



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

School of Social Sciences & Philosophy
Department of Political Science

MSc International Politics Handbook 2026/2027

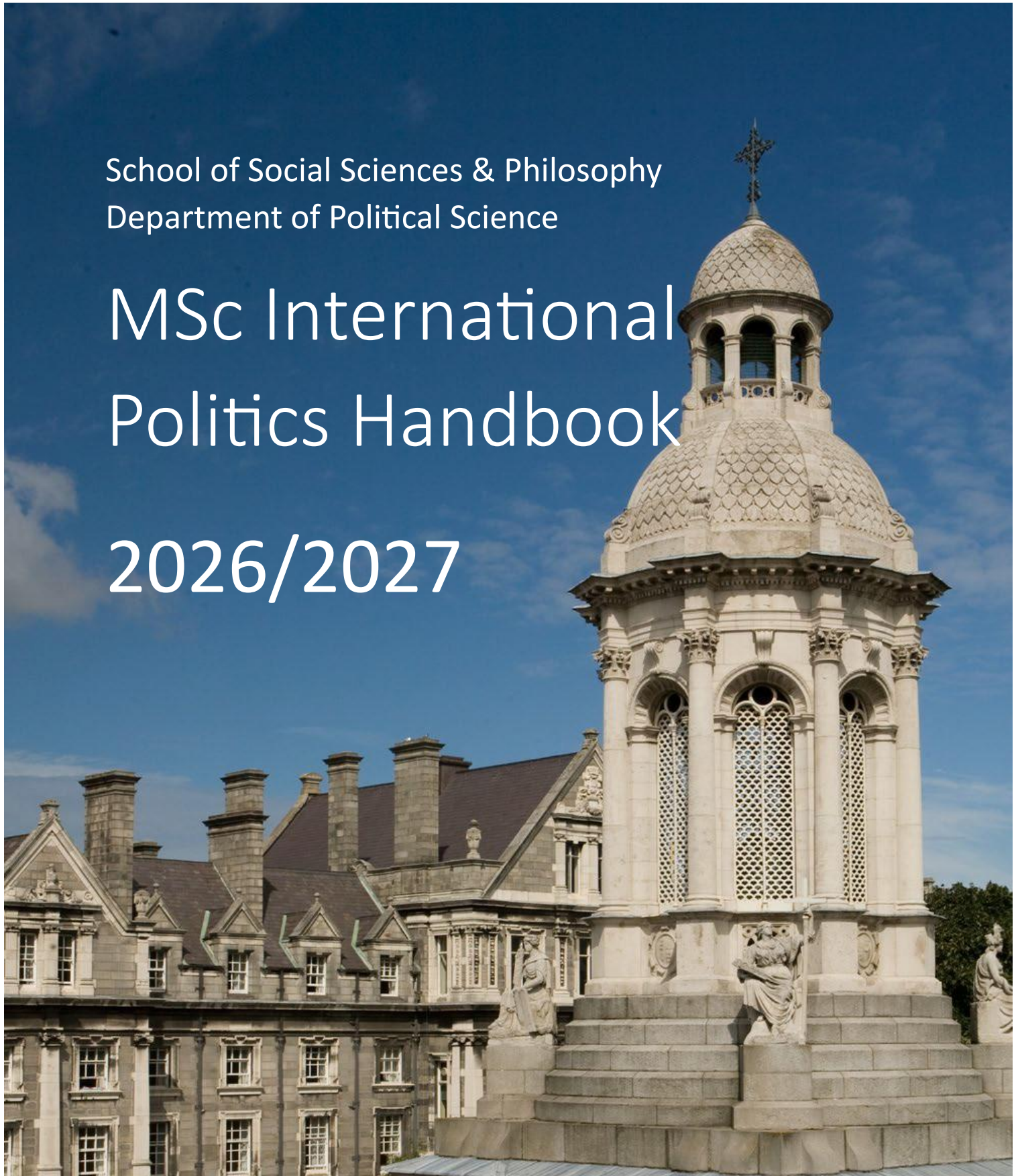


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A note on this Handbook

In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the General Regulations published in the [University Calendar](#) and information contained in programme or local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulation in the Calendar will prevail.

Alternative formats of the Handbooks can be made available on request.

1. General College Information

1.1 Student Services & Support

The Programme Administrator polisgraduate@tcd.ie is your first port of call for all general queries. College also provides a range of administrative, academic and wellbeing supports and services to help smooth your route through college. You can find further information at the links below:

- **Careers Advisory Service** | www.tcd.ie/careers
- **Graduate Studies Office** | www.tcd.ie/graduatestudies
- **Mature Student Office** | www.tcd.ie/maturestudents
- **Student Services Website** | www.tcd.ie/student-services
- **Trinity Disability Service** | www.tcd.ie/disability
- **Student Learning Development** | <https://student-learning.tcd.ie/>

1.2 Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS)

What?

The Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS) is a free and confidential service available to all registered postgraduate students in Trinity College. PAS offers a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral and professional supports including one-to-one appointments, workshops and trainings, and emergency financial assistance.

Why?

PAS exists to ensure that all postgraduates students have a dedicated, specialist service independent of the School-system to whom they can turn for support and advice during their time at Trinity. Common concerns students present to PAS include stress; financial worries; queries about regulations or services available at Trinity; supervisor-relationship concerns; academic progression issues; academic appeals.

Who?

The Postgraduate Advisory Service is led by the Postgraduate Student Support Officers who provide frontline support for all Postgraduate students in Trinity. These Support Officers will act as your first point of contact and a source of support and guidance; they can also put you in touch with or recommend other services, depending on your needs.

How?

For an appointment, please e-mail postgrad.support@tcd.ie.

For further information, please visit our [website](#), check out the regular PAS newsletter sent to all postgraduates via email, or follow PAS on Instagram (@TCDPGAdvisory).

1.3 Support Provision for Students with Disabilities

Trinity has adopted a Reasonable Accommodation Policy that outlines how supports are implemented in Trinity. Students seeking reasonable accommodation whilst studying in Trinity must apply for reasonable accommodations with the Disability Service in their student portal my.tcd.ie.

Based on appropriate evidence of a disability and information obtained from the student on the impact of their disability and their academic course requirements, the Disability Staff member will identify supports designed to meet the student's disability support needs. Following the Needs Assessment, the student's Disability Officer prepares an Individual Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) detailing the Reasonable Accommodations to be implemented. The information outlined in the LENS is communicated to the relevant School via the student record in SITS.

Further information on Postgraduate Student Supports [here](#).

Examination accommodation and deadlines:

Students should make requests as early as possible in the academic year. To ensure the Assessment, Progression and Graduation Team can set your accommodations for examination purposes the following deadlines are applied:

- Semester 1 assessments: the last Friday of October annually.
- Semester 2 assessments: the last Friday of February annually.

Student responsibilities for departmental assessments/course tests:

Students are required to initiate contact with the School/Department and request reasonable accommodations as per their LENS report, or email received following their needs assessment for particular assessments for School/ Department administered assessment. Students are advised to make contact at least two weeks prior to the assessment date to enable adjustments to be implemented.

Please note: no reasonable accommodation can be provided outside the procedures outlined in the Trinity Reasonable Accommodation Policy. For further information please visit: <https://www.tcd.ie/disability/current/how-reasonable-accommodations-work-in-trinity/>

1.4 Co-Curricular Activities

- **TCD Sports Clubs** | <https://www.tcd.ie/sport/student-sport/sport-clubs/>
Trinity has 50 sports clubs in a range of disciplines, from Basketball to Archery.
- **TCD Societies** | trinitysocieties.ie
Trinity offers over 100 societies across the University. From arts, culture, politics and debating to gaming, advocacy and music, you're sure to find your niche.
- **Student Union** | www.tcdsu.org
The Trinity College Students Union is a union for students, by students. It represents the student body at College level.

1.5 Emergency Procedure

In the event of an emergency, dial Security Services on extension 1999. Security Services provide a 24-hour service to the college community, 365 days a year. They are the liaison to the Fire, Garda and Ambulance services and all staff and students are advised to always telephone extension 1999 (+353 1 896 1999) in case of an emergency. Should you require any emergency or rescue services on campus, you must contact Security Services. This includes chemical spills, personal injury or first aid assistance. It is recommended that all students save at least one emergency contact in their phone under ICE (In Case of Emergency).

1.5.1 SafeZone

SafeZone is a voluntary app that increases the security and safety of students and staff while in a Trinity location. It provides immediate access to Trinity resources to aid in cases of emergencies or when an alert is raised.

For further information on this app and its advantages, please see <https://www.tcd.ie/disability/physical-access-information/safezone/>.

1.6 Data Protection

Please note that due to data protection requirements, staff in the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy cannot discuss individual students with parents/guardians or other family members. As the University considers students, even if they are not yet 18, to have the maturity to give consent for the use of their data, in normal circumstances, the University will not disclose personal data to the parents, guardians or other representatives of a student without the student's consent.

The University's preference is to receive written consent by way of email from the student where possible. Without such consent the University will not release any details regarding students including details of their registration, attendance, results, fee payments etc.

Trinity College Dublin uses personal data relating to students for a variety of purposes and we are careful to comply with our obligations under data protection laws.

Further information on how we obtain, use, and disclose student data can be viewed on the Trinity website: www.tcd.ie/dataprotection

1.7 Health & Safety Statements

The College Safety Statement can be viewed on the Trinity website:

<https://www.tcd.ie/students/orientation/shw/>

1.8 University Regulations

Please reference the links below for College regulations, policies and procedures:

- **Academic Policies**
<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/academic-policies/>
- **Student Complaints Procedure**
<https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/university-policies/complaints-procedure/>
- **Dignity and Respect Policy**
<https://www.tcd.ie/hr/dignity-and-respect/policies/>

2. General Course Information

2.1 Introduction

Welcome from Programme Director/s

Welcome to the International Politics MSc course at Trinity College Dublin. We are delighted you have decided to join our Programme for 2026-27.

As you know, our MSc in International Politics offers postgraduate students rigorous training in the study of international relations, and provides a comprehensive empirical approach to understanding many prominent problems in contemporary world politics, especially topics where domestic and international politics cannot be understood in isolation from each other. You will also receive training in research methods.

You will find in this handbook a detailed description of the work you need to complete in the course of our programme. More detailed information will be provided throughout the year, but this Handbook should be your first port of call when you have a query. Your individual timetable will be available to you via your online student portal at my.tcd.ie.

We hope very much that you will enjoy a happy and productive time at Trinity College.

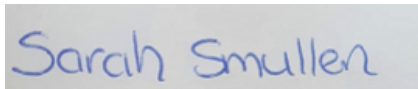
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Phelan." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Professor William Phelan

Welcome from the Programme Administrator

Welcome to the Department of Political Science at Trinity College Dublin. I am the Programme Administrator for the MSc International Politics programme and I am here to answer any queries you may have in relation to your programme.

The Department of Political Science office is located in room 5.02, 5th Floor, College Green, Trinity College Dublin.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah Smullen".

Ms Sarah Smullen,

Administrative Officer

2.2 Programme Governance

The Committee for the MSc in International Politics at Trinity College Dublin is chaired by the Director of the MSc programme, reporting to the Head of Political Science.

2.3 Contact Details

Head of the School of Social Sciences & Philosophy Professor Paul O’Grady Tel. +353 1 896 1522 E-mail: pogradey@tcd.ie
Head of Department Professor Constantine Boussalis Tel. +353 1 896 3482 E-mail: boussalc@tcd.ie
School Director of Teaching & Learning (Post-Graduate) Dr Noah Buckley E-mail: noah.buckley@tcd.ie
Course Director/s Professor William Phelan Tel. +353 1 896 3596 E-mail: phelanw@tcd.ie
School Manager Ms. Olive Donnelly Tel. +353 1 896 2499 E-mail: olive.donnelly@tcd.ie
Programme Administrator Ms. Sarah Smullen Tel. +353 1 896 4687 E-mail: polisgraduate@tcd.ie

2.4 Key Locations

Department

The Department of Political Science office (Room 5.02) is located on the 5th floor of 3 College Green in Trinity College Dublin.

Maps of campus are available at <https://www.tcd.ie/Maps/map.php>

Blackboard

Blackboard is the College online learning environment, where lecturers will give access to material like lecture notes and discussion forums. The use of Blackboard varies from module to module and individual lecturers will speak to you about the requirements for their module.

In order to access a module on Blackboard you should be registered to the module by your Programme Administrator. Blackboard can be accessed via tcd.blackboard.com.

Email

All official email correspondence will be sent to TCD email addresses only. You should check your email on a regular basis. When emailing the Administration, students should always include their TCD Student ID Number.

Student Portal

<https://my.tcd.ie> allows students to view their own central student record containing all relevant information related to the course for which you are registered. To access the system, you will need your College username and network password.

If your personal student information is incorrect, you should contact Academic Registry (via email, academic.registry@tcd.ie) stating your full name and student ID number. If your timetable module list is incorrect then you should notify the Programme Administrator.

Academic Registry

Academic Registry ("AR") manages course registration and fees. Their website can be accessed here: <https://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/>. The Academic Registry offices are located in the Watts Building, on the east side of the main campus.

2.5 Key Dates

Michaelmas Term

11 th September 2026	Mandatory orientation for all incoming MSc International Politics students.
14 th September 2026	MT Instruction Begins.
21 st September 2026	Draft syllabi or outlines distributed for optional Hilary Term modules; students send choices to Programme Administrator by specified date; students are enrolled on a first-come-first-serve basis. Note: HT module options may be cancelled at short notice , due to staff changes, insufficient student interest, or other reasons. In this situation, students will be asked to make new HT module choices.
4 th December 2026	MT Instruction finishes.
11 th Dec. – 22 nd Dec. 2026	Semester 1 Examination Assessment Session
Winter Break	Students read and work on dissertation-related research

Hilary Term

4 th January 2027	Students submit dissertation topics to MSc Course Director.
15 th January 2027	Students assigned dissertation supervisors.
18 th January 2027	HT Instruction begins.
8 th March 2027	Dissertation proposals due to MSc Course Director.
9 th April 2027	HT Instruction finishes.

Trinity Term

28 th April 2027	Dissertation Seminar begins.
6 th May 2027	Last day for submissions of research ethics applications.
28 th May 2027	End of dissertation supervision.
End of June 2027	Publication of provisional MSc modules results.

13th August 2027

Dissertations due.

2.6 Timetable

The updated course timetable will be available online shortly before the start of the Michaelmas term. Personal timetables will be available to students through <https://my.tcd.ie>.

The Academic Year Structure is available [here](#).

Academic Calendar Week	Week beginning	2026/27 Academic Year Calendar		Term / Semester
		UG continuing years / PG all years	UG new first years	
1	31-Aug-26	Marking/Results 2025/26		←Michaelmas Term begins/Semester 1 begins
2	07-Sep-26	Marking/Results and Orientation (PG, Visiting, Erasmus)		
3	14-Sep-26	Teaching and Learning	Orientation (JF UG)	←Michaelmas teaching term begins
4	21-Sep-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
5	28-Sep-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
6	05-Oct-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
7	12-Oct-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
8	19-Oct-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
9	26-Oct-26	Study/Review (Monday, Public Holiday)	Study/Review (Monday, Public Holiday)	
10	02-Nov-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
11	09-Nov-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
12	16-Nov-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
13	23-Nov-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
14	30-Nov-26	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
15	07-Dec-26	Revision / Assessment*	Revision / Assessment*	
16	14-Dec-26	Assessment*	Assessment*	←Michaelmas Term ends Sunday 20 December 2026/Semester 1 ends
17	21-Dec-26	Assessment* / Christmas	Assessment*/ Christmas	
18	28-Dec-26	Christmas Period - College closed 24 December 2026 to 3 January 2027 inclusive	Christmas Period - College closed 24 December 2026 to 3 January 2027 inclusive	
19	04-Jan-27	Foundation Scholarship Examinations	Foundation Scholarship Examinations	
20	11-Jan-27	Marking***	Marking***	
21	18-Jan-27	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	←Hilary Term begins/Semester 2 begins; Hilary teaching term begins
22	25-Jan-27	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
23	01-Feb-27	Teaching and Learning (Monday, Public Holiday)	Teaching and Learning (Monday, Public Holiday)	
24	08-Feb-27	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
25	15-Feb-27	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	

26	22-Feb-27	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
27	01-Mar-27	Study/Review	Study/Review	
28	08-Mar-27	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
29	15-Mar-27	Teaching and Learning (Wednesday, Public Holiday)	Teaching and Learning (Wednesday, Public Holiday)	
30	22-Mar-27	Teaching and Learning (Friday, Good Friday)	Teaching and Learning (Friday, Good Friday)	
31	29-Mar-27	Teaching and Learning (Monday, Easter Monday)	Teaching and Learning (Monday, Easter Monday)	
32	05-Apr-27	Teaching and Learning	Teaching and Learning	
33	12-Apr-27	Revision	Revision	
34	19-Apr-27	Assessment**	Assessment**	← Hilary Term ends Sunday 25 April 2027
35	26-Apr-27	Trinity Week (Monday, Trinity Monday) / Assessment**	Trinity Week (Monday, Trinity Monday) / Assessment**	← Trinity Term begins
36	03-May-27	Marking/Results (Monday, Public Holiday)	Marking/Results (Monday, Public Holiday)	
37	10-May-27	Marking/Results	Marking/Results	
38	17-May-27	Marking/Results	Marking/Results	
39	24-May-27	Research	Research	
40	31-May-27	Research	Research	← Trinity Term ends Sunday 6 June 2027/Semester 2 ends
41	07-Jun-27	Research (Monday, Public Holiday)	Research (Monday, Public Holiday)	
42	14-Jun-27	Research	Research	
43	21-Jun-27	Research	Research	
44	28-Jun-27	Research	Research	
45	05-Jul-27	Research	Research	
46	12-Jul-27	Research	Research	
47	19-Jul-27	Research	Research	
48	26-Jul-27	Research	Research	
49	02-Aug-27	Research (Monday, Public Holiday)	Research (Monday, Public Holiday)	
50	09-Aug-27	Research	Research	
51	16-Aug-27	Research	Research	
52	23-Aug-27	Reassessment 2026/27 - Semesters 1 & 2	Reassessment 2026/27 - Semesters 1 & 2	

* Semester 1 assessment session: December 11 to 22, 2026 inclusive (No assessment after Dec 22nd)

** Semester 2 assessment session: April 19 to 30, 2027 inclusive

*** Marking of Semester 1 assessments will continue into January and early February. Provisional Semester 1 results will be made available to students during the week commencing February 8, 2027

3. Academic Policies

3.1 Academic Integrity & Referencing

3.1.1 Academic Integrity

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. However, it is essential that we do so with integrity, in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement. Any action or attempted action that undermines academic integrity and may result in an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any member of the academic community or wider society may be considered as academic misconduct. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- **Plagiarism** - presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement. Submitting work as one's own for assessment or examination, which has been done in whole or in part by someone else or submitting work which has been created by using artificial intelligence tools, where this has not been expressly permitted.
- **Self-plagiarism** - recycling or borrowing content from the author's own previous work without citation and submitting it either for an assignment or an examination.
- **Collusion** - undisclosed collaboration of two or more people on an assignment or task, or examination, which is supposed to be completed individually.
- **Falsification/fabrication.**
- **Exam cheating** - action or behaviour that violates examination rules in an attempt to give one learner an unfair advantage over another.
- **Fraud/impersonation** - actions that are intended to deceive for unfair advantage by violating academic regulations. Using intentional deception to gain academic credit.
- **Contract cheating** - form of academic misconduct in which a person uses an undeclared and/or unauthorised third party to assist them to produce work for academic credit or progression, whether or not payment or other favour is involved. Contract cheating is any behaviour whereby a learner arranges to have another person or entity ('the provider') complete (in whole or in part) any assessment (e.g., exam, test, quiz, assignment, paper, project, problems) for the learner. If the provider is also a student, both students are in violation.

Further examples of the above available at <https://www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-integrity/>.

3.1.2 The Use and Referencing of Generative AI

Aligned with the [College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research](#) (2025), the use of GenAI is permitted unless otherwise stated. Where the output of GenAI is used in a document or work output, this usage should be acknowledged and appropriately cited, as per [Library guidelines on acknowledging and reference GenAI](#). From an academic integrity perspective, if a student generates content from a GenAI tool and submits it as his/her/their own work, it is considered plagiarism, which is defined as academic misconduct in accordance with College Academic Integrity Policy.

Please check the relevant syllabus/module description on Blackboard for details of any restrictions on specific modules.

If in any doubt, contact your instructor before starting work on any assignment.

3.1.3 Academic Misconduct in the Context of Group Work

Students should normally submit assessments and/or examinations done in co-operation with other students only when the cooperation is done with the full knowledge and permission of the lecturer concerned. Without this permission, submitting assessments and/or examinations which are the product of collaboration with other students may be considered to be academic misconduct.

When work is submitted as the result of a group project, it is the responsibility of all students in the group to ensure, so far as is possible, that no work submitted by the group is plagiarised, or that any other academic misconduct has taken place. In order to avoid academic misconduct in the context of collaboration and group work, it is particularly important to ensure that each student appropriately attributes work that is not their own. Should a module coordinator suspect academic misconduct in a group assignment, the procedure in cases of suspected academic misconduct must be followed for each student.

3.1.4 Avoiding Academic Misconduct

Students should ensure the integrity of their work by seeking advice from their module coordinator or supervisor on avoiding academic misconduct. All schools and departments must include, in their handbooks or other literature given to students, guidelines on the appropriate methodology for the kind of work that students will be expected to undertake. In addition, a general set of guidelines for students on avoiding academic misconduct is available at libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity.

Each coversheet that is attached to submitted work should contain the following completed declaration:

"I have read, and I understand the academic integrity provisions in the General Regulations of the University Calendar for the current year. I have also completed the Online Tutorial on avoiding plagiarism 'Ready Steady Write'.

Please find the standard School Assignment Submission Form [here](#). Some Departments may currently use their own submission form. Students should check with their department or Module Coordinator to confirm which form should be used for their assignment.

For further information including details of the procedure to be followed in case of suspected plagiarism, please refer to Section 1, 'Academic Integrity' of the Graduate Studies Academic Calendar: <https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/calendar/graduate-studies-higher-degrees/section-1.pdf>

3.1.5 Procedures regarding Dignity & Respect Matters

The School of Social Sciences and Philosophy is committed to fostering a learning environment that upholds principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion. We strive to ensure that all students and staff can pursue their academic and professional goals without fear of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or any form of mistreatment.

Recognizing the adverse impact harassment can have on individuals' performance, morale, confidence, health, and learning, the School seeks to create a culture where such behavior is unequivocally condemned. Our goal is to encourage an atmosphere in which individuals can address harassment concerns without fear of ridicule or retaliation.

[Trinity Dignity and Respect Policy](#) sets out the College's key principles and procedures for addressing matters related to negative treatment, including discrimination, bullying, and any form of harassment. [TCD Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) establishes the principles, approach, and procedures on the subject of sexual harassment or sexual assault and outlines the resources and support available to both students and staff when facing issues related to sexual harassment.

Should any student encounter issues related to dignity and respect, as outlined above, we strongly urge them to immediately reach out for support from the designated contact person, who will provide guidance and support in accordance with the Dignity and Respect Policy:

- ~ Course Director Professor William Phelan | phelanw@tcd.ie
- ~ School Director of Teaching and Learning (Post-Graduate) Dr. Noah Buckley | Noah.Buckley@tcd.ie

[Dignity, Respect and Consent FAQs](#)

Where can I find the link to the Speak Out tool?

As a member of the Trinity community, you have the right to work or study in an environment which is free from bullying, harassment, and sexual misconduct. Speak Out provides the

opportunity for you to make the University aware of incidents that you have either experienced or witnessed by reporting them anonymously. The Speak Out tool can be found [here](#).

Where can I find resources relating to Dignity, Respect and Consent for students?

The Dignity, Respect & Consent (DR&C) Service provides information and support about the Dignity & Respect and Sexual Misconduct policies and processes to Students. This information can be found [here](#)

How do I request an appointment with a Dignity, Respect and Consent Support Advisor?

Use the [Booking Form](#) to request an appointment with a Dignity Respect and Consent Support Advisor.

What is a disclosure and where can I find information on how to make a disclosure as a student?

A disclosure refers to the case where an individual discloses that they feel they have been subjected to bullying, harassment, and/or sexual misconduct. Making a disclosure does not constitute raising a complaint, however you may decide to submit a complaint after seeking advice from the DR&C Service. Information on how to make a disclosure as a student can be found [here](#).

Where can I find information on how to make a complaint as a student?

Information on how to make a complaint as a student can be found [here](#).

3.2 Research Ethics

We wish to draw your attention to the need for you to comply with the School's research ethics policy. Full details can be found at <https://www.tcd.ie/srp/research/research-ethics/>. The most consequential aspect of this is that, should you be planning to observe, interview, poll, or experiment on human beings, you will need to get ethics approval. This involves completing a form that you will find via the link above and then having it approved/signed by the Department's Research Ethics representative. **Failure to comply with the School's research ethics policy could result in penalties, up to and including a zero mark for the dissertation.**

Please also be aware that where a student's research project has the potential for harm to themselves, a risk assessment will also have to be carried out in advance. If this is a possibility for your Dissertation project, please raise it at the earliest possible stage with your supervisor, well in advance of the Ethics application deadline of 6th May.

4. Teaching & Learning

4.1 Programme Structure

The International Politics M.Sc. course is designed to run for one year on a full-time basis. The course commences on the Monday of the first teaching week in the College's academic year structure in mid-September. The programme concludes with the submission of the dissertation in the following August.

Please be aware that many modules may include student participation in their assessment arrangements, which may, for example, include marks for regular contributions to module seminar discussions, demonstrating strong preparation and engagement with module readings, and responding productively to contributions by the instructor and other students. Marks for participation are based on the instructors' professional assessment not just of the quantity but also the quality of students' participation in seminar and other activities.

The course is structured around 3 terms, each of which is compulsory. In each term, students take modules summing to 30 ECTS, where the dissertation in Trinity term counts for the full 30 ECTS. Thus, the degree programme sums to 90 ECTS. Most modules in the M.Sc. programme are taught around weekly seminars, with assessment typically based on participation, short assignments, a final paper and/or an in-person examination. Some modules (notably Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods) will involve lectures. Students are expected to attend class every week. In addition, please note that written work can be assigned during study week and between term times.

Full-time students are required to take POP88041/POP88051 MSc Research Design, POP88061/POP88071 International Politics and POP88081/POP88091 International Conflict in Michaelmas term. For these compulsory modules, the cohort will be split into two groups (A and B) to enable the classes to be conducted as seminars, something which would not be possible for the full group. Students should consult their timetables on my.tcd.ie to find out which group they are assigned to, and when their classes will meet. Transfers between groups are not possible.

In Hilary term, full-time students are required to take one of two methods modules or they can choose to take both methods modules. No student will be allowed to submit a dissertation project unless they have completed either POP88162 Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods (10 ECTS) or POP88302 Qualitative Research Methods (10 ECTS) or both. In addition, students will choose two optional modules (5 ECTS) for the first half of Hilary term and two optional modules (5 ECTS) for the second half of Hilary term. Alternatively, students can choose to take both methods modules and one optional module (5 ECTS) for the first half of Hilary term and one optional module (5 ECTS) for the second half of Hilary term..

In first year, part-time students are required to take POP88061/POP88071 International Politics and POP88041/POP88051 Research Design in Michaelmas term and one of two methods modules and two optional 5 ECTS modules in Hilary term. In second year, part-time students are required to take POP88081/POP88091 International Conflict in Michaelmas term and to choose two optional 5 ECTS modules in Hilary term. The dissertation in Trinity term counts for the full 30 ECTS.

The final MSc is awarded in accordance with University convention as either Pass or Distinction. In addition, the Department of Political Science may award the predicate Merit to a student whose overall performance falls between these categories. The MSc (or Postgraduate Diploma – see section 4.6 below) is a [level nine QQI – NFQ](#) qualification.

4.2 Programme Structure & Workload

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required to achieve the objectives of a module or programme of study. It is designed to enable academic recognition for periods of study, to facilitate student mobility and credit accumulation and transfer. The ECTS is the recommended credit system for higher education in Ireland and across the European Higher Education Area.

The ECTS weighting for a module is a measure of the student input or workload required for that module, based on factors such as the number of contact hours, the number and length of written or verbally presented assessment exercises, class preparation and private study time, laboratory classes, examinations, clinical attendance, professional training placements, and so on as appropriate. There is no intrinsic relationship between the credit volume of a module and its level of difficulty. The European norm for fulltime study over one academic year is 60 credits. 1 credit represents 20-25 hours estimated student input, so a 10-credit module will be designed to require 200-250 hours of student input including class contact time, assessments, and examinations.

Within postgraduate courses, 1 credit represents 25 hours estimated postgraduate student input, so a 10-credit module will be designed to require 250 hours of postgraduate student input including class contact time, assessments, and examinations.

ECTS credits are awarded to a student only upon successful completion of the programme year. Progression from one year to the next is determined by the programme regulations. Students who fail a year of their programme will not obtain credit for that year even if they have passed certain components.

The core compulsory full-term modules are as follows:

Module Code	Module Title	Term	Weighting
POP88041/POP88051	MSc Research Design	Michaelmas	10 ECTS

POP88061/POP88071	International Politics	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
POP88081/POP88091	International Conflict	Michaelmas	10 ECTS
Either POP88162 or POP88302	Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods or Qualitative Research Methods	Hilary	10 ECTS
POP88200	Dissertation (including attendance and participation in dissertation workshop)	Trinity	30 ECTS

4.3 Learning Outcomes

The course aims to provide students with the necessary skills for a range of research-related careers, as well as careers in other areas. It is suitable for students who wish to progress to doctoral research, or to pursue careers in applied policy research, the civil service, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, or the media. After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- Assess the major theories of international relations.
- Explain variation in developmental trajectories or interstate relationships as a consequence of the interplay between domestic and international factors.
- Evaluate critically theoretical and empirical research on how the interaction between international and domestic politics affects a range of key outcomes in the field of development.
- Formulate policy-relevant research questions in the fields of international politics and related issues such as development and the environment.
- Design appropriate research strategies, applying quantitative and/or qualitative methods as appropriate, for answering policy-relevant research questions.
- Conduct independent research relevant to international politics using qualitative and/or quantitative methods.

4.4 Module Descriptors & Compulsory Reading Lists

The School reserves the right to amend the list of available modules and, in particular to withdraw and add modules. Timetabling may restrict the availability of modules to individual students.

Module descriptors and timetables will be available on the Departmental website shortly before the start of each term: <https://www.tcd.ie/political-science/programmes/postgraduate/msc-in-international-politics/module-outlines/>

4.5 Coursework Requirements

The coursework requirements for each individual module will be detailed in relevant syllabus.

Documentation

The Department does not require that sources be documented in any particular format. If you are unsure about what reference format to use, however, we recommend the American Political Science Association Style Manual, at <https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/>. This style manual is generally an excellent resource for writing political science papers.

Late Work

All late work, unless excused in advance by the module lecturer, or justified by medical certificate, will be penalised at a rate of 5 marks per day. Under no circumstances will work be accepted after the set work has been marked and handed back to other students, or after the end of Hilary teaching term.

4.5.1 Dissertation

Students are required to submit a dissertation of a maximum of 11,000 words on a research question of their choice in the area relevant to their degree programme. This word count is inclusive of all aspects of the dissertation. The word count thus includes the title page, bibliography, plagiarism disclaimer, abstract, tables, footnotes, endnotes, 'code' (if relevant and it is suggested by your supervisor that this is included), any appendices (if necessary) and any other words submitted as part of the dissertation. Please note that it is expected that students will need use all or almost all the allowed word count for an ambitious research project. Only the final dissertation is graded, though students are expected to meet specific milestones while they are working towards producing the paper (more on this below).

Dissertations should be of an empirical nature, providing an explanation for observable variation in political phenomena, building on political science scholarship. They should not be (merely) descriptive or prescriptive. Students that are interested in writing a political theory dissertation should consult with the Course Director.

After successfully completing the dissertation, students should be able to:

- Identify a research question worthy of sustained scholarly attention;
- Design a research plan appropriate to answering that question within given time and resource constraints;
- Implement all stages of that research design independently, including the structured collection of new information, the application of appropriate analytical techniques and the interpretation of the results;
- Present their research in written form in a manner that withstands scrutiny.

The examiners are instructed to assess the dissertation according to the standards commonly used for peer-reviewed journals.

In particular, examiners assess the following:

- the importance of the research question in the context of the academic literature and the appropriateness of its formulation;
- the appropriateness of the evidence basis examined and the analytical tools brought to bear;
- the extent to which the interpretations and conclusions are justified on the basis of the analytical results, and;
- the contribution that the dissertation makes to knowledge on the particular question it addresses.

Students are advised to think about the dissertation as writing a paper for an international peer reviewed political science journal. A common format for your dissertation, and of course for journal articles, is the following:

- An introduction that states the research question and emphasises its social and scientific relevance.
- An outline of the variation to be explained, justifying choice of measures and concepts.
- A theory section that discusses the relevant, sometimes competing, explanations of the phenomenon being examined. The theory section often presents specific expectations to be tested in the study.
- A research design section that justifies the selection of cases, choice of analytic method and any measurement decisions.
- An analysis section that presents the empirical findings and procedure through which these were derived.
- A conclusion that draws out the implications of the findings for the theories examined and for our broader understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Further details will be provided when students begin their dissertation work. Completed dissertations should be submitted online through Turnitin. Further instructions will be provided closer to the submission date.

Please note that Artificial Intelligence is not permitted to be used in producing the dissertation for the MSc International Politics, or in any part of the work towards its completion (drafts, dissertation proposal, dissertation topic, etc.).

Supervision

By January 4th, students will submit a dissertation topic to the Course Director, through Turnitin.com. This will consist of a brief description (of 150-200 words) of the proposed area

that you will explore in your dissertation. This description may be vague, or it may be more specific (particularly if students are building on the proposal completed as part of the Research Design module), but it will be helpful if at this stage some consideration has been given to the methodology that might be used (qualitative, quantitative, theoretical). Students are also encouraged to include a brief literature review of 3-5 articles or books in the area, summarised in research design terms (i.e., dependent variable, key independent variable, and approach to testing the argument).

This dissertation topic will be used by the Course Director to assign students to a supervisor. Where possible, students will be allocated to a supervisor whose research and/or teaching interests align with the proposed topic; however, all supervisors are experienced in guiding students through the process of developing a research project.

Supervisors and students will meet regularly over the course of Hilary Term, and up until the end of supervision (May 28th). Between the end of May and the submission date in August, students will work independently to complete their dissertations. Throughout the supervision period, it is expected that students will set aside time every week to work on their projects, and that they will progress their ideas in between meeting their supervisor. Supervisors will set out key milestones that students are expected to achieve over the course of the supervision period.

The format of supervision meetings may vary, with some taking place on a group or one-to-one basis as appropriate. While supervisors will provide guidance, give feedback, and discuss progress with their supervisees, the dissertation is an independent piece of work which is being conducted by the student; with students taking decisions in respect of their project (regarding the methodology, data analysis, framing etc.).

Dissertation proposal

The first half of Hilary Term will be spent narrowing down the area chosen by students to a topic that is feasible to investigate as part of an MSc dissertation. Students will submit a dissertation proposal on Turnitin.com by March 8th. This will be reviewed by their supervisor and the MSc Director, and will consist of 250-500 words and will cover the following:

- 1) the research question to be answered - please state the variation to be explained and possible explanations for this variation
- 2) why this question is significant; and
- 3) the methodology proposed to solve it (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, etc.).

While it is normal to continue to refine the project after this date (e.g., in the event that the proposed data is not accessible), students should consider treat this deadline as a milestone after which substantial changes to their topic or research question are discouraged. The proposals will be assessed by the Course Director and the supervisor with students being

alerted to concerns that must be addressed going forwards. Where the proposal has received approval to proceed from the supervisor and Course Director, students who plan to use interviews or similar processes for their dissertation research should at this stage start the process of obtaining ethical approval to engage in such data collection (see below).

Ethics Approvals

No student should submit an application for ethical approval without having first spoken with their supervisor.

All ethics approval requests must be submitted by May 6th at the latest; since data collection cannot commence until ethical approval has been granted, it is recommended that applications be submitted well in advance of this deadline. It will not be possible to submit requests for ethics approvals after May 6th or during the summer.

Full details of the School's research ethics policy can be found at:

<http://www.tcd.ie/ssp/research/ethics/>.

Dissertation seminar

Instruction finishes on April 9th. However, students should be aware that they must participate in a dissertation seminar during Trinity Term, at which they will present their work in progress. Participation in the Dissertation seminar is a requirement to obtain course credit for the Dissertation. Students who do not attend the Dissertation seminar, will not have further dissertation work marked.

The dissertation seminar will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for the first several weeks of Trinity Term (approximately April 28th to May 12th).

At each seminar, there will be a small number of student presentations, each of which will be followed by comments from a student discussant, plus general discussion from the audience (the entire class, plus module instructors).

All students will serve as both presenter and discussant at the seminars and are also expected to attend in order to give feedback to their fellow classmates. These seminars not only represent an invaluable forum to get feedback from a wide audience, but also to get ideas from watching the other presentations about how to approach a particular project. **The most successful dissertations are generally produced by students who have fully engaged with these seminars, both by providing feedback to and by receiving it from their classmates.**

Where a student seeks to leave Dublin before the end of the MSc Workshop, such requests must be backed e.g. by a medical certificate or similar relevant documentation, and the confirmation of their Dissertation Supervisor that satisfactory progress has been made and arrangements have been agreed for Dissertation progress and supervision to continue until

the end of the supervision period in May. Such requests must be authorised in advance by the MSc Director.

Further information about the seminars, as well as presenter and discussant assignments will be circulated at the end of Hilary Term.

End of Supervision

Supervision ends on May 28th, with students expected to work on their dissertations independently over the rest of the summer prior to submission in August. Students are required to produce and submit a draft of their dissertation or detailed outline to their supervisor prior to the end of the supervision period.

This should consist, so far as is possible, of an outline of the proposed explanation, an outline of the 'variation to be explained', a literature review, together with methodology and results sections. This will enable supervisors to provide concrete feedback on the existing direction of the project, and to highlight areas that need greater consideration. Students should aim to produce a polished, complete draft dissertation if possible, on which the best detailed feedback can be provided. Of course not all dissertation projects are sufficiently advanced by this point for a full polished draft to be ready, and for example draft dissertations at this point may contain 'rough' drafts of various sections, while empirical results may only be preliminary or not yet available. Nonetheless, students are required to submit a draft dissertation or a detailed outline by the end of the supervision period, so as to obtain guidance on how to complete their dissertation project in light of their progress so far. Students should aim to submit at least ten typed pages or more of draft dissertation or detailed outline.

Students are expected to be in Dublin, attending College, both for the dissertation seminars (until May 12th) and until the end of supervision (May 28th). Where students wish to leave Dublin after the dissertation seminars end but before the end of supervision, they will have to approach their supervisor to request that arrangements be put in place to continue supervision online. Such arrangements are dependent on the supervisor's willingness to agree to the request. Students should be aware that all aspects of the programme, including supervision, are delivered on Irish Standard Time. Supervisors will not be available to meet outside of normal working hours to accommodate supervisees who have travelled to different time zones.

4.6 Marking Scale

The Department of Political Science uses the following grading scheme for overall module assessment:

- Excellent: 70 – 100
- Good: 60 – 69
- Fair: 50- 59
- Condonable Fail: 40 – 49
- Uncondonable Fail: 0 – 39

Note that all marks given during the year are provisional and subject to change by the External Examiner at the end of the year. After a lecturer has returned marks to students at the end of a module, they may not be changed other than at the Court of Examiners meeting at the end of the year. Trinity College does not routinely offer opportunities to achieve extra credit in modules. Students are encouraged to alert their module lecturers in the event that they are unable to complete an assignment on time and to request an extension where appropriate (module syllabuses will set out policies regarding extensions).

Grades and comments for module work should be returned to students in a prompt manner, and students should politely approach instructors for module grades if they have not been provided several weeks into the following term (e.g. several weeks into HT for MT grades, end of Trinity Term/dissertation workshop for HT grades).

The dissertation is marked by two readers, who will agree on a mark on the main numerical grading scale. The External Examiner will be consulted where there is a significant disagreement between marks given by two examiners and for any dissertation deemed to have failed or achieved 70+. If a student passes the taught elements of the course but is deemed to have failed the dissertation, the student may request a viva voce examination in which he or she may defend the dissertation. Students are required to be present in Dublin during the Court of Examiners meeting, usually held between mid-September and mid-October, if they wish to avail of this option.

Pass	The pass mark for the programme is 50%. To obtain an MSc, students must achieve <u>all</u> of the following: • a passing mark for the dissertation • an overall (ECTS-weighted) average pass mark in the taught elements of the course; • pass marks in individual modules amounting to at least 50 ECTS • a mark of not less than 40% in the remaining modules
Postgraduate Diploma	Students who pass the required modules but fail to meet the required standard on the dissertation are eligible for the award of a Postgraduate Diploma (exit only).

Merit	The Department may recommend that the MSc be awarded with the predication 'Merit' to students who achieve <u>both</u>: • a mark of 60% or above in the dissertation • an overall (weighted) average mark across all taught modules of at least 58%, where modules amounting to at least 30 credits have a mark of 60% or above. A merit cannot be awarded where the candidate has failed any credit during the course.
Distinction	The Department may recommend that the MSc be awarded with the predication 'Distinction' to students who achieve <u>both</u>: • a mark of 70% or above in the dissertation • an overall (weighted) average mark across all taught modules of at least 68%, where modules amounting to at least 30 credits have a mark of 70% or above. A distinction cannot be awarded where the candidate has failed any credit during the course.

In the case where a student has obtained an uncondonable fail (a mark of less than 40%) for one (maximum) taught module, and if significant extenuating circumstances can be documented, the student may apply in writing to the MSc Director to submit an additional written assignment related to the materials covered by the failed module for a deadline before the Court of Examiners meeting. The opportunity to submit this additional assignment and the deadline for its submission are at the MSc Director's discretion.

If this material demonstrates sufficient student learning, then, on the recommendation of the MSc Director, the Court of Examiners may award a capped mark of 40% for this module. Please note that this arrangement can only raise the student's mark in one taught module to 40%, it does not guarantee that the student will obtain an MSc and/or PG Diploma, as other criteria remain relevant. No such option is available where the student has obtained an uncondonable fail in more than one taught module, or where a student's dissertation has been marked as a fail, and in those cases the student will fail the MSc and/or PG Diploma as relevant. Regulations on repeating a Masters dissertation can be found at the following link: [section-III.pdf \(tcd.ie\)](#). A resubmitted dissertation is capped at 50%.

4.7 Attendance Requirements

Modules on this programme are delivered in-person and are not recorded. Regular and consistent attendance at all module seminars and tutorials is required of all MSc students.

Authorised absences should be requested in advance from the relevant instructor, who should be provided with medical or other documentation as appropriate. Students who fail to attend without obtaining authorisation may receive a failing grade for that module, which may prevent them from obtaining an MSc or Postgraduate Diploma. To avoid misunderstanding, a failing grade may be awarded for a module in the case of non-attendance without prior

authorisation even if the student would otherwise have passed the module on the basis of coursework submitted etc. Participation in the Dissertation Seminar is also a requirement to obtain course credit for the Dissertation. Students who do not attend the Dissertation seminar, will not have further dissertation work marked.

Please note that module instruction (and meetings with academic or administrative staff) may take place at any time between 9am and 6pm Monday to Friday and that all full-time students are expected to be available throughout this period. Timetabling may be organized and indeed reorganized if necessary, at any time within this period. Such rearrangements are indeed sometimes necessary, particularly in the first weeks of module instruction.

See Part III of the Calendar for College regulations regarding attendance and 'Off-Books' status: <https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/>

4.8 External Examiner

The External Examiner for the MSc International Politics is Professor Alejandro Quiroz Flores, The University of Hertfordshire.

4.9 Progression Regulations

See Part III of the College Calendar for full details of College regulations regarding Progression: <https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/>.

4.9.1 Appeals

See Part III of the College Calendar for full details of College regulations regarding Academic Appeals: <https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/>.

4.10 Transcripts

Transcripts are available on request to the Programme Administrator at polsigraduate@tcd.ie. Please include your student number and course when requesting a transcript. Transcripts are never issued to a third party, such as a parent or prospective employer without the consent of the person named on the transcript.

4.11 Careers Information & Events

The Careers Advisory Service (CAS) provides a wide range of resources and services to help you make and implement informed choices about your future career direction. The Careers Information Centre at 7-9 South Leinster Street contains a range of free, career-related booklets and employer materials for you to take away. Online, the resources section of the website (<https://www.tcd.ie/careers/graduates/>) provides useful information on a range of

topics from career choice and planning, to working abroad, taking a year out and everything in between. CAS also provides a MyCareer online service. More information is available [here](#).

4.12 Student Feedback & Evaluation

Evaluation of courses and their constituent modules is an important component of the College's commitment towards improving the quality of teaching and the support of learning. To this end, all modules that are taught by the School of Social Sciences and Philosophy are evaluated on a twice-yearly basis using an online survey. The survey is anonymous, and the results are used in reviewing and improving aspects of each module and its delivery. We particularly want to hear what students think was good about a module and what needs to be improved. Student feedback forms an important part of the evaluation and review process.

All results for each survey are collated and made available to the lecturer who taught the module, the Head of Department, the Head of School, the School's Director of Teaching and Learning (UG/PG), and the School Manager. Teaching Assistants receive their feedback through communication with the course lecturer.

Studies have shown that there is some gender bias in student evaluations of teaching – namely that female lecturers tend to receive more negative evaluations than their male counterparts. We ask you to bear this in mind when making your evaluations.