| | **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION** | Newcastle University |
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| 1 | **Awarding Institution** | Newcastle University |
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| 2 | **Teaching Institution** | Newcastle University |
| 3 | **Final Award** | MA |
| 4 | **Programme Title** | Politics (Research) |
| 5 | **Programme Code** | 4026 |
| 6 | **Programme Accreditation** | N/A |
| 7 | **QAA Subject Benchmark(s)** | N/A |
| 8 | **FHEQ Level** | Level 7 |
| 9 | **Last updated** | May 2012 |

### 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 7

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

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

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

| **Teaching and Learning Methods** |
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| 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** |
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| 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** |
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| **Basic structure of the programme** |
| One year full time or two years part time.<br>180 credits (120 coursework, 60 dissertation)<br>70 credits (compulsory) in HASS FRTP<br>50 credits (compulsory) in Politics modules<br>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** |
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| *Entry qualifications*<br>2:2 or above (or overseas equivalent) in a relevant cognate discipline in social sciences and humanities: Politics; Economics; Geography, Sociology; History, Business studies.<br><br>*Admissions policy/selection tools*<br>Academic references<br>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 |
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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. 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.

*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.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

*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. 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 finance 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 topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

*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.

*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.

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-sessional 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 Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the 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 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. 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.

*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. Every five years degree programmes in each subject area are subject to periodic 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 University Teaching and Learning Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further five year period.

*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*

## 16 Regulation of assessment

*Pass mark*
The pass mark is 50%

*Course requirements*
Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. 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, following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:
  i. See and approve assessment papers
  ii. Moderate examination and coursework marking
  iii. Attend the Board of Examiners
  iv. 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:  http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/

Degree Programme and University Regulations: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations

The Degree Programme Handbook

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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) |
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| A1 | **HSS8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| A2 | **POL8050 POL8038** |
| A3 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| A4 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| B1 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| B2 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| B3 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| B4 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| C1 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| C2 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| C3 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| C4 | **HSS8004 HSS8005 POL8038** |
| D1 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| D2 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| D3 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |
| D4 | **POL8038 POL8050 POL8099 HSS 8001 HSS8002 HSS8004 HSS8005 HSS8007** |