

**The University of Edinburgh**

**Politics & International  
Relations**



**Politics  
Honours Students Handbook  
2014/2015**

This booklet has been prepared for students undertaking Single or Combined Honours Degrees in Politics but also provides an introduction for anyone interested in studying Politics at the University of Edinburgh. It includes information on the aims, structure and requirements of the degree; the general rules governing assessment and examinations; useful information about the many extracurricular activities and facilities available to Politics students, and contact details when seeking advice, support, or further information on postgraduate study and other careers.

Politics is one of two single honours degrees offered by the Politics and International Relations (PIR) subject group. The subject group is part of the School of Social and Political Science (SSPS). This handbook should be read in conjunction with the [SSPS student handbook](#), which was provided to all students in their first and second years. Further information relevant to the Honours years can be accessed [here](#).

These booklets are not intended as replacements for the official publications of the University such as the University [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#).

Comments or queries regarding this handbook should be addressed to the PIR Director of Undergraduate Teaching, Dr Andrea Birdsall (tel: 0131 650 6974) email: [dugt@ed.ac.uk](mailto:dugt@ed.ac.uk) or the Subject Secretary & Student Support Officer (SSO), Ms. Ruth Winkle (tel: 0131 650 4253 / email: [Ruth.Winkle@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Ruth.Winkle@ed.ac.uk)), School of Social and Political Science, Chrystal Macmillan Building, 15A George Square.

**CONTENTS**

- I WELCOME TO POLITICS HONOURS! ..... 5**
- II HONOURS DEGREES IN POLITICS..... 6**
  - (I) TEACHING AIMS ..... 6
  - (II) PREPARATION FOR HONOURS ..... 6
  - (III) DEGREE REQUIREMENTS (SINGLE AND COMBINED HONOURS)..... 7
  - (IV) PIR PRIZES ..... 9
- III HONOURS COURSES IN POLITICS..... 9**
- IV STUDENT EXCHANGE SCHEMES/YEAR ABROAD..... 9**
  - THE UNIVERSITY-WIDE COMPETITION ..... 9
  - ERASMUS EXCHANGES ..... 10
  - OTHER EXCHANGES..... 10
- V MODES OF ASSESSMENT, FEEDBACK, SUBMISSION OF COURSEWORK, LATE PENALTY WAIVERS AND PLAGIARISM..... 10**
  - (I) MODES OF ASSESSMENT ..... 10
  - (II) IMPORTANT GUIDELINES WHEN SUBMITTING COURSEWORK ..... 12
  - (III) LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSED COURSEWORK ..... 13
  - (IV) PLAGIARISM AND HOW TO AVOID IT..... 14
- VI FEEDBACK, ASSESSMENT AND THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN PIR..... 15**
- VII LEARNING DISABILITIES..... 16**
- VIII SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES..... 17**
- IX DEGREE CLASSIFICATION AND EXAMINING BOARDS ..... 18**
- X RELEASE OF RESULTS..... 19**
- XI APPEALS AGAINST FINAL DEGREE RESULTS ..... 19**
- XII EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES..... 20**
  - (I) THE PIR SOCIETY ..... 20
  - (II) THE EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY MODEL UNITED NATIONS SOCIETY (EDMUN) ..... 20
  - (III) EU SOCIETY ..... 20
  - (IV) SEMINARS ..... 20
- XIII PIR EVENTS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING ..... 21**
  - (I) 1ST YEAR WELCOME EVENT ..... 21

(II)	FUNDAMENTALS .....	21
(III)	PEER SUPPORT SCHEME.....	21
<b>XIV FACILITIES, COMMUNICATION, STUDENT REPRESENTATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT21</b>		
(I)	FACILITIES .....	21
(II)	E-MAIL PROTOCOL AND SOCIAL MEDIA .....	22
(III)	STUDENT REPRESENTATION.....	23
(IV)	ADVICE AND SUPPORT .....	23
(a)	<i>Personal Tutor (PT)</i> .....	23
(b)	<i>The University</i> .....	24
<b>XV POSTGRADUATE STUDIES..... 25</b>		
(I)	TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE DEGREES (MSC) .....	25
(II)	RESEARCH DEGREES .....	25
<b>XVI CAREERS..... 26</b>		
(I)	THE UNIVERSITY CAREERS SERVICE .....	26
<b>XVII PIR CONTACTS..... 27</b>		
<b>APPENDIX 1..... I</b>		
	PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF DISSERTATIONS .....	I
<b>APPENDIX 2..... II</b>		
	INTRA-UNIVERSITY TRANSFERS INTO HONOURS PIR DEGREE PROGRAMMES.....	II
<b>APPENDIX 3..... III</b>		
	SSPS COMMON MARKING DESCRIPTORS.....	III
<b>APPENDIX 4..... IX</b>		
	INSTITUTE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT: PROVISION FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IX	
<b>APPENDIX 5..... X</b>		
	STUDENTS ON A TIER 4 VISA .....	X

## **I WELCOME TO POLITICS HONOURS!**

Welcome!

Congratulations on your entry to the Honours stage of your studies here in Politics & International Relations (PIR). Your two years in Honours will provide you with a grounding in several subfields of politics and international relations as well as the opportunity to specialise in particular topics in greater depth. This is a particularly rewarding part of your degree and my colleagues and I are keen to ensure that your courses are stimulating and provide you with useful skills that you may use in future employment. On that specific note we will be organising a series of workshops on career pathways for PIR graduates this academic year.

In PIR we believe that the curriculum should stretch students, should be offered by active researchers and should track recent developments in world events, academic literature and research methodology. We continue to update our course offerings to ensure that the curriculum offers new themes and ideas. To our EUSA shortlisted Parliamentary Studies (introduced last year) we have added an innovative course in Political Work, as well as new courses in IPE (the Politics of Money), the Middle East (Egyptian Politics) and comparative politics (Referendums in Comparative Perspective). My colleagues and I look forward to working with you on these and our existing courses as well as serving as your supervisors for your dissertations in fourth year.

I took over as Head of PIR in January and while I have come to know a good many of you as your PT and as a lecturer in your courses I have still to meet a fair number. If you ever feel that there is something that we could be doing better in PIR or if you just want to pop by please do contact me by email ([ailsa.henderson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ailsa.henderson@ed.ac.uk)) or in person. I'm in room 3.10 CMB

Last, we run a lively series of events throughout the year, including our long established Transatlantic Seminar Series as well as one-off public lectures throughout the year. We are always delighted to see undergraduate students at these and other events. To keep track of what is going on in the wider PIR community (including staff and PIR society events) please check out our website, facebook page and twitter feed @Edinburgh PIR

All good wishes,

Ailsa

Professor Ailsa Henderson  
Head of Politics and International Relations

## II Honours Degrees in Politics

### (i) Teaching Aims

- to deliver a broad-based curriculum incorporating major fields of study in politics;
- to equip students with substantive knowledge of a range of political systems, institutions, processes and ideas;
- to provide a curriculum supported and informed by a rich and active research culture;
- to enable students to understand, evaluate and use both normative and explanatory theoretical frameworks in the study of politics;
- to enable students to develop and apply their knowledge and skills to the understanding and evaluation of political issues and problems in the contemporary world, including within Scotland;
- to enable students to develop key generic skills in critical thinking, conceptual analysis, research, oral and written articulation of information and argument;
- to equip students for progression to a wide variety of careers or to further academic study.

### (ii) Preparation for Honours

Students intending to study for an Honours Degree in Politics are required to take the first and second year PIR courses: [Introduction to Politics and International Relations](#) (IPIR), Political Thinkers, Fundamentals: Politics and International Relations 1, [International Cooperation in Europe and Beyond](#) (ICEB), Comparative Politics in a Globalized World, Introduction to Political Data Analysis and Fundamentals 2: Politics & International Relations. Admission to ICEB is conditional upon achieving passes in IPIR/Political Thinkers (see further the [Politics/SSPS websites](#)).

*(Please note that these courses reflect the changed DPT that came into effect in 2014/15)*

To be admitted into Honours Politics, a student must also

- gain a mark of 50% or higher in the following three courses, usually at first sitting:
  - International Cooperation in Europe and Beyond (ICEB)
  - Comparative Politics in a Globalized World
  - Introduction to Political Data Analysis
- obtain the requisite number of passes in years 1 and 2 as required by the specific degree

Appeal procedures for those failing to meet these criteria are laid out [here](#).

### **Monitoring Attendance and Engagement**

It is the policy of the University as well as good educational practice to monitor the engagement and attendance of **all** our students on **all** our programmes. This provides a positive opportunity for us to identify and help those of you who might be having problems of one kind or another, or who might need additional support. Monitoring attendance is particularly important for our Tier 4 students, as the University is the sponsor of your UK visa. Both the School and the individual student have particular responsibilities to ensure that the terms of your visa are met fully so that you can continue your studies with us. Tier 4 students should read carefully the advice set out in the Appendix to this Handbook. This can also be found [here](#). You can also contact: [www.ed.ac.uk/immigration](http://www.ed.ac.uk/immigration)

### **(iii) Degree Requirements (Single and Combined Honours)**

#### **Single Honours**

For the MA (Honours) Politics degree, students take the equivalent of 240 credits over two years, split evenly between the two (i.e. 120 credits/year). This will usually be made up of ten 20 credit courses, plus a dissertation.

In Year 3, students take three compulsory 20 credit courses: Global Justice and Citizenship, Approaches to Politics and International Relations and Comparative Politics.

A further three 20 credit option courses are taken in Year 3.

In Year 4, students complete a dissertation (40 credits) and take a further four 20 credit option courses.

#### **Combined Honours Degrees in Politics**

We have set out below what is required in terms of Politics courses. Please consult the Degree Programme Table (DPT) via Learn or approach your Personal Tutor for details of the requirements in your combined subject.

#### **MA (Hons) Arabic and Persian/Politics**

Students reading these degrees should take the equivalent of 40 credits in Politics in their third year. In the following year, the requirements are the equivalent of 40 credits in Politics (for Arabic and Politics) and 20 credits in Politics (for Persian and Politics).

#### **MA (Hons) Economics/Politics**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) plus one 20 credit Politics course. Students may opt to take a further 20 credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must take the equivalent of 40 credits of Politics options and, in addition, submit a Dissertation in either Politics or Economics (40 credits).

#### **MA (Hons) Geography/Politics**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) plus one 20 credit Politics course. Students may opt to take a further 40 credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must take the equivalent of 40 credits of Politics options and, in addition, submit a Dissertation in either Politics or Geography (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) History/Politics**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) plus one 20 credit Politics course. Students may opt to take a further 40 credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must do the equivalent of 40 credits of Politics options and, in addition, submit a Dissertation in either Politics or History (40 credits).

### **LLB (Hons) Law/Politics**

In their third year, students must take "Global Justice & Citizenship" (20 credits). Students can choose either to take a further 20 credits in third year, and in the fourth year take 40 credits and a Dissertation in Politics or to take a further 60 credits in the third year and a Politics Dissertation in fourth year (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) Modern European Languages/Politics**

Students must take the equivalent of 40 credits in Politics during their year abroad, usually as SOCRATES credits or through long essays if such credits are not available. The courses and essay topics must be approved by the relevant contact person in PIR (currently Prof Andrew Thompson). In their fourth year in Politics, students must take one 20 credit Politics course and can choose to take a further 40 credits in politics OR a Dissertation in Politics (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) Philosophy/Politics**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) plus one 20 credit Politics course. Students may opt to take a further 40 credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must do the equivalent of 40 credits in Politics options and, in addition, submit a Dissertation in either Politics or Philosophy (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) Politics/Economic and Social History**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) plus one 20 credit Politics course. Students may opt to take a further 40 credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must do the equivalent of 40 credits in Politics options and, in addition, submit a Dissertation in either Politics or Economic and Social History (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) Social Anthropology/Politics**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) plus one 20 credit Politics course. Students may opt to take a further 40 credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must do the equivalent of 40 credits in Politics options and, in addition, submit a Dissertation in either Politics or Social Anthropology (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) Social Policy/Politics**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each). Students may opt to take a further 40 further credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must do the equivalent of 40 credits of Politics and, in addition, submit a Dissertation in either Politics or Social Policy (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) Sociology/Politics**

In their third year, students must take either "Global Justice & Citizenship" or "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) plus one 20 credit Politics course. Students may opt to do a further 20 credits in Politics. In their fourth year, students must do the equivalent of 40 credits in Politics and, in addition, submit either a Politics Dissertation or a Sociology Project (40 credits).

### **MA (Hons) Politics with Quantitative Methods**

In their third year, students must take "Global Justice & Citizenship", "Approaches to Politics and International Relations" (20 credits each) and Statistical Modelling for Social Scientists (20 credits) plus two 20 credit Politics courses as well as one 20 credit Methods course. In their fourth year, students must do the equivalent of 20 credits in Methods courses and, in addition, submit either a Politics Dissertation (40 credits).

#### **(iv) PIR Prizes**

PIR awards two prizes following the Exam Board in June, these are:

##### **The D P Heatley Prize**

A prize is awarded annually to the most distinguished honours student in PIR classes. The prize is awarded on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners.

##### **The Russell Keat Dissertation Prize**

A prize is awarded annually in recognition of excellence in the dissertation (Politics or International Relations), and is named for a former member of staff, Professor Russell Keat. The prize is awarded on the recommendation of the Board of Examiners.

### **III Honours Courses in Politics**

Please see the following [web page](#) for course descriptions and up-to-date timetables.

### **IV Student Exchange Schemes/Year Abroad**

If you plan to study abroad this normally occurs in the third year of your degree. Further information is available [here](#).

There are two basic schemes:

#### **The University-wide competition**

This places students primarily in North America, Australia or Asia. The competition is advertised early in S1 and generally closes in November. Please look at the International Office [website](#) for further details about application deadlines and useful contact information.

## **ERASMUS Exchanges**

PIR also has separate [ERASMUS](#) exchange arrangements with The University of Grenoble, Free University Berlin, University of Cologne, Madrid, University of Leuven, and Sciences Po, Paris.

## **Other Exchanges**

PIR students can also apply for university-wide exchanges with the University of Helsinki, the University of Lund and UC Dublin, run by the International Office. (see the [Exchange Possibilities webpage](#)).

NOTE: Except for students on a Language & Politics degree, marks for courses studied whilst on an exchange are no longer calculated into the students' final degree classification. If you are not taking a language as part of your named degree, your year abroad marks will be converted to pass/fail, and your Honours degree will be classified solely on the basis of your performance in your fourth and final year. Language and Politics degree students should consult their home subject for specific rules.

For further advice, please contact the PIR Junior Year Abroad co-ordinator Professor Andrew Thompson.

## **V Modes of Assessment, Feedback, Submission of Coursework, Late Penalty Waivers and Plagiarism**

### **(i) Modes of Assessment**

Honours courses in PIR now tend to have multiple modes of assessment (e.g. essays; tutorial participation and/or exams or coursework only).

#### **Coursework**

Course guides provide information on essay topics; word length and any further course specific requirements for written work.

**Return of Assessed Coursework:** Essays (or similar) will be returned by convenors or course tutors within **15 working days of their deadlines** with a mark and written feedback outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the work and also highlighting how students can improve their next piece of assessment (Note dissertations, which are significantly longer and are all double-marked, will take longer than 15 days to mark, and return)

#### **Coursework monitoring**

All PIR coursework marking is monitored and moderated by a second member of PIR staff to ensure consistency and fairness.

## **Examinations and Exam Feedback (see also next section)**

Examinations for PIR Honours courses will take place at the end of the semester in which the course was offered. The exam timetable is set by [Academic Registry](#)

Revision sessions and/or advice on the examinations for each course may sometimes be provided; check with individual course conveners or course guides.

Copies of past examination papers are available through the University Library (see this [link](#)). Normally, examinations are two hours long, and require two questions to be answered (but, again, check with course conveners for exact details). Examination scripts are anonymised and each candidate is identified by their examination number only (which is found on your matriculation card).

Examination papers are marked anonymously moderated by at least one other member of staff and the marks agreed internally. Marks and, where appropriate, scripts and coursework are then sent to the External Examiners.

The External Examiners check, approve and, sometimes, amend these marks. The same process applies to the marking of dissertations.

Exam Feedback: generalised exam feedback is provided by the course convenor early in the subsequent term and posted on LEARN. In addition, students have the option of seeing their individual exam scripts and reviewing their exam with the convenor. At Honours level, individual access to the exam is provided following the release of provisional course marks and the posting of generalised feedback on Learn. Students can only request individualised feedback from the course convenor (and should not contact the Subject Secretary or any other member of staff on such issues). When requested, course convenors can provide feedback during their feedback and guidance hours in weeks 2 or 3 only of the following semester..

## **Tutorial participation**

Some PIR courses assess tutorial participation. They do so in a number of ways (see further individual course guides). PIR follows the general School 'best practice' guidelines below:

- a) Best practice is to award grades for participation rather than to subtract penalties for non-attendance.
- b) Marks are meant to be for assessed performance rather than attendance alone; course convenors assessing tutorial participation must offer basic guidance to students and assessors on the performance assessment criteria used.
- c) Best practice is to award an aggregated overall mark for students' performance over the whole term.

## **Dissertation**

The assessment of the dissertation is based on the dissertation alone.

Marks are always provisional until confirmed or adjusted by the board of examiners.

**DISSERTATION DEADLINE**

**20 APRIL 2014 AT 12:00h**

### **Freedom of Information and Dissertations**

The School's policy is to retain copies of dissertations. The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 requires the University to make available to any enquirer information held by the University, unless one of the legislation's narrowly defined exemptions applies. Exemptions include:

- ♦ Information provided in confidence (e.g. situations where individuals were interviewed in confidence and are quoted in the dissertation).
- ♦ Substantial prejudice to commercial interests.
- ♦ Research in progress (most likely to apply where dissertations include information about research findings that have not yet been published but where an intention exists to publish them).

Should a student believe that an exemption applies to his/her dissertation, they should submit a Public Availability of Dissertations form with the dissertation (see Appendix 1). In the event that anyone asks to see the dissertation, PIR will use this information to determine whether or not it qualifies for a freedom of information exemption and can be withheld.

A selection of past dissertations will be available on the dissertation LEARN page.

### **(ii) Important Guidelines when Submitting Coursework**

#### **Electronic Submission**

Course work will be submitted online using our submission system – ELMA. You will not be required to submit a paper copy. Note: It is important to submit your work anonymously (i.e. without your name on the essay or the file name). Failure to do so will result in a penalty of 2 marks deduction.

Marked course work, grades and feedback will be returned online – you will not receive a paper of your marked course work or feedback.

For information, help and advice on submitting coursework and accessing feedback, please see the ELMA wiki at <https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/SPSITWiki/ELMA>

**Dissertations:** Dissertations will also be submitted using ELMA; no paper copies are required.

**(iii) Late Submission of Assessed Coursework**

Managing deadlines is a basic life skill and students are expected to have mastered this skill by the time they reach Honours level. Timely submission of all assessed items is a vitally important responsibility. Unexcused lateness can put at risk students' prospects of proceeding to Senior Honours, and can damage their final degree grades.

Work submitted late is subject to a 'Lateness Penalty' of 5 marks, deducted per calendar day after the deadline, up to a maximum of five calendar days (25 marks). Thereafter, an award of '0' will be given.

If there are factors beyond a student's control which make it essential to submit work after the deadline, students must fill in a 'Lateness Penalty Waiver' (LPW) form, which can be found outside the Student Support Officer's (SSO) room (1.11, CMB), stating the reason for the request.

It is very important that students do not contact course organisers or course tutors if they plan to hand in their work late so that anonymity is not compromised.

Before submitting an LPW, please consider carefully whether your circumstances are (or were) significant enough to justify the lateness. Such circumstances should be serious and exceptional (e.g. not a common cold or relationship difficulties – each of these we all encounter from time to time). Computer failures are not regarded as serious difficulties. Always regularly back-up your work so that you have two independent up-to-date copies. DO NOT apply for a lateness penalty waiver on non-legitimate grounds such as having a heavy workload or computer problems. Students with adjustment schedules are not automatically granted extensions; they should fill out a LPW form as below

If you do have legitimate grounds, you should submit requests for LPWs as soon as possible, preferably before the deadline in question. But you should always submit an LPW form when work is late, even if you are unable to submit the form until after the missed deadline.

**The LPW procedure works in the following way:**

1. The student requests the LPW form from the SSO, completes it, including details of the new expected submission date, and attaches the relevant supporting documentation. The form is then returned to the SSO.
2. The expected submission date is entered on the database.
3. The SSO, Exams Convenor and Directors of Undergraduate Teaching meet and decide whether penalties are upheld or waived. The decision is then entered on the database.
4. The SSO then informs the student about the outcome.

Please note: For LPWs submitted in S1, the outcome is announced in early S2. For LPWs submitted in S2, the outcome is announced in May.

The student's Personal Tutor will be notified for more serious and/or ongoing problems, or when repeated applications are made on different occasion, and if the circumstances are likely to have further academic implications.

Please also note: By signing the LPW, the SSO only indicates acknowledgment of the request, not the waiving of any lateness penalties. Students are advised not to ask the SSO about whether the request is likely to be approved. The SSO may decide that the request does not meet the criteria above and refuse to receive the form.

At their discretion, the Exams Convenor and Directors of Undergraduate Teaching may partially waive lateness penalties if they feel the reason for late submission is legitimate, but they believe that the length of the delay in submitting the work is disproportionate to the reasons for the late submission. However, final decisions, on all marks, rest with the PIR exam board.

#### **(iv) Plagiarism and How to Avoid it**

Plagiarism can be deliberate, accidental and/or involve duplication of coursework. All are unacceptable and can result in penalties.

Deliberate plagiarism occurs when the author intentionally copies out passages verbatim from sources without properly acknowledging the source.

Unintentional plagiarism is usually the result of sloppy note-taking and/or a lack of attention paid to proper referencing. Students should make sure to always write down the sources carefully when taking notes and then cite that source in their essay, using quotation marks where appropriate.

Duplication of coursework (or 'self-plagiarism') refers to submitting the same piece of work for more than one unit of assessment in the same programme of study and/or to work submitted for assessment at another institution. Duplication of coursework also refers to copying other students' essays as well as one's own from previous years. While discussion between students is encouraged, all coursework is accepted for assessment on the understanding that it is the student's own work.

Each piece of writing submitted for assessment should be a substantially original piece of work produced specifically for that unit of assessment. It may occasionally be appropriate to have quite similar short passages in separate pieces of assessment, conveying more general or 'background' points that the two pieces have in common, in which case the student should do their best to rephrase the material and limit any verbatim passages to a few sentences (no more than 100 words). Apart from this, students should avoid any duplication of previously submitted coursework.

If it is found that a substantial portion of an essay duplicates work previously submitted for assessment (at UoE and/or elsewhere), the work will be referred to the School Academic Misconduct Officer, penalties could be imposed on that piece of work and the student could be subject to disciplinary action.

Serious cases of plagiarism will normally lead to automatic failure of the whole course, and may also lead to action under the University's Code of Discipline.

As electronic submission of coursework and its processing through Turnitin (plagiarism detection software) becomes more standard, instances of plagiarism and self-duplication will be easily identified.

The University's policy on plagiarism is very useful to know and PIR encourages students to read it. It can be found [here](#) (see also the School's ['What is plagiarism and how to avoid it' – page](#)).

In short, failure to acknowledge other people's work will not be condoned.

## **VI Feedback, Assessment and the Learning Experience in PIR**

In previous academic years, PIR has had extensive discussions within the subject group, as well as within the School of Social and Political Science (SSPS), about how we can meet our aspirations to deliver the highest quality feedback, assessment and learning environment to our students.

One important aspiration is to ensure that all of our staff and students are fully informed of our procedures. We thus have compiled the below summary of measures in place. All of us should consider it an important reference source.

### **FEEDBACK**

- All feedback is marked, monitored and returned to students within 15 working days
- Feedback takes many forms including:
  - detailed feedback sheets for coursework
  - written or verbal feedback on tutorial presentations and performance
  - opportunities to view and discuss exam performance
  - ongoing opportunities for informal feedback and discussion with teaching staff during office hours.

### **ASSESSMENT**

- Exams and essays are moderated internally; samples of each degree class are moderated as well as ALL fails.
- ALL exams at Honours level and most pre-Honours exams are marked by academic staff; ALL academic staff are involved in moderating coursework.
- A sample of honours essays in ALL courses convened/taught by a non-permanent member of staff are double marked by a permanent member of staff.
- ALL Senior Honours dissertations are double marked.
- Marks remain provisional after internal moderation and (in some instances) double marking until they are reviewed by the EXTERNAL EXAMINERS and agreed formally at the Exam Board.
- External Examiners review samples of each degree class well as ALL fails.
- Student reps in years 1 and 2 regularly meet with their pre-Honours course convenors. Student reps at Honours Level meet with the Head of Department and the Director of Undergraduate Teaching in dedicated Staff - Student Liaison Committees (appr. twice/semester). The Director of Undergraduate Teaching reports back on UG matters to each PIR staff meeting; to

PIR's Teaching Committee as well as to the UG School Committee on these matters. In addition, a EUSA School Rep sits on the SSPS Undergraduate Teaching Committee.

- PIR courses are increasingly being assessed by a variety of assessment methods, including tutorial participation, one or multiple essays, policy briefs, exams etc. Feedback (individual or generalised) is provided for each of these methods. Several courses provide opportunities for non-assessed formative assessment via e.g. group presentation projects, tutorial summary points, essay plans, practice essays, etc.
- A growing number of Honours courses build in TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION as one of the criteria for assessment (usually contributing 10 to 15 percent of the course mark, in addition to essay(s) and/or an exam).
- Several Honours courses build in opportunities for PEER-ASSESSED LEARNING or give students the opportunity to write a 'mock essay'.
- Students complete Course Evaluation Forms at the end of each course. Student comments are considered by course convenors and teaching staff in their annual course reports, which inform efforts constantly to improve and refine each of PIR's courses. The reports and evaluation questionnaires are passed on to the School Director of Undergraduate Teaching and feed into regular (external and internal) Teaching Quality Assessment Exercises.
- Generalised feedback is now provided for all exams and is made available on Learn. In addition, pre-Honours and Honours students are given the opportunity to get individual feedback on exam scripts subject to the following provisions:
  - Individual feedback is only provided where it is explicitly requested by a student after having contacted the course convenor;
  - The course convenor then provides this feedback during his/her office hours, but only in weeks 2 or 3 of the semester following the release of provisional exam marks (usually January or September).
  - Our [ONLINE INFORMATION](#) on feedback and assessment has been vastly expanded and centralized. It contains guidance on 'writing essays', 'making the most of feedback' 'study involvement and representation', special circumstances, etc. The same web-page provides information on the latest developments in assessment and feedback.

#### **PIR's External Examiners for 2014-2015 are**

- o Dr Iseult Honohan (University College Dublin)
- o Prof. Mustapha Pasha (University of Aberdeen)
- o Prof. Ben Rosamund (University of Copenhagen)

Please note: students should not contact any of the external examiners prior to, during or after the exam boards.

## **VII Learning Disabilities**

SSPS and PIR welcome students with disabilities and are working to make all its courses accessible. Students can make contact the [Student Disability Service](#), (Main Library in George Square alongside the Student Counselling and Careers Services), (telephone 0131 650 6828)

and an Advisor will be happy to meet them. The Advisor can discuss possible adjustments and specific examination arrangements, assist with an application for Disabled Students' Allowance, provide information about available technology and personal assistance such as note takers, proof readers or dyslexia tutors, and prepare a Learning Profile for the School which outlines recommended adjustments. Students are expected to provide the Student Disability Service with evidence of disability - either a letter from their GP or specialist, or evidence of a specific learning difficulty. For dyslexia or dyspraxia, this evidence must be a recent Chartered Educational Psychologist's assessment. If students do not have this, the Student Disability Service can put them in touch with an independent Educational Psychologist.

Students should contact - in advance of coursework deadlines - the Disability Service for further information.

## **VIII Special Circumstances**

At its best, University work is rich and rewarding. But all of us go through difficult times and we must all work under pressure. We must all learn how to fulfil our working responsibilities in a professional way largely regardless of what might be going on in our private lives.

There is, for good reason, increasing concern nationally about the tendency for the routine difficulties of everyday life to be thought of as 'special circumstances' (SCs) and claimed as an insurance policy' against poor assessment results. A task force at the University of Manchester was convened in 2008 after it was found that more than 25% of all students in some faculties had claimed SCs. The task force found that students interpreted repeated notices of deadlines for the submission of SCs as encouragement to report 'every small setback'. It recommended 'a change in approach whereby students understand it is normal to experience problems of one sort or another as part of life and the university is not here to provide the solution'.

If students find themselves struggling due to short-term difficulties whose gravity makes them out of the ordinary and beyond the student's control (such as severe illness, a serious accident, or bereavement of a close family member), the SSO is available for help and support - but PIR expects all students to take full responsibility for their own education.

A SCs application denotes the formal process whereby students request (via the SSO) exceptional concessions related to specific pieces of course assessment on the basis of such temporary or 'one-off' serious and unpreventable problems.

Please note that ongoing problems that pre-date a student's time at University, or that last for most of their time here, may well count as disabilities rather than special circumstances, and should be dealt with by adjustments arranged through the Disability Service. If students are in doubt about whether their problem counts as a disability rather than a special circumstance, they should seek advice from the SSO.

A SCs claim is an extremely 'expensive' and labour-intensive process. Considerable time and effort are involved in any SC submission: for the student, the SSO, the administrative staff, and for the members of the SCs Committee that must consider all requests for concessions prior to the Examination Boards. The decision to apply for SCs should not be taken lightly. To apply, a student's case must be really exceptional.

Furthermore, it is the student's responsibility to gather unambiguous evidence to support the application. PIR is committed to the principle of equity in the treatment of all of our students and treat all SCs claims that come without clear or sufficient evidence equally: that is, as insufficient to grant concessions. Every year many applications are deemed 'not valid' because no supporting documentation, or inadequate supporting documentation, was submitted.

Students must write up a statement of their case for the SCs application, stating both the relevant circumstances and how, specifically, they affected which bits of assessment. All of this takes time and effort to compile. Students' time, especially in the run-up to exams, is extremely precious and probably more successfully invested in actual work and revision.

Even where the SCs Committee deems a case both valid and severe, concessions are not automatically granted; and where they are, it is only where the SCs Committee judges that there is clear evidence of underperformance on a specific piece of assessment.

To be clear: PIR will do all we can to help students who through misfortune find themselves in difficulty that is out of the ordinary run, but we do not even consider concessions unless the SC is beyond the student's control, adequately documented, and truly exceptional.

**Legitimate** grounds for submitting a SCs application:

- a serious illness or injury;
- the death or serious illness of a member of the immediate family;
- other unforeseen events occurring on, or close to, exam dates or coursework deadlines that have a direct, negative effect on performance (e.g. suffering a serious assault)

**Illegitimate** grounds for submitting a SCs application include (but are not limited to):

- minor illnesses and infections;
- occasional low mood and/or anxiety;
- relationship difficulties;
- accommodation problems;
- financial difficulties;
- the death of a pet;
- a relative's wedding.

## **IX Degree Classification and Examining Boards**

Full details regarding degree classifications are available [here](#).

The final degree classification for each student is determined at meetings of the Boards of Examiners, which take place at the end of Semester 2.

There is one Board for Single Honours students in PIR, composed of all PIR staff and the three External Examiners. Their deliberations are confidential. The Boards may take written evidence of special circumstances into account, where these are deemed likely to have affected a candidate's performance. See the guidelines on Special Circumstances under point VII.

The classification of a degree is decided on an overall assessment of a candidate's performance in the examinations and assessed coursework. The scale of marks (which is the same as that used in the assessment of coursework and the marking of examination scripts etc) is as follows:

First Class	70-100
Upper Second Class	60-69
Lower Second Class	50-59
Third Class	40-49
Marginal Fail	35-39
Clear Fail	25-34
Bad Fail	0-24

## **X Release of Results**

Final course marks will appear on students' Learn pages around three weeks after final exam boards have taken place. A final transcript with all marks will be sent to the student's home address by Registry.

For third year students marks for courses taken in their third year will be confirmed as final.

## **XI Appeals Against Final Degree Results**

The University of Edinburgh's [Academic Appeal Regulations](#) sets out the possible bases and procedure for appeals against final degree results:

'A student may appeal against an examination (i.e. any written, practical or oral examination, continuously assessed coursework or dissertation which counts towards the final assessment result) on one or more of the following grounds:

- (a) Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the examination which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.
- (b) Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose 'conduct of an examination' includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners.

It is the responsibility of the student to submit, in good time, notification of any special circumstances they believe should be taken into account. Special circumstances may include any factors beyond the student's control which adversely affect their performance in an examination or in assessed coursework over the year, such as, for example, personal illness or the illness of a close relative or partner. Special circumstances must be drawn to the attention of the examiners in writing by the student as soon as possible and in any event before the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners.

In relation to Ground (a), ignorance of the requirement set out above to report timeously any special circumstances adversely affecting performance, or failure to report special

circumstances because the student did not anticipate an unsatisfactory result in the examination, can never by themselves constitute good reason.

The appeal procedure may not be used to challenge academic judgement. The fact that a student believes that they deserve a better result cannot in itself constitute a ground for appeal

Please note: There are strict deadlines governing the submission of academic appeals. For Final Year students, appeals must be lodged within 6 weeks of the results being issued. Students who are considering making such an appeal are advised to consult first their Personal Tutor and/or the Head of Subject. Advice may also be sought from the EUSA Advice Place.

For all other Years, the appeal must be lodged within 2 weeks of the result being issued.

## **XII Extracurricular Activities**

### **(i) The PIR Society**

Want to get more involved in ‘Politics’ or ‘IR’? Got an idea for an article, or just a casual thought you’d like to discuss? The Politics and International Relations Society is one of the oldest student-run societies in Edinburgh - and the perfect way to get more involved.

This year we are running a huge number of events, ranging from academic talks, to weekly socials, to panel debates and the SSPS Ball in April next year. We also publish *Leviathan*, the University of Edinburgh's official, student-run, journal of politics and international relations. Past speakers at our events have included NATO Secretary-General, *Anders Fogh Rasmussen*, former ambassador to the UN, *Lord Hannay of Chiswick*, former Prime Minister, *Gordon Brown* and current Mayor of London, Boris Johnson.

This year our weekly meetings will be held in **Lecture Theatre 175, Old College** - every **Thursday between 7 and 9 PM**, so come along and sign up!

If you’d like more information, or are generally interested please visit our [website](#), join our [Facebook Group](#), or drop us an email at [edinburghpolitics@gmail.com](mailto:edinburghpolitics@gmail.com).

### **(ii) The Edinburgh University Model United Nations Society (EdMUN)**

Politics students might also be interested in the University’s Model United Nations Society (EdMUN). Check their [website](#) to find out more about what they do, where and when they hold meetings and which conferences they attend.

### **(iii) EU Society**

The EU Society is a great way of engaging further with a variety of EU-related issues as well as meeting people who work for EU institutions in Scotland. Click [here](#) for the Society’s Facebook page or email [eusocietyedinburgh@gmail.com](mailto:eusocietyedinburgh@gmail.com).

### **(iv) Seminars**

PIR runs research seminar series with presentations by both visiting speakers and in-house

staff/postgraduates. These usually take place at 1pm on Wednesdays (though this may vary). The topics covered by the speakers are not necessarily related to those explored in Honours courses, but they may often be of considerable interest and value to Honours students, who are most welcome to attend. Information about seminars in PIR, SSPS and other departments is posted on our notice boards and on the PIR and SPSS websites. Click [here](#) for further details.

The weekly [Transatlantic Seminar](#) takes place most Fridays between 13:00 – 14:30. It is designed to promote informed discussion of current issues and research on American and European relations, economy, and society and (especially) transatlantic relations. All are welcome to attend!

### **XIII PIR Events and Community Building**

#### **(i) 1st Year Welcome Event**

1<sup>st</sup> Years joining us in 2014-2015 are invited to attend a PIR Quiz on 11 September, from 7.00pm at Vodka Revolution, Chambers Street.

The PIR Society are also organising a tour of the Parliament on 11 September, meeting place A, Bristo Square at 1.30pm.

Student-led debate on the Scottish Independence Referendum on 11 September at 7pm in Lecture Theatre 187, Old College.

For all 3<sup>rd</sup> years, the ‘Welcome to Honours’ Coffee and Pastries event will take place on 23 September 2014 at 2pm in Seminar Room 3 and the CMB foyer.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Year Welcome event, focusing on dissertations and careers, will take place on 24 September 2014 at 4.00pm in Seminar Room 4 and the CMB foyer.

#### **(ii) Fundamentals**

Year 1 and 2 students will be enrolled in degree specific Fundamentals courses which introduce and develop core skills and debates in Politics and IR, but also provide opportunity to meet and engage with others in your degree

#### **(iii) Peer Support Scheme**

Since the academic year 2009-10, PIR has run a peer support scheme which serves as a social ‘hub’ for incoming students and aims to integrate Freshers into the wider PIR community, introducing them to the large variety of academic and non-academic activities provided by the University. From this year, the PIR-PALS (Peer Assisted Learning) will be closely linked to the first year course (IPIR). PIR PALS student leaders will also organise weekly events on different issues and topics.

### **XIV Facilities, Communication, Student Representation, Advice and Support**

#### **(i) Facilities**

Note: in accordance with University rules and Scottish Parliament legislation, smoking is prohibited in any areas of the Chrystal Macmillan Building.

**Resources Room:** A resources room is provided for all undergraduate students in SSPS in the basement of CMB (swipe card access only). It includes computers, study and meeting place for undergraduates only. The CMB foyer, equipped with sofas and tables, is also available for informal gathering space for SPSS students

Advice and support are available to students both within and outside SSPS. Messages can be passed on to staff via the SSPS Undergraduate Office as well as via phone and by e-mail. Personal Tutors and other staff have posted guidance and feedback hours for student consultation on their office doors and web profiles. PIR strongly encourages students to make use of these posted feedback hours.

## (ii) E-mail Protocol and Social Media

E-mail is essential to our work at the University. We all rely on it to get the information we need and to communicate with other members of the University community. Used properly, it makes us more efficient and better at what we do. Since e-mail is so important, PIR has agreed a short protocol on what we consider good practice. It applies to all PIR-Student e-mail correspondence, whether with academic or administrative staff.

### **PIR aims to:**

- respond to e-mails within 3 working days during the teaching semester. All full-time academic members of staff have periods of teaching/marking/fieldwork when they are away from the office and unable to access email. They also have designated 'Research Days' when they are expected to remain email free. All PIR staff must travel to attend conferences, workshops, events, etc. We may therefore only have sporadic access to e-mail while away. On the occasions when PIR staff and faculty are away, students can expect to receive an 'out-of-office' reply explaining how and when we can be reached on any urgent matter, and (if appropriate) who can help you in our absence;
- communicate in a tone that connotes respect and professionalism and
- treat student e-mail correspondence to PIR as confidential (and not to be forwarded to other colleagues) if students clearly signal that as a preference.

### **PIR expects students to:**

- check their *university* e-mail account regularly and also use this email address in all communications with the university;
- respond to e-mails within 3 working days, and sooner than that if we are asking students to supply information;
- check available documentation and relevant web-sites for answers BEFORE sending us an email;
- address e-mails to the appropriate recipient only, and to show diligence in determining who the appropriate member of staff is;

- communicate in e-mail as if writing us a letter.

### **Using social media**

While there are many cautionary tales about the use of social media and the 'digital footprint', there are also many positives to engaging with it. There have been many examples recently of students and graduates using social media to network and, in some cases, find employment. Social media allows easy exchange of information and ideas and can provide a powerful platform for discussion - all of which is within the control of the account owner. Do not be afraid to engage with debate but do remember that what goes on the internet stays on the internet – you need to remember that a future employer may discover things about you that you would prefer to keep private.

We expect you to be courteous in your postings and to not make personal or hurtful comments about other students or staff. You should ensure your comments are lawful, ie are consistent with legislatively protected areas of equality and diversity, and do not constitute a disciplinary offence under the University's code, which include offensive behaviour (in writing as well as actual) and bringing the University into disrepute.

### **(iii) Student Representation**

Student representatives from each UG year of the PIR degrees are selected within the first four weeks of Semester 1. These Reps will receive the regular PIR staff newsletters which will include topics affecting students - such as assessment methods, the introduction of new courses, curriculum changes, library resources and policy, etc. Reps may also attend PIR subject meetings and are welcome to put forward items that they wish to be discussed on the agenda for these meetings. The student representatives also select, from amongst themselves, representatives to the School and its Board of UG Studies.

The student representatives may canvass views of those they represent and report back to them. As throughout the University, however, students are excluded from discussion of 'reserved business' items, e.g. those involving confidential matters affecting individual students and staff.

The most important forum for student representation is the Staff-Student Liaison Committee consisting of student representatives and the Director of UG Teaching. This provides an opportunity for more informal discussion of matters affecting UG students.

### **(iv) Advice and Support**

Additional advice and support is available from several sources within PIR and beyond.

#### **(a) Personal Tutor (PT)**

The Personal Tutor can provide guidance on fundamental academic issues such as course choices, degree combinations and approving study abroad plans. Please see the FAQs document on the School's [webpage](#) for more information on the personal tutor system.

However, some of the more routine administrative duties are carried out by the staff working in the Undergraduate Teaching Office (UTO) (CMB G.04/5). For all UGs in SSPS, the staff in the Undergraduate Teaching Office will:

- deal with routine queries concerning issues such as curriculum structure, regulations and procedures, etc;
- provide standard letters of references (e.g. for banks or landlords);
- refer students to the appropriate Student Support Services.

Always approach the UTO for fairly routine queries or issues of a non-personal nature in the first instance.

Students are advised to check MyEd to confirm who their Personal Tutor will be from September 2014.

**Head of PIR:** The Head of Politics IR is available to be consulted by students if their PT, course organisers or student representatives are unable to help. The Head of PIR is Professor Ailsa Henderson (Room 3.10, CMB).

## **(b) The University**

The Students' Association: All matriculated students automatically become members of [the Students' Association \(EUSA\)](#), which is governed by the student body and run by students elected annually from the membership. EUSA is comprised of two main bodies: the Edinburgh University Union, which provides an extensive range of amenities and social gathering places for members; and the Students Representative Council, which not only presents the student view on dealings with the University and other bodies but also researches and disseminates a great deal of information of relevance to student academic and welfare issues.

[The Institute for Academic Development](#) provides series of workshops on study skills, exam preparation and essay writing. They can also offer individual guidance on study skills.

Financial Help: A number of [Scholarships and Hardship Funds](#) are provided by the Government and the University to help students who are experiencing particular financial difficulty.

The [Student Counselling Service](#) provides short term, confidential counselling which is available to all matriculated students at the University of Edinburgh. The counsellors are experienced and professionally trained and the service they provide is free of charge. They can offer counselling regarding personal problems which affect students' well-being or ability to work.

[The Advice Place](#) is the Students' Association's drop-in centre, offering free, confidential and independent advice on a range of issues including money issues, accommodation problems, academic concerns, etc.

[The Student Disability Service](#) offers help and advice to students with mobility, visual or hearing impairments, learning disabilities, chronic or mental health problems.

## XV Postgraduate Studies

PIR's Postgraduate Adviser, [Dr Juliet Kaarbo](#) can provide general information and advice on PG programmes at the University of Edinburgh and beyond. Applications usually have to be made by around March to commence studies in the following October. Please note: applications for funding usually have earlier deadlines.

PIR offers two kinds of postgraduate degrees: taught Masters degrees (MSc) and research-based PhD or MSc degrees. Masters programmes are completed in 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time) and are assessed by a combination of coursework and a dissertation. Further information is available [here](#).

### (i) Taught Postgraduate Degrees (MSc)

PIR offers several taught PG degrees:

[MSc in International and European Politics](#) (Programme director: [Carmen Gebhard](#)).

[MSc in International Political Theory](#) (Programme director: [Professor Tim Hayward](#)).

[MSc in International Relations](#) (Programme director: [Dr. Andrew Neal](#)).

[MSc in International Relations of the Middle East](#) (Programme director: [tbc](#)).

[MSc in International Relations of the Middle East With Arabic](#) (Programme directors: [Dr. Anthony Gorman](#) and [Dr Ewan Stein](#)).

[MSc in Global Environment, Politics and Society](#) (Programme directors: [Dr Elizabeth Bomberg](#) and [Dr. Liz Cripps](#))

PIR is also involved in the several other taught MSc degrees including: [Comparative Public Policy](#); [Policy Studies](#); [African Studies](#); and [Global Crime, Justice and Security](#).

### (ii) Research Degrees

PIR offers a taught [MSc by Research](#) degrees in [Politics](#) intended to prepare students for doctoral research. The degree has been designed to meet the Economic and Social Research Council's training guidelines for doctoral research in political science.

Teaching and supervision for these degrees are provided mainly by PIR staff but the degrees are organised and administered by the [Graduate School](#) in Social and Political Science.

PIR is normally able to provide supervision for postgraduate research students across all main areas of PIR research. We are particularly enthusiastic about supervising areas which match the

research expertise and interests of staff. For more details on staff research interests, see the [PIR website](#).

## **XVI Careers**

During their academic studies students will wish to give serious thought to the question of their future careers. In the different courses offered within PIR, students are encouraged to develop transferable skills of analysis, preparation of papers and presentation of material. The University offers advice on different career options, and students' Personal Tutor can provide additional advice and often act as referees for job applications.

### **(i) The University Careers Service**

[The Careers Service](#) offers help and advice on all matters concerning careers. Students may wish to know more about the range of options available to them and how they should approach their applications. The Careers Service runs a wide range of sessions and short courses on matters as diverse as numeracy, interview skills and psychometric testing. Students are advised to visit the Service at an early stage in order to make contact and identify the available resources.

Experience suggests that our graduates are well regarded by potential employers. Their interest is shown by, amongst other things, their presence in large numbers on campus and at the Careers Fair at the University. Significant numbers of our graduates have gone on to work in such diverse areas as, the public service (UK Civil Service, Scottish Executive and elsewhere); the European Union; local government; public and private services; industrial management; law; finance; consultancy; the media (press, radio and television); research posts: higher education; information sciences/IT/librarianship and, of course, politics itself (as councillors, MPs, MSPs and MEPs).

Careers-related events run throughout the semesters and include sessions on a wide range of occupations and industries; CV 'making'; interview tips; assessment centres, etc. These events are advertised on the [Careers website](#) and students are strongly urged to take advantage of these sessions from an early stage in their degree.

### **Message from the Careers Service**

#### ***Careers- What next after Graduation?***

*Considering your honours course options? Graduation may seem a long way off, but now is also a good time to start thinking about what you want to do after university- and what you can do now to help you get there.*

*Maybe you are already considering moving into employment, undertaking further study, finding an internship, travelling, volunteering, starting your own business or something else entirely! You might have some firm ideas at this point or no ideas whatsoever.*

*Making informed decisions about your future takes time and effort but your Careers Service is here to support you through the process, whatever stage you are at. To dispel a few myths: you do not need to know what you want to do to use the service and we do not deal solely with graduate training schemes; in fact, you may be surprised at just how much we cover:*

- Full range of talks and workshops- and look out for the range of careers fairs- from the 'More than Profit' fair to graduate recruitment fairs, virtual fairs and post graduate fairs!
- Campus visits from a wide range of employers
- Information on 1000+ careers online and in our centre
- Individual guidance interviews – impartial, confidential discussions which focus on **you**
- Daily (during semester time) drop-in sessions for quick queries, no appointment needed
- Quick careers coaching at Chrystal Macmillan - look out for the email!
- Feedback on CVs and application forms
- 'Mock' interviews – a chance to practise your skills and get feedback
- Database of semester-time, vacation time, one-off, voluntary and graduate vacancies in the UK and overseas
- Talks on postgraduate study, here and in the USA
- Information on the destinations of previous PIR graduates

For more details on the above, and everything else we do, check out our website [www.ed.ac.uk/careers](http://www.ed.ac.uk/careers) or feel free to come and browse round the centre on the third floor of the Main Library Building. There is a lot of support available to you so make sure you take full advantage!

I look forward to meeting many of you over the course of your studies. Best wishes for the coming year.

Kay Barbour  
Careers Adviser, Social and Political Science

Email: [Kay.Barbour@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Kay.Barbour@ed.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0131 650 4670

## **XVII PIR Contacts**

Most offices for [PIR staff](#) are on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor of CMB, but some are located in 21, 22 or 58 George Square.



## APPENDIX 2

### INTRA-UNIVERSITY TRANSFERS INTO HONOURS PIR DEGREE PROGRAMMES

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#### TRANSFER ARRANGEMENTS IN PLACE

PIR has applies a QUOTA FOR ENTRY INTO HONOURS and holds a competitive annual application for places.

PIR allocates no more than 35 transfers per year. Transfers will only be considered for students who have completed their 2<sup>nd</sup> year at pre-honours level and who qualify under SSPS rules for entry to honours.

The following rules/procedures govern the annual application process:

- The quota will not be ‘split’ into pre-designated totals for Politics or IR. We will simply admit the 35 best candidates for whatever degree they apply for;
- A transfer into a combined degree (e.g. Law and Politics from Law single honours) will be counted as ‘half’ a transfer;
- Responsibility for reviewing and deciding on transfer applications will rest the School’s Deputy Director of Undergraduate Teaching and PIR’s Director of Undergraduate Teaching in consultation with the Head of PIR.
- Applicants must complete a ‘[Degree Programme Request Form](#)’, appending a personal statement of no more than 100 words detailing why a transfer will benefit their academic and personal goals.
- Applications will be considered at a fixed point in the academic year. Check [here](#) for details.
- Students will be notified as to whether their application has been successful within a period of 2 months after the application deadline. All decisions on transfers will be considered final.

In considering transfer requests, PIR takes into account academic achievement at UoE and prior to entry, relevant special circumstances, fit with intended curricula, and the personal statement provided by the applicant. For students who apply to transfer into Honours Politics – Single or Combined degrees - PIR takes into account whether or not the course ‘Scotland: Society and Politics’ (which is highly recommended for those seeking to transfer) was taken during the 2<sup>nd</sup> year and how the applicant performed in the course (except for degree programmes for which the prescribed 2<sup>nd</sup> year courses allow no flexibility to take this course).

## APPENDIX 3

### SSPS COMMON MARKING DESCRIPTORS

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#### Common Marking Scheme

Below we offer brief descriptions of different mark categories for each method of assessment (essays/exams/dissertations). In assessing coursework there will be a greater emphasis on the breadth of material; more engagement with the literature and a more refined presentation. Exams require more concise and focused answers, with less emphasis on the literature incorporated or on sophisticated expression and presentation.

#### Essays

##### First

##### **A1** (90-100%)

An answer that fulfils all of the criteria for 'A2' and in addition shows an exceptional degree of insight and independent thought, together with flair in tackling issues, yielding a product that is deemed to be of potentially publishable quality, in terms of scholarship and originality.

##### **A2** (80-89%)

An authoritative answer that provides a fully effective response to the question. It should show a command of the literature and an ability to integrate that literature and go beyond it. The analysis should achieve a high level of quality early on and sustain it through to the conclusion. Sources should be used accurately and concisely to inform the answer but not dominate it. There should be a sense of a critical and committed argument, mindful of other interpretations but not afraid to question them. Presentation and the use of English should be commensurate with the quality of the content.

##### **A3** (70-79%)

A sharply-focused answer of high intellectual quality, which adopts a comprehensive approach to the question and maintains a sophisticated level of analysis throughout. It should show a willingness to engage critically with the literature and move beyond it, using the sources creatively to arrive at its own independent conclusions.

##### 2.i

##### **B-** (60-63%)   **B** (64-66%)   **B+** (67-69%)

A very good answer that shows qualities beyond the merely routine or acceptable. The question and the sources should be addressed directly and fully. The work of other authors should be presented critically. Effective use should be made of the whole range of the literature. There should be no significant errors of fact or interpretation. The answer should proceed coherently to a convincing conclusion. The quality of the writing and presentation (especially referencing) should be without major blemish. Within this range a particularly strong answer will be graded **B+**; a more limited answer will be graded **B-**.

##### 2.ii

**C-** (50-53%)   **C** (54-56%)   **C+** (57-59%)

A satisfactory answer with elements of the routine and predictable. It should be generally accurate and firmly based in the reading. It may draw upon a restricted range of sources but should not just re-state one particular source. Other authors should be presented accurately, if rather descriptively. The materials included should be relevant, and there should be evidence of basic understanding of the topic in question. Factual errors and misunderstandings of concepts and authors may occasionally be present but should not be a dominant impression. The quality of writing, referencing and presentation should be acceptable. Within this range a stronger answer will be graded **C+**; a weaker answer will be graded **C-**.

### **Third**

**D-** (40-43%)   **D** (44-46%)   **D+** (47-49%)

A passable answer which understands the question, displays some academic learning and refers to relevant literature. The answer should be intelligible and in general factually accurate, but may well have deficiencies such as restricted use of sources or academic argument, over-reliance on lecture notes, poor expression, and irrelevancies to the question asked. The general impression may be of a rather poor effort, with weaknesses in conception or execution. It might also be the right mark for a short answer that at least referred to the main points of the issue. Within this range a stronger answer will be graded **D+**; a bare pass will be graded **D-**.

### **Fail**

**E** (30-39%)

An answer with evident weaknesses of understanding but conveying the sense that with a fuller argument or factual basis it might have achieved a pass. It might also be a short and fragmentary answer with merit in what is presented but containing serious gaps.

**F** (20-29%)

An answer showing seriously inadequate knowledge of the subject, with little awareness of the relevant issues or literature, major omissions or inaccuracies, and pedestrian use of inadequate sources.

**G** (10-19%)

An answer that falls far short of a passable level by some combination of short length, irrelevance, lack of intelligibility, factual inaccuracy and lack of acquaintance with reading or academic concepts.

**H** (0-9%)

An answer without any academic merit which usually conveys little sense that the course has been followed or of the basic skills of essay-writing.

## **Exams**

## **First**

### **A1 (90-100%)**

An answer that fulfils all of the criteria for 'A2' (see below) and in addition shows originality and independent thought, together with flair and an ability to present and analyse things from different perspectives.

### **A2 (80-89%)**

A comprehensive answer that remains focused on the topic and provides an authoritative response to the question. It should be fully conversant with the main issues and literature and able to incorporate these into the analysis while showing awareness of their complexities and wider ramifications. It should display strong critical and analytical skills, mindful of other interpretations but not afraid to challenge them. A high level of quality should be sustained throughout.

### **A3 (70-79%)**

A sharply-focused answer of high intellectual quality, which adopts a comprehensive approach to the question and maintains a sophisticated level of analysis throughout. It should show a willingness to engage critically with the course material and move beyond it, using the sources creatively to arrive at its own independent conclusions.

## **2.i**

### **B- (60-63%) B (64-66%) B+ (67-69%)**

A very good answer, showing qualities beyond the merely routine or acceptable. The question should be addressed fully and directly within a coherent and well-structured discussion that demonstrates awareness of the main issues and reading. The answer should have a clear focus and engage with the topic in an analytical rather than descriptive way. There should be no significant errors of fact or interpretation of concepts or data. Within this range a particularly strong answer will be graded **B+**, a more limited one **B-**.

## **2.ii**

### **C- (50-53%) C (54-56%) C+ (57-59%)**

A satisfactory answer with elements of the routine and predictable. It should be generally accurate and show awareness of the main issues and/or evidence of independent reading, which will be presented accurately, if rather descriptively. There may be some errors of fact or interpretation, but the materials included should be relevant, and there should be evidence of basic understanding of the topic in question. It should attempt to engage critically with the question, though with some possible unevenness. Within this range a stronger answer will be graded **C+**; a weaker answer will be graded **C-**.

## **Third**

### **D- (40-43%) D (44-46%) D+ (47-49%)**

A passable but superficial answer which understands the question and displays some learning, though with omissions and inaccuracies and scant evidence of reading. There should be a discernible structure, although the answer may lack focus or coherence. There will be few signs of insight or critical awareness and the approach will be overwhelmingly descriptive rather than analytical. This could also be the mark for a short answer that at least referred to

the main points of the topic. Within this range a stronger answer will be graded **D+**; a bare pass will be graded **D-**.

## **Fail**

### **E (30-39%)**

An answer that attempts to address the question, but contains serious inaccuracies, omissions and/or misunderstandings. The structure will be weak, and the focus vague. There will be no or very little evidence of reading or critical awareness and a tendency to descriptive narrative, some of dubious relevance, rather than analysis. It might also be a short and fragmentary answer with merit in what is presented but containing serious gaps. Within this band, an answer conveying the sense that with fuller analysis it might have achieved a pass should be marked between 37% and 39%. More substantial fails should receive a mark of 30-36%.

### **F (20-29%)**

An answer showing no awareness of the relevant issues or reading and seriously inadequate knowledge of the subject. The structure will be incoherent and lacking in logical development, with no evidence of critical awareness or insight and major omissions and/or inaccuracies in the material presented.

### **G (10-19%)**

An answer that falls far short of a passable level by some combination of short length, irrelevance, lack of intelligibility, factual inaccuracy and lack of acquaintance with fundamental concepts or issues.

### **H (0-9%)**

An answer with no academic merit, conveying little sense that the course has been followed or of the ability to develop a coherent argument.

## **Dissertation**

### **First**

#### **A1 (90-100%)**

A dissertation that fulfils all of the criteria for an 'A2' (see below) and in addition shows an exceptional degree of insight and independent thought, together with flair and originality in tackling both methodological and substantive issues. These should be seen as yielding a product that is of potentially publishable quality in terms of scholarship, originality and contribution to the field.

#### **A2 (80-89%)**

An authoritative dissertation that displays a sophisticated grasp of issues raised in the literature and develops an appropriate design and methodology to address a clearly-articulated set of questions stemming from that literature. The analysis should achieve a high level of quality early on and sustain it through to its own independent conclusions. It should also show an ability to be reflexive, pointing to lessons learned from the research and making suggestions where appropriate as to how future studies in the area might benefit from experience gained in the course of the investigation. Referencing, presentation and use of English should be of commensurately high quality.

### **A3 (70-79%)**

A dissertation of high intellectual quality, which has clearly-stated aims, displays a good grasp of methodological issues and maintains a sophisticated level of analysis throughout. While presenting the data obtained from the research accurately, the discussion should move beyond a mainly descriptive account of the results, to develop its own comments, points and interpretations.

### **2.i**

#### **B- (60-63%) B (64-66%) B+ (67-69%)**

A very good dissertation that shows qualities beyond the merely routine or acceptable. The research question should be clearly stated and an appropriate methodology used to test or answer it, with effective use made of the literature. There should be no significant errors of either fact or interpretation. The presentation and use of the research data should be accurate and the discussion should show a willingness to speculate on their implications for theoretical, empirical or practical developments in the area. Referencing and the quality of the writing should be without major blemish. The answer should cover the question fully and present only relevant material. Within this range a particularly strong dissertation will be graded **B+**; a more limited one will be graded **B-**.

### **2.ii**

#### **C- (50-53%) C (54-56%) C+ (57-59%)**

A satisfactory dissertation, though showing elements of the routine and predictable. While generally accurate and firmly based in the reading, it will tend to draw on a more restricted set of sources. It will probably also be based on less clearly-stated aims and/or a less coherent methodology. Indeed, it is the grasp and handling of methodological issues that will most likely differentiate between the B and C grades. The data will be presented accurately, if rather descriptively, although there should be no serious weaknesses in their portrayal or interpretation. Factual errors and misunderstandings of concepts and authors may occasionally be present but should not be a dominant impression. The quality of writing, referencing and presentation should be acceptable. Within this range a stronger dissertation will be graded **C+**; a weaker one **C-**.

### **Third**

#### **D- (40-43%) D (44-46%) D+ (47-49%)**

A passable dissertation, which displays some familiarity with relevant literature and the issues under investigation. The aims may be poorly articulated and this incoherence will undermine the quality of the research. The work should be intelligible and factually accurate, but will contain deficiencies such as restricted use of sources, poor expression and failure to analyse or discuss the implications of the data in anything more than a thin and descriptive way. The general impression will probably be of a rather poor effort with weaknesses in conception or execution. It might also be the right mark for an obviously hastily-executed piece of research which attempted to address a relevant set of questions. Within this range a stronger piece of work will be graded **D+**; a bare pass will be graded **D-**.

## **Fail**

### **E (30-39%)**

A dissertation showing clear lack of understanding of the nature of research, but conveying the sense that with clearer aims and better developed instruments it might have achieved a pass. It might also clearly have been written in a hurry, with some merit, but serious gaps, in what is presented,

### **F (20-29%)**

Work showing seriously inadequate knowledge of the subject, with little awareness of the relevant issues or literature, major omissions or inaccuracies, and limited use of inadequate sources. It could also be the mark for a very short answer with some relevant material.

### **G (10-19%)**

Work falling short of a passable level by some combination of poor methodology, unclear aims, incoherence, factual inaccuracy and lack of familiarity with basic concepts or literature.

### **H (0-9%)**

A dissertation containing no academic merit or evidence that the author understands the nature of the research enterprise, or made a serious effort to address the topic.

## APPENDIX 4

### INSTITUTE FOR ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT: PROVISION FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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The Study Development Team at the Institute for Academic Development (IAD) provides resources and workshops aimed at helping all students to enhance their learning skills and develop effective study techniques. Resources and workshops cover a range of topics, such as managing your own learning, reading, note making, essay and report writing, exam preparation and exam techniques.

The study development resources are housed on 'LearnBetter' (undergraduate), part of Learn, the University's virtual learning environment. Follow the link from the IAD Study Development web page to enrol: [www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates](http://www.ed.ac.uk/iad/undergraduates)

Workshops are interactive: they will give you the chance to take part in activities, have discussions, exchange strategies, share ideas and ask questions. They are 90 minutes long and held on Wednesday afternoons at 1.30pm or 3.30pm. The schedule is available from the IAD Undergraduate web page (see above).

Workshops are open to all undergraduates but you need to book in advance, using the Learn booking system. Each workshop opens for booking 2 weeks before the date of the workshop itself. If you book and then cannot attend, please cancel in advance through Learn so that another student can have your place. (To be fair to all students, anyone who persistently books on workshops and fails to attend may be barred from signing up for future events.)

Study Development Advisors are also available for an individual consultation if you have specific questions about your own approach to studying, working more effectively, strategies for improving your learning and your academic work. Please note, however, that Study Development Advisors are not subject specialists so they cannot comment on the content of your work. They also do not check or proof read students' work.

To make an appointment with a Study Development Advisor, email [iad.study@ed.ac.uk](mailto:iad.study@ed.ac.uk) (For support with English Language, you should contact the English Language Teaching Centre.)

## APPENDIX 5

### STUDENTS ON A TIER 4 VISA

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As a Tier 4 student, the University of Edinburgh is the sponsor of your UK visa. The University has a number of legal responsibilities, including monitoring your attendance on your programme and reporting to the Home Office where:

- you suspend your studies, transfer or withdraw from a course, or complete your studies significantly early;
- you fail to register/enrol at the start of your course or at the two additional registration sessions each year and there is no explanation;
- you are repeatedly absent or are absent for an extended period and are excluded from the programme due to non-attendance. This includes missing Tier 4 census points without due reason. The University must maintain a record of your attendance and the Home Office can ask to see this or request information about it at any time;

As a student with a Tier 4 visa sponsored by the University of Edinburgh, the terms of your visa require you to, (amongst others):

- Ensure you have a correct and valid visa for studying at the University of Edinburgh, which, if a Tier 4 visa, requires that it is a visa sponsored by the University of Edinburgh;
- Attend all of your University classes, lectures, tutorials, etc where required. This includes participating in the requirements of your course including submitting assignments, attending meetings with tutors and attending examinations . If you cannot attend due to illness, for example, you must inform your School. This includes attending Tier 4 Census sessions when required throughout the academic session.
- Make sure that your contact details, including your address and contact numbers are up to date in your student record.
- Make satisfactory progress on your chosen programme of studies.
- Observe the general conditions of a Tier 4 General student visa in the UK, including studying on the programme for which your visa was issued, not overstaying the validity of your visa and complying with the work restrictions of the visa.

Please note that any email relating to your Tier 4 sponsorship, including census dates and times will be sent to your University email address - you should therefore check this regularly.

Further details on the terms and conditions of your Tier 4 visa can be found in the “Downloads” section at [www.ed.ac.uk/immigration](http://www.ed.ac.uk/immigration)

Information or advice about your Tier 4 immigration status can be obtained by contacting the International Student Advisory Service, located at the International Office, 33 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9JS

Email: [immigration@ed.ac.uk](mailto:immigration@ed.ac.uk)