



Durham
University

School of Government
and International Affairs

Inspiring the extraordinary

Undergraduate Programmes

Post-application Information 2024-25



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The aims and objectives of the School of Government and International Affairs (SGIA)

Aims

The School aims to provide teaching programmes within the diverse range of Politics sub-disciplines that will enable well qualified undergraduate students to learn and develop academically within an educational framework informed by the specialist expertise and research activities of its staff.

Within this overall aim the School seeks for its undergraduate students:

- to provide high quality and progressive study routes in Politics within a range of Politics degree programmes
- to provide high quality taught components in Politics, with progression through study routes where appropriate, to be chosen by students on other undergraduate degree programmes within the University or outside
- to operate a teaching and assessment system which ensures that students acquire knowledge and skills appropriate to their field of study
- to prepare students for further study or progression to suitable career

Objectives

On completion of a BA Single Honours degree students should have:

- acquired a substantial body of subject-based knowledge and understanding of Politics from the structured programme of study in the core modules offered in three broad areas of the discipline – political institutions and processes, international relations, political thought – and in their chosen options.
- demonstrated the ability to take responsibility for their studies and work independently to appropriate standards on topics within the field of Politics.
- developed a range of intellectual and personal skills applicable to further study and to a variety of careers.

On completion of the BA International Relations degree students should be able to describe and comment critically upon work at the forefront of present knowledge and possess skills in research design and conduct to deploy appropriate techniques and forms of analysis in their own work.

On completion of the single honours degree with year abroad degree students will also have gained personal skills from adapting to study in a different academic and cultural environment.

On completion of the Placement Year, students will have had 9 – 12 months of professional level work experience in a sector which may be related to their degree or could be in an industry which they are wanting to pursue a future career.

BA Joint Honours Programmes students share the first three objectives, subject to the recognition that:

- they acquire subject based knowledge and understanding of Politics to the same depth but from a smaller number of modules in levels 2 and 3.
- their development of intellectual and personal skills will also be informed by their progress in the partner subject.

Students registered in other undergraduate degree programmes should gain and demonstrate similar levels of knowledge and understanding of Politics in the appropriate modules, which should also contribute to their overall development of intellectual and personal skills.

Studying Politics at Durham University: A Students' Guide

A prospectus or brochure often contains a great deal of detailed information, but experience suggests that prospective students want clear answers to direct questions. Detailed information about courses and degrees is available from the department but the questions that follow are the sort most commonly asked. If your concerns are not addressed here, please write to us and we will try to answer them.

Q. Where is Durham and what is it like?

Durham is an historic, cathedral city designated as a World Heritage Site and located in the north-east of England. It is easily reached by rail, road and air. Its Cathedral is one of the finest buildings in Europe and the city provides an attractive and safe environment for students. The city possesses a range of entertainment

Q. What (SGIA) Politics modules do you offer?

Durham offers a wide range of modules in Politics including modules in international relations; political ideas and ideologies; British, European, American and East Asian politics. The degree structures allow an increasing amount of choice and in the second and third years, there are fewer compulsory courses. Students acquire a common basis of knowledge in the study of government and political ideas before specialising in those aspects of politics that most interest them.

Q. How will I be taught?

Large modules in the first and second years are taught by means of lectures and a programme of regular seminar's; in the first year, this consists of a one-hour lecture per week and a one-hour tutorial per fortnight for each module. Final year modules are mostly taught through seminars. Staff-student relations are extremely good and student questionnaires show that our modules are highly regarded. Students receive individual attention as and when their academic needs require it.

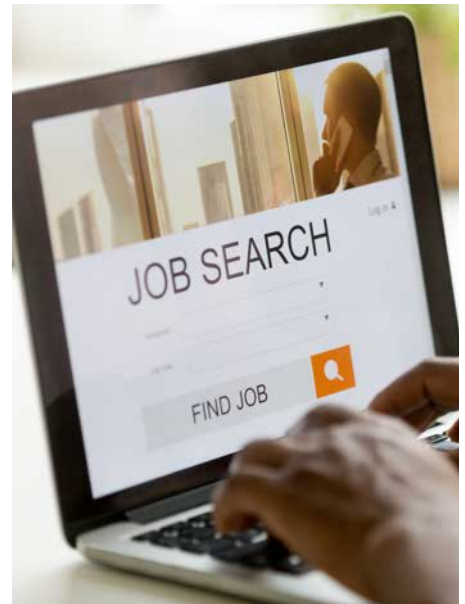


Q. How will I be assessed?

Assessment methods vary according to the precise degree programme chosen, but in most cases there is a mixture of examinations, group projects, assessed essays, and a dissertation in your final year. You will normally be assessed during or at the end of the year in which you take a module.

Q. What career prospects are there?

Durham graduates have an enviable record of employment and those graduating in Politics are no exception; recent surveys suggest that Durham graduates' employability is second only to Oxford. In recent years, Politics graduates have taken a wide variety of jobs in many different fields including law, accountancy, manufacturing industry, journalism, publishing and public service, including the civil and armed forces. The University has a well-resourced Careers Advisory Service at durham.ac.uk/careers of which students in any year are welcome to use.



Q. Are there opportunities to study abroad?

Durham has ERASMUS and exchange partners in some of Europe's most prestigious and attractive locations. Our ERASMUS+ partners include:

- France – Aix en Provence and Sciences Po
- Germany – University of Heidelberg and University of Konstanz
- Italy – LUISS Sweden – Uppsala University
- Netherlands – University of Amsterdam
- Spain – University of Granada and University of Salamanca
- Switzerland – University of Zurich

Note: due to Brexit the above will change to the Turing Scheme further information can be found on durham.ac.uk/international/studyabroad/brexit

Our International/Exchange partners include:

- Australia – University of Western Australia and University of Melbourne
- Canada – University of British Columbia, McGill University and University of Calgary
- Hong Kong – University of Hong Kong
- Japan – University of Tokyo
- New Zealand – University of Otago
- US – Boston College
- Singapore – National University of Singapore

If you are interested in studying Politics for a year in another country you should apply for the Politics (Year Abroad) degree. Further information on studying abroad can be found on the web page:

durham.ac.uk/international/studyabroad



Q. Are there opportunities for a Placement Year as part of my degree?

All Undergraduate programmes in the department allow you to take a Placement Year as part of your degree. You cannot combine a study broad year and placement year but you are able to undertake a work based placement year in the UK or internationally and will do so between your 2nd and 3rd year, extending your degree to 4 years in length. It is up to you to secure a suitable placement year which will be approved by the department and the University however there is lots of support to help you find a role.

Q. Where do Durham students come from?

Durham is a national and international university and our students come from all parts of Britain and around the world; we particularly welcome overseas students with good spoken and written English. We determine qualifications on an individual basis and consider what type of offer to make; our International Office can offer further guidance durham.ac.uk/international.office

We also welcome applications from mature students, who are 21 and over. We do not set any particular requirement for entry, but consider qualifications on an individual basis; we also look for strong evidence of promise and genuine interest in relevant areas of study. The School aims to ensure they receive the help and support they need.

Q. Where will I live?

Most students live in one of the seventeen undergraduate and postgraduate colleges and societies on the Durham campus, which provide safe, comfortable and convenient accommodation. The colleges have their own distinctive characters and provide social centres for students as well as offering educational and pastoral support. The closest colleges to the School are: St Mary's, Trevelyan, Van Mildert and St Aidan's. Students living out of college retain their college membership and are welcome to use their college's facilities durham.ac.uk/colleges

Q. Why choose Durham?

Durham is England's third oldest University after Oxford and Cambridge, and it enjoys an international reputation for the quality of the education it provides.

Some of the departments are housed in historic listed buildings in Durham, whilst others are in newer accommodation near the library. Departments are well placed for access to the University's main computing facilities. You will have a personal email account, networked Unix and PC access and direct access to the University teaching aid, Blackboard Learn Ultra system and the internet. In addition, the departments are a short walk away from the university's main library, which houses over a million books and 2,500 journals.

If you want to attend a first-class university in a beautiful, historic setting with unparalleled student support services, choose Durham.



An Introduction for Undergraduates

The main strengths of the School are: political thought, public policy making, European politics (including British politics), Middle and East Asian politics, International Political Economy and International Relations. Students have the opportunity to concentrate on one or more of these areas in their second and third years. All degrees offer the option of a year abroad or placement year.

First Year Studies

Course structures for all Single, Joint and Combined Honours degrees in the first year are as follows, students register for six modules that are taught for the whole year:

Politics

Core Modules

- Democratic Political Systems
- Researching Politics and International Relations
- Introduction to Political Theory
- Introduction to Comparative Politics

Two further modules from:

- International Security, Interdependence and Organisation
- Perspectives of Political Economy
- Introduction to International relations
- One module from the Centre for Foreign Language Study **OR** one module from another department

International Relations

Core modules

- International Security, Interdependence and Organisation
- Perspectives of Political Economy
- Researching Politics and International Relations
- Introduction to International Relations

Two further modules from:

- Democratic Political Systems
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to Political Theory
- One module from the Centre for Foreign Language Study **OR** one module from another department

Politics & International Relations

Core modules

- Researching Politics and International Relations
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to International Relations
- Introduction to Political Theory

Two further modules from:

- Democratic Political Systems
- International Security, Interdependence and Organisation
- Perspectives of Political Economy
- One module from the Centre for Foreign Language Study **OR** one module from another department

Students are advised to give careful consideration to their choice of modules outside SGIA; to assist you in choosing before your arrival, Faculty Handbooks which contain module titles and brief outlines are available online at: [Faculty Handbook](#)



Teaching Methods

Modules with large numbers (mainly in the first and second years) are taught by means of lectures backed up by regular tutorials. Smaller modules (mainly in the third year) are normally taught by means of seminars. In all cases, there is ample opportunity for discussions in small groups.

Economics and Politics

Three of the following modules:

- Researching Politics and International Relations
- Introduction to Political Theory
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to International Relations
- Perspectives of Political Economy

Three modules from Economics

Philosophy and Politics

Core modules

Three Philosophy modules and Introduction to Political Theory

And two of the following modules:

- Researching Politics and International Relations
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to International Relations
- Perspectives of Political Economy

Philosophy, Politics and Economics

Two of the following modules:

- Introduction to Political Theory
- Introduction to Comparative Politics
- Introduction to International Relations
- Researching Politics and International Relations
- Perspectives on Political Economy

Two modules from Economics and two modules from Philosophy

Outline of First Year Modules and Preliminary Reading

***Please note all modules are subject to change**

Introduction to Political Theory (SGIA1231)

This module lays the basis for a systematic understanding of the role that political ideas, values and theories play in shaping modern political institutions and public policy. It introduces students to competing theories of justice and demonstrates how arguments in favour of particular interpretations of ideals can be justified and critiqued in order to offer reasoned support or opposition to public policies and political institutions. The module focuses on ideals, theories of justice, arguments and ideologies that have been particularly influential in the western political tradition.

Course content can include such topics such as:

Liberty, Human Rights, Distributive Justice, Liberalism, Feminism, Multiculturalism, Egalitarianism, Libertarianism and Equality of Opportunity.

Introductory Reading:

- Adam Swift, *Political Philosophy: A Beginners Guide for Students and Politicians* 3rd ed. (Polity Press, 2013).
- Matthew Clayton and Andrew Williams (eds.), *Social Justice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)
- Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
- Catriona McKinnon (ed.), *Issues in Political Theory* (Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 2015)
- Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit, (eds.), *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology*, 3rd ed., (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2019). Or 2nd ed., 2006.
- Michael Sandel, *Justice: What is the Right Thing to Do* (New York: Penguin, 2009).
- David Miller, *Political Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Notes

Formative Assessment:

- Two 1500 word essays (Michaelmas and Epiphany terms)

Summative Assessment:

- Take-home exam (100%) (Easter Term)

Please note there could be possible overlap between the dates of take home exams on modules across levels 1 and 2.



Introduction to Comparative Politics (SGIA1211)

The module aims to provide students with an introduction to comparative politics focusing on both theoretical ideas and empirical evidence. This module will provide a broad overview of key ideas and theories within comparative politics and will expose students to key conceptual debates that have helped define how we classify and understand the political world. This module gives students the opportunity to start thinking about how we evaluate theories with the use of evidence and think about what it means to study something comparatively.

Course content can include such topics as:

- Defining regime types and political systems
- Democratisation
- Parties and party systems
- Voting behaviour and participation

Introductory Reading:

- Carmani, D. (2017) *Comparative Politics* 4th edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Hague, R., Harrop, M. & McCormick, J. (2016) *Comparative Government and Politics* 10th edition, Palgrave Macmillan Publishing, London.
- Newton, K. & Van Deth, J. (2016) *Foundations of Comparative Politics* 3rd edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Grugel, J. & Lewis Bishop, M. (2014) *Democratisation: A Critical Introduction* 2nd edition, Palgrave Macmillan Publishing, New York.

Notes

Formative Assessment:

- 1,000-word individual essay (Michaelmas term)

Summative Assessment:

- 2,000-Group Project/Report (50%)
- 2,000-word individual essay (50%)

Introduction to International Relations (SGIA1221)

The module aims to provide an overview of the field of International Relations (IR) including its historical context. The module aims to offer students the opportunity to explore different traditions of thought in the field of International Relations and, from a theoretical approach, to explore complex problems that characterise the global/international order including, for example, the problem of violence, the fragmentation of world order, the relevance of international organisations, the function of the state, environmental destruction, poverty, technological change, etc. The module aims to develop students' skills in using theory, and the ability to engage in critical analysis of core concepts of relevance for the study of international relations.

Course content can include such topics as:

- The historical origins of the international political order
- The historical origins of IR as a discipline
- Different theories of international relations
- Normative theory
- Critical and post-modern approaches
- Empire and Imperialism
- Power
- Sovereignty
- The International System
- The International Society
- The State

Introductory Reading:

- Agathangelou, Anna M. And Ling, L.H.M. Transforming World Politics: From Empire to Multiple Worlds. London: Routledge, 2009.
- Baylis, John, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens. The Globalization of World Politics. 8th Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- de Carvalho, Benjamin, Halvard Leira, John M. Hobson. "The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths That Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919", Millennium 39 (3): 735-758.
- Efstathopoulos, Charalampos, Milja Kurki, and Alistair Shepherd. "Facing human interconnections: thinking International Relations into the future." International Relations 34.3 (2020): 267-28
- Sabaratnam, Meera. "Is IR Theory White? Racialised Subject-Positioning in Three Canonical Texts." Millennium, (November 2020). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829820971687>.
- Schmidt, B. (2012), 'On the History and Historiography of International Relations,' Handbook of International Relations Edited by Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse & Beth A. Simmons (London: Sage): 3-22.

Notes

Formative Assessment:

- One 1000 word essay (Michaelmas term)

Summative Assessment:

- 1,500 word research essay on a theoretical topic selected from a range of titles (60%) (Epiphany Term)
- 1,250 word group policy document (40%) (Easter Term)

Researching Politics and International Relations (SGIA1201)

This module introduces students to a range of strategies used to produce knowledge in politics and international relations. It will help students develop a critical appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of a range of research methods. It will give students an opportunity to practice different types of research, both quantitative and qualitative.

Course content may include such topics as:

- Research design
- Statistical analysis
- Causation
- Discourse analysis
- Interview techniques

Introductory Reading:

- Kellstedt, P. M., & Whitten, G. D. (2018). The fundamentals of political science research. Cambridge University Press.
- Urdan, T. C. (2011). Statistics in plain English. Routledge.
- Halperin, S. & Heath, O. (2017) Political Research Methods and Practical Skills 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Notes

Formative Assessment:

- 2,000-word individual essay
- 2,000-word individual data analysis exercise

Summative Assessment:

- 2,000-word individual essay (50%).
- 2,000-word individual data analysis exercise (50%)

Perspectives of Political Economy (SGIA1241)

The module aims to introduce students to the central concerns of political economy as an inter-disciplinary social science that focuses on the relationship between political and economic systems, agents, and institutions.

Pursuing an enquiry-based approach to political economy, the module will introduce students to key issues and debates in political economy through their own lived experiences, accessing the field through everyday topics that students will be familiar with. Sample topics include student loans, how individuals relate to the carbon economy, consumerism, the importance of place, or corruption. By drawing on current public debates around aspects of their lived experiences, the module explores how the distribution and exercise of power interact with the material substance of economic life, thereby identifying the kind of questions that political economists seek to answer and the approaches they take to finding answers.

It further aims to lay foundations for students to critically engage with relevant research materials and to develop awareness of the major epistemological approaches used in political economy.

Introductory reading:

- Brassett, J., Elías, J., Rethel, L., Richardson, B (2022). I-PEEL: The International Political Economy of Everyday Life, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hobson, J., Seabrooke, L. (2007). Everyday Politics of the World Economy, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Notes

Formative Assessment:

- One 1,500 word essay

Summative Assessment:

- One 2,500 word essay (90%)
- One Annotated photograph (10%)

Democratic Political Systems (SGIA1191)

This module provides an introduction to the study of government and political activity by looking in detail at two democratic political systems. For each of the two countries studied, the module will address the historical context and constitutional framework, the structure of government in its functional and territorial distribution, and the wider setting of political parties and political participation. It is taught by means of a series of lectures supported by fortnightly seminars.

In addition to knowledge of the two political systems covered, students will acquire familiarity with some key terms of political analysis and will be introduced to some of the debates surrounding these.

Introductory reading:

- R. Singh (ed.), *Governing America: The Politics of a Divided Democracy* (2003).
- D. McKay, *American Politics and Society*, 7th edition (2009).
- B. Jones, P. Norton and Daddow, O. (eds), *Politics UK*, 9th edition (2018).
- Heffernan, R., Hay, C., Russell, M., & Cowley, P. (Eds.). (2016). *Developments in British Politics 10*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Notes

Formative Assessment:

- Two 1,500 word essays submitted at the end of the first term (Michaelmas), and at the end of the second term (Epiphany)

Summative Assessment:

- In the Easter Term (May/June) there will be a two hour unseen written examination (100%)



International Security, Interdependence and Organisation (SGIA1071)

This module introduces students to the major theoretical and analytical problems in the fields of international security, interdependence and organisation.

The module particularly examines the following areas: (a) use of coercive force between organised political units in international relations, (b) the historical context of 'war' and 'peace' in the modern world, (c) the notion of patterns of complex and diverse interdependence that encourage states to accept some limited forms of governance of their relations and (d) institutional development in Europe in the form of the institutional framework of the EU and its various policy mechanisms.

Introductory reading:

The following will provide students with an introduction to the core ideas and problems of International Relations. You are advised to buy at least one of the following books. They should be seen as a necessary but not a sufficient basis from which to write essays and pass the exams.

Introductory (Level 1)

J. Baylis, S. Smith & P Owens (eds) (2017) *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford: University Press, 7th edition

Intermediate (Level 2)

J. Grieco, G.J. Ikenberry and M. Mastanduno (2015) *Introduction to International Relations: Enduring Questions and Contemporary Perspectives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Advanced (Levels 1-3)

P. D. Williams, Matt McDonald (2018) *Security Studies: An Introduction* 3rd edition. Routledge

Notes

Formative Assessment:

- one 1,500-word essay during the first term (Michaelmas)

Summative Assessment:

- One group presentation delivered in tutorial, 15 minutes
- One summary from each contributor of one side A4 (500-550 words) (10%)
- One two-hour unseen written examination in May/June (90%).

Course Structure

There are six modules per year. For each module, there will be one hour lecture per week and a one hour tutorial fortnightly. It is estimated that you should spend four hours independent study for each hour of teaching. All academic staff work regular office hours and meetings are available with your Academic Advisor at your request

Academic Adviser Scheme

All taught students will be appointed an Academic Adviser in their academic departments, who will be responsible for providing academic support and guidance - by which we mean providing feedback and advice on a student's overall academic performance and progress (including performance in examinations), and guidance on study choices - throughout a student's programme of study.

An Academic Adviser will offer their advisees the opportunity of individual meetings at key stages in the programme of study (these will depend on such factors as the stage and mode of study but for example it is likely to include initial induction; in connection with module choice; and to provide feedback on overall academic progress and performance including feedback on examinations), and be available for consultation (for example through publicised officehours). Academic Advisers will be members of academic staff, and will normally be responsible for providing academic support and guidance throughout a student's programme of study (noting that alternative arrangements will need to be made when an academic adviser is on research leave). The number of advisees per academic adviser will be such that the adviser knows each of them personally.

All Academic Advisers will be available to act as a student's academic referee for applications for employment or further study, although students may approach other members of academic staff (for example their dissertation supervisor) for academic references.

Transfers

To ensure the quality of student experience, we have a target quota for each of our degree courses and winning a place on these courses is very competitive. It is possible to change degree programmes, but there is no automatic right to do so. The factors that we take into account are academic merit as well as availability of places on particular programmes; you will also need to satisfy any pre-requisites for the programme to which you wish to change.

If you wish to change one or more modules, or the degree programme you are studying within or across departments, you must seek advice from the department(s) concerned at the earliest opportunity; although we do our best to help students who wish to change module(s) or programme it becomes progressively more difficult to change as time goes on due to the amount of work which you will have missed. If you are permitted to change modules or programme it is your responsibility to catch up on any work you may have missed.

Transfers from one degree programme to another may be possible at the end of the first year, subject to approval of the Head of the Schools/Departments concerned, Faculty approval and providing students have passed their preliminary honours examinations, however this is not guaranteed.

August Result Period

Results are normally released to students in August (this can be earlier for students taking examinations other than A-levels).

There are two routes:

Route 1 - you achieve your offer conditions. Congratulations and welcome to Durham. A welcome pack will follow via email.

Route 2 - You have not achieved your offer conditions but don't panic. On occasion we can accept near miss candidates, although this is not guaranteed. A list of near miss applicants is submitted for consideration. The final decision to accept near misses is made by the University Strategic Confirmation Committee; if you have been accepted or declined as a near miss, UCAS will be updated throughout the August confirmation period.

Induction week consists of a variety of events:

- Matriculation in Durham Cathedral
- Meetings with Academic Advisers
- Social Events, such as the Fresher's Fair
- Library Induction

Induction lectures will include:

Expectation and Obligation
Preparing for lectures and tutorials
Presentation and essay writing skills

For more information visit our 'Welcome and Induction' webpage:

durham.ac.uk/experience/welcome



Placement Year

A globally outstanding centre of teaching and research excellence, a collegiate community of extraordinary people, a unique and historic setting – Durham is a university like no other. With employers increasingly looking beyond qualifications and an emphasis on practical experience and transferable skills within the recruitment process, a Placement Year from Durham University could really help you stand out from the crowd.

Why do a Placement Year?

We strongly encourage undergraduate students to do a Placement Year as part of your degree if you feel it is the right option for you. Not only will it help you decide what you want to do when you graduate and potentially lead to graduate job offers, but research suggests that those who have completed a placement have a higher degree classification overall. You may choose to work in the UK or internationally and work in an organisation related to your degree or a completely different sector.

Some of the companies which offer Placement Year roles are; Pfizer and their Global Regulatory Affairs Team, Houses of Parliament and House of Lords in their Social Research Teams, Office for National Statistics, Public Affairs Agencies and Communications and Public Affairs roles in companies such as Disney, L’Oreal, Renault and BP.

You will develop a number of transferable skills whilst completing the placement as well as sector specific experience and knowledge which will support you in future job applications upon graduation whether or not you choose to stay in your chosen industry or role.

- **Future-proof Your Career.** Many employers use the placement schemes to secure talent for their graduate schemes and many of our students enter final year with a graduate role secured
- **Networking.** The connections made during your Placement Year, as well as the recruitment process, will help expand your network and enable you to secure roles in the future beyond graduation. Bring your subject to life. You will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge from your degree in a practical setting and for some decide whether you want to enter the job market or pursue a career in research
- **Finances.** Placements will most likely be paid. On average a placement student earns between £15-£25k



Requirements of a Placement Year

Once you have decided to undertake a Placement Year, you should book an appointment with your Faculty Placement Manager who will be supporting you through the pre-placement process. They can also advise you on searching strategies and how to secure an appropriate placement. Please note, it is up to the student not the department or University to secure a placement.

In general, the requirements are that:

- You must pass all Level 2 modules of your programme
- You must have secured an approved placement of no less than 40 weeks (made up from one long placement, or up to a maximum of three shorter opportunities)
- You must have attended a pre-placement briefing

Contact Details:

For further information on placement years, please contact your Faculty Placement Manager at: socialsciences.placements@durham.ac.uk

Placement Year Case Study- Raphael Jackson

Name:

Raphael Jackson

Degree Title:

BA Politics with Placement Year Placement

Company:

Garrison Technology

Overview of role:

My role at Garrison is that of Operations Coordinator, however I split my time almost evenly between the Operations and Production teams. The Operations team is the commercial nerve centre of the business, handling matters ranging from logistics to site management to regulatory affairs. The Production team does what its name suggests; its responsibility is the physical manufacturing of the hardware that the company designs and sells. This division in my responsibilities between the two teams is an incredibly valuable opportunity to not only learn more about different elements of the commercial world, but also to interact and work alongside individuals with wildly differing fields of expertise, from lawyers to electronic engineers. I have worked on investigations into the impact of international sanctions on our supply chains, trademark law and regulation, accountancy investigations into stock discrepancies, business registrations in different countries and different US states, and compliance with government regulations to list but a few of the projects that I have been involved in or had responsibility for.

Best moment on placement so far:

I would say that my best moment on placement so far was when an investigation that I was conducting into the impact of new US sanctions on certain elements of the business, intended to be a preliminary glance before contracting a law firm to produce a report, was deemed by upper management to be so comprehensive as to not require the company to employ the team of lawyers. It certainly felt nice to save the company thousands of pounds and also validate my research skills and ability, much of which I learnt at Durham!

How has your degree impacted your placement:

My degree has certainly provided me with skills that I use each and every day at my placement. The ability to read and digest large amounts of information, to critically examine and analysis both written sources and data, and to produce clear, concise, and accurate summaries are all skills that studying politics gave me and that are critical in performing well in my placement role.



Societies

There are multiple societies that you can become involved with during your study with Durham University.



Durham Model United Nations Society

The main objective of the Durham University United Nations Society (DUUNS) is to educate and inform members about the mission and activities of the United Nations. This usually involves heated debates and rich dialogue, be that between members or with experts in their field. In doing so, we provide a platform for all those interested in international affairs (political, developmental, etc.) to voice their opinions in our fortnightly MUN styled debates and by engaging with the speakers who come to address our society.

Rather than simply speaking about the United Nations, we aim to take annual trips to a United Nations Headquarter. The DUUNS is also responsible for annually organising DurMUN, the Durham University Model United Nations conference. In addition, we aim to inform all our members about and send delegations to different Model United Nations (MUN) conferences throughout the year within the United Kingdom as well as abroad. If you are interested in global issues, international politics and world events or just want to join a fun society full of diverse and interesting people from a wide range of countries, DUUNS is the society for you.

Durham Union Society

The University's debating society, the Durham Union Society, is one of the oldest student debating societies in the world and attracts notable speakers such as Sir Ian Blair, David Davis, Terry Waite, Rory Bremner and Barry Norman. It's also a lively forum for you to get involved in discussing a wide range of topics - from the war in Iraq, to designer babies. Whether you want to make your voice heard, compete in the UK debating circuit, or simply understand more about the issues that affect us all, you'll be very welcome at the Durham Union Society. You can find a calendar of events and information on how to get involved at dus.org.uk

First Generation Scholars' Society

SGIA's First Generation Scholars' group exists to offer support and guidance to those students who, as the first in their families to go to University, face certain specific challenges. We have an email list and a Facebook page and aim to meet once or twice a term in a relaxed atmosphere (and normally over pizza!) to share experiences, talk about and address our specific learning needs and think about how we might make Durham University a more accommodating place to first generation and working-class students. Several of our members also work in the student-run 93% Club and we have put on joint socials. We have plans to further links between students involved in the first generation scholar's network in other departments throughout the university. SGIA's current first generation scholars' contact is Dr. Lewis Mates (lewis.mates@durham.ac.uk). Please email him if you would like any more information about the group and its work.

Durham Students Union

Many other student societies are available via your College or the Durham Students' Union durham.ac.uk/schools.outreach/onlineresources/ambassadors/societies

Philosophy Politics and Economics (PPE) Society, and Politics and International Relations Society (both fall under the Students' Union). durham.ac.uk/experience/su



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