

Programme Specification

BA Politics and International Relations with International Foundation Year

For students entering Foundation year in September 2025

**UCAS Code:
L256 L257**

UFPOLFF

This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	4 years
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Politics and International Relations

Programme information and content

This programme will provide you with the tools to understand and assess how political processes shape our lives, both within and between societies. You will study the dynamics of domestic and international politics, and explore how the global context influences national political decision-making. Throughout the programme you will connect the academic study of politics and international relations to contemporary issues, such as war, climate change and populism. You will learn to think critically and independently about a wide range of political ideas, institutions, and events: from debates about equality and social justice, to nuclear weapons and terrorism.

The programme includes a foundation year (Part 0) provided through the International Foundation Programme (IFP), with entry points in both January and September. The IFP provides access to higher education in Britain to international students who do not meet the standard direct entry requirements. Through the foundation year, you will be equipped with subject specific and general study skills that will enable you to succeed in an undergraduate degree in Politics and International Relations. This is achieved through the provision of high-quality teaching, sympathetic to the needs of students from a wide range of educational backgrounds.

Interactive small group teaching is central to the programme. Through discussion and debate, you will deepen your understanding of the political world and gain an appreciation of the complex and contested nature of political problems. As you move through the programme you will become an increasingly independent learner, acquiring the tools you need to analyse how societies are and should be governed.

The programme will equip you with a broad set of transferable skills. You will learn to interpret data and evidence from diverse sources, develop persuasive arguments, and communicate them effectively. The knowledge and skills you acquire will prepare you for a wide range of careers within the commercial and charitable sectors, as well as roles in government and the civil service.

Foundation year:	<p>During the Foundation Year, you will develop key transferable skills through a compulsory Academic Skills module. Topics will include critical thinking, essay writing, group work, referencing, examination techniques and presentation skills. If your level of English is below the standard specified for undergraduate study, you will take two 20-credit modules in Academic English. You will also have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of optional modules, including modules in politics and sociology provided by the Politics and International Relations Department.</p> <p>Students starting Part 0 in January will join Part 1 in September of the same year.</p>
Part 1:	<p>At Part 1, you will study central concepts and theories in all three parts of the broad discipline of politics and international relations – government, international relations, and political theory. You will have the opportunity to apply your knowledge to some of the major challenges facing contemporary societies, such as climate change, inequality and war.</p>
Part 2:	<p>At Part 2, you will build on the foundations established at Part 1, strengthening your understanding of all three parts of the discipline. You will also receive skills-based training to enable you to evaluate existing research in politics and international relations, and to conduct original research. You will have the opportunity to specialise by selecting optional modules within specific areas of the discipline.</p>
Part 3:	<p>At Part 3, you will tailor the degree to your own interests: choosing from a wide range of research-led modules that reflect the expertise of our members of staff. You will also complete an independent research project under the guidance of a dedicated individual supervisor.</p>

Programme Learning Outcomes - BA Politics and International Relations with International Foundation Year

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Describe and compare political systems within different countries, and the processes and institutions that structure international politics.
2	Draw on established theoretical frameworks to analyse domestic and international politics.
3	Think critically and independently about political events, ideas, and institutions, and identify potential solutions to questions of public and policy concern.
4	Interpret and evaluate current research across the broad discipline of politics and international relations.

5	Understand and apply qualitative and quantitative data relating to political phenomena.
6	Independently formulate a research question in politics and international relations and, under supervision, use appropriate methods to address it.
7	Gather and synthesize complex information from a wide range of primary and secondary data sources.
8	Effectively communicate their knowledge to a range of audiences and in a variety of formats, including in writing and orally.
9	Articulate reasoned and persuasive arguments in support of their views.
10	Productively collaborate with others to achieve defined goals.
11	Effectively plan and manage their own time to prioritise and complete a series of tasks.
12	Analyse and present data and evidence using a range of information and communication technologies.

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Additional Learning outcomes	
N/A	

Module information

Part 0 comprises 140 credits and Parts 1, 2 and 3 each comprise 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.

Foundation modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
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Students entering the programme in September will take the following compulsory modules:

Modules	Name	Credits	Level
IF0ACA	Academic Skills	20	0

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available from a list provided by the International Foundation Programme.

If your level of English is below the standard specified for undergraduate study, you must take the modules Academic English 1 (IF0AE1) and Academic English 2 (IF0AE2).

Students entering the programme in January will take the following compulsory modules:

Modules	Name	Credits	Level
IF0ACJ	Academic Skills	20	0

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available from a list provided by the International Foundation Programme.

If your level of English is below the standard specified for undergraduate study, you must take the modules Academic English 1 (IF0E1J) and Academic English 2 (IF0E2J).

Part 1 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
PO1ICD	Introduction to Contemporary Democracy	20	4
PO1IPI	Introduction to Political Ideas	20	4
PO1IRE	International Relations	20	4
PO1PCC	Politics of Climate Change	20	4

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available in the Politics and International Relations Department. You may choose to replace 20 optional credits with a module from an approved list of modules.

All students will take a preparatory module in core skills required for transition to undergraduate study.

In addition, students on the 4 year with placement year programme will take a preparatory module providing placement training.

Part 2 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
PO2CGP	Comparative Government and Politics	20	5
PO2GLO	Global Order	20	5
PO2PHC	Political Classics	20	5
PO2SOP	The Study of Politics	20	5

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available in the Politics and International Relations Department. You may choose to replace 20 optional credits with a module from an approved list of modules.

All students will take a further preparatory core skills module. This module is designed to support your successful transition to more advanced study at Part 2 and beyond.

In addition, students on the 4 year with placement year programme will take a preparatory module providing placement training.

If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation.

Part 3 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
PO3DIP	Dissertation in Politics and International Relations	40	6

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available in the Politics and International Relations Department. You may choose to replace 20 optional credits with a module from an approved list of modules.

Placement opportunities

N/A

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

You will be taught primarily through a combination of lectures and seminars. Small-group teaching is central to each stage of the programme, and all modules will include some seminar sessions in which you develop your knowledge through discussion and group exercises. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Year uses a variety of approaches to help prepare you for undergraduate study in politics and international relations, and can include tutorials, group work, and use of virtual learning environments, as well as lectures and seminars. At Part 1, small-group teaching is supported by larger lectures. Lectures will introduce you to a topic and provide a framework to enable you to engage successfully with seminar activities. At Parts 2 and 3, there is less reliance on large lectures, with modules typically including more and longer seminars. Students are also introduced to other forms of teaching such as PC labs, simulation exercises and practical activities.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The International Foundation Programme will include at least 15 hours of classroom-based teaching each week.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

The programme will be assessed through a combination of written examinations, coursework (including class tests) and presentations. Assessments are designed to develop your transferable skills, as well as to test subject knowledge. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression

Foundation Year

To achieve a threshold performance in the Foundation Year, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 0;
- (ii) Have no more than 40 credits of modules at Part 0 with marks below 35%; and
- (iii) Achieve a mark of at least 40% in the Academic Skills module.

BA Politics and International Relations with International Foundation Year Specific Progression Requirements above Threshold.

In order to progress from Part 0 to Part 1 and be eligible for transfer to BA Politics and International Relations, a student must achieve a threshold performance; and

- (i) at least 40% in IF0ACA or IF0ACJ Academic Skills and 55% in each of IF0AE1 or IF0E1J Academic English 1 and IF0AE2 or IF0E2J Academic English 2 (if taken)

and achieve the following in the remaining 120 credits or 80 credits (if taking Academic English)

- (i) at least 55% in 40 credits;
- (ii) at least 50% in another 40 credits;
- (iii) at least 40% in all modules

The achievement of a threshold performance at Foundation Year qualifies a student for a Certificate of Completion if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1;
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits.

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance;

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Transferring from a Joint Honours to a Single Honours programme

Students are able to transfer from a Joint Honours to a Single Honours programme in one of their joint subject areas at the end of Part 1, subject to fulfilling the Part 1 University Threshold Standard, achieving marks of at least 40% in at least 40 credits of modules in the subject to which they wish to transfer, and fulfilling any programme-specific progression rules for the Part 1 Single Honours Programme to which they wish to transfer.

Students who transfer from a Joint Honours to a Single Honours programme may not have taken all of the Part 1 modules listed in the Single Honours Programme Specification. The modules which they have taken will be shown on their Diploma Supplement.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits, except that a mark below 30% may be condoned in no more than 20 credits of modules owned by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance;

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% First class

60% - 69% Upper Second class

50% - 59% Lower Second class

40% - 49% Third class

35% - 39% Below Honours Standard

0% - 34% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Four year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Five year programmes, including study abroad / Placement year:

Part 2: one-third

Study abroad/Placement year: not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

The classification method is given in detail in Section 17 of the Assessment Handbook.

Additional costs of the programme

You will incur some additional costs during your programme of study. A wide range of resources to support your learning, including textbooks and electronic resources, are available through the library. For some modules, we will recommend that you purchase a copy of the textbook, and there may be other books/resources which it would be convenient for you to buy. We recommend that you budget £300 per year for purchasing books.

Some optional modules may involve additional costs for fieldtrips or travel to work placements. You will be advised of these costs before you enrol on the module.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2024.

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

BA Politics and International Relations with International Foundation Year for students
entering Part 1 in session 2025/26

16 July 2024

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