



# **PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR**

# **BA IN HISTORY AND POLITICS**

<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding institution/body</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching institution</b>	<b>University of Oxford</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Programme accredited by</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Final award</b>	<b>BA (Hons)</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Programme</b>	<b>History and Politics</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>UCAS code</b>	<b>MV11</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Relevant subject benchmark statement</b>	<b>History; Politics</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Date of Programme Specification preparation</b>	<b>13 December 2002 Updated Michaelmas Term 2010</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Educational aims of the programme</b>	
	<p>The programme aims to enable its students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• combine a knowledge of the past, characterised by range, depth and conceptual sophistication, with an understanding of the key areas of the discipline of politics, including empirical politics and political theory;</li> <li>• engage and enhance their critical and analytical skills, their imagination and their creativity.</li> <li>• develop the skill of independent thinking, drawing on the technical skills of the disciplines in investigation and exposition, to enhance sensitivity to the human issues at the heart of the analysis of the past; and to increase the capacity to understand the institutional structures, interests and values underlying political systems.</li> <li>• promote skills of relevance to the continued professional development of historical understanding and political analysis, and which are transferable to a wide range of employment contexts and life experiences.</li> </ul>	

<b>10</b>	<b>Programme outcomes</b>		
	<b>A</b>	<i>Knowledge and understanding of:</i>	<i>Related teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
	<b>1</b>	<b>a broad knowledge of past societies and of historical processes in terms of both chronological and geographical range</b>	Breadth of knowledge and understanding is ensured primarily by the broad time frame and the focus on more than one society and its culture of the required British and General History courses. This is enhanced by the extensive list of optional subjects, involving a variety of approaches to historical enquiry. Chronological range is also formally secured by requiring the student to take at least one paper of British or General [i.e. European and World] History from each of the medieval, early modern and modern periods.
	<b>2</b>	<b>a broad understanding of the philosophical, theoretical, institutional and issue-based approaches to Politics and International Relations based on comparative study of several societies, and higher level knowledge of some of the principal sub-areas of the discipline</b>	Breadth of knowledge and understanding in Politics is ensured by the broad survey nature of the introductory courses in the first year, by the range of core subjects building on the empirical and theoretical foundations in the second year, and by the requirement that in each empirical course students become familiar with a range of countries. This is enhanced by an extensive choice of further subjects covering all aspects of the discipline, enabling students to reach an advanced understanding of content and methodology in at least one sub-area of Politics.
	<b>3</b>	<b>how primary evidence is employed in argument</b>	Primary materials may be the subject of discussion in any of the courses. But detailed study of contemporary texts, photographs, works of art, films and other artefacts are essential to several elements of the course e.g. nos. 2, 10, 11 and 12 noted in section 11. In such courses students must master a range of assigned contemporary documentation and other evidence, which becomes the subject of class discussion and the basis of weekly tutorial work.
	<b>4</b>	<b>the development of History and Politics as subjects, the role played by conceptual frameworks and models in the investigation of the past and of political systems, and the theoretical foundations of the disciplines</b>	All courses contain significant opportunities for historiographical and theoretical reflection. Certain courses that employ evidence from literature or works of art, or complex data sets, oblige it.
	<b>5</b>	<b>wherever appropriate and possible, relevant linguistic skills and their application to historical and political studies</b>	Linguistic skills are developed and employed in the text-based courses that may be taken as part of the first year course and in the History Special Subjects that concentrate on subjects in Modern European History.  Dedicated courses in reading French, Russian, and Italian for historians are offered. Students also have recourse to general language training at Oxford University Language Centre.

<i>Assessment</i>		
<i>Most aspects of the required knowledge and understanding are tested through written examinations, held during the course of the third and the ninth terms of the programme, together with a 12,000 word History thesis or 15,000 word Politics thesis or supervised dissertation. Extensive preparation for the organisation and communication of such knowledge and understanding is provided in weekly tutorials, in classes, and practice examinations. Understanding is particularly assessed on a continuous formative basis through the weekly tutorial, and oral presentations in classes.</i>		
<b>B</b>	<b>Intellectual skills: the ability to</b>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>exercise critical judgement and undertake sophisticated analysis</b>	There is emphasis throughout the programme on the skills relevant to the careful and critical reading and exegesis of secondary studies and primary texts, and the ability to gather, sift, synthesise and interpret data. These are recognised as making a particular contribution to the development of sophisticated analytical skills.
<b>2</b>	<b>construct reasoned argument, and argue persuasively</b>	Practical written and rhetorical skills are honed within the weekly tutorial context, and in the classes associated with several elements of the course. Presentations in tutorials and classes from students must demonstrate the ability to identify issues, to formulate questions that are susceptible to demonstration, and to marshal evidence and analysis in a logical and coherent way.
<b>3</b>	<b>approach problems with creativity and imagination</b>	Developing the creativity and human sympathy of all students is integral to the programme. These attributes, allied to the exercise of disciplined imagination, are regarded as essential if students are to comprehend the often alien values and expectations of past or foreign societies and cultures.
<b>4</b>	<b>develop the exercise of independence of mind, and a readiness to challenge and criticise accepted opinion</b>	All our learning strategies are designed to inculcate these skills, most particularly the vigorous argument that we seek to encourage in our frequent tutorials.
<i>Assessment:</i>		
<i>The formative assessment provided by tutorials and by classes is critical to the development and monitoring of the intellectual skills set out here. Students are subjected to weekly scrutiny on these skills through presentation and defence of written essay material in front of an established academic historian or political scientist and usually with one or more of the student's peer group.</i>		

<b>C</b>	<b>Practical skills: the ability to</b>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>write well for a variety of audiences and in a variety of contexts</b>	Continuous scrutiny of written work, whether produced for tutorial, class presentation or for written examination, aims to promote written work which is marked by well-structured and coherent argument, in a prose that is clear, fluent and elegant.
<b>2</b>	<b>engage in oral discussion and argument with others, in a way that advances understanding of the problems at issue and the appropriate approaches and solutions to them</b>	Tutorials and other classes provide ample opportunity to develop and refine high level skills in oral discussion and presentation.
<b>3</b>	<b>ensure, often working independently, that the fullest range of evidence and opinion can be brought to bear on a problem; develop research skills to this end</b>	Students are trained to show a familiarity with the variety of bibliographical resources – library catalogues; and electronic information systems – and to demonstrate an ability to identify and retrieve materials and commentary.
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>Formative assessment through the weekly tutorial and other opportunities for class or seminar presentation enables a continuous monitoring of the development of practical skills. Termly reports identify both points of excellence and of concern, e.g. the ability to present and defend an argument or thesis convincingly and cogently. Opportunities for more formal assessment through college trial examinations ('collections') provide opportunities to assess and provide feedback on skills associated with timed written examinations.</i></p>		
<b>D</b>	<b>Transferable skills: the ability to</b>	<i>Teaching/learning methods and strategies</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>find information, organise and deploy it</b>	Information retrieval is integral to all aspects of the programme. The opportunities presented by ICT are particularly emphasised. Subject-specific training on bibliographic resources, electronic datasets and texts, statistical methods, and collation and presentation tools is offered to all students, in association with Oxford University Computing Services (OUCS) and Oxford University Library Services (OULS).
<b>2</b>	<b>draw on such information, and with a trained analytical intelligence, to consider and solve complex problems, in ways that are imaginative, yet sensitive to the needs and cultural expectations of others</b>	These are the skills at the heart of our programme. They are eminently transferable to contexts beyond the university.
<b>3</b>	<b>work well independently, with a strong sense of self-direction, but with the ability to work constructively in co-operation with others</b>	Self-direction is encouraged by the preparation of weekly essays, and particularly by the thesis. Classes, organised by the faculty and within colleges, encourage collaboration.

4	<b>effectively structure and communicate their ideas in a variety of written and oral formats</b>	The ability to present ideas effectively and to respond to the ideas of others constructively is integral to the nature and construction of the programme. Formats used are: written weekly essay, gobbet commentary, extended essay, thesis and oral presentation.
5	<b>plan and organise the use of time effectively</b>	The ability to produce material within time constraints and against tight deadlines, whether within the framework of the written examination or in the programme of tutorials, is essential. Long term planning is required for the thesis and extended essay.
6	<b>where relevant, make appropriate use of language skills</b>	See also Section 10. A. 5

*Assessment:*

*The transferable skills identified in 1-5 above are essential elements of the programme. As such their presence or absence is the focus of much of the regular comment provided by tutors in their weekly contacts with students; and in the varying modes of formal feed-back provided to students throughout the course.*

**General teaching/learning methods and strategies**

Each of the students' eleven units of assessment [see below, **section 11**] has a different teaching strategy. This depends in part on the nature of the subject matter, in part on its place in the cumulative process of learning over the three years. All involve employ the interweaving, in slightly different proportions, of three kinds of learning experience: lectures, classes and tutorials.

1	<b>Lectures:</b> these are associated with all first-year courses [items 1-4 in <b>Section 11</b> ] with the British and General History papers [items 5 and 6 in <b>Section 11</b> ] taken in the second and third years of the programme, and with all Politics core and further subjects; some support more specialised options in History. Most obviously they provide a basic knowledge of the subject and of the historiography and conceptual schemes generated by its study. But they are not merely 'talking text-books'. Lectures provide examples of how complex materials can be organised into intellectually persuasive patterns, and so enhance the development of intellectual and practical skills.
2	<b>Classes:</b> For both Politics and History, classes, organised either within individual Colleges or by the Faculty/ Department, are important elements of courses involving focussed discussion of methodological themes or those concentrating on the advanced discussion of texts and other historical artefacts. While all learning outcomes can be enhanced by classes, they have a particular purpose in the programme, since it is in making presentations to such classes, and in engaging in the discussion generated by them, that students gain their most sustained and formal experience of working co-operatively in groups.
3	<b>Tutorials:</b> The tutorial – usually a weekly meeting between one member of the academic staff, expert in the subject matter of the course, with two students each of whom prepares an essay on an agreed topic from within the course syllabus – is at the heart of the learning experience in this programme. Essays are written after the provision of a full reading list, supported by the faculty/departmental bibliographies that are produced for each course. The essays are criticised rigorously and constructively in terms of substance and style; the themes that they raise are explored in an open, in-depth discussion. The tutorial is the major vehicle in which the learning outcomes of this programme are secured, both the students' acquisition of knowledge and the fostering of their intellectual qualities and their practical skills

<b>11</b>	<b>Programme Structures and Features</b>	
<p>Progression through this three-year programme is a process of interlinked consolidation and development. The base line is provided by student performance at the highest level prior to admission (see <b>13</b> below)</p> <p>On admission students will have demonstrated the ability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to distinguish and assess different points of view;</li> <li>• to think in causal terms;</li> <li>• to master the technical skills of essay-writing, including the clear presentation of relevant material; and</li> <li>• to analyse the significance of such material in relation to a given problem.</li> </ul> <p>The course draws on this foundation, which is then reinforced by a series of introductory sessions in the student's first term. The programme expands the students' knowledge, and cumulatively enhances their skills and intellectual qualities. Alongside a constant pattern of formative assessment, the basic rhythm of the programme is provided by formal procedures of assessment at the end of the first year (Preliminary Examinations) and then at the end of the third year (Final Honour School).</p>		
<b>A</b>	<p><b><i>Learning in the first year</i></b></p> <p>Students work on four courses during the year, for examination in Preliminary Examinations at the end of it.</p>	
	<i>Course</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction to Politics: Analysis of Democratic Institutions</b>	The course provides a foundation of empirical knowledge of the recent political history, institutions, parties, and political processes in France, Germany, the UK, and the USA. The course offers both an understanding of the importance of political and historical context in political analysis, and a sound empirical base from which more systematic and comparative work can be conducted in second- and third-year courses. It is taught by a combination of lectures and tutorials.
<b>2</b>	<b>Theories of the State</b>	All students in this course are introduced to Political Thought through the study of the texts of four of the canonical writers (Aristotle; Hobbes; Rousseau; Marx) and of the subsequent developments of the concepts that they advanced.

3	<p><b>Either: A period of general (essentially European) History [chosen from four periods]</b></p> <p><b>Or: A period of British History [chosen from seven periods]</b></p>	<p>All these introductory courses combine the study of an extended period with a measure of geographical range. They are approached thematically, with an emphasis on the conceptual categories, to encourage the student to explore the relation between political, economic, social and cultural developments. They aim to develop appreciation of the underlying continuities as well as the dramatic discontinuities within each period.</p>
4	<p><b>Either: An optional subject [chosen from sixteen subjects]</b></p> <p><b>Or: A supplementary subject [chosen from ten subjects]</b></p>	<p>The choice permits students <i>either</i> to deepen their historical understanding by concentrating on a course that will have a focussed chronological and geographical range and require the intensive study of a selection of contemporary texts.</p> <p><i>Or</i>, in the second option, to reflect critically on methodological issues raised by the practice of history. Some of these subjects additionally develop specific practical skills, as in that on Quantitative Methods for Historians or any of the seven options in which the study of important historical works is undertaken in their original language.</p>
<p>Common to all these four elements is the assumption that students will build on their previous training, and that, while challenging, the path to a more advanced enquiry and discourse cannot be too steep in its initial stages. All courses have demanding bibliographies, concentrating on the monograph and the article rather than on the textbook or ‘problem’ studies of pre-University work. These bibliographies are carefully designed and focussed, rather than exhaustive. All, save the smaller language-based courses, have dedicated lecture series designed to elucidate the key themes that bind the period, and make it more than an arbitrary chunk of years, or that introduce the key conceptual assumptions or historiographies that underpin the course. The themes of the lectures form the basis of tutorial work, and also form the foundation of the questions set in examination papers.</p>		
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>The students’ progress will be monitored continuously in the tutorial. The regularity and relative informality of the weekly tutorials give students easy access to assistance if they encounter academic or personal problems, or both together. At the beginning of the second and third terms students will set a mock-examination in their colleges on the work done in the preceding term and receive diagnostic feedback from their tutors. The examination at the end of the year on four papers, provide a sound assessment of the students’ achievements and progress in the first year in relation to the Learning Outcomes set out in Section 10.</i></p>		
B	<p><b><i>Learning in the second and third years</i></b></p> <p>Students work on six or seven courses in their second and third years; their progress is assessed in an examination (Final Honour School) containing seven units at the end of the third year. The courses are:</p>	

	<i>Course</i>	<i>Comment</i>
6, 7.	<p><b>Two history courses, chosen from the seven periods of British History or the eighteen periods of General History (which cover the whole of European history and its engagement with the non-European world from the fall of Rome until 1973, with additional papers in American history and the history of the wider world in the nineteenth century). One of these courses can be substituted by the compulsory thesis (see 12 below).</b></p>	<p>These papers oblige the student to study the history of relatively long period or widely focussed geographical area. The work builds on the first year survey course (item 2 above). Students will build on the skills they have developed to enhance the critical and analytical sophistication displayed in their writing and their discussion.</p> <p>The bibliographies provided for these courses are fuller, and students will be expected to read more widely in the monographic literature in which the problems that they address have been debated, refined and transformed, and to show more historiographic awareness in their thinking. Lectures provide less thematic survey, and engage more precisely with specific issues within the period. Students, in discussion with their tutors, will have more latitude to pursue the themes and topics that interest them. Students will build on the skills they have developed in the First Year to enhance the sophistication of the critical and analytical skills displayed in their writing and their discussion.</p>
8, 9.	<p><b>Any two of five ‘core’ papers in Politics (Comparative Government; British Politics &amp; Government since 1900; Theory of Politics; International Relations; Political Sociology)</b></p>	<p>Each core subject enables students to develop the conceptual understanding and the knowledge acquired in the empirical and theory-based first-year subjects, but within in a more focused and specialised framework. Some papers cover subject matter in greater depth than in the first-year survey courses of a joint-degree; others (Comparative Government and Theory of Politics) approach it in a different manner from their first-year predecessors. The combination of lecture- and tutorial-based teaching, driven by an extensive course bibliography, gives students access to a range of subjects which together cover the whole discipline of Politics, but in which each subject separately is sufficient to ensure, through extensive essay-writing practice, that students work through intellectual problems that stretch and develop critical capacities, and are not limited to volume learning.</p>
10 11 12	<p><b>Three courses from any one of the following combinations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The two papers (one closed paper and Extended Essay) of a History Special Subject, plus another ‘core’ or a Further subject in Politics (there are twenty-three Further subjects in Politics and International Relations).</b></li> </ul>	<p>In the History Special Subject and Further Subject courses students master the original sources on which historical scholarship is based. Students construct their own understanding of the subject from this primary evidence. In both, classes, taught by members of the Faculty who are actively engaged in research in the area, play a central role; class presentations by students, and class discussion are an integral part of these courses. The classes provide an invaluable opportunity to enhance the skills of working effectively as part of a group. In the Special</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Two Further Subjects in History, plus another ‘core’ or a Further subject in Politics.</b></li> <li>• <b>One Further Subject in History, plus two ‘core’ or Further subjects in Politics.</b></li> <li>• <b>One of the optional papers in Politics may be substituted by a thesis in PPE.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Subject the command of textual detail is assessed in one paper which one requires detailed commentary on passages from the prescribed texts; the other requirement for this course is the production of an Extended Essay of 6,000 words, the questions for which invite the students to employ their familiarity with the set-texts to illuminate broader issues raised by the subject. This exercise is designed to encourage students to develop practical and presentation techniques, and to demonstrate their ability to marshal evidence and to sustain argument in an extended piece of writing. Short term Special Subjects run for the life of a postholder’s specific research project (eg for 5 years), enabling undergraduates to gain first hand experience of an academic’s research process.</p> <p>In allowing students to choose between further subjects in Politics, or additional core subjects, the degree offers a choice at the final stage between breadth of coverage and specialisation. This flexibility is recognised as appropriate for a joint degree in which the balance between the two disciplines may vary according to student preference. Some further subjects enable students, through special class work, to pursue focused topics to an advanced level, in some cases working on documents, or other case materials, and help develop collaborative and group-working skills. There is also the opportunity to take a Special Subject in Politics closely related to a research area of the Department.</p> <p>The range of options is extensive. Students can, after discussion with their advisors, adjust the balance within the Joint School more to the study of History or of Politics. They can focus on in-depth study of historical periods or particular concerns in politics, or they can emphasise a broad overview of substantive and conceptual issue. Many students use the range of opportunities to concentrate on particular areas – American History and Government, for instance, or Political Theory.</p>
12	<p><b>A thesis in History, which can be in place of a British or General History paper, or a thesis or supervised dissertation in Politics, which can be undertaken in place of a Politics optional paper.</b></p>	<p>Students may choose to prepare a thesis on a History or a Politics theme which may be offered in place of the papers listed opposite. The writing of a thesis offers students the opportunity to undertake primary research in a topic of their own choosing, to develop practical and presentation techniques, and to demonstrate their ability to marshal evidence and to sustain argument in an extended piece of writing. It also demands a good deal of organisation and self-discipline. The supervised dissertation in Politics allows a group of students to study a general theme together, but to write separate dissertations on some aspect of it. The History Faculty runs a “thesis fair” involving librarians, archivists, and museologists, where students can</p>

		<p>discuss intentions and plans. This is followed by a series of workshops where students have first-hand experience of using primary sources, including gaining relevant IT skills. They have individual meetings with advisers to assist in focussing the work and reviewing its progress.</p>
<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <p><i>As in the First Year, the students' progress will be monitored continuously in the tutorial. Students will receive a great deal of commentary on their contributions, in relation both to their class-presentations and their engagement in general discussion, from the leaders of the various classes. At the beginning of each term students will sit mock-examinations in college on the work done in the previous term and receive diagnostic feedback.</i></p> <p><i>The examination at the end of the final year, consisting of a thesis, extended essay if a Special Subject is offered, and five unseen papers, or six unseen papers if no Special Subject is offered, provides a robust assessment of students' achievements and progress through the programme in relation to the Learning Outcomes discussed in Section 10.</i></p>		
12	<p><b>Support for students and their learning</b></p>	
A	<p><b>Libraries</b></p> <p>Reflecting the nature of History and Politics as primarily text-based disciplines, and the essential requirement for adequate Library resources, History students at Oxford have access to an extraordinary array of library resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bodleian Library, with its world-class holdings of both printed and manuscript materials;</li> <li>• the Radcliffe Camera (part of the Bodleian), with its large History holdings on open shelf;</li> <li>• the Indian Institute Library (Indian and South Asian History);</li> <li>• Rhodes House Library (British Empire and Commonwealth);</li> <li>• the Vere Harmsworth Library at the Rothermere American Institute (USA);</li> <li>• the Nissan Institute (Japanese Studies).</li> </ul> <p>The range of central University provision is supported by the History Faculty Library, by the Politics, International Relations and Sociology Library in the Social Sciences Building, and by College Libraries, not least in the provision of borrowing facilities and of multiple copies of essential titles. Students also have access to the Libraries of other Faculties, whose holdings are relevant to particular options that they are studying. The OLIS cataloguing system incorporates the holdings of all major and most College libraries.</p> <p>Students have access, via OULS, to a vast range of electronic resources, such as journals, databases, and other electronically available texts.</p> <p>The range of general and specialised Library resources, and the quality of holdings and accessibility support the breadth of the outline papers and the range of advanced subjects in the syllabus.</p>	

<b>B</b>	<p><b>Museums</b></p> <p>A number of the specialised Optional, Further and Special Subjects in History employ the resources of the Ashmolean Museum and the Museum of the History of Science, and the expertise of the staffs of those institutions.</p>
<b>C</b>	<p><b>IT resources</b></p> <p>There is an extensive network of IT resources and support within Oxford, with web-based information (accessible from most faculty, college, library, and common areas). Comprehensive use of the internet and the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is made for teaching and learning..</p> <p>Colleges provide excellent IT resources and Support Officers prepared to train and assist students.</p> <p>The OUCS also provides facilities for undergraduates, and a variety of training programmes, several of which are specifically geared to students in the Humanities, and Social Sciences.</p> <p>The use of ICT within the undergraduate degree course is central to course delivery and continues to develop. All course information is on the Web, including bibliographies. A number of courses make substantial use of learning materials that are to be downloaded from the Web; other courses direct students to such resources as alternatives to Library provision. Essays for class discussion are often circulated as attachments to e-mail. The Department of Politics and International Relations has a computing room with PCs connected to the internet, which have access to a wide range of Social Sciences research software, which undergraduates may apply to use. The History Faculty has a 20-seat ICT teaching room: this is used for bibliographical training, quantitative methods, and specific software training. Students can also attend a range of courses on software packages at OUCS.</p>
<b>D</b>	<p><b>Advice concerning the Syllabus</b></p> <p>Guidance to the range of options available to students in this course is readily available.</p> <p>The structure of the course, and short descriptions of its various elements, are available in the two Course Handbooks, one covering the First Year's work, the other outlining the Second and Third Year Course (also available from the Web-site for the course).</p> <p>Guidance concerning questions of the syllabus and choices within it is primarily provided in a more personal forum, by the student's College tutor. The tasks that fall to the tutors are wide-ranging, though all involve easy access and informal but informed discussion. Tutors have a pastoral role if students have academic or personal difficulties; they may advise on future employment; but their key responsibility is to realise the student's full intellectual potential within the course. To this end, they monitor their students' progress through the syllabus, they help them in the choice of courses, and they arrange the teaching for the courses that they have selected.</p>

<b>E</b>	<p><b>Other support available</b></p> <p>The University Language Centre offers all students taught classes in general language in six modern languages, and materials for private study. In addition the Language Centre offers a course specifically for Historians in their second year: <i>Reading French for Historians</i>.</p> <p>The Oxford University Counselling Service provides free, confidential support to all students.</p> <p>College support structures: in addition to college tutors, colleges have other support structures for students. They vary from college to college but may include the appointment of personal tutors, access to college chaplains and support structures provided via the Junior Common Room.</p> <p>There are complaints procedures for students within the History Faculty, within their college or via the University Proctors' Office. These are fully detailed in the course handbooks for the First Year students and Second/Third Year students. There are similar procedures within the Department of Politics.</p>
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<b>13</b>	<b>Criteria for admission</b>	
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<b>A</b>	<p><b>School/College leavers</b></p> <p>Applications are made to the Colleges of the University, not to the Faculty, but selection is made using common criteria. Applicants who are offered places will usually be required to attain minimum grades of AAA at A-level, or equivalent marks on the Scottish Highers and CSYS, or the IB. Offers are made on the basis of students' academic record, the recommendations of their teachers, and their performance in interviews held in the Colleges in December. To qualify for an interview, applicants are asked to take the History Aptitude Test under exam conditions in their own schools or a test centre; this is marked as a gathered field. On being invited to interview, candidates are invited to submit examples of their A-level work to the College, and the interviewers – the History and Politics tutors in the college to which a student has made an application, and in many cases those in a second college - will discuss this work, as well as the students' personal statements on their application forms. The purpose of the interviews is to determine those students, from an excellent cadre of applicants, who might best benefit from the intensive, tutorially based learning methods employed in the University (see <b>10 E. 3</b> above).</p> <p><b>1. General Selection Criteria</b></p> <p>The admissions process as a whole is concerned with detecting potential for the study of History and Politics at Oxford. Existing achievements (as revealed in official examinations, predicted examination results, written work and school reports) are relied upon mainly as evidence of potential.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Candidates should show that they can listen effectively and present reasoned arguments orally.</li> <li>ii) Candidates should show that they can understand and analyse written work and present reasoned arguments on paper</li> <li>iii) Candidates should show self-motivation, intellectual curiosity and creativity in areas they have studied</li> <li>iv) Candidates should demonstrate enthusiasm for both sides of the joint school. It is not necessary to have studied both subjects at school, but candidates should be prepared to put their minds to problems of Politics or History that might be put to them.</li> </ol> <p>In the case of candidates whose first language is not English, competence in the English language is also a criterion of admission.</p>
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	<p><b>2. Test/Written Work Criteria</b></p> <p>These are the same as those for History, above.</p> <p><b>3. Criteria for interview</b></p> <p>The interview is aimed primarily at assessing the candidate's potential for future development. Interviewers will be looking for evidence of genuine interests, enthusiasms and the motivation to work hard at them. The candidates should listen effectively, absorbing facts and ideas presented to them and assessing their relevance. They should be ready to respond to problems and criticism put to them. They should present arguments in a clear and carefully articulated manner. Interviewers will be looking for evidence of a capacity both for analytical reasoning and for historical imagination. The candidates are expected to show reasons for their expressed interests in History and Politics. Their general accomplishments are not relevant except insofar as they bear on one or more of the general admissions criteria.</p> <p><b>4. General observation</b></p> <p>Those responsible for admissions will pay due attention to all the available information, i.e. from past and predicted exam results, school reports, personal statements, written tests and interviews. In the light of all this information they will assess (a) whether the candidate is suited to the chosen course at Oxford, and (b) how that candidate should be ranked in relation to other candidates for the same course, or for other courses. Entry is competitive, and it may well happen that a candidate who satisfies all the criteria mentioned above is nevertheless squeezed out by stronger competitors.</p>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>Mature and overseas students</b></p> <p>Applicants in these groups, and those who have completed the Foundation Certificate in Modern History course offered at the Department of Continuing Education, also required to take the HAT, but are then considered on an individual basis, but the submission of written work, and its discussion in interview would be equally important to the Admissions process. For overseas students, a command of English equivalent to IELTS 7.5 or TOEFL 650 (275 in the computer-based TOEFL test) is recommended. English language support is available at the University</p>
<b>14</b>	<p><b>Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning</b></p> <p><i>Note: Responsibility for this course, in relation to the issues raised in this section and the next (15: Regulation of assessment,) is shared formally by the Faculty of History and the Department of Politics and International Relations. Most issues are dealt with initially by a <u>Joint Standing Committee for Modern History and Politics [MHP JSC]</u>, appointed from interested members of the Faculties by the two subject Boards. The chair of this Committee rotates bi-annually between the two Faculties.</i></p>
	<p>Student feedback on lectures and seminars is requested, and their comments are reviewed by the lecturer or by the course co-ordinator, who report to the Faculty's Undergraduate Studies Committee for History, and to the relevant subject Panel for Politics, and to the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students are also invited to comment, with full anonymity if they wish, on any aspects of the course for consideration by the appropriate committee of the Faculty. Student concerns are also discussed in the termly meetings of the Joint Consultative Committees for both History and Politics, formed by student representatives and by members of the HP JSC, and the students' opinions on new course proposals or suggested changes to the curriculum are solicited and gives serious consideration. There is also student representation on the HP JSC. Forms for student feedback are made available on the History Faculty website.</p> <p>Student comment on tutorial provision is requested by their colleges and is reviewed by the Senior Tutors of the Colleges.</p> <p>All new academic staff attend training sessions on teaching run by the Institute for the Advancement of University Learning and have a one-to-one session with IAUL staff to assess training needs. Mentors are appointed for all new lecturers. Formal review takes place in the second and fifth years of appointment.</p>

Teaching by all academic staff of the History Faculty is reviewed annually by two peers (including the mentor in the case of new appointees), through the History Faculty's Research Monitoring and Appraisal Scheme. The Faculty runs internal workshops on lecturing and small class teaching.

Teaching by academic staff of the Politics Department is monitored by the University appraisal scheme.

The Undergraduate Studies Committee of the History Faculty encourages and approves the introduction of new courses, and organises a regular, five-year cycle of reviews of all Joint Schools, and of all its undergraduate courses. The HP JSC chair and the course co-ordinators are asked to comment on student take-up and feed-back, on Library provision, on the provision of teaching, and on any changes alterations to the course, such as changes to the set-texts, that might be desirable. These reports are discussed by the Faculty's Undergraduate Studies Committee. In Politics, the structure of all degrees, and the content of individual courses, is kept under regular review by the Undergraduate Studies Committee and a range of subject Panels, each covering a sub-branch of the discipline. These meet at least termly. Six-yearly subject reviews are also undertaken in turn by the Divisional Board and the EPSC on a rotating basis, generating a triennial internal accountability exercise. Suggestions for changes to the content of the programme, in terms of intellectual interest and of library and teaching provision, are discussed among the interested parties in a wide range of fora. Major changes to the curriculum are also widely discussed. It is usual in these cases, as in the foundation of this relatively new Joint School, for an ad hoc committee to be established, instructed to embody the ideas that have emerged in preliminary discussion in a document that will become the focus of general analysis and debate in the Faculty, at the Joint Consultative Committee, among the Subject Groups, and at the Faculty Board and its Committees.

Any changes to the programme agreed by the Faculty have to be reviewed and approved by the Humanities Board, the Social Sciences Divisional Board, and by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee of the University. The Divisional Boards of Humanities and Social Sciences have formal responsibility for the maintenance of educational quality and standards across their broad subject areas and exercise responsibility through their Academic Committees and in particular the consideration they give in respect of examiners, course revision and academic appointments.

The success rates for students is monitored through Examiners' Reports and their consideration by the Committees of the History Faculty and the Department of Politics. The University Careers Service provides an annual report to Faculties, detailing the destination of new graduates in History and schools involving Politics. From 2008, the History Faculty will monitor Final Honours School performance against performance in the History Aptitude Test.

## **15 Regulation of assessment**

The HP JSC is responsible for establishing and publishing the detailed marking and classification conventions within the formal guidelines set by the Divisional Boards and the EPSC. The Examinations Committees of the History Faculty Board and of the Politics Department nominate the internal Examination Boards for each of its degrees, and External Examiners, who are invited to serve by the Vice-Chancellor alongside the Examination Boards.

Boards of Examiners, under their elected Chairs, are responsible for setting all papers, and marking the scripts and submitted work of the examinees. They may appoint Assessors to assist in the setting and marking of the more specialist papers, where the subject matter is not within the expertise of two of the examiners. Each script for the FHS and piece of submitted work is blind-marked by two examiners or assessors; where their marks differ significantly they will discuss the script to obtain an agreed mark. If they are unable to agree, a third examiner (in many cases an external) will be asked to read the script and give it a mark. After scripts have been marked, the Board of Examiners meets to classify the students in accordance with the rules established by the Examinations Committee.

Examination candidates are anonymous through the allocation of candidate numbers. Marking criteria are published in the course handbooks (published on the web) and made available to students prior to the examination. Complaints procedures in examination matters through the University Proctors' Office are detailed in the course handbooks and on the Faculty and University websites. A key role in this process is played by the External Examiners. They act as impartial advisors, providing the History

Faculty, the Department of Politics and International Relations and the University with informed comment on two major issues.

1. To verify that standards are appropriate to the award, in part by comparison with the standards of comparable institutions, and to ensure that the assessment procedures and the regulations governing them are fair and otherwise appropriate.
2. To ensure that the conduct of the examination and the determination of awards has been fairly conducted, and that individual student performance has been judged in accordance with the regulations and conventions of the Examining Board. This will entail signing the Class List as an endorsement that the processes of examination and classification have been fairly conducted.

External Examiners are expected to report to the Vice-Chancellor in each year in which they act. Their reports are expected to cover all the following points

- the standards demonstrated by the students
- the extent to which standards are appropriate for the award
- the design, structure and marking of assessments
- the procedures for assessment and examinations
- whether or not external examiners have had sufficient access to, and the power to call upon, any material necessary to make the required judgments
- students' performance in relation to their peers in comparable courses
- the coherence of the policies and procedures relating to external examiners and their consonance with the explicit roles required of them
- the basis and rationale for any comparisons made
- the strengths and weaknesses of the students as a cohort
- the quality of teaching and learning which may be indicated by student performance

The Report is addressed to the Vice-Chancellor, and will be considered by the Divisional Boards of Humanities and of Social Sciences, and by the Educational Policy and Standards Committee of the University.

The Report will also be scrutinised by the History Faculty Board and its various Committees, particularly the Examinations Sub-Committee; it will also be discussed by the Faculty as a whole, and by its constituent Groups. The scrutiny process in Politics proceeds from initial consideration by the subject Panels, then by the general meeting of the Sub-Faculty, and finally by the departmental General Purposes Committee. The Report is also considered by the academic committee of the Divisional Boards.

Where an External Examiner's Report contains particular suggestions or criticisms, it is the responsibility of the Chair of the History Faculty Board and of the head of the Politics Department to ensure that full consideration is given to these, to institute further discussion or action, and to inform the External Examiner within a reasonable time of what is done.

<b>16</b>	<b>Indicators of quality and standards</b>
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The Humanities Division and EPSC Joint Review of the Faculty of History, Hilary Term 2008, found "The syllabus retains required chronological and geographical spread in its 'outline' papers [...and] a diversity of specialist choices [...] The result is a course rich in options." The Review members also stated that "The History Faculty offers, in a number of respects, an example from which lessons can be learned, not just by other parts of the Humanities Division but across the University more generally".

The Politics Department's course provision, including this Joint-School, were 'approved' by the QAA in November 2000, with a score of 24/24.

Reports from Examining Boards regularly address issues relating to quality and standards.

The History Faculty's External Advisory Panel reviews quality and standards and provides valuable feedback from the world of other academic institutions and the world of business, the museums, the professions and secondary education.

A review of the Final Honours School performance takes place each year.

Graduates of History and PPE enjoy a high level of success in aspects of the job market.