

# BA (Hons) International Relations (Combined Honours)

## Programme Specification

### Primary Purpose:

Course management, monitoring and quality assurance.

### Secondary Purpose:

Detailed information for students, staff and employers. Current students should refer to the related Course Handbook for further detail.

### Disclaimer:

The University of Portsmouth has checked the information given in this Programme Specification and believes it to be correct. We will endeavour to deliver the course in keeping with this Programme Specification but reserve the right to change the content, timetabling and administration of the course whilst maintaining equivalent academic standards and quality.

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# **Programme Specification**

## **1. Named Awards**

BA (Hons) International Relations and History  
BA (Hons) International Relations and Politics

## **2. Course Code (and UCAS Code if applicable)**

C0984 BA (Hons) International Relations and History LV21  
C0694 BA (Hons) International Relations and Politics L250

To view units and course structures please visit [www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch](http://www.port.ac.uk/unitwebsearch) and enter the 'C' code above to find the correct course.

## **3. Awarding Body**

University of Portsmouth

## **4. Teaching Institution**

University of Portsmouth

## **5. Accrediting Body**

Not applicable for CH programmes with exception of LLB Law with International Relations which will be accredited by the Bar Standards Board and the Solicitors Regulatory Body

## **6. QAA Benchmark Groups**

Politics and International Relations

## **7. Document Control Information**

Version: August 2016

## **8. Effective Session**

2016-2017

## **9. Author**

Dr Paul Flenley

## **10. Faculty**

FHSS

## **11. Department**

SSHLS

## **12. Educational Aims**

### **a. The Combined Honours degree programme:**

- To provide a challenging and stimulating study environment.
- To provide a framework allowing students to follow a flexible coherent programme of study.

- To enable students to study two subject areas and develop specialist interests and knowledge.
- To provide an opportunity for students to create links between two different subject areas.
- To provide students with the opportunity to study up to a maximum of 40 credits worth of elective units.
- To provide students with the opportunity to develop key skills.
- To equip graduates with the necessary transferable skills for lifelong learning and flexibility in the context of changing labour markets.
- To provide students with the skills and knowledge required to maximise career and postgraduate study opportunities.
- To provide an opportunity for students to further their independence and relevant academic and employment skills by studying abroad for half a year or one year of their degree course, undertaking work-based placement and choosing relevant study options.\*

\*Some study abroad opportunities and placements may not be appropriate for all students.

#### **b. the International Relations route of the Combined Honours Degree Programme:**

- To enable students to acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of international relations and politics in a global context
- To enable students to understand and apply key concepts and theoretical approaches within the field of International Relations and develop an appreciation of its contested nature
- To encourage students to think critically about political issues, power, values, ideas and institutions at an international and global level
- To facilitate student knowledge of the key dimensions of contemporary international relations including conflict and co-operation between states, foreign policy, international order, strategic and security studies, and global political economy
- To enable students to analyse political events, political change, democratisation and development in selected countries and/or regions and to be able to situate them in an international and global context

#### **International Relations is currently offered with:**

**European Studies** – The BA (Hons) European Studies and International Relations provides students with an opportunity to study two inter-related subjects in depth. The study of European history, ideas and social and political change is enhanced with an understanding of the key issues and structures of power in contemporary international relations. Furthermore, this combination allows those interested in international relations to concentrate and focus on the study of the region of Europe.

**Languages (French, German, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish)** - International relations concerns the political, economic and cultural relationships, between governments and peoples throughout the world. The study of languages equips students with language and communication skills, and promotes inter-cultural awareness and understanding. Students learn about the history, politics and cultures of the countries where the language is spoken, making the combination of International Relations and Languages an attractive, vocational degree programme which prepares students for a wide range of careers in the UK and abroad.

**Politics** – The BA (Hons) International Relations and Politics provides students with the opportunity to study two closely related subjects in depth. It examines international affairs and the interrelationship between national and world politics. Students study political structures and agency within and across states, multi-level governance, regionalisation, and globalisation.

**History** - This combination offers students the opportunity to study the broader social and historical context of the History subject area in association with an examination of the key issues and structures

of power in contemporary international relations. This reinforces the potential linkages between the international dimension of human activity and its social, cultural and historical bases.

**LLB Law** – This combination offers IR as a minor route only in order to meet LLB requirements for professional accreditation. The combination allows students to develop a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of international law, building on the study of core aspects of Law and of International Relations before taking units in specific areas of international law including EU Law and Public International Law.

### 13. Reference Points

- Benchmark Statement for Politics and International Relations (PIR)
- University of Portsmouth Curriculum Framework Document 2012 (CFD)
- The scholarship and research expertise of academic members of staff (AS)
- QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education (particularly section 7 appendix 2 and appendix 3) (QAA)
- National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

The curriculum promotes progression during the course of the programme. Promoting progression means that the demands on the students in the areas of skills, knowledge, intellectual challenge, conceptualisation and learning autonomy increases from L4-L6. (QAA appendix 2).

### 14. Learning Outcomes

#### a. The Combined Honours Degree Programme:

##### **Generic Learning Outcomes of the Programme (independent of route of study):**

##### ***Students will be able to demonstrate an ability to:***

- Understand the key aspects of two subject areas
- Apply appropriate techniques of analysis to two subject areas
- Research topics and devise and sustain arguments related to two specific subject areas
- Discuss current research and scholarship related to two subject areas
- Discuss the current limits of knowledge in specific subject areas
- Take responsibility for their own learning in a combined Honours degree programme
- Carry out an extended piece of independent enquiry into one or more subject areas
- Communicate information in a manner appropriate to the subject and the intended audience
- Show initiative and be able to make and justify decisions.

#### b. The International Relations route of the Combined Honours Degree Programme:

The Benchmark Statement applies to Honours degrees in International Relations or Combined Honours Degrees where International Relations comprises at least 50% of the curriculum in the final or Honours year.

The outcomes below apply where International Relations is taken as a Minor or Joint route through the Combined Honours Degree Programme. Some additional outcomes may also be achieved depending upon the choice of options selected.

- Understand the key aspects of the subject area
- Apply appropriate techniques of analysis to the subject area
- Research topics and to devise and sustain arguments related to the subject area
- Discuss current research and scholarship related to the subject area
- Discuss the current limits of knowledge in the subject area
- Take responsibility for student's own learning

- Communicate information in a manner appropriate to the subject and the intended audience
- Show initiative and be able to make and justify decisions
- Work independently or as part of a team or as a team leader
- Understand the labour market, workplace and graduate employability

The curriculum promotes progression during the course of the programme which means that the demands on the students in the areas of skills, knowledge, intellectual challenge, conceptualisation and learning autonomy increases from L4-L6. (QAA appendix 2).

#### **A. Knowledge and Understanding of:**

- A1. The ideas, concepts, theories, and methods distinctive to International Relations (PIR; AS)
- A2. The integration of the central ideas, concepts and theories of International Relations within international political research (PIR; AS)
- A3. The contending interpretations of processes, events and issues within International Relations (PIR; AS)
- A4. The multifaceted and trans-sovereign nature of contemporary global issues (PIR; AS)
- A5. The changing context of the international system, particularly with reference to strategic and security issues, the role and agency of the state and non-state actors, and the rise of regional and global governance (PIR; AS)
- A6. Debate within and between competing theories within International relations and their respective utility in explaining change and continuity within international politics (PIR; AS)
- A7. The evolution of the post-1945 world economy and processes of globalisation with reference to the study of international political economy (PIR; AS)
- A8. The strengths and weaknesses of the range of political research strategies and methods (PIR; AS)

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

There are a variety of ways in which student learning is advanced by the programme:

- Lectures are used to set out the key themes, concepts, issues, and empirical evidence in a given area of study (A1-A8)
- Seminars, plenaries, workshops, tutorial groups and group work enable students to advance their learning (A1-A8)
- Guided study enables students to make effective use of a range of learning material and resources centred on academic books, reports, and journal articles and supplemented by additional materials including film, newspaper articles and others from electronic sources (A1-A8).
- In the case of Combined Honours students, further knowledge and understanding of International Relations is consolidated through the completion of the final year dissertation/major project (A1, A2, A3, A5, A6)
- Students also use web-based self-instructional packages that promote independent learning. (A1, A2, A4, A6, A7, A8)
- Combined Honours students have the opportunity to study abroad for one year which enables students to experience learning in a different academic and cultural context adding to their knowledge of globalisation and internationalisation (A2, A3, A4, A7)

#### Assessment

Assessment is a crucial component of student learning. It is necessary to monitor student progress, motivate learners, provide feedback and grade students. The assessment methods used on the programme are varied:

- Individually assessed course work takes the form of essays, dossiers, individual projects and reports, article and news reviews, documentary commentaries, policy briefing papers and the final year dissertation/major project (A1-A8).
- Group-based course work assessments often take the form of group projects, group presentations and web-site building (A1, A3, A5)
- Formal examinations seen or unseen papers (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6)

- Formative assessments are included in units 4 (A1-A8)

### **B. Cognitive (Intellectual or Thinking) Skills, able to:**

- B1. Evaluate, interpret and apply evidence, data, and information from a variety of sources (PIR)
- B2. Demonstrate clear and logical reasoning and use relevant evidence to support arguments, synthesise relevant information, and exercise critical judgement (PIR; CFD)
- B3. Demonstrate the application of research, analytical and presentation skills in a specific enquiry within International Relations (PIR)
- B4. Apply a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of international politics, international history, strategic and security studies, and global political economy (PIR)
- B5. Reflect on and manage effectively own learning and make use of constructive feedback (PIR; CFD)

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

The teaching and learning of intellectual (thinking) skills occurs alongside the teaching and learning of the substance of International Relations as set out above. Formal teaching strategies promote students' independent learning in preparation for seminar, plenary, and workshop discussions. Cognitive skills (B1-B4) are developed via seminar/tutorial discussions and student presentations. B1 and B2 are also supported by lectures. B5 will be developed throughout all 3 years with a particularly strong focus on this area in L4 tutorial groups. Working independently with tutor support to complete the dissertation/major project at L6 will develop B1-B5.

#### Assessment

- Assessment criteria and feedback addresses the coherence, structure and prosecution of logical argument (B1-B5).
- The range of modes of assessment as outlined above tests students' thinking skills in a variety of contexts and situations. For example closed exams call for an immediate and time-time limited response whereas the dissertation demands an extended period of research, reflection and evaluation (B1-B5)
- Marking criteria for assessment is designed to address a range of intellectual skills(B1-B5)

### **C. Practical (Professional or Subject) Skills, able to:**

- C1. Demonstrate the ability to use major theoretical perspectives, concepts and models in International Relations with reference to empirical evidence (PIR; AS)
- C2. Analyse, assess, and communicate ideas and arguments orally and in written formats in relation to the issues, structures, and activities within International Relations (PIR)
- C3. Undertake and present scholarly work, demonstrating initiative, self-organization and time-management (PIR)
- C4. Identify and utilise a range of different research methods and data appropriate to the study of International Relations (PIR; AS)

#### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

- The major theoretical perspectives, concepts and models in International Relations are taught via lectures and plenaries and further knowledge in relation to these is developed through independent reading (C1, C4)
- International Relations theory is taught in lectures, workshops and seminars and further knowledge in relation to this area is developed through independent reading (C1, C2)
- The practical application of international political analysis is developed through seminars, plenaries, workshop exercises and discussions (C2, C3)
- Research strategies and methods used within International Relations are taught in lectures and seminars and are enhanced through independent study (C4)

## Assessment

- The ability to apply subject specific practical skills is tested through the range of modes of assessment referred to above. Assessing C1- C4 is undertaken at all 3 levels of the degree with higher expectations of students' abilities at L6.
- Essays, analytical reviews, projects, briefing papers, documentary commentaries, dossiers, and seminar journals will assess C1, C2, C3 and C4. The dissertation/major project will assess C1.
- Marking criteria provide opportunities for the assessment of a range of subject-specific practical skills (C1-C4).

### **D. Transferable (Graduate and Employability) Skills, able to:**

- D1. Communicate effectively in a variety of contexts and modes (PIR, CFD)
- D2. Demonstrate information retrieval skills in relation to primary and secondary sources of information (PIR, CFD)
- D3. Demonstrate communication and information technology skills (PIR, CFD)
- D4. Demonstrate skills of time planning and management (PIR)
- D5. Work independently and as a member of a group, establishing and maintaining cooperative working relationships in the meeting of agreed objectives (PIR, CFD)
- D6. Define and seek solutions to problems through logical and critical thinking (PIR,CFD)
- D7. Make use of feedback to plan, organise and review own performance (PIR)

### Learning and Teaching Strategies and Methods

- At level 4 learning and study skills are embedded in the curriculum – especially the units Current Political Issues and Global Issues – and developed through the tutorial programme. This includes time management, note-taking, critical reading, group work, library and web-based research skills, essay planning and writing, referencing, group presentations and IT skills (D1, D2, D4, D5, D6) Combined Honours students are also introduced to methods of data collection and analysis via Global Issues.
- Beginning in Level 4 and continuing through the degree career awareness, graduate employability skills and self-reflection on progress are developed in the context of support from Purple Door, tutorials, plenaries, and electronic resources provided via the VLE (D1, D2, D3, D4,D6, D7)
- The development of graduate employability skills is an important aspect of teaching and learning on all core and optional units
- At level 6 students draw upon and further develop a range of skills in the production of their dissertation/major project, supported by individual tutorials (D1 –D7)

## Assessment

- At all levels skills are assessed a variety of means such as essays, article reviews, documentary commentaries, briefing papers, the retrieval, representation and analysis of qualitative and numerical data in individual projects and reports. At Level 4 group work is assessed through the construction of a web site.
- At level 5 progress in developing graduate employability skills will be assessed in different units depending in part on option choice. For example, all students will be offered the opportunity to undertake work-based learning as part of the unit Learning from Experience. In terms of core units, all students will write a briefing paper analysing the foreign policy position adopted by a key state actor in relation to a contemporary international event. All students also will have the opportunity to undertake a language option (D1-D7).
- Students will also be given the opportunity to practise CV writing and completing graduate application forms as well as to attend careers plenaries at Level 5 ( D1,D3, and D4)
- The level 6 dissertation provides the opportunity for the assessment of a range of key and transferable skills as outlined above and as reflected in the dissertation marking criteria (D1-D7).



## 15. Course Structure, Progression and Award Requirements

- The International Relations Combined Honours degree programmes comprise 120 credits per level usually involving 3 years full-time study. A 4 year sandwich route is also offered to all students allowing them to undertake placement in the third year of their programme of study.
- Students taking a Joint Degree must study a minimum of 140 credits in each subject area and the remaining 80 credits can be made up of either subject area or options outside of the subjects. Students on a Major/Minor Honours only study 120 credits in the Minor subject area. Students will always take the Dissertation/Major project in the Major subject area. See s.5 of the Curriculum Framework document 2012 for a full description of combined honours structures and award titles.
- To qualify for the award of a Certificate in Higher Education students must have been assigned at least 120 credits at levels 4, 5, or 6. To qualify for the award of a Diploma in Higher Education students must have been assigned at least 240 credits overall, including 100 credits at level 5 or above. To qualify for the award of an ordinary degree students must have been assigned at least 300 credits, of which at least 60 credits are at Level 6. To qualify for the award of an ordinary degree students must have been assigned at least 360 credits, of which at least 100 credits are at Level 6. Standard University rules apply. The regulations must be consulted for a full description of exit awards.
- Units are offered as 20 credits apart from the final year dissertation/major project which is 40 credits. Students on some Combined Honours combinations have the opportunity to spend half a year studying abroad via the Erasmus scheme or direct exchanges for a 60 credit unit. All students have an opportunity to undertake a year-long work placement or period of study in their third year (sandwich route) which is offered as a 120 credit unit. One credit is equivalent to 10 hours of student learning.
- International Relations is also offered as single honours degree.

## 16. Employability Statement

**Employability skills** are delivered (and assessed where applicable) throughout the curriculum. We provide structured support to enable students to develop their employability skills from L4 to L6. Core units at each level will include most of the academic and employability skills that are listed in Annex 5 of the 2012 Curriculum Framework.

**Career management skills** specifically (as a subset of employability skills) are embedded throughout the curriculum:

At a basic level (L4), the management of self, learning, tasks, the communication of information, and the development of interpersonal skills is embedded in the first 'short fat' subject foundation unit (Current Political Issues.) These skills are further developed in the second 'short fat' subject foundation unit (Global Issues). These units help students 'learn how to learn' as part of studying the discipline of a subject area. Additionally, students are introduced to basic career management skills (self-awareness, professional development planning, CV development etc.) in order to get them thinking about their existing skills and career plans.

At L5, we continue with developing Career Management skills during re-induction. There are plenary sessions for students on the further development of career management skills and these are supported by interactive online exercises and website resources related to the subject area. Students also have access to an interactive, online Employability Hub.

At L5 in the case of some Combined Honours combinations students have the opportunity to spend half a year studying abroad via the Erasmus scheme or direct exchanges. All students have the opportunity to spend a year between L5 and L6 undertaking a work placement or a period of study abroad, enhancing their employability.

At L6, as part of re-induction, personal tutorials and PDP, we provide further guidance and activities for students. This is linked to individual research/project skills related to the core 40 credit dissertation/major project and group research/project skills in core units.

For both L5 and L6 students we run a series of Faculty-wide careers events with employers from a range of relevant employment sectors during the year (including a Faculty Alumni Day).

All these activities are supported by the Personal Tutor system and a refocused PDP – developing students as professionals - Professional Development Planning.

Students taking the Joint Degree have the opportunity to take the Faculty-wide Learning from Experience (LiFE) unit which offers students the chance to undertake a work placement as an accredited part of their degree. There is also the opportunity to undertake a **work-based learning dissertation/project** as an alternative to the traditional dissertation.

Finally, we are committed to providing opportunities for students to study a **language** as part of preparing students for the global labour market and as part of our commitment to internationalisation.

## 17. Support for Student Learning

- The Combined Honours Degree is managed by a Course Leader from one subject and a Deputy Course Leader from the other.
- Extensive induction programme introduces the student to the University and their course.
- Each student has a personal tutor, responsible for pastoral support and guidance.
- University support services include careers, financial advice, housing, counselling etc.
- The Academic Skills Unit (ASK).
- The Additional Support and Disability Advice Centre (ASDAC).
- Excellent library facilities.
- The University of Portsmouth has consistently been awarded an excellent rating for student support and guidance in a number of Quality Assurance Agency inspections.
- Student course and unit handbooks provide information about the course structure and University regulations etc.
- Feedback is provided for all assessments.
- Personal Development Planning (PDP) for all awards.
- Students studying abroad communicate via email with a nominated tutor and are provided with electronic versions of relevant handbooks and necessary administrative notices during the year.

## 18. Admissions Criteria

### A. Academic Admissions Criteria

- A-levels: 240-300 points from 3 A Levels or equivalent for BA (Hons) International Relations and History – of which 100 points must come from A Level History; 240-300 points from 3 A levels or equivalent for BA (Hons) International Relations and Politics.
- GNVQ: students must have achieved at least a C grade for a single 12-unit GNVQ in a relevant area.
- Students may also offer more varied GNVQ and A/AS combinations, including 6-unit and 3-unit GNVQ awards.
- Professional qualifications & experience: considered positively
- Access courses: 60% overall
- Other qualifications: Yes
- Mature and International students are welcomed
- IELTS – minimum requirement level 6
- If appropriate Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) may be assessed and accredited

## **B. Disability**

The University makes no distinction in its admissions policy with regard to disability and will endeavour to make all reasonable adjustments in order to make it possible for students to study at Portsmouth on a course of their choice.

## **19. Evaluation and Enhancement of Standards and Quality in Learning and Teaching**

### **A. Mechanisms for Review and Evaluation**

- Course Leader's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Head of Department's Annual Standards and Quality Evaluative Review.
- Unit and Course Level student feedback considered at Board of Studies.
- Unit Assessment Board consideration of student performance for each programme.
- Annual Standards and Quality Reports to Board of Studies, including consideration of Subject and Award External Examiner Reports.
- Periodic Programme Review.
- Student Representatives and Student/Staff Consultative Committees.
- National Student Survey.
- Staff Performance and Development Review.
- Peers Enhancing Practice Framework.
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee.
- Combined Honours Management Board

### **B. Responsibilities for Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Unit Co-ordinators for unit content and delivery.
- Course Leader for day-to-day running of course.
- University Contact for day-to-day running of course.
- Board of Studies with overall responsibilities for operation and content of course.
- Combined Honours Management Board.
- Head of Department.
- Associate Dean (Academic).
- Associate Dean (Students).
- Quality Assurance Committee.
- Unit, Award and Progression Board of Examiners.

### **C. Mechanisms for Gaining Student Feedback**

- Student Representation on Board of Studies.
- Student Staff Consultative Committees.
- Unit and Course level student feedback questionnaires.
- Virtual Student Staff Consultative Committees via VLE (also available to students studying abroad)
- University participates in external student surveys, eg National Student Survey (NSS), Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and International Student Barometer (ISB).

## D. Staff Development Priorities

- Academic staff undertake activities related to research, scholarship, teaching and learning and student support and guidance.
- Annual staff performance and development reviews match development to needs.
- Managers undertake a variety of management development programmes.
- Academic staff undertake initial and continuing professional development within the Academic Professional Excellence Framework (APEX) programme which is aligned with the Higher Education Academy (HEA)'s UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
- All academic staff encouraged to seek Higher Education Academy membership.
- Support Staff are encouraged to attend short courses in areas such as minute taking, and specific IT packages.

## 20. Assessment Strategy

Assessment is viewed as a crucial component of student learning and is necessary to monitor progress, motivate learning, provide feedback and lastly to 'grade' student performance. The degree uses a diversity of assessment methods that are geared to assessing the desired learning outcomes and are designed to enable students to demonstrate their learning in relation to explicit and transparent criteria. The learning outcomes relate to subject specific knowledge, academic transferable skills and graduate employability skills.

It is expected that the student's knowledge and capabilities will increase with each level of study. All assessments on this programme provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge of the subject matter relevant to the degree programme and appropriate to the level of study (see above), and a range of transferable graduate employability skills. The emphasis within this programme is on assessment 'for' as well as assessment 'of' learning (Curriculum Framework Document 2014) Part of this process is to help students use feedback effectively.

Assessment is designed to enhance students' learning by providing appropriate and constructive feedback on their performance within a reasonable time (20 working days – in line with the University's regulations). This applies to both formative and summative assessments, although the subject team typically returns the first formative assessments at L4 within a shorter time frame. The level of formative assessment is greater at level 4 but opportunities for formative assessment are available in units from Level 4 to level 6. Formative assessment is viewed as important in a number of ways not least of which is that it allows students to practise and take risks with their ideas. All assessments also provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate the achievement of academic and transferable skills and will include one or more areas of graduate employability skills. Assessment of some units will focus on graduate employability skills more directly, for example the Learning From Experience (LiFE) unit or work-based major project, amongst others.

### Level 4

The assessment strategy at this level is about helping students to 'learn how to learn', to manage their time and workload independently and to develop their knowledge of the subject areas, while thinking reflectively about their future career path.

At this level assessments typically include, commentaries and reviews, essays, exams, small group presentations, or some combination of these, but will also include website building, an MCQ on-line quiz, and a personal journal. The range of assessment is intended to help students demonstrate engagement and learning. The aim is to support student transfer into higher education by setting assessments that allow students to recall information, factual knowledge, develop their ability to work independently and to meet deadlines. Moreover, group work enables students to develop interpersonal skills, to gain experience of collaborative working or leading a team and to respect the views of others whilst gaining confidence in talking to an audience. These assessments, together with thinking about their professional development will also help students to develop skills relevant to the world of work and graduate employability.

All units at Level 4 have assessment opportunities that are substantially formative or diagnostic, ranging from formative essays to MCQ tests housed within the specific unit's Moodle site. For example, Introduction to Political Thought affords students the opportunity to compile an ongoing journal summarising the main ideas of key thinkers. Students are encouraged to read and write more widely for formative assessment purposes. The Journal is compiled online and visited by seminar tutors as the unit progresses. Additionally on this unit, students are offered a weekly workshop supervised by a tutor as they work in groups on building a website on a key thinker. In Introduction to International Relations: States, Conflict and Cooperation, students have the opportunity for formative assessment, taking the form of a multiple choice test at a mid-point between the summative assessments. This is housed in Moodle allows students to reflect on their own learning and help tutors to identify any specific areas where further support is required. In Political Economy in a Globalising World students are offered the opportunity to submit a draft version of their project for formative feedback prior to the final submission. In Current Political Issues both summative assessments incorporate mandatory reflective components requiring that students review the strengths and weaknesses of their own work, progress, and areas requiring improvement. Staff check students' ongoing engagement and contact students who seem not to be taking up learning opportunities as it may indicate they are having difficulty with particular units or wider disengagement with their course learning. The formative assessment opportunities, therefore, clearly are *for* learning and *of* learning. Clearly too these opportunities for formative assessments are supplemented by scheduled tutorials and seminar discussions.

Learning Outcomes, word-length, time-length and combination of assessments are in line with University Assessment Guidelines for this level (Policy for the Assessment of Students 2014; assessment details provided in unit descriptors for Level 4).

## **Level 5**

At this level assessments provide opportunities for students to further develop their intellectual skills of evaluation, application of knowledge and analysis in essays, documentary analyses, briefing papers, projects, and exams. Formative assessment remains an important aspect of the assessment strategy. For example, in Conflict and Disaster students are offered a tutorial to discuss their ideas for the final report providing an opportunity for the tutor to offer formative verbal feedback at an early stage of the writing process. In Perspectives in World Politics students have a workshop on examination preparation and performance, supported by anonymised past scripts. Students will have the chance to read and grade these scripts and then to discuss their findings in light of the marks the papers actually achieved.

In International Politics of the Middle East, a similar workshop will be held for the examination artefact and students also will have an opportunity to review previous documentary commentaries so they can understand exactly what the assessment criteria mean. Assessment workshops are offered on other units too such as Russian and Eurasian Politics and From Revolution to Dictatorship. In units such as Comparative Foreign Policy Analysis, and International Politics students get help and guidance on how to prepare their project outline, article review, and briefing paper outline during specific scheduled assessment workshops. These artefacts then are reviewed by tutors and further targeted written feedback is given to the student – which then helps inform the subsequent, linked assessment artefact. Many of the assessments for L5 units (and L6 units) necessitate a knowledge of global and international material as well as UK specific issues. This international knowledge is enhanced by the opportunity to take part in cross-national exchange programmes, an opportunity which will also broaden students' experience of learning and assessment.

The formative assessment opportunities, therefore, clearly are *for* learning and *of* learning. Clearly too these opportunities for formative assessments are supplemented by tutorials and seminar discussions. The opportunity to develop career management and employability skills will also be available via a range of on-line formative assessments and career plenary sessions. They are also developed in taught units. In the unit Fighting over Europe, students submit a lobbying strategy detailing the role and methods used by a social/political/economy actor in a current EU policy area, demonstrating their analytic, informational and communication skills

Learning Outcomes, word-length, time-length and combination of assessments are in line with University Assessment Guidelines for this level (Policy for the Assessment of Students 2014; assessment details provided in unit descriptors for Level 5).

### **Level 6**

At this level students are expected to demonstrate critical thinking skills in addition to the skills developed so far. Students are expected to engage critically and analytically with a range of sources and to be able to apply their knowledge to their assessments. In addition to essays, projects, and seminar journals, students can choose to, for example, to produce and present a Briefing Paper (Regional Powers, Politics and Security in a Multi-Polar World), designed to encourage students to address real-world policy focused issues and develop professional briefing skills in written and oral format. In Democracy and Democratisation students will analyse an ongoing or recent transition process, showing their ability to relate conceptual and theoretical material to global trends and processes.

At this level students will also undertake a substantial and sustained piece of independent work in the form of the dissertation or work-based project. This assessment is designed to enhance research skills, self-management, independent thinking, problem solving and use of online resources. This assessment also necessitates the ability to work in an organised way, synthesise considerable amounts of data and present this in a coherent, word-limited piece of work. All of these skills will enhance the graduate employability skills of the student as well as the student's academic skills and subject knowledge.

Research and employability skills will also be enhanced by students completing various exercises via e-learning, participating in further careers sessions or in discussion with and feedback from personal tutors during individual tutorial meetings.

Learning Outcomes, word-length, time-length and combination of assessments are in line with University Assessment Guidelines for this level (Policy for the Assessment of Students 2014; assessment details provided in unit descriptors for Level 6).

## **21. Assessment Regulations**

Standard university rules apply (see [Assessment and Regulations](#)).

## **22. Role of Externals**

Subject External Examiners who will:

- oversee unit assessment and usually attend Unit Assessment Boards;
- approve unit assessment strategy;
- sample assessment artefacts;
- present report to Unit Assessment Boards.

Award External Examiners (usually also a Subject External Examiner) who will:

- oversee and attend Award/Progression Boards;
- scrutinise and endorse the outcomes of assessment;
- ensure that the standard of the award is maintained at a level comparable with that of similar awards elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

## **23. Indicators of Standards and Quality**

### **A. Professional Accreditation/Recognition**

Not applicable

## **B. Periodic Programme Review (or equivalent)**

PPR May 2013 – The programme was reviewed within the university's programme of regular review including ASQR and PPR. Politics and IR provision for single and combined honours underwent a Periodic Programme Review in May 2013. The review confirmed the 'fitness of purpose' of the Politics and IR curriculum and the effectiveness of its annual monitoring and review processes.

## **C. Quality Assurance Agency**

QAA Higher Education Review, March 2015, judgements about standards and quality meet UK expectations (*for full report see [Higher Education Review of the University of Portsmouth, March 2015](#)*).

[1] [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/ReviewsAndReports/Documents/University%20of%20Portsmouth/University-of-Portsmouth-HER-15.pdf)

## **D. Others**

None.

## **24. Other Sources of Information**

Other sources of information may be found in

- Course Approval Document.
- Student Handbook.
- University of Portsmouth Curricula Framework.
- University of Portsmouth Undergraduate Prospectus.
- Assessment Regulations.
- University of Portsmouth (<http://www.port.ac.uk/>) and School of Social Historical and Literary studies (<http://www.port.ac.uk/departments/academic/sshls/>) websites.