

Research Degrees in  
**Politics &  
International  
Relations**

**Programme Handbook  
2011 - 2012**

***Politics & IR***

MSc/Diploma by Research (Politics) (PRMSCPOLTC)  
MSc/Diploma by Research (Multi-level and Regional Politics) (PRMSCMRPOL)  
PhD (PRPHDPOLTC)

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***Note:*** The handbook does not supersede the University *Regulations*, nor the formal requirements for each degree as set out in the University's Postgraduate Study Programme in the Calendar, nor the Terms and Conditions of Admission set out in the Postgraduate Prospectus. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this Handbook was correct at the time of going to press, but the handbook does not form part of any contract between University and student.

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**THIS BOOKLET IS AVAILABLE IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT ON WebCT**

## INTRODUCTION

### What is in this Handbook?

This Handbook contains information specific to **POLITICS and INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS research students** studying for the MSc by Research or PhD degrees. It is published by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science, which is the postgraduate division of the School of Social and Political Science. It explains our research training activities and arrangements for supervision of students and reviewing progress.

It needs to be read in conjunction with:

- **Graduate School Research Masters and PhD Students' Handbooks:** <http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/intranet/handbooks>. These Handbooks provide information on resources and entitlements for Graduate School students, and on supervision, upgrading and other formal requirements for the progress of all research students. It also describes the School's procedures for ethical review of postgraduate research projects and for dealing with cases of suspected plagiarism.
- **Graduate School Research Training Courses website:** [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research\\_training\\_courses/introduction](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research_training_courses/introduction). This website sets out the Graduate School programme of generic social research training and its workshops in advanced research skills. It also provides information on the wide range of training in generic and transferable skills available across the University.
- **The University Postgraduate Research Students and their Supervision: A Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students:** <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf>.

### About Politics and International Relations

Edinburgh Politics and International Relations (PIR) is committed to excellence in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge on issues of power, government and governance. We aim to fully integrate postgraduate students of PIR at Edinburgh into our vibrant teaching and research community.

The University is one of the largest in the UK, attracting some 28,000 students, of whom over 6,000 are international students and around 9,000 are postgraduates. Edinburgh is a great European city, as well as a historic and cosmopolitan political capital. Its close connections with government, business and civil society make it a leading centre of research and teaching in Politics, International Relations and related subjects. There are more than 30 full-time staff in PIR, all of whom are active both in research and postgraduate teaching. We offer particularly strong expertise in Scottish and territorial politics, European integration, comparative politics, international politics, migration studies, public policy and international political philosophy.

Edinburgh PIR is home to nine research groups or clusters, several of which operate across the University and beyond. Research students become full members of appropriate research groups and are encouraged to play an active role in all their activities. For more information see:

<http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk/researchgroups.html>.

PIR runs one of the largest postgraduate programmes in the Graduate School of Social and Political Science. Approximately 100 students take advanced courses or pursue research degree programmes in Politics and IR each year.

For more information, visit:

[http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research\\_training\\_courses/introduction](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research_training_courses/introduction).

## **Postgraduate Students**

We have a thriving and cosmopolitan community of postgraduate students, studying for the degrees of PhD and MSc by Research. Some examples of current projects can be found at:

[http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk/student\\_profiles/index](http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk/student_profiles/index). Former graduate research students have gone on to successful academic careers, teaching in universities around the world, as well as working in political research, policy organisations and related contexts.

## **Why Research Training?**

All new research students, whatever degree they are registered for, follow a programme of research training, drawn from the MSc by Research and more generic Postgraduate Research Training courses co-ordinated by the Graduate School in Social and Political Science (**see *Graduate School Research Training Courses* website:** [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research\\_training\\_courses/introduction](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research_training_courses/introduction), and the Politics-specific training described here.

The programme equips you with professional training to a high standard, enabling you to pursue further research, perhaps leading to a PhD or further research for a governmental or non-governmental organisation.

After graduating, you can expect to be a strong candidate for careers in a wide variety of contexts, including academia, international NGOs, the media, the private sector and a diverse array of public services. Nearly everyone needs good researchers!

Postgraduate researchers also have access to the University and College-wide programme of training in transferable skills and other aspects of professional development, such as specialist Careers advice, at the Institute for Academic Development: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development>.

In PIR, each PhD student must agree an individual training programme with their supervisor and Postgraduate Adviser. This programme is reviewed and updated on an annual basis as part of the Annual Progress Review.

## **The Graduate School of Social and Political Science**

The Graduate School provides research training in the social sciences for students from across the University and is the administrative home for all postgraduate students from the School's constituent subject areas and Centres: African Studies, Canadian Studies, Politics and International Relations, Science and Technology Studies, Social Anthropology, Social Policy, Social Work, Sociology, South Asian Studies. The Graduate School Office is situated on the 1<sup>st</sup> Floor of the Chrystal Macmillan Building. See *Graduate School Research Students' website* for further information: [http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research\\_training\\_courses/introduction](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research_training_courses/introduction).

### **Ethical issues**

The School of Social and Political Science attaches great importance to addressing the ethical implications of all research activities carried out by members of the School. A formal ethics policy and set of procedures have been devised. Any research you carry out as part of your Master's dissertation or doctoral thesis is therefore subject to these procedures. You will find further guidance in the *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook*.

You can access the School's ethical policy, procedures and the self-audit forms in full at the School website: <http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/research/ethics>.

### **Plagiarism**

The University's degrees and other academic awards are given in recognition of the candidate's personal achievement. Plagiarism (the action of including or copying, without adequate acknowledgement, the work of another in one's own work as if it were one's own) is academically fraudulent and an offence against University discipline.

Plagiarism, at whatever stage of a candidate's course, whether discovered before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University. If after investigation it is established that work submitted for assessment has been plagiarised to a significant extent, this fact will be permanently noted on a candidate's record.

The University's policy, and a statement of the steps which the University may take in cases where a candidate uses or is thought to have used the work of another person or persons in his/her work, can be found at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/postgraduate-taught/discipline/plagiarism>.

**Self Plagiarism:** The University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Degree Regulations state that no candidate may be awarded more than one qualification for the same work (para 2.7) (<http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/11-12/regulations/postgrad.php>). We expect all coursework and your dissertation or thesis to be your own original work, carried out specifically for your Edinburgh University Degree. When you submit any assessed work, you will be asked to include a signed statement that you have not previously submitted this work for any other degree or qualification.

Detailed guidance on Avoiding Plagiarism is included in the *Graduate School Research Training Courses* website.

## **The Postgraduate Adviser for Politics and International Relations**

The Postgraduate Adviser for Politics and IR is the Programme Director for its PhD and MSc by Research programmes and is responsible for their smooth running, including admissions, coordinating teaching inputs, examinations, progress reviews for continuing research students, programme evaluation and curriculum development. The Postgraduate Adviser is available to all MSc by Research students in Politics and IR as their first line of pastoral support and advice, for any scholarly or personal issues that may arise while you are on the Programme. The PG Adviser is able to offer advice on course or topic choices at critical stages in the Programme, or deal with less routine queries. All other research students would normally consult with their supervisors on any academic or pastoral matters, although the PG Adviser would offer back-up advice or support for students.

*It is your responsibility to inform the PG Adviser immediately of any issues (including medical, religious or personal issues of any kind) which may affect your progress or participation in any aspect of the programme you are taking. You also must inform both the PG Adviser and your supervisor if you are planning to conduct fieldwork or engage in any other kind of research abroad.*

The Postgraduate Adviser for Politics and International Relations is:

**Professor Andrew Thompson**  
**CMB 3.28**  
**☎ 0131 651 1562**  
**✉ [andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk)**

Office hours: Mondays, 11.00 – 13.00  
Research day: Fridays

## **Overview of the Programmes**

There are three research degrees offered in Politics and International Relations:

- ❖ **MSc by Research (Politics) (PRMSCPOLTC)**  
(1 year full-time; 2 years part-time)  
*Programme Director:* Prof Andrew Thompson ([andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk))
- ❖ **MSc by Research (Multi-level and Regional Politics) (PRMSCMRPOL)**  
(1 year full-time; 2 years part-time)  
*Programme Director:* Dr Nicola McEwen ([N.McEwen@ed.ac.uk](mailto:N.McEwen@ed.ac.uk))
- ❖ **PhD (PRPHDPOLTC)**  
(3 years full-time; 6 years part-time)  
*Programme Director:* Prof Andrew Thompson ([andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk))

# MSc/Diploma BY RESEARCH (Politics)

**Programme Director:** Prof Andrew Thompson ([andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk))

## Aims and Outcomes

The MSc by Research (Politics) is an ESRC-approved Research Training programme that aims to provide a structured foundation of training and preparation for postgraduate research leading to a PhD in Politics, although it may also be taken as a stand-alone degree that acts as a foundation for further research in Politics. It is a flexible, one-year full-time, or two-year part-time, degree which provides the opportunity to start work on an individual project whilst also gaining research skills to the level prescribed in the ESRC's generic and subject-specific research training guidelines. In terms of outcomes this means that, by the end of the session, all students taking the programme will:

- have practical competence in a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods and tools
- be able to make sophisticated links between theory and method, and to understand the epistemological implications of different methodological strategies.

**The range of generic research methods and tools covered includes the following quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, together with research design:**

- survey and questionnaire design, interviewing, focus groups, use of the internet for data gathering
- descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency and dispersion; exploratory data analysis; sampling and inference; measures of association; the use, modelling and interpretation of multivariate data; and working with datasets
- the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and at least one qualitative data package (for example, Ethnograph or NVivo).

Politics-specific training includes:

- the epistemological character of enquiry in political science and the nature and possibilities of explanation, and the relationship between these philosophical issues and the principal theoretical and methodological debates in political science
- theoretical and practical issues and dilemmas encountered in the pursuit of academic research
- skills to present academic work in progress to an interested professional audience
- awareness of accepted professional practices in modern academic life.

## Structure of the Programme

The Diploma by Research (Politics) consists of **five** compulsory courses. Candidates for the MSc by Research (Politics) must also submit a **dissertation**. A normal programme would involve successful completion of the following training courses in the Graduate School of Social and Political Science:

Research Skills in Social Sciences: data collection (PGSP11016) (20 credits)  
Core Quantitative Data Analysis for Social Research parts 1 & 2 (SCIL11009) (20 credits)  
Research Design (PGSP11208) (20 credits)

together with the following courses in the Politics subject group:

Explanation and Understanding in Social and Political Research (PGSP11017) (20 credits)  
Theory and Practice of Political Research (PLIT11001) (40 credits)

For those who successfully complete their training courses and wish to proceed to the MSc, they will then be required to submit the following:

Dissertation/Research Proposal: maximum limit of 15,000 words (60 credits)

Where students' research will involve the use of sophisticated techniques of data collection or analysis, they will be required to undertake additional training as offered by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science:

([http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research\\_training\\_courses/introduction](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research_training_courses/introduction)).

Dissertation supervisors will also advise students of the most appropriate further training in their area of research interest and may also propose a programme of guided reading.

In addition to their coursework, students work throughout the year with their dissertation supervisors on a systematic review of the secondary literature in their proposed area of research.

### **Exemption from Training**

Students who can display expected levels of research skills in particular areas can, *with the agreement of their supervisors and the Programme Director*, claim exemption from particular parts of the training programme. Exemptions from the required Graduate School Research courses will be administered by the Graduate School course team. With the agreement of the Programme Director, they can either substitute another relevant 20 credit course or, in certain cases, submit a longer dissertation. A dissertation carrying 80 credits has a maximum word length of 19,000 words, while a dissertation carrying 100 credits has a maximum word length of 23,000 words.

### **Dissertation**

The dissertation constitutes the main work in which students demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the crucial learning outcomes from the first year of research training. The dissertation usually takes the form of an extended research proposal which contains the following components:

- a review of the literature, both theoretical and empirical
- an outline and justification of the specific questions to be addressed, plus a statement of the expected contribution of the study to the field
- an elaboration and justification of the research design and methods to be employed
- a discussion of any practical, political and ethical issues affecting the conduct of the research
- a presentation of the schedule for the research.

The dissertation will normally be up to, but not exceeding, 15,000 words. Guidelines on the planning and writing of Masters' dissertations are available in a separate document from the Graduate School: <http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/intranet/regulations/dissertation>.

**The deadline for submission of the MSc by Research dissertation is advertised by the Graduate School and is usually at the end of the third week of August<sup>1</sup>.** Two soft-bound copies and an electronic copy of the dissertation, word-processed, should be submitted to the *Graduate School of Social and Political Science* by 4.00 pm on that day.

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<sup>1</sup> The deadline for 2011/2012 is 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

# MSc/Diploma BY RESEARCH (Multi-level & Regional Politics)

**Programme Director:** Dr Nicola McEwen ([N.McEwen@ed.ac.uk](mailto:N.McEwen@ed.ac.uk))

## Aims and Outcomes

The MSc by Research in Multi-level and Regional Politics is an exciting new programme which capitalises on Edinburgh's unrivalled strength of research and teaching expertise in regional and territorial politics, multi-level governance, federalism and devolution. This interdisciplinary postgraduate degree equips students with an advanced knowledge and understanding of the dynamics and processes of multi-level policy analysis and governance, sub-state regionalism and identity, and the effects of state structural change. The degree is designed specifically to prepare students for further academic training at the PhD level.

## Structure of the Programme

A normal programme would involve successful completion of the following training courses in the Graduate School of Social and Political Science:

Research Skills in Social Sciences: data collection (PGSP11016) (20 credits)  
Core Quantitative Data Analysis for Social Research parts 1 & 2 (SCIL11009) (20 credits)  
Research Design (PGSP11208) (20 credits)

together with the following courses:

Multi-level Democracy and Public Policy (PGSP11127) (20 credits)  
Comparative Territorial Politics (PLIT11014) (20 credits)  
One other specialist course in a research related field of European integration, nationalism, or public policy (20 credits).

For those who successfully complete their training courses and wish to proceed to the MSc, they will then be required to submit the following:

Dissertation/Research Proposal: maximum limit of 15,000 words (60 credits)

In addition, students will work through the year with their dissertation supervisors in a programme of systematic review of the secondary literature in their proposed area of research. Supervisors will also advise students of the most appropriate further training in their area of research interest. Students on this degree are strongly encouraged to attend *Theory and Practice of Political Research*.

## Exemption from Training

Students who can display expected levels of research skills in particular areas can, *with the agreement of their supervisors and the Programme Director*, claim exemption from particular parts of the training programme. Exemptions from the required Graduate School Research courses will be administered by the Graduate School course team. With the agreement of the Programme Director, they can either substitute another relevant 20 credit course or, in certain cases, submit a longer dissertation. A dissertation carrying 80 credits has a maximum word length of 19,000 words, while a dissertation carrying 100 credits has a maximum word length of 23,000 words.

## Dissertation

The dissertation constitutes the main work in which students demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the crucial learning outcomes from the first year of research training. The dissertation usually takes the form of an extended research proposal which contains the following components:

- a review of the literature, both theoretical and empirical
- an outline and justification of the specific questions to be addressed, plus a statement of the expected contribution of the study to the field
- an elaboration and justification of the research design and methods to be employed
- a discussion of any practical, political and ethical issues affecting the conduct of the research
- a presentation of the schedule for the research.

The dissertation will normally be up to, but not exceeding, 15,000 words. Guidelines on the planning and writing of Masters dissertations are available in a separate document from the Graduate School: <http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/intranet/regulations/dissertation>.

The *deadline for submission* of the MSc by Research dissertation is advertised by the Graduate School and is usually at the end of the third week of August<sup>2</sup>. Two soft-bound copies and an electronic copy of the dissertation, word-processed, should be submitted to the *Graduate School of Social and Political Science* by 4.00 pm on that day.

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<sup>2</sup> The deadline for 2011/2012 is 17<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

## MSc/Diploma COURSES

### Required Courses

Details of required and other research training courses in the social sciences and the 2011-2012 timetable can be found on the Graduate School web pages:

[http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research\\_training\\_courses/introduction](http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/research_training_courses/introduction).

### Theory and Practice of Political Research (PLIT11001)

This course is a **core** component of the degree of MSc/Diploma by Research (Politics). Students registered for this degree **are required to attend, as are all students in the training year of the PhD**. On-course doctoral students in Politics and International Relations are also strongly encouraged to attend.

The course consists of a weekly seminar on Wednesdays from 16.00 – 18.00 in **Seminar Room 6** in the Basement of the **Crystal Macmillan Building**. The seminars in Semester 1 will start on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2011 and finish on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in Semester 1, re-starting in Semester 2 on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2012 until 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

The aims of the course are:

- to link training requirements for research degrees in Politics (MSc by Research and the training year of a PhD) with the independent learning required to prepare a dissertation or extended research proposal
- to expose students to the issues and dilemmas encountered in the pursuit of academic research through presentations by Edinburgh Politics and International Relations staff, advanced postgraduate students and invited academic guests
- to provide a forum for presentation and discussion of postgraduate students' research
- to provide a forum for discussion of seminal works in politics
- to provide a forum for discussion of professional and other issues of interest related to the pursuit of a successful academic career in the social sciences.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course students are expected:

- to demonstrate knowledge of the skills required to present academic work in progress to an interested professional audience
- to demonstrate an ability to respond to, as well as to offer criticism on, academic work in progress in the spirit of open and constructive debate
- to demonstrate an ability to plan, design, and conduct an advanced research project
- to show awareness of accepted professional practices in modern academic life.

All students taking Theory and Practice in Political Research must present on their work-in-progress during the course of the year. As a group, students are also required to organise an end-of-year **Showcase** of their work in April or May.

## ASSESSMENT OF THE MSc/Diploma BY RESEARCH

The MSc by Research is *not* a taught Masters degree, and is not assessed as if it were. In assessing the degree, examiners are looking at a student's overall performance. Accordingly, examiners see a complete portfolio of the student's work (i.e. assessed coursework AND dissertation). This assessed work is reviewed *as a package, allowing for progression*. Accordingly, the examiners take the view that *the quality of the final work is far more important than the number of words written*.

Assessment of research training presents particular problems, not least because we expect students to return to the same issues and problems in different pieces of assessed work. It is likely that elements of prior coursework will be integrated into the dissertation, but we expect that these will have been reworked or further developed in the course of the dissertation, on the strength of earlier feedback and the student's own development. MSc by Research dissertations are thus examined in their entirety and as an entity, *irrespective of whether elements of them have been presented for assessment earlier in the programme*. On the other hand, *students cannot submit substantively the same piece of work for assessment in more than one course*. (Also see **note on self-plagiarism earlier (p6)**.)

We expect all coursework and your dissertation to be your own original work, carried out specifically for your Edinburgh University Degree. You are not allowed to submit work which has previously been submitted for any other qualification. When you submit any assessed work, you will be asked to include a signed statement that you have not previously submitted this work for any other degree or qualification.

### **How it is examined?**

The MSc by Research is examined by a Board of Examiners comprising an External Examiner(s), the student's supervisors, and the Programme Director who convenes the programme. Coursework assessment for the MSc by Research is validated by an Examination Board in June, but the crucial decisions about how each student has performed in the degree as a whole are made at an Examination Board meeting in September or October, after the dissertations have been submitted and assessed. This is when the complete portfolio of work is reviewed.

There are four possible ways for the Board of Examiners to assess students' overall performance in the degree: Pass with Distinction; Pass; Pass for Diploma (but not MSc); Fail.

Where students have low marks on particular pieces of coursework, these will be interpreted in the context of the overall portfolio of work and Boards of Examiners can invite supervisors to comment on individual cases of inconsistent performance. If there is one aberrant mark in the context of an otherwise very strong performance, it is up to the particular Board to decide on the appropriate outcome. Where weak marks occur across the coursework and are matched by a weak dissertation, the Board may want to recommend a pass at Diploma level, or even a Fail in particularly serious cases.

# THE PhD PROGRAMME

**Programme Director:** Prof Andrew Thompson ([andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:andrew.thompson@ed.ac.uk))

## **Progression from the MSc by Research to the PhD**

All MSc by Research programmes have two tracks: the one-year only track, and the 1+3 track. Students on the one-year only track need to make a fresh application to the PhD programme and to be offered a place in order to be allowed to continue to PhD level. Students who are admitted on the 1+3 track need not reapply to the PhD programme. However, they must present their research proposal to – and have it approved by – a **Progression Panel**, which consists of at least 4 members of staff in Politics/IR or a cognate discipline (one of whom is the student's dissertation principal supervisor). Progression Panels are normally convened in October, as soon as possible after the MSc by Research Board of Examiners.

*In Politics and International Relations we would normally expect that students proceeding to the PhD will attain an average (mean) mark of 65 percent or above on their coursework and also for their dissertation.*

## **The PhD Degree**

The PhD degree in Politics is awarded to candidates who have demonstrated, by the presentation of a thesis and by performance at an oral examination (unless this is exceptionally waived) that they are capable of pursuing original research in the field of study, relating particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field and presenting the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way.

The thesis must:

- be an original work making a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of study and containing material worthy of publication
- show adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature
- show the exercise of critical judgment with regard to both the candidate's work and that of other scholars in the same general field
- contain material which presents a unified body of work such as could reasonably be achieved on the basis of three years' postgraduate study and research
- be satisfactory in its literary presentation, give full and adequate references and have a coherent structure understandable to a scholar in the same general field with regard to intentions, background, methods and conclusions.

The thesis may not exceed 100,000 words. Exceptionally, on the recommendation of the supervisors, permission may be granted by the University to exceed the stated length on the ground that such extension is required for adequate treatment of the thesis topic.

The University's *prescribed period of registration* for a PhD is three years (full-time) and six years (part-time). University regulations specify a *maximum period of registration for the PhD* of *four years* for full-time students and *seven years for part-time students*. After this, extensions may be granted by the College Postgraduate Studies Committee, but cannot be guaranteed. More information on interruptions and extensions may be found in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9, respectively, of the University *Code of Practice*:

<http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf>.

It is both feasible and desirable for students to complete and submit their thesis within a three to four-year period (four to seven years for part-time students). This requires careful planning of the research and frequent communication with supervisors at every stage.

### **Programme of work for PhD students**

The normal progression for a PhD is that the first stage is spent preparing for the main research work – training, reading and reflecting on relevant literature, with the support of the supervisors, and developing the full research proposal. The second stage is spent doing the body of the research (data collection and analysis for students doing empirical research) and the third stage is spent completing the analysis and writing and submitting the thesis. During this period, students are normally expected also to build their academic curriculum vitae and gain experience as junior academics; for example, in teaching and attending appropriate academic conferences.

### **The normal Programme of Research Training to be completed in the First Year (full-time) or first two years (part-time) of a PhD.**

Politics and International Relations follows the Graduate School practice that students entering the first year of the PhD without prior, or sufficient, research training or methods expertise are required to complete a programme of training and research preparation, normally comprising the following:

For students in Political Theory:

- Methods in Political Theory (PGSP11135)
- Theory and Practice of Political Research (PLIT11001)

For other students:

- Research Skills in Social Sciences: Data Collection (PGSP11016) (Semester 1)
- Core Quantitative Data Analysis for Social Research, Part 1 (PGSP11078) (First half of Semester 1).
- Research Design (PGSP11208) (Semester 2)
- Explanation and Understanding in Social and Political Research (PGSP11017) (Semester 1)
- Theory and Practice of Political Research (PLIT11001) (Semesters 1 and 2)
- Any additional research training specified by Supervisor and PG Adviser. This may include the requirement to attend University-provided transferable skills events <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development>, to complete additional English language or other language training, etc.

During the Postgraduate Researcher Induction Programme in Induction week or soon after, detailed course choices and training requirements are agreed and recorded at a meeting between the Postgraduate Researcher and their PhD Supervisor, as well as with the PG Adviser.

### **Research Training to be Completed in the Second and Third Years (full-time), or third year onwards (part-time) of the PhD, if appropriate:**

- Core Quantitative Data Analysis for Social Research, Part 2 (PGSP11079) (second half of Semester 1).
- Additional research training specified by Supervisor and PG Adviser. This may include the requirement to take specified Graduate School courses, to attend University-provided transferable skills events <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development> to complete additional English language or other language training, etc.

## Milestones for PhD Students

The *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook* sets out generic milestones for measuring progress for full and part-time PhD students. In addition, more detailed PIR-specific guidance is given below.

It is important to note that the progression of each research student will differ. Appropriate milestones should be discussed and agreed between supervisors, student and PG Adviser as part of the annual review process.

<b>Milestones for Politics PhD Students</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Reviews</b>	<b>Suggested progress indicators &amp; milestones (full time students)*</b>
PhD Year 1 “Research Training Year “	Training Needs Assessment (start of year)  End of First Stage Review Formal Panel & Report (May or June)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 presentation at Theory and Practice of Political Research seminar or equivalent</li> <li>• Presentation at internal end-of-year postgraduate showcase (or equivalent)</li> <li>• Attend at least 1 external graduate conference or workshop (or equivalent)</li> <li>• Successful completion of required and agreed training courses</li> <li>• Portfolio of work as agreed with supervisors</li> <li>• End-of-First Stage Review – submission of research proposal/draft chapter &amp; detailed work schedule (as agreed with supervisors)</li> <li>• Submit academic CV</li> </ul>
PhD Year 2	Training Needs Assessment (start of year)  Annual Review** with supervisors & others (end of year) & Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 presentation to Theory and Practice <b>or</b> specialist Research Group</li> <li>• Present paper at a graduate conference or specialist workshop/seminar (as agreed with supervisor)</li> <li>• Successful completion of any agreed training</li> <li>• Timely completion of written work (draft chapters, fieldwork reports etc) as agreed with supervisor</li> <li>• End-of-Year review – submission of end-of-year report, sample of work as agreed with supervisors (for example, two or three draft chapters, detailed field reports, data results) &amp; detailed work schedule</li> <li>• Update academic CV</li> </ul>
PhD Year 3	Training Needs Assessment (start of year)  Submission of thesis OR Annual Review** with supervisors & others (end of year) & Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present paper at a full academic conference or seminar (as agreed with supervisors)</li> <li>• Professional development and training activities, as required</li> <li>• Completion of substantial body of work, preferably full draft or final draft of thesis</li> <li>• Update academic CV</li> <li>• Submission of thesis by end of August (the end of the “prescribed” period of study)</li> </ul>
PhD Year 4	Training Needs Assessment (start of year)  Submission of thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion and submission of thesis before end of August (the end of the “maximum” period of study)</li> <li>• Professional development and training activities, as required</li> </ul>

\* For part-time students, adapt to reflect longer prescribed and maximum periods

\*\* Annual Reviews may take place between 9 and 12 months after the start of the academic year in question.

## End of First Stage Review

All full time PhD and MPhil students in PIR undergo a formal 'end of first year' progress review within 9- 12 months of their enrolment. **Students should expect to be formally reviewed in May or June of their first (full-time) academic year, and prepare accordingly.**

For part-time students this review takes place after 18 to 24 months, with an interim review of progress after 9 to 12 months. **Politics and International Relations students should expect to be formally reviewed in May or June of their second (part-time) academic year, and prepare accordingly.**

*MSc by Research students on the 1+3 stream who seek to progress to PhD undergo a similar Review Process shortly after the final exam Board (see earlier section).*

For further information about the purpose of the End of First Stage Review please read the appropriate section in the *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook*.

## The Review Board

The Review is carried out by a Board, which usually has four academic members including supervisors. It may include someone who is not a member of the University, where appropriate. Membership of the Board is decided by the Postgraduate Adviser, in consultation with supervisors.

The postgraduate researcher makes a written presentation to the Board, usually in the form of a full research proposal. Such a paper will specify the research question, locate it in the appropriate academic literature and fully elaborate the research design, methodology and anticipated contribution to knowledge. It will discuss ethical, political and practical issues and also include a detailed timetable and programme of work.

In some instances, it may be more appropriate to submit a shorter research proposal, together with a sample chapter. **The precise form of the paper submission should be discussed and agreed with supervisors and the Postgraduate Adviser. As a rule of thumb, the paper submission should not exceed about 10,000 words.**

The paper is submitted at least two weeks in advance of a meeting of the Review Board, which begins with a short oral presentation by the student. Board members discuss the work presented – asking questions, giving constructive feedback and making suggestions. It will usually last for about an hour, to allow enough time for a full assessment of the work and of the student.

The process of reporting after the Board and the range of recommendations open to the reviewers are detailed in the *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook*.

## Annual Reviews

University Annual Progress Review Reports are completed towards the end of the second and every subsequent year of the PhD for full and part time students. The completion of the Report is preceded by an Annual Review of Progress. Timing of the Review is within 9-12 months of the previous progress review meeting.

In PIR, the Annual Review consists of a meeting of the Politics PhD Progress Review Board. Membership of this Board comprises supervisors, though under some circumstances, supervisors may wish to invite another member of staff to sit in, in consultation with the Politics PG Adviser.

The objectives of the Annual Review meeting are:

- to review the year's progress against the previous plan. If progress differed from that expected, the meeting reflects on how and why work did not proceed as anticipated.
- to assess progress on the student's skill portfolio and agree a programme of skills training for the coming year
- to agree a sensible programme of work for the coming year including, where appropriate, a target thesis submission date
- to review the supervisory relationship (e.g. was the support appropriate and adequate in the last year? Could anything improve the relationship? How might the student's supervisory needs evolve in the coming year?).

The student prepares a written Progress Review Report at least one week in advance to show what has been achieved since the last review and how the advice from that review was acted on. This should include a review of research training completed and identify future training needs. It should also include a programme of work for the coming year. The Politics PhD Progress Review Board may decide that satisfactory progress is also dependent upon a range of milestones, as suggested in the earlier table. In the third and subsequent years of the full-time PhD, or fourth and subsequent years of the part-time PhD, the Board may require evidence that the student can produce work of a publishable quality.

The student is invited to make a short oral presentation to the Review Board, based on their work during the year, including a description of any problems and how they have been dealt with, and their plans for the following year.

The Board then discusses the Report with the student and agrees actions for the following year, including agreed training to be completed.

Supervisors are invited to comment in private to the Postgraduate Adviser, or other nominated Board Member, on their views on the progress of the student, further training needs and supervision arrangements.

The student is invited to comment in private to the Postgraduate Adviser, or other nominated Board Member, on their views on supervision arrangements, further training needs and other matters relating to progress with their research.

Where appropriate, the possibility of changing supervisors may be discussed.

Supervisors write a brief formal report on the student's progress, including a statement of agreed work and research training for the following year. This is signed by student and board members.

Where progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, or where the student wishes to express a view in confidence, then student and supervisors may wish to write separate Reports, to be given to the Postgraduate Adviser, who would seek a solution to the problems identified. Reference is made to the Graduate School Director as necessary.

The Progress Review Report is copied to the Graduate School Office and forms the basis for the Annual Progress Report to College.

## Submission and Examination of the Thesis

See the *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook* for further information. Details about the required length and format of theses, plus other submission details, are available from the College Postgraduate Office: <http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/Postgraduate/infostaff/PracticalGuide/guide.html#>.

### Part-time Teaching

Research students make an invaluable contribution to the Politics teaching team for undergraduates, running tutorial groups, and reading and commenting on students' work. There might also be opportunities to tutor postgraduate students where the research student has specific knowledge or skills. Teaching opportunities typically begin in the second year of study. Those interested should respond to the PG Tutoring Call on the Graduate School web site:

<http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/intranet>.

For further information see *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook*.

## SUPERVISION

All research students have two (and exceptionally three) supervisors with whom they work closely throughout their research, at least one of whom will be from Politics and International Relations, although it is possible for MSc by Research students to begin with just one supervisor. It is quite possible and often beneficial for the student for co-supervision to be arranged with other subjects and centres whose expertise is especially relevant to the student's research topic. All new research students are allocated a principal and a second supervisor when they are accepted for admission. However, it is quite possible that changes will be made to the supervisory team once the student has started, where it is felt by supervisors and the student to be beneficial for their particular research needs.

For further information on roles and expectations see *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook*.

All research students and supervisors should also make themselves familiar with the sections on 'supervisors' and 'students' (sections 3.2 and 3.3) in the University Code of Practice: <http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Codes/CoPSupervisorsResearchStudents.pdf>.

**If you feel you are having a serious problem with your supervisor or supervisors, you should alert the *Politics Postgraduate Adviser*, your *Head of Subject*, or your *student representatives* (see below).**

## FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

For details of the facilities and resources provided by the Graduate School please consult the *Graduate School Research Students' Handbook*: <http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/intranet/handbooks> .

### **Politics Assistant to the Postgraduate Adviser**

One of our advanced PhD students provides administrative support to the Postgraduate Adviser in Politics and International Relations. You are likely to find that s/he is in touch quite often on various matters to do with postgraduate studies in Politics and IR. You are asked to respond to any queries that come from her/him as promptly and thoroughly as possible.

### **Politics Representation**

Research students in Politics elect representatives at the beginning of each year. Representatives attend subject meetings, organise social and other events, and liaise regularly with the Postgraduate Adviser on all matters of concern. Other representative and support functions are carried out by Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA).

### **Politics Research seminars**

As a postgraduate student in the School of Social and Political Science, you are also very much a member of one or more specialist research communities. The Politics and IR Subject Group, research groups and Centres and the School itself host regular seminars and other activities. Your attendance is an important part of your induction into scholarship. See the many events which are open to all postgraduates: <http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk/events/index>.

### **Staff**

A full list of staff in Politics and International Relations, including outline CVs and a brief account of research interests, is on the departmental website: <http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk>.

### **WWW**

The Politics and International Relations postgraduate website is at [http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk/student\\_profiles/index](http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk/student_profiles/index) and contains information about recent and current students, work-in-progress, course outlines and a set of useful links. We try to update it frequently, especially with news of the awards and achievements of our research students, and you are asked to let us know, via the Assistant to the Postgraduate Adviser, when you have an item of news that can be posted.