support students who face an immediate crisis. To this end, I grades are awarded in cases where the student has not completed all of the requirements for a module and has submitted certifiable evidence of medical and/or psychological illness or immediate family crisis where the presence of the student is indispensable. I grades are not assigned in response to a plea made in respect of pressure of work. In the case of medical and/or psychological illness or immediate family bereavement, students need to make an appointment with the relevant service and must submit satisfactory evidence to support the request for an I grade. They must do so through the Student Health Centre, Counselling or Chaplaincy services.

Please refer to the websites below for detailed information on how to avail of the services. Only students who have been instructed by the relevant professional may complete the online I grade application form, providing they are registered for the current semester.

Student Health Centre
Counselling Service
Chaplaincy Service
I Grade applications

ASSESSMENT AND THE CALCULATION OF YOUR FINAL AWARD (TAUGHT MA PROGRAMMES)

Your assessment produces a final mark by translating the letter grade that you received for a module (A1, A2, B1, B2 etc) into a quality point value or QPV (4.00 for an A1, 3.60 for an A2 etc.; the full list can be found at the end of this section). The QPV is used to calculate your final degree result (a 1, 2.1, 2.2 etc) via the calculation of your Quality Credit Average (QCA). Your QCA determines your award (details of the math can be found in the Student Academic Handbook available at the Student Academic Administration's web page).

Each MA programme consists of 90 credits, made up of 60 credits from taught modules and 30 credits from the dissertation. Thus, the dissertation is worth one-third of your final grade. Most taught modules count for 9 credits each, though Research Methods is comprised of 12 ECTS (Autumn semester) and 3 ECTS (Spring semester). The Graduate Diploma programmes are made up of 60 credits from taught modules.

Other things to note:

- **There is a minimum passing mark for the dissertation (a C3 or above).** You may get a D1 or a D2 ('compensating fails') for a taught module and still graduate. This is not the case for the dissertation, and you must receive a passing mark of at least C3 in order to graduate.
- For this reason, and on the recommendation of various University committees and boards, no compensating fail marks (D1, D2) are awarded for dissertations: you will get an F if you do not meet the pass standard. The external examiners automatically check all F grades. If you receive an F grade for the dissertation you will be advised of your rights to resubmit your dissertation and should consult with your dissertation supervisor and course director about how to proceed.

GRADING SCALE				
GRADE	*DESCRIPTOR*	QUALITY POINT VALUE *QPV*	*PERCENTAGE EQUIVALENT*	*CREDITS AWARDED*
A1	Outstanding Performance *(First honours)*	4.00	75+	Yes
A2	Excellent Performance *(First honours)*	3.60	70-74	Yes
B1	Very Good Performance *(Honours 2.1)*	3.20	65-69	Yes
B2	Good Performance *(Honours 2.1)*	3.00	60-64	Yes
B3	Competent Performance *(Honours 2.2)*	2.80	55-59	Yes
C1	Satisfactory Performance *(Honours 2.2)*	2.60	50-54	Yes
C2	Acceptable Performance *(Third honours)*	2.40	45-49	Yes
C3	Min Acceptable Performance *(Third honours)*	2.00	40-44	Yes
D1	Weak Performance *(compensating fail)*	1.60	35-39	Yes
D2	Poor Performance *(compensating fail)*	1.20	30-34	Yes
F	Fail *(no compensation allowed)*	0.00	Less than 30	No
NG	Fail (no compensation allowed)	0.00		No

AWARD SCALE		
Award	Abbreviation	Minimum QCA
First Class Honours	1st	3.40
2nd Class Honours Grade 1	2.1	3.00
2nd Class Honours Grade 2	2.2	2.60
Third Class Honours	3rd	2.00

FEEDBACK

You are entitled to feedback on all your written assignments. It is good practice for feedback to be provided within three weeks of submission. Faculty may use a grading sheet, which is designed to help signal to you the strengths and weaknesses of your work. A sample grading sheet is supplied in the appendices.

PENALTIES

All work must be submitted on time. Deadlines for essays and course work can be found in the relevant modules guides, along with details about penalties for late submission. If you are unable to meet a deadline for medical (or similar) reasons, you should contact the appropriate module leader(s).

In the case of the dissertation (for MA students), and where an extension has not been granted by the relevant course director, late submissions will be penalised at a rate of 3% per working day. A dissertation will be judged to have been submitted when the electronic copy has been submitted.

In general, the above will be applied equally in the assessment of essays and examination answers. However, the time available for writing an essay and the freedom to consult material suggests that it is reasonable to expect that an essay should have high standards of presentation and that its arguments will be presented with greater ease, assurance and clarity.

Honours

To attain first class honours (A1, A2) the writer will have constructed a sound argument, made a convincing case, or resolved a problem by the reconstruction of knowledge as against the reproduction of knowledge. To do so will entail the application, synthesis and evaluation of knowledge obtained from independent study of sources referred to in lectures and in bibliographies. A question will be addressed in its entirety and all of the material used in the answer will be relevant to the question. The answer will have a deliberately fashioned structure which itself will be a direct response to the structure of the question. The language used will be precise and clear; the text will adhere fully to the appropriate conventions and will be largely free from error in spelling and grammar.

A candidate answering at the higher level of first class honours (A1) may, in addition to the above, give evidence of an ability to relate the answer to other components of the degree course or of having integrated relevant material not derived from bibliographies.

An answer below the first class honours standard (B1, B2, B3, C1) will display the characteristics required for that standard but not as comprehensively or as effectively. Such answers will display less ability to present a coherent argument, less ability to synthesise material and in some instances might also overlook a minor element in the question.

Pass

In contrast with an honours answer, a pass answer (C2, C3) will display a clear tendency to recall relevant evidence in order to structure an essay, rather than to support an argument. Consequently it may indicate that appropriate material was read but that its full significance was not grasped. The format of references is complete, the conventions for presentation are adhered to and the text will be relatively free from spelling and grammatical error. In addition to the above characteristics, an essay or an answer at the minimum level of pass (C3) may indicate that more than a minor element in the question was overlooked or that the language used was imprecise and unclear.

Fail

A student who falls short of performing at the level required for a pass will be deemed to have failed but that result may be compensated for (D1, D2) if there is evidence that the essay or answer is the result of an imprudent use of time, or the result of overlooking some (though not the majority) of key concepts in the question.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS ON PG RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

PROGRESSION REGULATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

PPA offers a number of postgraduate research programmes: a Structured PhD in Politics, a traditional PhD programme (the PhD in Politics and Public Administration), and an MA by Research in Politics and Public Administration. We also supervise students on our faculty's International Structured PhD programme.

All postgraduate research students in PPA have their research training and academic progress monitored both informally and formally. Progress is monitored informally and on an on-going basis by the supervisor(s). Progress is monitored formally through the 'Research Review Panel' system and through the 'Proposal Approval Panel' for students in the first year of the SPhD in Politics.

In advance of meeting with your Panel, you should discuss what work to submit with your supervisor(s). Usually, a submission will consist of the following things:

- a substantial piece of work appropriate for your stage of progress;
- a one-page project overview explaining how this work fits into your overall PhD project;
- the PPA PG5 PhD Student Progression Form;
- and the PPA PG6 PhD Personal Development Plan.

The PPA PG5 and PPA PG6 forms can be found on PPA's Sharepoint and should be completed after discussion with your supervisor.

The Panel will monitor progress against the prescribed programme of research and study, and will discuss the educational, training, personal and professional development needs of the candidate. According to the Academic Regulations on Research Student Progress (5.6), the overall progress of Research students will be formally recorded by the University on an annual basis.

Research Review Panels

The Research Review Panel is composed of the supervisor(s), the Head of Department or his/her nominee, who will act as chairperson, and at least one independent panel member, nominated by the Head of Department, who satisfies the criteria of appointment of supervisor. The department of Politics and Public Administration convenes formal Research Review Panels on a twice yearly basis, at the ends of the Spring and Autumn semesters. The guidelines for constitution of the Research Review panels are given in Academic Regulation 5.6.7.2.

The Research Review Panel will assess the candidate's performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation, which shall be one of the following (Academic Regulation 5.6.7.5):

a. The student's research progress is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant continuation on the master's or PhD register as applicable (G)
b. The student's progress is not satisfactory and the student is required to undertake the Research Confirmation Process (NG).

PLEASE NOTE:

- Students who fail to present to the Research Review Panel will automatically be referred to the Research Confirmation Panel.
- Students must submit all work to be considered by the Research Review Panel at least one week prior to the panel, in order to afford staff on the panel sufficient time to read the material presented.
- Students who fail to submit work on time to their Research Review Panel will be deemed to have failed to present to their panel and referred automatically to the Confirmation Review Panel.

Research Confirmation Panels

Academic Regulations concerning the constitution and membership of the Research Confirmation Panel are detailed in Academic Regulations 5.6.8.1 and 5.6.8.2. For students referred to a Research Confirmation Panel by their Research Review Panel, the Department of Politics and Public Administration convenes formal Research Confirmation Panels on a twice yearly basis, at the beginning of the Spring and Autumn semester (during week 0 – the week prior to the commencement of scheduled teaching).

The Research Confirmation Panel will assess the candidate's performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation, which shall be one of the following (Academic Regulation 5.6.8.4):

a. The student's research progress is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant continuation on the master's or PhD register as applicable (G)
b. The student's research progress on the master's register is of a sufficiently high standard to warrant transfer to the PhD register (G)
c. The student's research progress on the PhD register is unsatisfactory and the student is transferred to the master's register (T)
d. The student's research progress is unsatisfactory and the student's enrolment on the masters or PhD register, as applicable, should be discontinued (W).

Should the student not be satisfied with the outcome of the Research Confirmation Panel review, s/he may appeal the matter to the Head of Department. The appeal must be made within two weeks of the publication of the research review grade (Academic Regulation 5.6.8.8).

Proposal Approval Panels (year 1 of the Structured PhD in Politics)

In the first year of the SPhD in Politics, each student is individually advised by their Supervisor(s) and a Proposal Approval Panel, made up of three members of faculty (including their supervisor/s). The Proposal Approval Panel will meet regularly with the student (usually 2-3 times per semester) to provide guidance. The two 3-ECTS modules associated with the Proposal Approval Panel are 'PhD Proposal Development I' (in the Autumn) and 'PhD Proposal Development II' (in the Spring). They are 'M-Graded', which means that you will receive a single grade after the Spring Semester. Your final grade will be based on the quality of the final draft of your research proposal, and you will receive written feedback. After the first year of the SPhD in Politics, students present their work at biannual Research Review Panels.

Note that there is also a requirement for first-year SPhD in Politics students that:
'To be considered for progression in the Structured PhD in Politics, student must have achieved a cumulative QCA of 2.90 at the end of the academic year.' (Academic Regulation 3.5.5.1).

Transfer from Masters to PhD

A transfer from a Masters by Research to a PhD registration should only occur when a candidate is able to demonstrate their suitability for doctoral level work, usually after a minimum of one year of registration. There must be clear evidence that the candidate has the ability to understand the topic deeply enough and has shown the ability to undertake independent research work successfully appropriate to doctoral level.

Students wishing to transfer must submit a written transfer report to a Research Confirmation Panel and attend an oral viva. A detailed description of this procedure can be found in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures.

Leave of Absence

(Quoted from the Handbook of Academic Regulations & Procedures 5.9.1)

'In special circumstances (e.g. financial, medical or personal reasons), a student may be granted up to a period of one year's leave of absence off the register. Application should be made to the Dean Graduate & Professional Studies or his/her nominee. Supervisors should indicate any academic, contractual or financial implications to the student when leave of absence is requested. In exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Dean Graduate & Professional Studies or his/her nominee, this period may be extended up to one year. Extensions to a leave of absence beyond two years may be considered where there are serious extenuating circumstances (medical or personal reasons that preclude the student from resuming their studies). Where a student does not apply for an extension to their leave of absence, they will be deemed to have withdrawn from their studies.

'Prior to readmission to the PhD or masters register, as applicable, the candidate must review in detail his/her work to date with his/her supervisor(s). Once the Research Readmission Form has been completed and signed by the student, supervisor and Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Student Academic Administration office.

'In instances where the candidate's research or data has been superseded or any required facilities/resources are no longer available, the supervisor(s) and Head of Department will review any revised research proposal. Once the revised research proposal has been agreed and the Research Readmission Form has been completed and signed by the student, supervisor(s) and the Head of Department, it should be forwarded to the Student Academic Administration office.

'In instances where the supervisory expertise in the original or new research area is unavailable, the Head of Department will recommend appropriate supervision arrangements to the Assistant Dean Research on the relevant PGR form (Alteration to Research Degree Supervisor(s) form). The recommendation will be approved by the Assistant Dean Research and forwarded to the Student Academic Administration office.

'On resumption of his/her studies, a candidate who has completed the minimum registration period for their research degree must re-register and pay the appropriate fee for a minimum of one year.'

THESIS REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE ON SUBMISSION

The thesis word limits are:

- MA Research: should not exceed 60,000 words, inclusive of appendices, footnotes, tables and bibliography
- PhD: should not exceed 100,000 words, inclusive of appendices, footnotes, tables and bibliography

These limits are advisory. It is unlikely - but possible - that your thesis would not be accepted for examination simply because you exceeded your department's limits. On the other hand you should not disregard them entirely: they are guides to give you an indication of the scale on which you should be working.

The following summary of the thesis and examination process is without prejudice to the relevant University Academic Regulations that are authoritative in all cases.

Degree of Master

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of a degree of Master must be clearly and concisely written and show evidence of originality in knowledge and interpretation and contain a bibliography. It will also be judged on its scholarly presentation.

Degree of PhD

To satisfy the requirements for the degree of PhD, a thesis must constitute a substantial original contribution to knowledge that is, in principle, worthy of publication. The thesis must be clearly and concisely written, well argued, and show a satisfactory knowledge of both primary and secondary sources. In addition, it must contain a full bibliography and, where appropriate, a description of methods and techniques used in the research.

Inclusion of Published Work or Material from a Prior Thesis

Candidates may include in a thesis any material arising from work on the thesis that has appeared in print before the thesis was completed or examined, but such publication should be clearly referenced. Work published or submitted for publication before the beginning of a candidate's period of study may be included within a thesis, provided that it is clearly acknowledged and set apart from the main body of the thesis (e.g. in an appendix) but this work should not in itself form part of the material to be examined for the degree. A candidate may include material as part of a thesis which has previously been submitted for a Master's degree but the material must be clearly identified as such on the declaration. Material submitted for a lower degree may provide support for a thesis, but will not itself be considered as contributing towards the substantial original contribution to knowledge required for the award of a degree of PhD. Candidates must not submit a thesis that has been, or is being, submitted for a degree at another university.

GUIDANCE ON SUBMISSION AND THESIS REGULATIONS

Your supervisor will advise you on the procedures to be followed in submitting your thesis. Comprehensive instructions can be found on the Doctoral College webpages and the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE EXAMINATION OF A THESIS

The composition and role of the examination board and the purpose, processes and procedures pertaining to the *viva voce* examination for PhD candidates at the University of Limerick can be found on the Doctoral College webpages and the University's Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures. All postgraduate research forms (PGR forms) are available on the Doctoral College webpages.

TEACHING AND TUTORING IN PPA

Teaching

The Department considers that while the substantive content and concerns of the discipline of Politics and Public Administration are important in their own right, they also constitute the medium through which it seeks to achieve wider educational aims. Accordingly, the Department's teaching and learning aims are:

1. To develop the powers of the mind and critical intellectual skills by giving priority to reflexive, interactive and deep learning.
2. To broaden and deepen the political understanding of students by encouraging them to analyse beneath the surface of political phenomena.
3. To enable students to benefit from staff expertise by promoting a close relationship between research and the teaching programmes.
4. To introduce students to the basic assumptions and procedures of research and scholarship.
5. To enable students to develop a range of flexible and key transferable skills, particularly techniques of analysis and communication which are not subject-bound and which may be applied in subsequent personal, social, occupational and postgraduate academic contexts.
6. To encourage autonomy and choice in learning around a common core.

Teaching Objectives

In pursuing these aims, the objectives are that students graduating in politics and Public Administration will:

1. Recognise the importance of the relationship between evidence and explanation in reasoned argument.
2. Show autonomy and choice in learning, on their own and in groups, using a range of scholarly and other resources, including the internet, official and library sources.
3. Be equipped with a broad understanding of the scope of the academic discipline of politics and public administration - its main fields of study and sub-divisions, its central preoccupations, dilemmas, internal debates and its relations with other social sciences and humanities.
4. Have a basic grasp of the main theoretical frameworks and approaches in politics and public administration so as to appreciate the salience of concepts and theory in social and political analysis.
5. Be equipped with a more detailed knowledge of at least two specialist branches within the discipline, drawn from political theory, European and comparative politics, international politics and relations and public administration.

6. Be able to display a grasp of cognate subjects, and be sensitive to the advantages and complexities of interdisciplinary work involving politics and public administration and other disciplines.
7. Be able to communicate effectively in writing and orally.

In addition, the objectives of the postgraduate taught Master's Degrees are to:

8. Deepen substantive knowledge of specialist areas through core modules, while allowing choice and autonomy of options.
9. Prepare graduates for subsequent research degrees or work.
10. Enhance professional skills.

The achievement of these aims and objectives is pursued through emphasis on the following features of the programmes of study:

- A progressive undergraduate teaching structure in politics and public administration which develops from a broad, interdisciplinary and introductory first year, to second and third year choices of core modules, option modules and an independent research dissertation.
- A variety of teaching and learning methods based primarily on the principle of small-group teaching.
- An integrated approach to study skills that emphasises methods and techniques of independent study and scholarship, encouraging also the use of IT and language training opportunities.
- Regular opportunities for feedback to and from students.
- Adherence to the principles outlined in the Teaching Charter



HANDBOOK OF ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES

The Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures sets out the regulations and procedures governing student enrolment, registration, assessment, grading, progression and graduation at the University of Limerick.

This link to the handbook is updated regularly, and will take you to the current version.
Section 5—Research Postgraduate Academic Regulations (pgs 41-58) contains relevant information for all research students including supervision, progression, ethics, and thesis specifications.

APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

We very much hope that your time in the Department will be a happy and productive one. However, if problems occur with your studies, there are several channels available to you in seeking to address them.

If you want to raise issues that are of general relevance to the postgraduate community, you can do so via the Graduate Committee (by asking either one of the student representatives or the Chair to place the item on the Committee agenda).

If you have problems of a more individual nature, consult the procedures for addressing them that are set out below.

Problems with Supervision

In the first instance, students are expected to raise any difficulties informally with the supervisor concerned. Should this be difficult or ineffective, you may raise the issue formally, i.e. in writing, by a letter to the supervisor and the Head of Department (or the Dean of the Faculty, should your supervisor also be Head of Department). The letter should be copied to the Assistant Dean for Research of the Faculty. The Head of Department or Dean has ten days to reply. Should the reply not satisfy you, the next step is to approach either the Dean of the Faculty, or, if she/he has already been involved, the Dean of Graduate Studies of the University.

Problems with Progress

The University requires research student progress to be monitored annually by means of Research Review and Research Confirmation Panels. Students have the right to appeal the decision of the Research Confirmation Panel to the Research Progression Appeal Panel who will assess the candidate's performance to date and determine the appropriate recommendation. The Research Progression Appeal Panel will consist of the Dean of Graduate School or his/her nominee, who will act as chairperson, and two independent panel members, one nominated by the Head of Department and the other nominated by the Dean of Graduate School.

Failing the Degree

Appeals will be considered only where the recommendation of the Examiners is the award of a lower degree or outright fail, based on a reasonable claim being made that the examination was unfair. The grounds for appeal are procedural, i.e. that the examination process was unfair. The grounds for appeal are set out in the Handbook of Academic Regulations and Procedures. However, seriously inadequate supervision can constitute a ground for appeal (although candidates would have to explain why the Departmental and University procedures to monitor progress and redress problems with supervision had failed to solve any significant problems). Further information is available from the Graduate Studies Office.

APPENDIX I
RESEARCH ETHICS

PPA COORDINATOR: DR. PATRICK DOYLE

Ethics Application Form and Faculty Guidelines:
https://www.ul.ie/artsoc/research/research-ethics

For queries on dates, forms and guidelines can be found on the AHSS Research Ethics web page and AHSS Sharepoint.

You can get the application form via the AHSS website.

APPENDIX II
SAMPLE GRADING SHEET

NAME:						Degree programme:
ID:						Assessment:
Mark (%): *Marks deducted for poor referencing*:						Mark (letter grade):
Scale: 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = poor, 1 = very poor						
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
Argument						
Does not answer question						Answers question
Poorly structured						Well structured
Not analytical						Analytical
Empirically inaccurate						Empirically accurate
Illogical and incoherent						Logical and coherent
Uncritical						Critical
No signs of independent thought						Shows signs of independent thought
Poor use of evidence						Good use of evidence
Range of sources used						
Poorly researched						Well researched
Quality of references						
Poorly referenced						Well referenced
Poor bibliography						Good bibliography
Writing style						
Unclear						Clear
Grammatically incorrect						Grammatically correct
Poor spelling						Good spelling

Other Comments

Marker:

Date:

APPENDIX IV
MA Dissertation grade descriptions and Sample Grading Sheet

MA Dissertation Grade Descriptions

Note: It is expected that all MA dissertations will be professionally formatted, properly referenced, inclusive of all appropriate scholarly and bibliographical information, and free from spelling and grammatical errors. Marks will be deducted for inadequate formatting, referencing, spelling and grammar.

A1, 75+: Excellent intellectual content reflecting a comprehensive grasp of the relevant theories and concepts; novel ideas, integrated professionally with the existing literature; clear and logical presentation of material; project aims and rationale explained very clearly and well justified; research design, method(s) and sources closely aligned with research objectives; extensive engagement with the existing literature, which provides the basis for the project objectives; professional quality analysis and interpretation; perfect or near perfect referencing.

A2, 70-74: Very good intellectual content reflecting a very strong grasp of the relevant theories and concepts; some original ideas, integrated well with the existing literature; clear and logical presentation of material; project aims and rationale explained clearly and well justified; research design, method(s) and sources aligned with research objectives; strong engagement with the existing literature, which is connected clearly to the project objectives; excellent analysis and interpretation; perfect or near perfect referencing.

B1, 65-69: Good or very good intellectual content reflecting a strong grasp of the relevant theories and concepts; material integrated well with the existing literature; generally logical presentation of material; good statement of project aims, project rationale well justified; solid research design, appropriate method(s) and sources; the connections between the existing literature and the project are well explained; good analysis and interpretation.

B2, 60-64: Good intellectual content, competent usage of all (or nearly all) of the relevant theories and concepts; material integrated with the existing literature; generally logical presentation of material, though perhaps not optimal; adequate statement of project aims and rationale; appropriate methods and sources, solid research design, any faults are insignificant; some link between the literature surveyed and the project aims; good analysis and interpretation.

B3, 55-59: Modest intellectual contribution reflecting a familiarity with most of the relevant theories and concepts; material explicitly connected to the existing literature; progression of the material may be uneven or unclear in places; main aims of project stated and justified; adequate methods and sources, research design appropriate and stated clearly, any faults are insignificant; connections between the literature and the project aims are present, but not fully explained; adequate analysis and interpretation.

C1, 50-54: Modest intellectual contribution suggesting an adequate grasp of most of the relevant theories and concepts; evidence of a relationship between the material and the existing literature; progression of the material may be uneven or unclear in places; main aims of project stated; relevant sources and plausible research design, with relatively minor shortcomings; connections between the literature and the project aims are present, but not fully explained; moderate quality analysis and interpretation.

C2, 45-49: Evidence of intellectual contribution, though with some theoretical and/or conceptual flaws; limited integration of the material with the existing literature; some logical progression of the material, most of which is relevant; main aims of project lack clarity; weak research design, with shortcomings that compromise the plausibility of the research findings; connections between the literature and the project aims are present, but not fully explained; weak analysis and interpretation.

C3, 40-44: Limited evidence of intellectual content; weak integration of the material with the existing literature; material not well organised, some passages irrelevant; main aims of project lack clarity; inadequate research design, with shortcomings that undermine the plausibility of the research findings; connections between the literature and the project aims unclear or poorly explained; deficient analysis and interpretation.

Fail, 0-39: Serious theoretical and/or conceptual errors; repetitive; unoriginal; incoherent; no evidence of scientific focus; aims not clearly stated; inappropriate research method(s) that undermine the validity of the study; little or no engagement with a relevant academic literature; flawed analysis or interpretation.

Note on Political Theory dissertations: A dedicated chapter or section on research methods is not essential for theoretical projects, though consideration ought to be given to the overall logic of the approach used. In general, strong theoretical projects will develop and defend an original argument, identify and accurately reconstruct relevant perspectives from the existing literature, anticipate possible objections and address them accordingly, and exhibit awareness of what the author's case can and cannot achieve.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH
Department of Politics and Public Administration

Department of Politics & Public Administration
Dissertation Comment & Mark Sheet

Markers: Please return this sheet to the Departmental Administrator. They will notify markers where there are grade differences. Where markers do not reach agreement on a final grade or where there is a substantial gap between markers, the thesis will be flagged for the External Examiner's attention. After grades have been reconciled, there is no need to amend this mark sheet, but a short account of the reconciliation can be provided separately to the Departmental Administrator and entered into the Department's thesis grading spreadsheet; it can then be communicated by the Course Director to the External Examiner.

There is a minimum passing mark for the dissertation (a C3 or above). Students may get a D1 or a D2 ('compensating fails') for a taught module and still graduate. This is not the case for the dissertation, and students must receive a passing mark of at least C3 in order to graduate. For this reason, and on the recommendation of various University committees and boards, no compensating fail marks (D1, D2) are awarded for dissertations: students will get an F for the dissertation if it does not meet the pass standard (see grade descriptors, below). External examiners automatically check all F grades. If a student receives an F grade for the dissertation they will be advised of their rights to resubmit and they should consult with their dissertation supervisor and course director about how to proceed. Grades of repeat submissions are capped at a C3 if the thesis was failed at the first attempt, but this is waived where an I-grade is granted.

Student Name:	**Student ID:**
MA Programme:	
Thesis title:	

Quality Mark (%)		Marks Deducted for Late Submission:		**Recommended letter grade:**	

Scale: 1 = very poor; 2 = poor; 3 = satisfactory; 4 = good; 5 =excellent

	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Intellectual Content and Originality					
Clarity of Research Objectives and Rationale					
Quality, Sophistication and Appropriateness of Research Design					
Quality of Execution of Research Method					
Breadth and Appropriateness of Sources					
Theoretical and Conceptual Clarity					
Empirical Accuracy					
Quality and Objectivity of Analysis and/or Interpretation					
Quality and Relevance of Engagement with Academic Literature					
Quality of Writing: Structure, Logical Coherence and Clarity					
Quality of Writing: Spelling and Grammar					
Quality of Writing: Referencing and Academic Style					

Comments

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