	PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION	

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	MA
4	**Programme Title**	Politics (Research)
5	**UCAS/Programme Code**	4026
6	**Programme Accreditation**	N/A
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	N/A
8	**FHEQ Level**	Masters
9	**Date written/revised**	June 2007

10	**Programme Aims**

1   to meet the aims of the ESRC's postgraduate research training guidelines by providing high quality research training at Master's level

2   to provide learning opportunities to enable graduates to acquire the knowledge and understanding, skills and aptitudes necessary to undertake advanced research in the social sciences generally and political science specifically

3   to provide high quality research training to an increasing number of postgraduates and to enhance their skills and employability

4   to produce graduates who can proceed to careers in research in universities, in the public sector, the private sector, the voluntary sector and the media

5   to meet the needs of stakeholders

6   to provide a programme which meets the needs of FHEQ at Masters level

11	**Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the social sciences, information skills, concepts and methods in politics, theories and approaches to the study of politics, qualitative and quantitative methods in political science.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

A1   have an advanced knowledge and understanding of ESRC recognised research methodologies

A2   an advanced knowledge and understanding of political science methods and techniques required to carry out advanced research in politics

A3   have a foundation of specialist knowledge and research skills from which they can embark upon careers with significant research responsibilities or pursue a postgraduate research degree in international studies

A4   have the theoretical and practical skills that will enable them to successfully complete an MA dissertation

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding is seminars in Politics and as part of the HASS Faculty Research Training Programme (A1-A4). Throughout the MA programme students are strongly encouraged to engage in independent reading for which they are given extensive support and guidance on reading materials and their appropriate use. Students are strongly supported by staff in their completion of self-designed research projects.

Assessment Strategy

Research skills are tested by a variety of techniques including individual and group presentations, research exercises and papers, and ultimately, the dissertation (A1-A4).

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
B1   effectively disseminate research findings to specialist and non-specialist communities
B2   effectively communicate in writing and in oral presentations
B3   effectively manage research including design of research proposals, planning of research projects and their timely completion
B4   work effectively as a team member in both subject specific and multi-disciplinary settings

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding is seminars in Politics and as part of the HASS Faculty Research Training Programme (B2-B4). Students receive explicit training in qualitative and quantitative methods, information skills, and in reflective approaches to research problems and issues in such seminars and are engaged in individual and group projects (B1).

Assessment Strategy

General research skills are assessed by means of coursework research and reflective projects and ultimately the MA dissertation (B1-B2). Other modes of assessment include the construction of a bibliography, incorporating bibliographic search strategies and professional design and layout (B3). IT skills are assessed by the bibliographic exercise and data practicals (B3). Students will also receive ethics training and complete a jointly produced 6000 word research article with the aim of it being published in an appropriate journal B1, B4).

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
C1   select and apply appropriate methods of data collection with knowledge and understanding
C2   understand the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of data and develop a critical use of sources
C3   understand the use of methods and tools to analyse data
C4   demonstrate proficiency in a range of qualitative and quantitative data analysis

Teaching and Learning Methods

Skills of data collection and management are imparted through seminars and through practical exercises in several HASS faculty FRTP modules and in the Politics module, Doing Political Research (C3). Critical skills are developed through independent reading and encouraging active participation individually and in groups in seminar settings (C1-C2). Reflective exercises in research design and the appropriate use of data reinforce seminar and group learning (C4).

Assessment Strategy

Students complete a range of assessments including research projects and the dissertation. Other assessment modes include short reflective exercises, bibliography preparation, and short answer tests (C1-C4).

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
D1   Take responsibility for his/her own learning and personal professional development
D2   Manage time and prioritise tasks by working to deadlines
D3   Communicate effectively to others when working in seminar group settings.
D4   Make effective use of appropriate electronic resources including journals, databases and the internet and undertake effective word processing

Teaching and Learning Methods

Student self learning and time and task management is encouraged in weekly seminars and

one on one research supervision sessions. Communication is practiced in weekly seminars. Students are directed to appropriate journals and provided information concerning appropriate internet usage.

Assessment Strategy

Self learning is assessed in the context of the timely submission of research projects and completion of unseen examinations (D1-D2). Effective use of electronic resources is assessed in the context of their analysis and correct presentation in research projects and presentations (D3-D4).

12	Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

One year full time or two years part time.
180 credits (120 coursework, 60 dissertation)
70 credits (compulsory) in HASS FRTP
50 credits (compulsory) in Politics modules
60 credits dissertation.

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)

ESRC recognised training programme which equips students with generic and subject-specific skills that enable students to undertake advanced research in the social sciences and in Politics in particular

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/

13	Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications
2:2 or above (or overseas equivalent) in a relevant cognate discipline in social sciences and humanities: Politics; Economics; Geography, Sociology; History, Business studies.

Admissions policy/selection tools
Academic references
Candidate's personal statement

Non-standard Entry Requirements
Relevant professional experience and/or qualifications may be taken into account in the absence of a satisfactory first degree.

Additional Requirements

Level of English Language capability
As set by HASS faculty but usually no less than IELTS 6.5 overall (or TOEFL equivalent)

14	Support for Student Learning

Induction
During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml)

Study skills support

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Academic support
The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support
All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml
In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare.phtml

Support for students with disabilities
The University's Disability Support Service provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies. For further details see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/

Learning resources
The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities, see
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/acfacilities.phtml

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-sessional language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/facilities/langcen.phtml

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15   Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews
All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews
The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports
External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Staff-Student Committee.

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback
Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms
The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

Accreditation reports
This programme is recognised by the ESRC under its 1+3 system for funding postgraduate studies and UK-resident applicants are eligible to be considered for ESRC funding.

Additional mechanisms

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16   Regulation of assessment

Pass mark
The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements
Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdepr.pdf) and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees
(http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdeprexamconv.pdf). Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes		**Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes**	
<50	Fail	<50	Fail
50-59	Pass	50 or above	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit		
70 or above	Pass with Distinction		

Role of the External Examiner
An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:
    See and approve examination papers
    Moderate examination and coursework marking
    Attend the Board of Examiners
    Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/)

The School Brochure (contact enquiries@ncl.ac.uk)

The University Regulations (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Either

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007**
A2	**POL8015 POL8038 POL8041**
A3	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
A4	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041**
B1	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
B2	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
B3	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
B4	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041**
C1	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
C2	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
C3	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
C4	**HSS8004 HSS8005 POL8038**
D1	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
D2	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**
D3	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041**
D4	**HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007 POL8015 POL8038 POL8041 POL8099**