

**THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE**

PhD

IN

**Politics and International
Relations**

Programme Handbook

PhD in Politics

2020-2021

**THIS HANDBOOK CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT IF
REQUIRED**

Postgraduate Adviser:

Professor Wilfried Swenden

Room 3.05, Chrystal Macmillan Building

Telephone: 650 4255 Email:

w.swenden@ed.ac.uk

http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/staff/politics/swenden_wilfried

Office hours: Wednesday 10.00-12.00 and by appointment

Please Note: Due to COVID-19, Office Hours may take place virtually if required for health and safety reasons.

Research day: Tuesday

Programme Administrative Support

The Postgraduate Research Support Team is your first point of contact within the Graduate School of Social and Political Science. Contact details are below:

Graduate School Office

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

Please contact via email in the first instance as staff may be working away from their campus office: pgresearch.sps@ed.ac.uk

Note: The handbook does not supersede the University *Regulations*, nor the formal requirements for each degree as set out in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, 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.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
What is in this Handbook?	4
About Politics and International Relations	4
Postgraduate Students	5
Why Research Training?	5
The Graduate School of Social and Political Science	5
Ethical issues	5
The Postgraduate Adviser for Politics and International Relations	5
THE PHD PROGRAMME	6
The PhD Degree	6
Programme of work for PhD students.....	7
End of First Stage Review	9
The Review Board	10
Annual Reviews	11
Submission and Examination of the Thesis	11
Part-time Teaching	11
SUPERVISION	12
FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	12
PIR Representation	12
PIR Research seminars	12
Staff	12
Website	12

INTRODUCTION

What is in this Handbook?

This Handbook contains information specific to **POLITICS and INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS Research students** studying for the PhD degree. 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:

[Postgraduate Research Training Courses web page](#): This sets out the Graduate School's programme of generic research training courses 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.

[PhD Handbook](#): This provides 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 procedure for the ethical review of postgraduate research projects.

The University [Postgraduate Research Students and their Supervision: A Code of Practice for Supervisors and Students](#).

About Politics and International Relations

The University of Edinburgh Politics and International Relations (PIR) is committed to excellence in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge on issues of power, government, governance and international politics. 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 60 academic 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, security studies, foreign policy, international political economy, migration studies, public policy and international political philosophy.

The University of Edinburgh PIR is home to several 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 our [Institutes and Research Groups](#).

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 International Relations each year.

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 [here](#).

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. See their [success stories](#).

Why Research Training?

Postgraduate researchers 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](#).

In PIR, each PhD student must agree an individual training programme with their supervisors and the Postgraduate Advisor. 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, Technology and Innovation Studies, Social Anthropology, Social Policy, Social Work, Sociology and South Asian Studies. See the [Graduate School Research Students' website](#) for further information:

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 doctoral thesis is therefore subject to these procedures. You will find further guidance in the [Graduate School PhD Student Handbook](#).

You can access the School's ethical policy, procedures and the self-audit forms in full at the School website [Research Ethics pages](#).

The Postgraduate Advisor for Politics and International Relations

The Postgraduate Advisor for Politics and IR is the Programme Director for its PhD and MSc by Research programmes and is responsible for their smooth running, including coordinating teaching inputs, examinations, progress reviews for continuing research students, programme evaluation and curriculum development. The

Postgraduate Advisor is available for any scholarly or personal issues that may arise while you are on the Programme. The Postgraduate Advisor 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 Postgraduate Advisor would offer back-up advice or support for students.

It is your responsibility to inform the Postgraduate Advisor 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 Postgraduate Advisor and your supervisor if you are planning to conduct fieldwork or engage in any other kind of research abroad and if you will be away from Edinburgh for more than 30 days.

The [Postgraduate Advisor \(PGA\)](#) for Politics and International Relations is:

Professor Wilfried Swenden
Room 3.05, Chrystal Macmillan Building
☎ 650 4255

✉ w.swenden@ed.ac.uk

Feedback and Guidance Hours: Wednesday 10.00-12.00 (in person or virtually due to COVID 19 if required for health and safety) and by appointment Research day: Tuesdays

THE PHD PROGRAMME

Programme Director:

Professor Wilfried Swenden (w.swenden@ed.ac.uk)

The PhD Degree

The PhD 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 (fulltime) 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 5.2 and 5.3, respectively, of the University [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#).

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 encouraged also to build their academic curriculum vitae and gain experience as junior academics. This may include gaining experience in teaching and attending and presenting at appropriate academic conferences. PhD students are encouraged to publish in professional outlets, such as academic journals.

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 may be required to complete a programme of training and research preparation. In addition to the **Seminar for Politics/IR Research Students ('Theory and Practice')**, specific training courses may be required as discussed with your supervisors. This may include the requirement to attend University-provided transferable skills events provided by the [Institute for Academic Development](#) to complete additional English language or other language training, etc.

During the Postgraduate Researcher Induction Programme in Welcome 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.

Note that **apart from the Seminar for Politics/IR Research students**, there are NO set-required courses for first year PhD students in Politics and IR, unless they are [ESRC \(Economic and Social Research Council\)- SGSSS \(Scottish Graduate School of Social Sciences\)](#) funded.

ESRC-SGSSS- funded students in their first year MUST enrol for

[Core Quantitative Data Analysis 1 and 2](#),

[Research Skills in the Social Sciences: Data Collection](#) and

[Research Design](#)

Furthermore, first year students who are eligible and intend to apply for ESRC-SGSSS-funding in 2021-22 are strongly recommended to take the three above courses. If NOT, they will be required to do so in their second year, should they have been successful in obtaining ESRC-SGSSS-funding.

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

Additional research training specified by Supervisor and Postgraduate Adviser. This may include the requirement to take specified Graduate School courses, to attend University-provided [transferable skills events](#) to complete additional English language or other language training, etc.

In addition to the Research Training Courses, the Graduate School runs a series of [Research Training Workshops](#). They are regular sessions on advanced training topics and themes of interest to PhD students. They offer masterclass style training from leaders in the field and an opportunity to meet students with similar interests. They are open to all research students in the School, whatever stage you are at and whatever subject you are studying.

Milestones for PhD Students

The Graduate School [PhD 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 Postgraduate Adviser as part of the annual review process.

Milestones for Politics PhD Students		
Year	Reviews	Suggested progress indicators & milestones (full time students)*
PhD Year 1 "Research Training Year"	Training Needs Assessment (start of year) End of First Stage Review Formal Panel & Report (May or June)	<u>At least</u> 1 presentation at Seminar for Politics/IR students ('Theory and Practice') seminar or equivalent Presentation at internal end-of-year postgraduate showcase (or equivalent) Attend at least 1 external graduate conference or workshop (or equivalent) Successful completion of required and agreed training courses Portfolio of work as agreed with supervisors End-of-First Stage Review – submission of research proposal/draft chapter & detailed work schedule (as agreed with supervisors) Submit academic CV

** For part-time students, adapt to reflect longer prescribed and maximum periods ** Annual Reviews, for both full-time and part-time PhD students, must take place between 9 and 12 months from the start of the academic year.*

End of First Year Review

All full time PhD 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 between May and the end of August of their first academic year, and prepare accordingly.**

The same timescale is in place for part time students, however they will not have been expected to have made as much progress in this time and the decision on the confirmation of PhD registration can be delayed until the second annual review.

For further information about the purpose of the End of First Stage Review please read the appropriate section in the Graduate School [PhD Students' Handbook](#).

The Review Board

The End of First Year Review is carried out by a Board (usually in May-June, but no later than August), which normally has three academic members including the supervisors and at least one internal examiner who is not involved in supervising the work of the student. It may include someone who is not a member of the University, where appropriate. Membership of the Board is decided by the supervisors, where needed, in consultation with the Postgraduate Advisor.

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 general rule, the paper submission should not exceed 10,000 words and is submitted at least two weeks in advance of the scheduled Review Board.**

The Review Board usually takes the following format:

- Student presents a short summary of the research, with a particular focus on the research question and research design (normally not more than ten minutes)
- Examiner(s) raises questions about the paper related to research design, original contribution, methodology, ethics, feasibility, timeline. Main supervisor takes notes; both supervisors can also raise questions, but non-supervisory examiner(s) clearly takes the lead. Q&A usually lasts for about 50 minutes-1 hour.
- Supervisors leave the room, so that student can exchange views with examiner on supervision.
- Student leaves the room: examiner reports back on supervision, and suggests way forward in consultation with the supervisors.
- Student is brought in again and a result is communicated:

Possible outcomes include:

Pass

Conditional Pass: (student is required to revise sections of the board review paper within a two-month period and resubmit these to supervisors OR to supervisors and examiner(s)). Student passes if supervisors and/or examiner(s) are satisfied with revisions made. A re-sit of the Board is not normally required

Fail: student is required to resubmit board review paper following guidelines of the board, normally within an eight-week period, and re-sit the Board.

The process of reporting after the Board and the range of recommendations open to the reviewers can be found in the Graduate School [PhD Students' Handbook](#). The Board review report is shared and approved by the examiner, supervisors and students. The lead supervisor appends the relevant board review paper to the students' Annual Review section in Euclid (see below).

Annual Reviews

[Annual Reviews](#) are completed towards the end of first, second and every subsequent year of the PhD, for all students. This should be carried out in a meeting between the student and both supervisors and a report from duly agreed and signed by each.

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?)

Both student and supervisors are invited to comment in confidence to the PG Advisor before or after the Review, to express and discuss any concerns they may have about progress, training, supervision or any other aspect of a student's academic welfare.

In third and subsequent years of the full time PhD, or fourth and subsequent years of the part time PhD, satisfactory progress may also be dependent on the student having presented a thesis chapter, or equivalent work in progress paper to the appropriate subject-based Postgraduate Seminar or Writing Workshop.

Submission and Examination of the Thesis

Please refer to our [Thesis Submission and Examination webpages](#) for details.

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.

For further information see the Graduate School [PhD 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 for MSc by Research students require 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 PhD students are allocated a principal supervisor at admission and a second supervisor early in Semester 1 if they have not already been allocated at admission stage. However, changes can be made to the supervisory team once the student has started, if supervisors and the student agree a change would be beneficial for the student's particular research needs.

For further information on roles and expectations see [A Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#). All research students and supervisors should also make themselves familiar with the sections on 'supervisors' and 'students' in this document.

If you feel you are having a serious problem with your supervisor or supervisors, you should alert the Politics [Postgraduate Advisor](#), 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 [PhD Students' Handbook](#).

PIR Representation

Research students in Politics and International Relations 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). If you have a particularly sensitive issue that you would prefer one of your peers raise, then you may wish to approach one of the [programme reps](#).

PIR 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 International Relations 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.

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.

Website

The [Politics and International Relations postgraduate website](#)

contains information about recent and current students, work-in-progress, course outlines and a set of useful links.