

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	BA (Hons)
4	Programme Title	Politics and Economics
5	UCAS/Programme Code	LL21
6	Programme Accreditation	Not relevant
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	Politics and Economics
8	FHEQ Level	Level 6
9	Date written/revised	May 2009

10 Programme Aims

- 1 to develop a knowledge and understanding of aspects of political and economic activity, principles and institutions
- 2 to provide opportunities for students to specialise within both politics and economics according to their interests
- 3 to provide a grounding in the theoretical concepts and analytical apparatus of both politics and economics and to enhance students' ability to use these tools to address a range of political and economic issues confronting modern society
- 4 to provide students with opportunities to develop a range of cognitive and key skills across both subject areas
- 5 to provide a learning environment enhanced by scholarship and research
- 6 to produce graduates capable of pursuing a variety of careers or, if they have the requisite ability, of embarking on work at postgraduate level

11 Learning Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes as detailed below.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1 have a knowledge and understanding of some central aspects of government and politics and of some specialised topics within the discipline;
- A2 have a knowledge and understanding of core principles of microeconomics and macroeconomics and of a range of more specialised topics in economics

Teaching and Learning Methods

Core knowledge is imparted and understanding developed through lectures supplemented by handouts and, where appropriate, by other visual media, such as videos and online sources including Blackboard. Seminars and workshops are used to check and improve students' understanding, and to develop their levels of knowledge through discussion, argument and problem-solving. A1 is developed throughout the curriculum and, in particular, by the requirement to choose a certain number of modules from a short-list of modules at stage 1. A2 is developed by core and compulsory modules in Stage 1 covering the topics specified and by the requirement to choose more specialised economic options at stages 2 and 3.

Assessment Strategy

1. Politics - Unseen written examinations, oral examinations, essays, class simulations, projects, dissertations
2. Economics - Unseen written examinations, projects, essays, presentations.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1 make effective use of a wide range of information sources, including qualitative and quantitative data, library, internet and other electronic sources.
 B2 use the analytical apparatus of both politics and economics to address a range of political and economic issues confronting modern society.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The skills listed under B1 and their application to the study of politics are taught through lectures, seminars, exercises, and debates in skills modules at Stage 1 and Stage 2. Student presentations and essays require effective extraction of information at all three stages. The skills listed under B2 are developed throughout the politics and economics curricula. Lectures provide the principal means to impart intellectual skills. Analytical and critical thinking are enhanced and tested in seminars (mainly discussion classes), workshops (mainly numerical/technical problem solving), and private study (recommended reading and electronic sources).

Assessment Strategy

1. Politics – essays, unseen examinations, oral examinations, projects, dissertations, simulation exercises, literature reviews
 2. Economics – these skills are assessed by a combination of unseen examinations, the principal method, and by assessed essays and project reports. Such assessed coursework tests skills that involve information and data gathering.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
 C1 critically evaluate arguments and evidence
 C2 present a reasoned and informed position, verbally or in writing
 C3 engage in qualitative and quantitative analysis

Teaching and Learning Methods

Practical skills (C1 and C2) and their application to the study of politics are taught through lectures and seminars. Reasoned arguments (C2) are developed in seminars and through the use of simulation exercises at all three stages of the degree. Practical skills deriving from the study of Economics (C3) are developed throughout the economics curriculum. Lectures provide the building blocks for an analytical approach to practical problems. Seminars for discussion of problems and issues enhance and test the student's practical approach, while workshops provide practice in mainly numerical/technical procedures; private study (recommended reading and electronic sources) consolidates and augments the taught elements.

Assessment Strategy

C1 and C2 are assessed through essays and exams, and through observed simulation exercises. C3 is tested by a combination of unseen examinations and coursework, with the former usually having the greater weight.

Transferable/Key Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:
 D1 communicate effectively in both written and oral formats
 D2 plan and organise a programme of work or study
 D3 utilise appropriate IT skills
 D4 utilise an appropriate level of numerical skills

Teaching and Learning Methods

Written communication (D1) is developed through essays, projects and examinations while verbal communication (also D1) is developed through seminars, presentations, simulations and debates. Planning and organisation (D2) skills, are also developed through such sessions. IT skills (D3) are taught in Study Skills modules and further developed in core and compulsory modules in Economics, particularly mathematical and statistical modules (D4).

Assessment Strategy

D1 and D2 are assessed through essays, written and oral examinations and simulation

exercises. D3 is assessed as part of Study Skills modules at Stage 2 of Politics, and at Stages 2 and 3 of Economics. D4 is directly assessed through project and written exam in statistics but is also indirectly tested in coursework for other modules throughout the programme.

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features

Basic structure of the programme

Duration: 3 years

Stages: 3

Number of credits per stage: 120 (60 Politics and 60 Economics, with some flexibility at Stages 2 and 3).

Number of credits per module: 10-40

Number of study hours per 10 credit module: 100

Students may take up to 20 credits in subjects other than Politics and Economics in Stages 2 and 3 of the degree.

Requirements for progression: satisfactory completion of each stage in accordance with University Progress Regulations

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

This joint-honours degree brings together two complementary areas of study. It aims to provide students with a range of conceptual and analytical, written and verbal, qualitative and quantitative skills that are highly transferable. Given these skills, students graduating from Newcastle University with a BA degree in Politics and Economics should be extremely attractive to prospective employers, but should also have the ability to go on to postgraduate study in either discipline. What therefore makes the degree distinctive, is its broadness of academic content and the flexibility or adaptability of the skills which it seeks to impart.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)

http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/2009-2010/documents/Geography.docBSc_001.pdf

13 Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

GCSEs required: All candidates must satisfy the University's General Entrance Requirements and Matriculation Regulations.

A level subjects and grades: BBB from 18 units including two A levels, AVCE (Double Award) accepted if offered with an A level. Economics or Mathematics should ideally be offered at A or AS level but for candidates not taking these a Grade A in GCSE Maths is required.

Alternative Entry qualifications for candidates offering Access courses: modules in Arts and Social Sciences desirable (where graded, at Credit level).

Admissions policy/selection tools

The admissions policy is based on a number of considerations:

- the applicant's predicted grades (if he or she has not yet sat her exams);
- the applicant's school reference;
- the applicant's personal testimonial; and,
- the applicant's earlier academic performance (e.g., his or her GCSEs)

The decision as to whether to accept a candidate, and, if so, what offer to make, are based on all of these considerations.

Non-standard Entry Requirements

We recognise that students will apply to our degree programmes with a range of qualifications. We consider each application on an individual basis, taking into account the information on the UCAS form including past academic performance and potential. We welcome applications from students with non-standard qualifications other than the ones

described above, and are pleased to advise anyone interested with regard to choosing an appropriate preparatory course of study.

Additional Requirements

None.

Level of English Language capability

6.5 IELTS or approved equivalent is required for international applicants whose first language is not English.

14 Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

Induction

During the first week of the first semester, students attend an induction programme specially designed for Politics and Economics students. New students are also given a general introduction to University life and the University's principal 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.

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.htm>

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions/workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student financing and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Union Society operates a Student Advice Centre which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of issues including housing, debt, legal matters etc..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>

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/library/>

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

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 relevant Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of, new modules are considered at the relevant Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. 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 relevant Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. The FTLC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the University Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports

External Examiner reports are considered by the relevant 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 and Board of Studies.

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. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School/institutional level and reported to the appropriate body. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at www.thestudentsurvey.com/ With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the relevant Staff-Student Committee and 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/agss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a two-day review visit by a review team which includes an external subject specialist in addition to University and Faculty representatives. Following the review a report is produced which forms the basis for a decision by the University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be reapproved for a further five-year period.

Accreditation reports

None

Additional mechanisms

None

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 40 (Undergraduate programmes)

Course requirements

Progression is subject to the University's Undergraduate Progress Regulations and Undergraduate Examination Conventions. In summary, students must pass, or be deemed to have passed, 120 credits at each Stage. Limited compensation up to 40 credits and down to a mark of 35% is possible at each Stage and there are re-assessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Weighting of stages

The marks from Stages 2 and 3 will contribute to the final classification of the degree. The classification is based on the weighted average result for Stages 2 and 3, with Stage 3 results accounting for twice the weight of Stage 2.

Common Marking Scheme

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

	Honours	Non-honours
<40	Fail	Failing
40-49	Third Class	Basic
50-59	Second Class, Second Division	Good
60-69	Second Class, First Division	Very Good
70+	First Class	Excellent

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

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/regulations/docs>)

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

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1	POL1016, POL1017, POL1022, POL1032, POL2012, POL2022, POL2033, POL2034, POL2045, POL2077, POL2078, POL2079, POL2080, POL2082; POL2083; POL2084; POL3034, POL3046, POL3047, POL3048, POL3059, POL3063, POL3065, POL3071, POL3076, POL3078, POL3079; POL3081, POL3082, POL3083, POL3084, POL3085, POL3087, POL3089
A2	ECO1001, ECO1008, ECO1010 , ECO1004, ECO1015, ECO1013, ECO2001, ECO2002 , ECO2006, ECO2008, ECO2010, ECO2011, ECO2014, ECO3003, ECO3012, ECO3013, ECO3016, ECO3018, ECO3021, ECO3022, ECO3023, ECO3025, ECO3026, ECO3027, ECO3028
B1	As in A1, but also including POL1031
B2	As in A1 and A2, but especially ECO1001, ECO 1008, ECO1010, ECO2001, ECO2002, ECO3028, POL1031, POL2077
C1	As in A1 and A2
C2	As in A1 and A2
C3	POL1031, POL2077, ECO1001, ECO1008, ECO1010, ECO2001, ECO2002 , ECO3028
D1	As in A1 and A2
D2	POL1031, POL2077
D3	POL1031, POL2077, POL3046, POL3047, POL3048, ECO1008, ECO1010, ECO2001, ECO2002 , ECO3026
D4	ECO1001, ECO1008, ECO1010, ECO2001, ECO2002 , ECO3018, ECO3027