



Faculty/School of Humanities and Social Sciences

**Department of Politics, Languages
and International Studies UG
Handbook
2024/25**

BA (Hons) Modern Languages

This handbook is available online or in alternative formats. Please contact your Director of Studies if required.

[September 2024]

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Purpose and scope

Your handbook for academic year 2024/25 comprises the following three documents which should be read alongside each other:

1. [University information](#)
2. **Department handbook (this document)**
3. [Your course specification](#)

All three of these documents were made available to you at the beginning of the academic year and/or at the start of your studies. You are expected to familiarise yourself with the contents.

This handbook includes important information about the Department and your course that you should be aware of whilst studying here.

This handbook is available online and can be provided in alternative formats. Please contact ug-polis-admin@bath.ac.uk

The content of this handbook is accurate at the time of publication (September 2024) but *information contained within may sometimes be subject to change after this handbook has been issued. You will be informed of any changes and issued with a revised version, if there are any material changes to the information in this handbook.*

Please note that links to further information are embedded in the title of each section or in applicable text.

The Department

Introduction to the Department

Welcome to the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies.

We are very proud of our courses, the quality of our teaching and the enthusiasm and passion of our staff. We are also proud of the cutting-edge research that our staff are doing that directly feeds into our teaching. We hope that you will enjoy learning about new things, developing your skills, knowledge and critical analysis and feel inspired by the course. Hopefully your time at Bath will not only be a positive and memorable experience but also a launchpad for you into a career that you enjoy and makes a difference to the world.

The transition into University life is fun and exciting, but we know that it can be daunting at times and there can be some unexpected challenges along the way. The University offers a wide range of support services which are detailed in this brochure and which you can also find out about from the course team, your personal tutor and the Students' Union. Please do reach out to these sources of support – especially your personal tutor - if you have any concerns about your studies, University life or anything else.

University is a lot more than your studies, so we encourage you to get involved in some of the vast range of sporting, cultural, political and community activities that the University and the Students' Union offer to make the very best of your student experience. Through your course and these activities, we hope you meet a wide variety of new and inspiring

friends and colleagues who shape your thinking, contribute to your development and help you along the journey to graduation.

We wish you all the best for your studies with us over the next few years, and of course all the other opportunities and experiences being part of the University of Bath brings with it.

- *Professor Peter Lambert, Head of Department*

Departmental information including course teams

Your programme is delivered by the Department of Politics, Languages & International Studies within the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences (HSS).

The faculty is one of three Faculties and one School in the University and comprises six academic Departments: Economics, Education, Health, Politics, Languages & International Politics, Psychology and Social & Policy Sciences.



The Department is led by Head of Department Peter Lambert who oversees the Department's strategic planning and development. He has overall responsibility for the research, education, and student and staff wellbeing in the Department.

The Director of Teaching for POLIS is Mattia Cacciatori whose role has general responsibility for the quality of learning and teaching in the department and has departmental oversight of things like student engagement, development and introduction of new courses, assessment marking and feedback and much more.

Finally, your Directors of Studies are Dr Astrid Forsyth (Y1 & Y2) and Mariana Bonnouvrier (Y3 & Y4). Your Director of Studies are responsible for the day-to-day management of the course and will be your main point of contact for any questions regarding IMCs, extensions and pastoral support while you are studying.

The Administrative Team, in addition to your Director of Studies and Personal Tutor, are on hand to support you and act as a central point of contact. The team can be found in the PoLIS and Health Hub at 1WN 3.02 and are there to share information and provide signposting. If you have an enquiry, you can contact us by emailing the shared email box at polis-ug-admin@bath.ac.uk which is monitored **between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday**.

Academic Advisor

At the start of 2024/25 the role of Personal Tutor was renamed Academic Advisor to better reflect the nature of the role.

When you join the University, you are assigned an academic staff member as an Academic Advisor. They will act as a personalised point of contact throughout your time here, supporting your transition, and your academic and personal development. It is important to respond to communications and requests from your Academic Advisor, and to attend scheduled meetings.

Your Academic Advisor should arrange to meet with you on three occasions during your first semester and offer at least one meeting per semester on an ongoing basis for the remainder of your studies. This includes when away on placement or study year abroad. Your Academic Advisor can provide information and guidance about:

- your transition into the University community and your academic studies
- unit choices, placement opportunities and future career plans
- sources of support with any personal matters or situations involving your health and wellbeing that may be impacting your studies
- providing you with a reference for work experience, internships, your placement, further studies, or career

Your Academic Advisor will be in contact during welcome week to arrange your first meeting.

Contact information

Contact	Title	Tel Ext.	Email	Room No.	Contact With...
Mrs Astrid Forsyth	Director of Studies (Y1 & Y2)	8384 9	af204@bath.ac.uk	1WN 2.21	Course Queries
Dr Mariana Bonnouvrier	Director of Studies (Y3 & Y4)	4764	mb2994@bath.ac.uk	1WN 3.26	Course Queries
Dr Karoline von Oppen	Head of Languages	6334	mlskvo@bath.ac.uk	1 WN 2.29	Course Queries
Mrs Laura Massa	Placements Officer	3808	politics-placements@bath.ac.uk	1W 3.06	Placement Queries

Mrs Rachel McBride	Programmes Administrator	5154	polis-ug-admin@bath.ac.uk	1WN 3.02	Administrative Queries
Miss Sophie Parker	Programmes Administrator	5288	polis-ug-admin@bath.ac.uk	1WN 3.02	Administrative Queries
Mrs Lauren Jones	Programmes Administrator, PoLIS	6 471	Polis-ug-admin@bath.ac.uk	1WN 3.02	Administrative Queries
Miss Katie Hillier	Programmes Officer	3368	polis-ug-admin@bath.ac.uk	1WN 3.02	Administrative Queries

External Examiners

External Examiners have an important role in assuring the academic standards are appropriate and assessment processes are fair. At least one External Examiner is appointed for each taught course or group of courses at the University and will be someone from another university or professional organisation who is qualified and experienced in the relevant field of study.

External Examiners:

- Review draft assessment questions and samples of assessed work
- Participate in Boards of Examiners' decision-making
- Give independent feedback and advice throughout the year
- Submit an annual written report on the course(s) they are appointed to

External Examiner annual reports, and departmental responses to those reports, are made available to students and are discussed by Staff/Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs). Students can engage with the process through which the University considers and responds to External Examiners' comments and suggestions through the University's student representation mechanisms. However, it's not appropriate for individual students to make direct contact with External Examiners.

If you are dissatisfied with the process or outcome of an assessment and are considering whether to raise this either informally or formally, please familiarise yourself with the University's procedures for [student complaints](#) and [academic appeals](#).

The External Examiner(s) for your programme are:

Name	Course	Home Institution
Ms Mandy Q. Poetzsch	Modern Languages (German)	University of Bristol
Dr Marco Paoli	Modern Languages (Italian)	University of Liverpool
Dr Helen Stuhr-Rommereim	Modern Languages (Russian)	University of St Andrews
Dr Craig Neville	Modern Languages (Spanish)	University College, Cork
Dr Karine Chevalier	Modern Languages (French)	Roehampton University, London
Dr Wenxuan Li	Modern Languages (Mandarin)	University of Central Lancashire

The University's expectations of students

[University regulations](#)

<http://go.bath.ac.uk/regulations>

When you registered with the University you agreed to abide by the Regulations for Students. These are important documents which set out the roles and responsibilities of both you as a student and the University. **You are expected to familiarise yourself with these.**

[Attendance expectations](#)

You are expected to be in attendance and participate in all scheduled learning and teaching activities required by your course. If you require a leave of absence from the University for any reason, please contact your Director of Studies:

Y1 + Y2 Astrid Forsyth: af204@bath.ac.uk

Y3 + Y4 Mariana Bonnouvrier: mb2994@bath.ac.uk

Students are required to attend university regularly. In some cases, if attendance is not satisfactory then Academic Registry are authorised to terminate your course of studies. If you are ill, or think that you are likely to be ill, for more than three days, please get in touch with your Director of Studies within three days of becoming ill. Where you have a planned absence to undergo medical or surgical procedures that requires time off for more than three days, you can apply for a leave of absence from your Director of Studies. Your department can arrange in advance for time off study and may be able to consider other options.

Learning and Teaching delivery

[Timetables](#)

Using [MyTimetable](#), you can access your personal timetable and download it into an electronic calendar. MyTimetable updates regularly, so should there be a change to your timetable, it will be reflected.

Any ad hoc changes to your teaching schedule will be conveyed to you via the Announcement forums on Moodle and /or relayed by email using course and unit mailing lists.

If you have any questions about your timetable, please contact your Director of Studies.

Learning resources, Moodle, and recorded lectures

Many of your lectures will be recorded; however, this is subject to the discretion of individual members of staff and we cannot guarantee that all lectures will be recorded. Recorded lectures can be accessed via the Moodle page for each relevant unit. Please contact the individual lecturer concerned if you have questions about access to recordings of their lectures. Seminars will not be recorded. When you start your units, you will be able to access associated online material at a time that suits your schedule.

Option choices

If your course has option choice, then information about [how and when to choose your optional units](#) can be found online. If applicable, you will receive an email notification at the relevant point in the year when online unit selection is available. If you want to discuss your option choices, please contact your Director of Studies.

Study/ Work Abroad Year and support

The third year of the course is spent abroad on an individual programme approved in advance by us. Exactly how and where you spend the year is largely up to you, but we will give you advice and make sure that your plans are appropriate to the degree programme.

You will have to choose between a) studying in overseas universities or language centres; b) teaching English as an assistant in a school or college; c) working abroad. Study abroad is normally in the form of half-year or whole-year places at our partners in the Department student exchange scheme. We will help you to apply to overseas universities or study centres. Students will usually apply to teach English with the British Council and they are responsible for submitting their application. Support on the application process will be provided by the Department and Placements but we don't apply for the students. We will help you arrange work placements but cannot guarantee to provide one.

Planning for the Year Abroad begins in semester two of Year 1, when your Placements Officer will give you an overview of the Year Abroad, you will be briefed on the opportunities available in relevant countries and given access to detailed resources on Moodle. In addition, in semester one of Year 2, your Placements Officer will take you through a series of in-person sessions covering introduction to work placements, application skills, sourcing placements, interview skills and resilience. In semester two, you will take part in workshops on planning finances for your time abroad, preparing for study exchanges, and applying for work and study visas. You will be able to book 1:1 appointments with your Placements Officer, either online or in-person, as well as access the weekly drop-in sessions organised by the Placements Team. The Department has Year Abroad Officers for each language whose contact details are in the Department Guide. They, along with your personal tutor and Placements Officer, will help you draw up a programme. Towards the end of the second year there is a Year Abroad Information Day, which includes final briefings with information relevant to particular countries. At this stage you will also be given access to the Year Abroad Booklet on Moodle.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you understand the Year Abroad requirements and have arranged placements or study exchanges which meet these requirements. If you change your Year Abroad arrangements without our approval, we will suspend your registration. We will also require you to provide information on your learning experience when you return.

The Year Abroad is assessed and is worth 8% of the degree programme. Students taking part in a department student exchange scheme for the full academic year are assessed at their host universities. Students spending only one semester on a department student exchange and completing a work placement in the other semester, will be assessed by the exam results obtained at the exchange partner and by writing a 3,000-word Year Abroad Essay in their other language of study. Students who work for the full year (e.g. on a work placement or British Council assistantship) are required to write a Special Study Essay while they are abroad. This is a 5,000-word essay and students can choose in which of their languages of study they write it. The Special Study may be on any topic: we will advise you on your topic of choice and assign you a supervisor at the end of your second year.

During the Year Abroad you will be expected to complete two Reflection Reports which help you to structure your placement objectives and personal development.

Re-induction meetings will be held at the start of the final year to welcome you back from your Year Abroad and update you on any changes that may have occurred at the University during your time away.

The Year Abroad is an essential part of the degree programme and it is not possible for anyone to be exempted from it. If your Year Abroad is very substantially disrupted by illness or other problems, you may have to repeat it.

Please also note that foreign visas may now be required for work and study abroad and entitlements and arrangements will vary from country to country: see the Year Abroad section on the PoLIS Virtual Undergraduate Hub for more advice. Whilst support will be provided to students, it is students' responsibility to apply for and obtain the relevant visa in order to undertake their activity abroad.

You will receive more detailed information on the Year Abroad Study exchanges and placements in the form of a Year Abroad Booklet in second year as well as access to the Year Abroad Hub online. Please see the PoLIS Virtual Undergraduate Moodle page [here](#) for further information.

Role	Name	Email
Director of Studies (Y1 & 2)	Astrid Forsyth	af204@bath.ac.uk
Director of Studies (Y3 &4)	Dr Mariana Bonnouvrier	mb2994@bath.ac.uk

Department Exchange and Apprenticeships Director	Dr Steve Wharton	s.wharton@bath.ac.uk
Placements Officer	Laura Massa	polis-placements@bath.ac.uk
Chinese Year Abroad Officer	Xu Lin	xl2318@bath.ac.uk
French Year Abroad Officer	Dr Sandra Daroczi	sd2016@bath.ac.uk
German Year Abroad Officer	Dr Elisabeth Attlmayr	ea420@bath.ac.uk
Italian Year Abroad Officer	Dr Elena Minelli	e.a.minelli@bath.ac.uk
Spanish Year Abroad Officer	Dr Leire Barrera-Medrano	lbm25@bath.ac.uk

In preparation for your Study/Work Abroad Year, please read the information, on the website, about [planning your finances](#) including potential sources of funding, travel insurance, and visas.

Further study

Should you wish to continue studying with the University of Bath, our department offers a range of postgraduate master's degrees. We offer MA and MRes degrees where you can focus on topics that interest you and build your skills around your future career ambitions.

You can browse our range of postgraduate courses and find the right one for you by clicking the link [here](#).

Research ethics

The University has a wide range of resources available to you to help you understand the importance of academic integrity and how you can enhance your academic writing and practice. When writing at university level it is important to ensure that your work is referenced correctly and that you make clear reference to the resources that you have read and cited throughout your work. This can be a tricky skill to master, however, there is plenty of support available to help you.

The University of Bath have published their own referencing guide designed to support those who are new to academic writing to cite their work correctly. This can be found online at: <https://library.bath.ac.uk/referencing>.

Further support can be found at the Skills Centre who provide academic skills support and enhancement to all students at the university. In order to attend a skills masterclass, access academic writing support or find self-access online academic skills resources contact the Skills Centre at: <https://www.bath.ac.uk/professional-services/academic-skills/>.

Do also reach out to your personal tutor for any queries you might have about Research Ethics, Academic Integrity or Referencing.

Student Representation

Mechanisms for student representation are designed to enable you to be an active partner in continually improving your learning and teaching experience. The main ways in which your feedback will be sought will be through:

- Staff/Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) ([Academic and Faculty Reps](#))
- surveys and evaluations
- [the Students' Union](#)

Assessment

[Assessment Regulations](#)

The Undergraduate Assessment Regulations (UGAR) set out the rules for your course including how the University governs your outcomes; progression requirements and what happens if you fail; award eligibility and how your classification is calculated. If your course has **any exemptions** to the Undergraduate Assessment Regulations, you will find this information in your course specification. **You are expected to familiarise yourself with these regulations.**

Calculating your degree outcome

Your degree result is based on the calculation of your Overall Course Average (OCA) based on the stages of your course. The contribution of each stage is set out in the Programme and Unit Catalogues.

Supplementary assessment

Supplementary assessment describes the assessment you will be expected to undertake either to retrieve failure in a unit's main assessment, or in the case of deferred assessment.

Supplementary assessment takes place during the summer (August) and you can find information on the supplementary assessment period in the [University's academic year chart](#). You will be expected to return to Bath to sit any in-person supplementary exams.

Exit awards – CertHE and DiplHE

If you leave the University early, without completing your course, you may be eligible for a generic exit award, either a Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) or a Diploma of Higher Education (DiplHE).

Switching courses

If you are considering transferring to a different course, where this would be permitted, you should speak to your Director of Studies in the first instance. In certain circumstances you may be able to or may be required to transfer onto a specific alternative course, known as a Designated Alternative Course (DAC) if you have not met the criteria to remain on your current course of study.

Additional Information

Academic Registry have also published [further information and guidance on assessment arrangements](#). This includes a link to the [University's Academic Integrity Training and Test](#).

No student will be able to progress beyond the next progression point in their studies until they pass the test. The test has a pass mark of 85% but you can take the test as many times as you need to.

[Individual Mitigating Circumstances \(IMCs\)](#)

We acknowledge that you may experience circumstances that disrupt your assessment attempt or performance. Submitting an IMC claim allows you to report any conditions which prevented you from taking assessment or significantly impaired your performance. If accepted, an IMC recognises that your assessment was affected.

You are expected to familiarise yourself with the information available about IMCs

including the process for submission, the evidence requirements, how claims are considered and what can (and cannot) happen if a claim is accepted as valid.

Coursework

[Assignment briefs, word counts and deadlines](#)

Most units taught in the Department are assessed by a combination of either coursework and examination or coursework and final essay, giving at least two opportunities for feedback on performance. At the end of each semester, the assessments will be aggregated to give you an overall mark out of 100 for each unit. Coursework can take a variety of forms, however, the most common forms of coursework are seminar presentations and essays.

Not all the assignments you are given may "count" in terms of how you are assessed. Those which do are referred to as assessed coursework. We undertake to make very clear to you what is assessed and what is not, but if you are in any doubt, you should ask the teacher concerned. The way in which each individual unit is assessed will be explained to you at the start of the academic semester by the unit convenor and will be stated in writing in the unit guide or on the Moodle page. A summary is also given in the relevant entry in the Unit Catalogue. If you are in any doubt about what "counts" (and how much it counts for) please ask your unit convenor.

In first-year core units, you will receive guidance on how to prepare for essays and exams. You will also receive guidance on how to prepare for seminar presentations in the first or second year, depending on your programme and choice of units.

6.13 Students will normally receive the following information about an assessment task:

- *its weighting in calculating the mark for the unit*
- *the assessment criteria, and any grade criteria relevant to the subject*
- *the timing, nature, and extent of feedback they can expect and whether this is to be accompanied by the return of assessed work*

6.14 Students will receive clear and accurate information which sets out the expectations of the assessment task(s). This will normally include:

- the requirements of the assessment task(s)
- the word limit/range, and the penalty for non-compliance. If a penalty policy is not stated in writing the University default policy will apply
- any specific requirements of professional, regulatory, or statutory bodies
- any special presentation or referencing preferences/requirements
- the date for submission of the work
- the dates when any further detailed information about the individual task(s) will be communicated and how they will be communicated
- for in-class tests, information on the conditions under which the test will be conducted (e.g., open-book) or other specific requirements
- whether the work is to be submitted anonymously]

Coursework tasks will normally have a word limit or word range. This, and the penalty for not adhering to this, will be confirmed when you receive an assignment. Markers may stop reading/marking your work at the point it exceeds the word/page limit.

Deadlines

Submission deadlines for each unit will be provided within the unit outline and displayed on the Moodle page. Assignments are due at 3pm on the date of the deadline unless otherwise specified. For information on extensions and late submissions, please see "Late Submission of Coursework" below. The university is committed to anonymous marking, and the Department of PoLIS is practicing anonymous submissions where practical (presentations, oral exams and dissertations will remain some of the exceptions). Where applicable, the process of submission of anonymised work will be as follows:

Essays must be submitted by the due date electronically via Moodle. Please refer to the 'Assignment Submission Procedure' on the [PoLIS Virtual Undergraduate Hub](#) for details on how to submit your assignment. You must retain an electronic copy of every piece of coursework you submit. This is in case of loss.

[Coursework extensions](#)

If you find you are facing circumstances that are preventing you from submitting on time, you can request an extension to your deadline before the work is due. Short extensions are often granted but occasionally there may be a better measure to support you depending on your individual circumstances and the type of assessment. You will need to give a brief explanation of how your circumstances are impacting on your ability to complete on time. Extension requests require evidence to confirm what has happened and when.

Students who wish to apply for extension to coursework deadlines are required to consult the Unit Convenor **in advance** of the deadline. Extension requests must then be submitted via SAMIS to your Director of Studies and **must be supported with evidence**. The normal acceptable reasons for a coursework extension can be found [\[here\]](#). Circumstances that are

foreseeable and preventable, busy assessment schedule or “normal life” events would not normally be considered valid.

Late submission of coursework

To ensure fairness to all students, you will be expected to hand in all assessed coursework and dissertations/projects by a specified date and time, and [there are penalties for submitting work after the specified deadline](#). **If you are experiencing difficulties completing work on time, please seek help before the deadline.**

[Examinations](#)

There are three formal assessment periods during which examinations take place, January, May and June, and August.

Marking and feedback

We have in place processes to ensure that assessment is conducted and marked in a fair and rigorous manner which upholds the academic standards of the University. You can find further [information on such processes, and their purpose, on our website](#).

Marking

All assessments you complete during your course are marked according to:

Marking criteria (or assessment criteria) - these are the knowledge, understanding and skills which it has been identified that students should demonstrate in the assessment, and which are considered during marking. They are based on the unit learning outcomes being assessed.

Marking schemes - these are detailed descriptions of how specific numbers of marks should be assigned against individual components of an answer within the assessment task.

Grade descriptors - these are descriptions of the levels of achievement required to get a result within a given band of marks (for example 70% or more).

You will be made aware of the relevant assessment criteria and any relevant grade criteria when you receive your assessment tasks.

Anonymous marking

The University has adopted a principle of anonymous marking to protect students and staff from bias, and the perception of bias, in the marking process. It applies to all assessment where practical. It is not possible to mark all assessment anonymously as either you will be identifiable even if you do not use your name (for example, in presentations, group work, Individual work) or it might not be practical, or in your interest, to do so. You will be informed when assessment cannot be marked anonymously.

Moderation

Both the setting and the marking of assessment are independently checked through processes known as moderation. In setting assessment moderation makes sure it will test the relevant learning outcomes for the unit and contains appropriate levels of challenge. When marking, moderation makes sure this is consistent and in line with the relevant assessment criteria, marking scheme and grade descriptors. Moderation is conducted by internal examiners (other academics in the department) and by an External Examiner.

Scaling

All marks for a unit are reviewed at a meeting of a Board of Examiners for Units which will verify that the assessment process has been conducted appropriately and that the marks are an accurate reflection of the standards achieved. A Board of Examiners can decide to recommend a change to the provisional marks, based on evidence that there was a problem with the assessment which means the initial marks do not reflect the standards achieved by students. This adjustment is known as scaling and under these circumstances the marks of all affected students will be changed.

Your course

[Programme and Unit Catalogue](#)

This is where you will find details about individual units for the current academic year. The catalogues also provide links to the relevant assessment regulations.

[Course Specification](#)

Course Specifications set out important key information about your course, including the award title, the intended learning outcomes, the structure of the course, as well as regulations for meeting the requirements for exit awards and any agreed exemptions from the undergraduate assessment regulations (UGAR). You are expected to be familiar with your course specification document and its contents.