[](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/)

## *Politics*

## *Course Unit Guide*

*Part 2*

Policies, procedures and other useful information for all Politics Course Units

2021-2022

This MUST be read in conjunction with the course unit-specific guide for your particular Politics Course Unit which is available on Blackboard and Coronavirus FAQs

[Coronavirus: Frequently asked questions | The University of Manchester](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/coronavirus/support-current-students/coronavirus-faqs/)

Information on all aspects of Politics assessment is available through the

SoSS UG web page at:

<http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/student-intranet/>

This guide is available through your course unit Blackboard site and at: <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/student-intranet/undergraduate/course-information/politics/>

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**Politics Essentials**

**Welcome from the UG Director, Adrienne Roberts**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to students undertaking courses here in the Politics discipline area. We are a large and vibrant discipline area, boasting a wide-range of scholarly expertise and presenting an unusually diverse and impressive range of courses. Many of our courses directly reflect the specialist research interests of our staff and all of them provide students with a rich and challenging learning experience.

A very large proportion of our student cohort is represented by students undertaking joint degrees such as Politics and Modern History and PPE. For these students, whilst their formal home might not be in Politics, we do want to ensure that they have a great experience and are clear about the specific rules and guidelines that they must follow when taking a Politics course. Rules and procedures vary across discipline areas, and that is why we have the Politics Part 2 guide which is specifically geared toward ensuring that all students are up to speed with what they need to know.

Please ensure that you take the time to read through this guide and keep hold of it for future reference. It will help make your studies run more smoothly and ensure that your time spent studying in the politics discipline area is enjoyable and rewarding.

Of course, while we are trying to return to some degree of normality, Covid continues to present a challenge and to introduce a certain amount of uncertainty to how we go about teaching and learning. This handbook/guide sets out our expectations for this year, and you will be informed by your module convenors, programme director/administrator and/or the University about any changes to the guidelines set out herein. I can assure you that as always, the teachers and support staff in Politics are committed to helping you succeed in your studies, and will do their best to support you in whatever ways they can.

**Contact Details**

**Politics Undergraduate Director:**

Adrienne Roberts [adrienne.roberts@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:adrienne.roberts@manchester.ac.uk)

**Politics Exams Officer:**

Andreja Zevnik [Andreja.Zevnik@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Andreja.Zevnik@manchester.ac.uk)

**Programme Administrators:** [**ugpolitics@manchester.ac.uk**](mailto:ugpolitics@manchester.ac.uk)

Luke Smith [luke.smith-2@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:luke.smith-2@manchester.ac.uk)

Toby Nicholas [toby.walkland@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:toby.walkland@manchester.ac.uk)

**C:\Documents and Settings\msasspw2\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\Z4A88D7B\MC900293188[1].wmfLectures and Tutorials**

**The University's Academic Standards Code of Practice specifies that 1 credit should represent about 10 hours of work by a student; hence a 10-credit course is expected to require about 100 hours’ work by students, a 20-credit course 200 hours and a 40-credit course 400 hours’ work.**

***Lectures -*** Please note that unless you are told otherwise, lectures will be in person and accessible remotely for students studying online. This is the case for semester 1 at least.

Lectures can be given to large audiences, especially during the first year of a degree, or to quite small groups as in the case of students who attend specialised options in their final year.

You would not usually ask questions in the middle of a lecture, especially if large numbers of students are involved, but many lecturers will invite questions at points throughout the lecture or at the end.

Many lecturers make their notes available online after a lecture through the module Blackboard site. Also, many lectures are now recorded and podcast. This system has been set up to help students replay, revisit and revise from past lectures. You can access podcasts <https://video.manchester.ac.uk/>. Any course units you are enrolled on that use this system will show here for you.

***Tutorials & Seminars***

Tutorials usually involve small groups exploring areas in a more informal way and can include students being asked to undertake certain tasks. Larger tutorials may involve students working through question sheets with staff on hand to help with difficulties as they arise.

A seminar is usually a talk or presentation on a subject, by either a tutor or a guest speaker, which is followed by questions and answers.



Attendance at tutorials and seminars is compulsory

You are expected to make every effort to attend all tutorials/seminars in the course units you are taking. If you know in advance that circumstances beyond your control will prevent you from attending a tutorial, you should contact your tutor or the SoSS undergraduate office with this information. If you are unable to do this, you should explain your absence as soon as possible. You should not wait to be contacted by the course tutor or Programme Administrator for non-attendance.

Unexcused absences may result in exclusion from this course or in a refusal to allow you to re-sit a failed exam. It is also worth noting that prospective employers frequently ask a referee to comment on a student’s reliability, motivation, etc. and when writing a reference for a student, a good work and attendance record allows a referee to provide a favourable reference while a poor work and attendance record is frequently reflected in a more negative evaluation.

***Teaching Assistants***

Complementing the academic staff involved in lecture and seminar delivery are graduate teaching assistants (GTAs). GTAs are a vital component of our teaching environment and, by combining the skills of academic staff and teaching assistants, Politics is able to combine leading-edge research with first-rate undergraduate teaching.

Most GTAs will be an emerging academic, in the process of researching a Doctorate (PhD). Others might have already completed their PhD, whilst some are experienced HE (Higher Education) teachers. All GTAs have met University training requirements and they work closely with the academic staff who are convening and lecturing a course. As with academic staff, GTAs are involved in regular peer review exercises of their teaching and meet with course convenors on a regular basis so to ensure the smooth running of lectures and seminars.

**Blackboard**

The teaching and learning activities are enhanced and supported by the use of Blackboard. You can access Blackboard through My Manchester <http://my.manchester.ac.uk>.

Blackboard is a web-based system that complements and builds upon traditional learning methods used at The University of Manchester. By using the Blackboard system you can view course materials and learning resources, including multimedia, for any units that you are taking that have a Blackboard course page. The software also provides tools for communicating and collaborating with your lecturer or other students about the course using discussions, chat or email.   
  
This will allow you to participate in a number of interactive tasks which you can do at a time and place of your convenience, providing a degree of flexibility to your studying. You can complete, and electronically submit, coursework in Blackboard as well as monitoring your progress using quizzes and assignments that teaching staff have set for you. It is also possible to check your grades for Blackboard activities online.

To ensure that you have access to all of your courses within Blackboard, you must be enrolled on them through the Student Records system. Once enrolled, your courses should appear in Blackboard within 24 hours. Also, your tutor needs to have ‘activated’ your Blackboard course in order for you to access it. If you cannot see a course you expect to see, please:

* contact your School Administrator to check that you have been enrolled;
* check with your tutor that they have made the course available;

If you change your course enrolments there will also be a delay of up to 24 hours in acquiring your new courses and removing those you are no longer taking.

After enrolment or changing your enrolments, if your courses are not correctly listed in Blackboard after 24 hours, please let us know which course(s) you are missing by going through <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/servicedesk/>

For general information on Blackboard and access to support information, please visit: [www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/blackboard](http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/blackboard)

**Information for Students with a status of Resit Without Attendance**

**Student Access to Course Materials on Blackboard**

The University Policy on the storage of course materials in Blackboard is to normally only permit students access to materials for the courses that they are studying in the current academic year for which access will be available until the end of the resit period. For those students that have a status of Resit Without Attendance (RWA) they should download materials prior to the end of the resit period.

******The Politics Hub is a multi-programme Blackboard space open to students studying Politics course units. Regular announcements will keep you up to date with everything that is happening in Politics.

This should be your first stop for everything you need to know about Politics including:

* Timetables
* Announcements
* Wellbeing
* Careers Related Information and Bulletins
* Sample Essays

You will also be able to view programme specific information including:

* Academic Advisor Contact Info
* Programme Handbooks
* Peer Mentor Contact Info and Events
* Student Reps Info

You can access the Politics Hub from your Blackboard homepage under the ‘My communities’ tab.

See <http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/blackboard> for further Blackboard advice and guidance.

**Turnitin**

The University uses electronic systems for the purposes of detecting plagiarism and other forms of academic malpractice and for marking. Such systems include TurnitinUK, the plagiarism detection service used by the University.

The School also reserves the right to submit work handed in by you for formative or summative assessment to TurnitinUK and/or other electronic systems used by the University.

Please note that when work is submitted to the relevant electronic systems, it may be copied and then stored in a database to allow appropriate checks to be made.

Please note that sometimes course convenors may require alternative submission e.g. they will ask you to submit in class. If this is the case you will be informed by the course convenor in class and through the course Blackboard site.

**Assessment Advice and Guidelines**

**Essay and Coursework Submission**

Politics uses electronic submission **only** for all assessed work and

the **deadline is always 2pm (UK time) unless you are told otherwise by the course convenor.**

**When submitting to Turnitin for the ‘Submission Title’ please ONLY enter your 7 or 8 digit ID number. DO NOT enter anything else in this box. If we are unable to identify your work by ID number you may be counted as not having submitted.**

You should consult your course Blackboard site for the submission deadline dates and submission details.

***How to submit your work:***

1. Log into Blackboard via My Manchester at: <https://login.manchester.ac.uk>  and go to the course unit site.
2. Click on the ‘Assessment’ folder from the menu on the left hand side.
3. You will then see a folder named ‘Coursework Submission’. Click on this and you will be taken to the coursework folder which contains full instructions for online submission.
4. Click on ‘Submit your POLIXXXXX Assessed Coursework here’.

***Before Submitting Remember:***

* When submitting online please ensure you submit the correct version of your work.
* Essays must be double-spaced and 12 point type.
* Ensure pages are numbered and that your University ID number (seven/eight digit library card number) and the relevant course code (POLI----) appear on each page.
* The total number of words (excluding the bibliography/final list of references, but including any footnotes) must be printed at the end of the essay.
* Even though your name is automatically entered when submitting your coursework (step 1 of 2), assignments are marked anonymously so your name will not be visible to the marker.

For further information please see *“A Student Guide to Submitting an Assignment via Turnitin”* <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=13010>

**Late Submission of Essays**

**Late Submission of Essays and Other Coursework will be penalised.**

There will be a penalty of 10 points per day for up to 5 days (including weekends) for any assessed work submitted after the specified submission date, unless the students Home School grants an extension or the student is in receipt of the DASS Auto Extension. After 5 days a mark of 0 will be assigned.

**Please note a "day" is 24 hours, i.e. the clock starts ticking as soon as the submission deadline has passed**.  **There are no discretionary periods or periods of grace.** A student who submits work at 1 second past a deadline or later will therefore be subject to a penalty for late submission.

More information on the Policy on Submission of Work for Summative Assessment on Taught Programmes can be found on the Teaching and Learning Support Office website at:

<http://www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/map/teachinglearningassessment/assessment/sectionb-thepracticeofassessment/policyonsubmissionofworkforsummativeassessment/>

***Important:***

Submitted work counting for less than 15% of the overall mark will get a mark of 0 if it is submitted late. Please note that mitigating circumstances procedures would still apply and that these rules do not apply for marks given for participation and attendance.



**A note about coursework extensions**

**You must contact your Programme Administrator in your home school to request an extension on your Politics assessed work and submit an application for mitigating circumstances using their process.**

**Word limits**

For all assessed work, it is important to comply with the word limit given in the course guide. You may be penalised up to 5 points if your essay is significantly longer or shorter than specified. As a guide, an acceptable variation is 10 percent above or below the word limit.

You must indicate the word count at the end of your essay. **Failure to do so will result in a deduction of 2 marks**

The bibliography/final list of references that is required for both the Harvard and Chicago referencing styles does not count towards the word limit of an essay/extended essay/dissertation.

All footnotes relating to the Chicago style, all references in the text relating to the Harvard style (e.g. Russell, 2012: 3), as well as all other footnote material and quotes, do count toward the word limit.

In addition, if appendixes are used (sometimes the case with dissertations, rarely with essays), these are not counted in the final word count.

**Politics Essay Advice**

The following are intended to be broad, but helpful, guidelines on how to write a Politics essay. Understandably, given the range of different areas taught within Politics at Manchester – from Comparative Politics, to International Politics, and Political Theory – and the different approaches to research – both quantitative and qualitative – a definitive guide is both impracticable and undesirable. For this reason you are advised to seek course specific guidance from course convenors and tutors when undertaking a particular essay in a particular module. That said, the following will provide some basic insight into the criteria used to assess your essay.

***Choosing a topic and assembling the materials***

Essay questions are listed in course guides, so you know what the questions are before you’ve even started learning about the subject. Keep the questions in mind as you listen to lectures and prepare for tutorials so that you can start to think about how the material relates to different questions.

***Reading and planning***

It’s very important to approach the task of reading in the right way. Before you read anything, think about what issues and arguments are relevant to the question, and (perhaps provisionally) what conclusions you want to draw.

Remember, you are supposed to *analyse* and *argue* in your essay – not merely report who said what. Think of the essay as a dialogue between yourself and the authors whose work you are reading. So, find reading that you find provocative and/or stimulating, and respond to it by challenging its assumptions and arguments, thinking up objections, replying to objections that are made to your own view, and so on. Maintain a thoughtful and critical attitude the whole time.

***Some common pitfalls***

* *Reading too much or too little*

There is a fine line between reading too much and reading too little. Having a large number of references in the bibliography will not, in and of itself, guarantee you a good mark. On the other hand, if you only have one or two references in the bibliography you are almost guaranteed of a relatively low mark. The key is the depth of engagement with the texts. That is, can you show the marker that you have read, critically thought about, and use the texts well in developing your own argument in the essay.

* *Being too deferential*

Don’t be afraid to adopt a critical attitude towards the authors you read – it may just be that you are right and they are wrong. And even if not, arguing with them is the best way to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the subject.

* *Being too dismissive*

On the other hand, you must remember that the authors you study are not stupid. Treat the texts you read – and their authors – with respect.

* *Regurgitating your lecture notes (and not reading anything at all)*

Lectures are intended as a way of informing and guiding your thoughts so that you can make the most of your own reading and thinking. They should never be thought of as a substitute for reading and thinking on your own. The person marking your essays knows full well what she told you in the lecture; handing it back to her in your essay is hardly likely to impress her.

***Planning the essay***

By the time that you get to the planning stage you should have:

* Read and understood a variety of authors, all of whom engage with the essay question but some of whom disagree with each other about what the right answer to it is.
* Formed an opinion – the beginning of an argument – about the subject and the question you will answer (and who or what is right or wrong).

These two essentials will form the basis of the structure and argument of the essay.

Think of the essay as your opportunity to present arguments for a certain view. The key to a good argument is therefore ***analysis***. Students often wonder though what is meant by the term. Essentially, analysis means breaking something down into its component parts, before you piece it together again in the conclusion. To develop a coherent argument, you must do both in a systematically structured fashion. **In other words, whatever the topic you are writing about, you are expected at least to *attempt* to do the following:**

1. Identify the underlying analytical, theoretical or intellectual problem faced by those trying to analyse and interpret the topic or question.
2. Know at least the main outlines of the principal ***alternative lines of argument*** out there (sometimes called paradigms) on the subject in question, as set out in debates amongst academics in books, academic journals, etc. (Often these are competing ways of ***explaining*** the phenomenon in question).
3. Often – though not always – this will include identifying what, from your reading and thinking, you perceive to be the key pieces of ***empirical evidence*** which in your view are crucial for attempting to navigate through these debates and arguments and to ***understand*** the phenomenon in question.
4. ***Structure*** the essay (i) to substantiate one of the principal lines of argument taken from the authors you have read or (ii) to develop a line of argument of your own. *It is also the key to being seen to* ***answer the question****! You cannot answer the question properly except with a coherent, systematically structured argument*.

The key is plausibility, and ***good logic*** *is as important as key facts*. At the same time, you are *not* merely being asked to express your *opinion*. Your opinion is one key element, but what is most important is how you attempt to ***justify*** your opinion through empirical facts or examples, on the one hand, and/or logical argument, on the other.

***Structure***

Most good essays have the same very basic structure. Write down a rough outline or diagram of the structure as your essay plan. Once you’ve got that right, all you have to do is fill in the gaps.

* **Introduction**

The introduction should do three things: (i) introduce the question and subject, (ii) outline your own answer, and (iii) give the reader of the structure of the essay.

Your essay is not a mystery story: no purpose is served by not letting on what your eventual conclusion will be until the very last moment. Essays that do this are very hard to follow. *Be explicit about what you’re going to do and your argument*.

* **The main body**

This is s where the content comes in. Make sure you organise that content well. Be methodical. Tell the reader what you are doing as you go along by saying things like ‘I have just argued that….. I shall now argue that…’. Make a point at a time and link it to your overall argument.

* **The conclusion**

A common error is to think that the point of the main body of the essay is to be purely expository – to describe two opposing views, for example – and that the point of the conclusion is to “say what you think”. This is not true. You should have already presented your argument in the bulk of the essay. So, by the time you get to the end of the main body, you should already have reached a conclusion. As such, there may be no need to provide a summary at the end. On the other hand, make sure that the essay doesn’t stop abruptly or fizzle out.

***Writing the essay***

* **Style**

Adopt a formal, precise tone. Use short direct sentences. These are often clearer and easier to read. Be wary of using too much jargon. Ensure that you understand what you right yourself. See Strunk’s classic book on *The* *Elements of Style*.

There is a fine line between assuming that the marker knows everything – in which case you don’t need to explain concepts etc. that you use – or that they know nothing – in which case you have to explain even the minutest details. Put simply, without wasting too much time (or words) show the marker that you have understood the material/concepts etc. This means your target audience is someone who can follow an argument and understand complex ideas *so long as those arguments and ideas are expressed clearly and simply*. You should also think of your target audience as someone who needs to be *persuaded* of your position – and to do this, you need to argue for it.

* **Answering the question**

While you should regard any essay or exam question as an opportunity to put forward and argue for your own view, it is vitally important that the view you defend is one that counts as an answer to the question – and that the material you discuss is relevant to that answer. Small differences in the words used in the question can make a very big difference to what counts as an *answer* to the question.

**Other Forms of Assessment**

Whilst essays and exams are the main approaches used to assess students, we do employ a range of additional assessment methods. On courses where these are employed, the Course Convenor will provide students will clear guidelines on how these forms of assessment will be graded in terms of the degree classifications. Particular criteria for nonstandard forms of assessment will also be set out in the relevant module guides and/or on Blackboard.

The following will give you a general overview of what is expected for these additional assessment methods. Please note this is only a guide and you should consult the course guide and module blackboard site for specific requirements.

***Article Analysis***

The article analysis is a sustained reflection on the detractions, merits, and implications of one article chosen from the reading list.

The assignment should:

* State clearly whether you agree or disagree with the article chosen for the analysis, justifying your position.
* Critically interrogate the assumptions and commitments of the article chosen.
* You should critically explore the claims being put forward, the assumptions (explicit or implicit) that underwrite these claims, and the implications for theory and/or practice that emerge from the article(s).

The purpose of the Article Analysis is to demonstrate your ability to critically analyse an author’s argument. You must demonstrate then that you can accurately summarise the argument of the author and offer some critical reflections on that argument.

To help you complete this task you may want to think about the following questions:

* Why did you choose this article: what is important about it to you?
* What is the central argument that the author makes?
* What evidence and/or reasoning does the author provide in support of his/her key arguments?
* Is there anything in the article that you find questionable or that you might challenge? Why?
* What difference did reading this article make to you with regard to what you think about the topic?

***Book Review***

A book review should contain a balance between description and critical evaluation. One approach is to use the first half of the review to tell readers what the book is about, such as its fundamental argument, its approach, the topics, countries or cases the author analyses, and what kind of readers the book is aimed at. Then you can use the second half of the review to give an assessment of how well it succeeds. Does the author succeed in his/her goals? Is the book innovative or noteworthy in theory, method or empirical work? Are there gaps or anomalies in its coverage? How plausible are the author's arguments? Is the book well written?

***Learning Logs & Portfolios***

These are collections of work that document your learning experience and development throughout the course.

They are intended to provide you not only with a record of what you have done, but also allow you to track the development of your thinking across the subject matter and enable you to raise pertinent questions relating to the literature you have read, the research you have undertaken, and the seminar-based activities in which you have participated.

We look for two things in particular from the learning logs/portfolios. First, we seek signs that you have thought about and reflected on the readings and the tutorial discussion. What most impressed or surprised you at the tutorial? Which reading did you find most interesting? Try to avoid simply rehashing the readings or the contents of the lecture. We are interested here in your own knowledgeable, engaged, reasoned views and impressions. Secondly, we will reward writing that is clear and concise.

These are normally only short pieces of work and in general, one can only make two or three points in them, so consider how you can best convey these points. How are you using paragraphs to organise your ideas?  Do your sentences follow on logically one from the other? Please avoid bullet points and try to express your ideas in prose.

***Participation***

**This is not a mark for attendance – attendance is compulsory.**

You are expected to attend tutorials/seminars prepared and to have read assigned readings. Tutorials/seminars are an opportunity for students to engage critically with the material covered in the course. The expectation is that students arrive in class prepared to discuss the assigned reading in a collegial and constructive environment. This means that you must read *before* you arrive in class. While this may seem obvious students often confuse participation with physical presence. Participation means substantive engagement with the material (in other words, quality not quantity), this requires that you participate in the class including group activities, evidence of preparation and reading, insightful comments and collegial behaviour.

Keep in mind that you and your colleagues all have the same apprehension about speaking up in class. Considering that open discussion is critical to learning, it matters that you learn to participate constructively in the early stages of your academic career.

Remember, these are your classes so they can only be as good as you make them.

***Presentations***

* Group Poster Presentations

In a group you will produce a visual representation of the specific area of politics you are studying. Each group will produce a poster and present it to the class in a short oral presentation. This assignment is intended to prompt students to engage more deeply and creatively with the material covered and questions asked in lectures and seminars.

Groups are encouraged to work together to think about what will inform their visual presentation, and work together to collect images, text, news articles, and produce a visual story that can include text alongside the images. Groups may be encouraged to ‘theme’ their poster presentations since they are not intended to be exhaustive. Alongside this you may also need to put together a narrative for the poster that you will present to the class. (Particular guidance will be given by the module leader for each module). All members of the group should participate in this part as well so the burden is equally shared and the pressure lessened.

* Tutorial/Oral Presentations

Presentations should

* Answer the presentation question (if there is one – this will be made clear to you in class).
* Show teamwork with your co-presenter(s)
* Have a seminar handout and make sure there are enough copies for the class
* Be clearly delivered and practiced.

**Assessment Criteria**

Politics students work is assessed into different class categories by using the following criteria:

**Very High First Class (90-100)**

Such answers are **exceptional** and *fully* answer the question demonstrating the attainment of all learning objectives and in adherence to all guidelines. The answer will be expected to show an exceptional level of achievement with respect to the following criteria:

* insight and depth of understanding of the material;
* the exercise of critical judgement along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
* knowledge of the relevant literature.

**High First Class (80-89)**

Such answers are **outstanding** and provide a *near-full* and well-structured answer to the question and can be expected to indicate an outstanding level of achievement of all of the following qualities:

* insight and depth of understanding of the material;
* the exercise of critical judgement along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
* good knowledge of the relevant literature.

**First Class (70-79)**

Such answers are **excellent** and provide a *largely*- *full* and well-structured answer to the question and can be expected to indicate excellence in *some or most of* the following qualities:

* insight and depth of understanding of the material;
* the exercise of critical judgement along with clarity of analysis and of expression;
* knowledge of the relevant literature.

**Upper-second Class (60-69)**

Such answers are **very good** and provide a generally well-structured answer to the question and can be expected to indicate *some of* the following qualities:

* a good or very good understanding of the material;
* clarity of analysis, of argument and of expression;
* a demonstrable grasp of the relevant literature.

**Lower-second Class (50-59)**

Such answers are **good** and provide a clear answer to the question. They can be expected to show *most of* the following features:

* a firm understanding of the material;
* clarity of analysis and argument, albeit limited in extent;
* some awareness of the relevant literature.

**Note**: What distinguishes a high Lower-second Class from a low Upper-second Class is greater extent of understanding of material and clarity of analysis and argument, as well as at least some selective knowledge of the relevant literature, not mere awareness of its existence.

**Third Class (40-49)**

Such answers are **sufficient** and demonstrate a *rudimentary* understanding of the issues and offer *only partial* answers to the question. They can be expected to show some of the following features:

* sparse coverage of the material with several key elements missing;
* unsupported assertions and a lack of clear analysis or argument;
* Important errors and inaccuracies.

**Fail (30-39)**

Such answers are **insufficient** and, while showing some awareness of the area, fail to deal

* with the question in a way that suggest more than a fragmented and shallow acquaintance
* with the subject. They are often error-prone, lacking in coherence, structure and evidence of independent thought.

**Bad Fail (20-29)**

Such answers are **inadequate** and fail to demonstrate the ability to engage with the question. They demonstrate only the most basic awareness of the area and may contain errors. They will be almost completely lacking in coherence, structure and evidence of independent thought.

**Very Bad Fail (10-19)**

Such answers are **severely inadequate** and exhibit an almost complete lack of engagement with the area or question.

**Extremely Bad Fail (0-9)**

Such answers are **profoundly inadequate** and exhibit a complete lack of engagement with the area or question.

**Marking Criteria on Grademark in Politics**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **High First Class (80+)** | **First Class (70-79)** | **Upper-second Class (60-69)** | **Lower-second Class (50-59)** | **Third Class (40-49)** | **Fail (30-39)** | **Fail (0-29)** |
| **Critical analysis and argument** | The analysis is fully coherent. It makes several critical insights that are deeply perceptive. The arguments are fully supported with sound evidence. It may also demonstrate a degree of originality. | The analysis is almost fully coherent. It makes several critical insights that are perceptive. The arguments are almost fully supported with sound evidence. | The analysis is, in large part, coherent. It makes some perceptive critical insights. The arguments are supported with sound evidence. | The analysis is mostly coherent, although there may be some minor contradictions. It makes some critical insights, although some may require greater clarification or thought, or the work may be largely descriptive.  Some of the arguments require greater evidence. | The coherence of the analysis may be weak. The work may contain weak arguments or be overly descriptive. | The analysis lacks coherence. The arguments are very weak and not fully supported. | The work demonstrates little or no critical ability. |
| **Knowledge and understanding** | The work demonstrates a deep understanding of the issues and approaches involved. | The work demonstrates an excellent understanding of the issues and approaches involved. | The work demonstrates a very good understanding of the issues and approaches involved. | The work demonstrates a reasonable level of understanding of the issues and approaches involved, although at times may show a lack of awareness of some of the complexities of the subject. | The work demonstrates an incomplete understanding of the issues and approaches involved. There are some notable gaps in understanding. | The work demonstrates a very weak understanding of the issues and approaches involved. There are some very sizable gaps in understanding. | The work demonstrates a little or no understanding of the issues and approaches involved. |
| **Structure and organisation** | The structure and organisation are very clear and logical. | The structure and organisation are clear and logical. | The structure and organisation are appropriate and largely logical. | The structure and organisation are largely appropriate, but some points are not organised in a logical manner. | The structure is very weak and unclear. The points are not organised in a logical manner. | The structure is very poor and unclear. | There is no discernible structure. |
| **Relevance** | The work addresses the question fully. It answers the question in an extremely focused manner. There is no tangential material. | The work addresses the question almost fully. It answers the question in a very focused manner. There is little, if any, tangential material. | The work addresses the question for most part. It answers the question in a focused manner. There is not much tangential material. | The work addresses the question for most part. It answers the question in a largely focused manner. There may be some tangential material. | The work addresses the question, but offers only a partial answer to it. It (i) contains tangential material and/or (ii) lacks focus at several junctures. | The work fails to tackle the question. | The work fails to demonstrate the ability to engage with the question. |
| **Use of secondary literature** | The work provides a deeply perceptive and focused use of the literature, based on a very wide range of reading. | The work provides a perceptive and focused use of the literature, based on a wide range of reading. | The work effectively uses the literature to frame the discussion and to support its claims. It is clearly based on a good range of reading. | The works demonstrates a good knowledge of the literature. However, it may rely too heavily on certain sources and/or be overly descriptive of the existing literature. | The work demonstrates a limited knowledge of the literature. There may be notable errors and inaccuracies. | The work demonstrates a poor knowledge of the literature in the subject area. There may be notable errors and inaccuracies. | The work demonstrates almost no knowledge of the literature in the subject area. |
| **Style and presentation** | The discussion is highly lucid and cogent. There are very few, if any, spelling, grammar, or typographical errors. | The discussion is lucid and cogent. There are few, if any, spelling, grammar, or typographical errors. | The discussion is clear. The work adopts an appropriate tone. There may be a few errors in presentation. | The discussion is, for the most part, clear. The work adopts an appropriate tone. There may be some presentation errors. | The discussion is unclear and/or adopts an inappropriate tone. There may be several errors in presentation. | The discussion is very unclear and/or adopts an inappropriate tone. There may be several errors in presentation. | The discussion is extremely unclear and/or adopts an inappropriate tone. There may be several errors in presentation. |

**How to Improve your Marks**

This guide is designed to help you to get better marks in your assignments. It is not meant to replicate the existing guidance on essay writing. Please note that this is *informal* guidance. It does not replace the formal marking criteria. It should be used with common sense and following these steps will not *guarantee* that your mark will improve—the guidance is not exhaustive. Also note that the guidance focuses on essays, but the advice may apply to dissertations, exams, and other formats of assessment as well.

**“How do I get a 2:1/over 60?”**

* One of the clearest differences between work that attracts lower than 60 and work that gets 60 and above is the presence of a clear, overall argument. The essay needs to do more than simply *describe* the existing literature on the topic. It needs to critically analyse the issues and questions, and present a clear overall answer to the question that is set out in the introduction and that drives the whole essay. Each section of the essay should be relevant to this argument. The argument should provide a clear response to the essay question. Avoid the ‘flip-flop’ model, whereby you simply describe one side of the argument, then describe the other, and in the conclusion present your own view. Instead, you should develop what you think is the most persuasive answer to the question and then explain (with reference to the existing literature) in detail why you think your argument is convincing. The overall argument needs to run throughout the whole essay. Once you have worked out your argument redraft the essay to ensure you are consistent.
* Ensure that the argument and essay more generally is clearly expressed. Read through it several times and redraft it.
* Ensure that your overall argument is consistent and plausible. Although the marker need not necessarily agree personally with your position, it needs to be reasonable and coherent. An incoherent or implausible argument often demonstrates a lack of thought about the response to the essay question. It follows that you need to think through carefully your overall argument and the specific claims that you make in your essay.
* The essay should be organised in a logical and clear manner. The overall structure of the essay should be dictated by your overall argument. The structure of the essay should be clearly outlined in the introduction. In addition, ensure that the particular points that you raise are organised clearly. Don’t simply drift from point to point – have a clear purpose. Also, do not consider several points in one paragraph. Use a paragraph for each point and carefully link each point to your overall argument. An essay that has a poor overall argument or that does not organise its particular claims clearly and logically will often struggle to get 60 or above.
* Signpost the essay. This means that you need to make it clear to the reader at various points how what you are doing relates to the rest of the essay. This is particularly the case when you move to consider another major point or issue. (So, for instance, say: “We have seen that X. The essay will now argue Y...”). Where appropriate, summarise complex arguments at the end of sections.
* Adopt a rigorous, analytical approach. Ensure that your claims are well supported with evidence, where appropriate. Also ensure that you consider potential responses to your point of view and how you would respond to these.

**“I constantly get marks in the high 60s. How do I get a first/70?”**

*Getting a First is not easy. It is reserved for very high-quality essays and typically only a small percentage (e.g., 5-15%) of students get a First. However, it is achievable and the following provides some tips and guidance. There is, however, no formula to guarantee a First class grade.*

* The essay needs to be very tightly argued. What this means is that you need to ensure that all the sections of your essay are strictly relevant to the overall argument. There should not be any extraneous material. So, when you read through your essay, ask yourself “why am I saying this?” If it is not obvious to you, it won’t be obvious to be marker. Every word matters in a first-class essay. Material that is only *desirable* to have in your essay—and not *necessary*—should be deleted and replaced by more in-depth argumentation.
* Ensure that your voice comes through. What this means is that your own argument—and potentially original contribution—needs to be clearly highlighted. The critical analysis that you present needs to give the impression of going simply beyond a restatement of the standard objections and arguments in the literature (that is, by others). Instead, you need to show that in presenting your *own* objections and arguments, they are your own, even if they have been (heavily) influenced by others. So, for instance, make it clear what you are doing differently to (some) others. This might include discussion of a relevant but under-discussed case study, philosophical line of argument, or a body of secondary literature. If the essay does have some original elements (which is not necessary for a First), establish why these are original. Overall, the essay needs to demonstrate a degree of intellectual confidence. (In doing this, be wary of using “I” too much since some sub-disciplines are less keen on its use. You can establish your voice by using “this essay will argue”.)
* Ensure that you have read and understood the central readings for the topic and, in particular, those on the reading list. A First will typically have a deep understanding of the sources for the topic from the reading list. Sometimes particularly impressive essays will cite the very latest literature on a topic, which has only just been published (after the reading list has been put together). To find this, you can use the ‘since 2013’ function on Google Scholar (ensure that you are using *articles* and *books*, and not the working papers and theses sometimes picked up by Google Scholar).
* Try to have something interesting to say. When presenting your overall argument, try to think about adding potential nuances or further implications. This adds greater sophistication to an essay.
* Try not to cover too much. Although a typical worry of students is that they will be marked down for not covering all areas in response to a set question, essays that focus on specific issues within a question, and consider these in detail, typically attract better marks than those that adopt a more broad-brush approach. So, for instance, consider limiting the number of points that the essay makes to only a handful. Ensure that these are considered in detail, with potential counterarguments responded to effectively. At the start of the essay, you can make it clear that you intend to focus on a specific area or issue and, importantly, both justify this and acknowledge that there are other issues that you won’t consider (e.g., “Although the area of A raises issues of B, C, and D, I will focus in detail on the issue of E. This is because...”
* The essay should also have a suitable style and flow. A First-class essay will be fluent, clear, and easy to read. Redraft the essay several times to ensure that it reads well. Use short, direct sentences. These can help with the readability of the essay.
* Ensure that the presentation of the essay gives the impression that the essay merits a First. There should be very few, if any, typographical, spelling, or grammar errors. The referencing should be precise and follow very close the set guidelines. In short, ensure that it looks as if you have put a lot of time into the essay. Although the substance of the essay is what matters and a poorly presented essay can sometimes receive top marks, this is quite rare. To ensure excellent presentation of an essay, you need to proofread it several times. The proofreading process also helps to spot any errors in argument and substance, which goes some way to explain the correlation between a well-presented essay and those with good marks.

You can also try drinking more water: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-17741653>

**Referencing and Bibliography**

***Referencing Guidelines***

All essays **must** be properly referenced. This means indicating the source of any quotation, any data, and/or for any view or interpretation which you summarise from another source or author. Failure to attribute ideas to the source from which they have been taken constitutes **plagiarism** and is a serious academic offence.

As well as acknowledging the source of particular ideas or information contained in your essay, the purpose of referencing is to enable a reader to find the source that you have used. It is this principle that guides what is to be included when you reference.

There are two alternative systems of referencing used in the social sciences, the ‘**Harvard system’** (sometimes called the ‘author-date system’) and the ‘**Chicago system’** (which uses footnotes). The Harvard system is recommended (since it is easier to master), but you may use either system. Whichever system you choose you must use it consistently and you must only use one system.

In both systems of referencing you must include a list of **references** at the end of your essay, which gives the full bibliographical details for all the sources that you have cited, listed in alphabetical order of author surname. This is sometimes also referred to as a **bibliography**. The final list of references should only include sources which you have referred to in your essay. **Do not** include sources you have read but not actually cited.

The guidance below gives some general rules and examples of how to reference the most common types of source. For more detailed guidance on referencing look at one of the following websites:

Harvard: <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>

Chicago: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/footnote-bibliography-or-oxford-referencing-system>

The formatting conventions about the order in which the various details should be given differ slightly between the Chicago and Harvard systems. Don’t worry too much about these details, as long as you adopt a **consistent system** and include **all** **the necessary information**.

***The Harvard system***

In the Harvard system, the author and date of the source to which you are referring appears in brackets in the text of the essay/article.

Paraphrasing:

- If the author is directly discussed in the text, the brackets appear after their name. For example:

McMahan (2009) rejects many of the claims of traditional Just War Theory.

- If the author is not directly discussed in the sentence, the brackets appear after their name. For example:

Humanitarian intervention is clearly part of the responsibility to protect doctrine (Hehir 2012).

Quoting:

-The brackets appear after quote.

- If you have not mentioned the author’s name in the sentence already, this should be included too. If you have, do not include it. For example:

Mandelson invites critics of New Labour to “judge us after ten years of success in office” (1997, p. 7).

The Draft Convention uses the vague term “waging war and/or combat operations” (White 2011, pp. 137–40).

Page numbers:

- Quotes should always include the page(s) from which the quotation has been taken.

- When paraphrasing, pages should also be provided when you are drawing on a specific part of the author’s text. If the source is a single page in a text then this is indicated by ‘p. x’; if you are referring to something which appears over a number of pages in the original source, you should give the page range as ‘pp. x-y’.

Multiple authors:

- Where there are two authors for a source, you should give both names. For example: (Clarke and Churchill 2009).

- For publications with three or more authors, you should give the first author’s surname followed by ‘*et al’.* For example: (Clarke *et al* 2007). When you list this source in the References at the end of the essay, you should give all the authors’ names (without ‘*et al*’). For example: Clarke, K., Churchill, H. and Jones, P.

The full publication details for each source referred to is listed in the References section at the end of the essay.

***The Chicago system***

In the Chicago system, each citation is indicated by a numbered note in the text.

- A footnote at the bottom of the page gives the full bibliographical details for the source the first time it occurs. For example:

Robert Putnam argues that there has been a significant decrease in social cohesion in the United States over the past three decades, as measured by a variety of indicators.[[1]](#footnote-1)

- An abbreviated version of the bibliographical details is used for subsequent citations of the same source. This should include the author’s last name, a short title of their publication, and the page numbers.

For example:

In his proposals for how this problem should be addressed, he suggests reform of both public and private civic institutions to “invite more active participation”.[[2]](#footnote-2)

- The references must all be listed in full in alphabetical order of author in a final References section.

- Page numbers should be included as per the Harvard system.

***References***

The following details need to be included in the References section (for both Harvard and Chicago systems) and in the footnotes (if you are using the Chicago system):

1. Book:

Author surname, initials/first name (year of publication). *Book Title* (Place of Publication: Publisher).

Northedge, Andrew (2005). *The Good Study Guide* (Milton Keynes: Open University).

2. Chapter in edited book:

Author surname, initial (year of publication). “Chapter Title”, in initial and surname(s) of book editor(s), *Book Title*. (Place of publication: publisher), page range of chapter.

Wulf, H. (2006). “Reconstructing the Public Monopoly of Legitimate Force”, in A. Bryden and M. Caparini (eds), *Private Actors and Security Governance* (Berlin: LIT Verlag), pp. 87–106.

3. Journal article:

Author surname, initials (year of publication). “Article Title”, *Journal Title*, volume number (part number), page range for article.

Gamble, Andrew (2010). “The Political Consequences of the Crash”, *Political Studies Review*, 8 (1), pp. 3-14.

4. Newspaper article:

Author surname, initials (year of publication). “Article Title”, *Newspaper Title*, date of publication, page number.

Monbiot, George (2010). “General Election 2010: Grasp the Opportunity for Reform”, *The* *Guardian*, 8 May 2010, p. 17.

5. Internet source:

The same general rules apply to internet sources. You should try to give the author, year of publication, title of the publication, the web address, the date that you accessed the website (because web addresses change, so the link may not work at later date).

Liberal Democrats (2010). *Liberal Democrat Manifesto 2010*. Available at <http://www.politicsresources.net/area/uk/ge10/man/parties/libdem_manifesto_2010.pdf>

6. Government publications:

Government department (year of publication). *Title*, Command number (for White or Green papers). Place of publication: publisher.

Department for Work and Pensions (2002). *Pathways to Work: Helping People into Employment*. Cm5690, London: HMSO.

Referring to sources you have not read yourself:

If you want to refer to a source but have not read the original, but only a summary written by another author (such as Weber’s ideas on democracy as summarised by Giddens), you should do it as follows:

Weber believed that the increasing democracy inevitably involved an expansion of bureaucracy (in Giddens 1993, p. 334).

Your list of references should include Giddens (1993) *Sociology* (which you have read), but not Weber (1978) *Economy and Society* (which you have not read yourself).

Common errors

- Do not divide the reference list by types of source. All sources should be in the same list ordered alphabetically.

- Do not italicise quotes (unless the original is italicised).

- Quotes over 50 words long should be indented on a new line.

- Do not number the list of references or use bullet points.

- Reference everything meticulously and ensure that you reference both empirical facts (such as statistics) and arguments.

***Useful Links***

Referencing

<http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/studyskills/develop_learner/research_skills/referencing.html>

**Deductions for inadequate referencing and/or bibliography**

In general, we do not stipulate that students must use one form of referencing or another, so long as they are consistent and thorough in providing all the relevant publication details and at the necessary locations in the text.

The essay comment sheet provides for up to 10 percentage points deduction for inadequate scholarly apparatus.

Referencing (0-5 points)

1. 1-2 point deduction:

- inconsistent style of referencing (Harvard and footnotes combined, different styles in footnotes)

- occasional failure to acknowledge sources

- frequent omission of details in citations

1. 3-5 point deduction:

- occasional failure to provide a reference for quotations

- frequent failure to acknowledge sources

- citing incorrect sources

Bibliography (0-5 points)

1. 1-2 point deduction:

- frequent errors in alphabetical ordering

- frequent omission of minor publication details (e.g., place of publication, author’s initial, date of access to online article)

- occasional omission of major publication details (e.g. author, title, publisher, date, page numbers)

- frequent failure to distinguish aspects of the reference, e.g., putting book/journal titles in non-italics and chapter/paper titles in italics; failing to distinguish edited works from sole-authored works

- inclusion of irrelevant sources not cited in the text

1. 3-5 point deduction:

- systematic omission of publication details

- systematic errors in publication details (incorrect author, title, etc.)

- systematically inconsistent style of referencing

- frequent omission of sources cited in the text.

**Policy on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the theft or expropriation of someone else’s work without proper acknowledgement, presenting the material as if it were one’s own. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and the consequences are severe.

*Guidelines on Plagiarism - for Students*

1. Coursework, dissertations and essays submitted for assessment must be the student’s own work, unless in the case of group projects a joint effort is expected and is indicated as such.

2. Unacknowledged direct copying from the work of another person, or the close paraphrasing of somebody else’s work, is called plagiarism and is a serious offence, equated with cheating in examinations. This applies to copying both from other students’ work and from published sources such as books, reports or journal articles.

3. Use of quotations or data from the work of others is entirely acceptable, and is often very valuable provided that the source of the quotation or data is given. Failure to provide a source or put quotation marks around material that is taken from elsewhere gives the appearance that the comments are ostensibly one’s own. When quoting word-for-word from the work of another person quotation marks or indenting (setting the quotation in from the margin) must be used and the source of the quoted material must be acknowledged.

4. Paraphrasing, when the original statement is still identifiable and has no acknowledgement, is plagiarism. A close paraphrase of another person’s work must have an acknowledgement to the source. It is not acceptable to put together unacknowledged passages from the same or from different sources linking these together with a few words or sentences of your own and changing a few words from the original text: this is regarded as over-dependence on other sources, which is a form of plagiarism.

5. Direct quotations from an earlier piece of the student’s own work, if unattributed, suggests that the work is original, when in fact it is not. The direct copying of one’s own writings qualifies as plagiarism if the fact that the work has been or is to be presented elsewhere is not acknowledged.

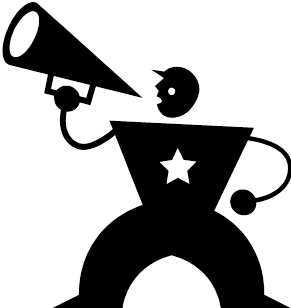
6. Sources of quotations used should be listed in full in a bibliography at the end of the piece of work and in a style required by the student’s department.

7. Plagiarism is a serious offence and will always result in imposition of a penalty. In deciding upon the penalty the University will take into account factors such as the year of study, the extent and proportion of the work that has been plagiarised and the apparent intent of the student. The penalties that can be imposed range from a minimum of a zero mark for the work (without allowing resubmission) through the down grading of degree class, the award of a lesser qualification (e.g. a pass degree rather than honours, a certificate rather than diploma) to disciplinary measures such as suspension or expulsion.

The University Policy on plagiarism can be found at:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=2870>

**Feedback**

******Receiving feedback is an integral part of your learning process. You should be aware that feedback will come in a number of different forms, most of which require your active participation.

**Coursework Feedback –Our Promise**

Politics staff will provide feedback on written work within 15 working days of submission.

Students should be aware that all marks are provisional until confirmed by the external examiner and the final examinations boards in June.

**For semester two modules that do not have examination components the marks and feedback for the final assessed component are not subject to the 15 working day rule and will be released with the examination results.**

You will receive feedback on assessed essays in a standard format through Blackboard/Turnitin. This will rate your essay in terms of various aspects of the argument that you have presented your use of sources and the quality of the style and presentation of the essay. The general assessment criteria against which your work will be judged are outlined on page 12. If you have any queries about the feedback that you have received you should make an appointment to see your tutor.

***How much feedback should I expect?***

Our feedback norms are as follows:

* essays of 1,500 words will have commentaries from roughly in the region of 70-100 words
* essays of 2,000 words will have commentaries from roughly in the region of 80-120 words
* essays of 3,000 words will have commentaries from roughly in the region of 100-150 words

These norms have been set in order to give you about the right amount of feedback to explain your mark and offer suggestions for improvement, without overwhelming you with too many comments.

**How to Access Feedback and Marks**

On assessments submitted through Turnitin you will receive feedback via Blackboard. This will include suggestions about ways in which you could improve your work in future. You will also receive feedback on non-assessed coursework, whether this is individual or group work. This may be of a more informal kind and may include feedback from peers as well as academic staff. In dissertation courses you are likely to obtain continuous oral and/or written feedback from your supervisor.

Accessing Marks and Feedback through Blackboard/Turnitin Please see “A Student Guide to Downloading Feedback from Turnitin” at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=13011>

***Accessing Marks through the Student Self Service Centre***

As your essay is marked via Turnitin you will receive your provisional mark on the Blackboard page for relevant course. For other forms of assessments your mark and feedback will be available through the Student self Service System.

**Please Note: The mark displayed on the student system is the correct mark as this will include any late deductions if you submitted your essay after the 2pm deadline. If you notice that your mark is different to the one displayed through Turnitin please look under the ‘Instructor Comments’ section to see if you have incurred a late penalty.**

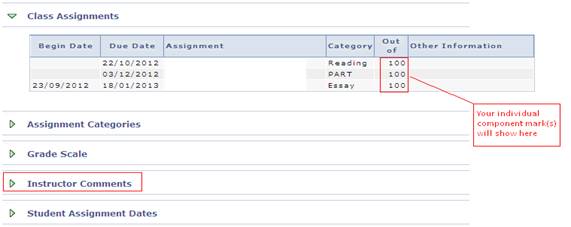
Log into your Student Service Centre through My Manchester: <https://login.manchester.ac.uk>

To view your marks:

* Go to your Student Service Centre
* Using the                              drop down list on the left select Assignments.
* Click on the arrows      next to it.
* Click on the correct academic year.

This takes you to a list of your modules.

* Click on the link for the module required to bring up the marks page.
* Click on **Instructor Comments** at the bottom of the screen to view essay comments and marks.



If you have a negative service indicator on your account, indicating a debt to the University, you will not be able to access your grades. If this is the case you will need to contact Student Services at [ssc@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ssc@manchester.ac.uk) or +44(0)161 275 5000.

***Exam Feedback***

There is a lot that students can reflect on about their examination performance in order to improve their results for future units. To facilitate this, large course units may provide generic feedback on the cohort’s performance. Where no generic feedback is provided, other procedures are in place. Students should contact the course convenor if there is concern about their overall examination performance in a particular course unit and arrange a meeting with them. The convenor will then be provided with a copy of the students’ exam script (students cannot take them away with them or take pictures) by the UG Office so they can provide you with further feedback. This will also be the students opportunity to ask any questions. If students are concerned about their overall examination performance then they should discuss this with their Academic Advisor.

**Information on all aspects of Politics assessment is available through the SoSS UG web page at:** <https://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/student-intranet/undergraduate/assessment/>

***Face to Face - Lectures/Tutorials***

You will receive feedback on your learning process whenever you go prepared to a lecture or tutorial, as you will realise whether your understanding of the material is correct or not. By asking the teaching staff questions during and after the lectures and tutorials, and during office hours, you will receive valuable feedback.

***Assessment and Feedback Advice Hours***

All academic staff have specific office hours when they are available to students. Your course unit Tutor and your Course Convenor have a dedicated timeslot each week when you can meet with her/him to discuss course unit specific problems and questions.

In conjunction with the School of Social Science Feedback Policy, Politics will ensure that:

* Where there is further assessment to be completed for the unit, feedback should be provided no later than 3 weeks from the submission date and before completion of the next assessment.
* Where there is no further assessment for a unit, students must have the opportunity to receive feedback as appropriate and in time to be able to improve performance in further programme assessments.

The Feedback Policy is available in full at:

<http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/policy-guidance/assessment/>

**Making the most of your assessment and feedback**

***What will the feedback do?***

The purpose of written feedback is twofold: (i) to explain why the mark was awarded and (ii) to help you improve marks in the future.

* The feedback will refer to the marking criteria to explain why the particular mark was awarded.
* In almost all cases, the comments will be *both* positive and negative. Accordingly, expect *some* constructive criticism of your work.
* Do not focus, however, unduly on the negative comments. It is important also to reflect on what you are doing well.
* Any negative comments will be linked to recommendations and suggestions on how to improve the piece of work. These are the most important part of the feedback process. Take the time to consider these in detail.
* Although the comments may seem to relate only to the particular assignment, the general underlying points will also typically be important for other assignments.

***Using feedback***

* Read the feedback, even if you get a mark that you are dissatisfied with or if you have finished the module. It will help you to improve more generally.
* When you receive feedback, read it through once. Then come back to it in a couple of days and consider it in much more detail. This enables you to consider the comments and suggestions more dispassionately and reflect on what you could improve on in the future.
* If you do not understand the feedback, or want some more help on how to improve your work, arrange to see your seminar tutor in their office hour. Indeed, this is one of the central purposes of office hours (we now refer to them as ‘Assessment Feedback and Advice hours’).
* Once you’ve digested the feedback, make *your own* list of all the *good* points of the essay and of how you can improve it in the future (do not list the negatives). You may have some thoughts, in addition to those of the marker. This list will be very useful when it comes to your next assignment.
* If there are some key recurrent themes in the feedback that you receive from a variety of assignments (e.g., you need to improve the structure of the essay), arrange to see your Academic Adviser. They will be able to help.
* You may also find it very helpful to share experiences with your fellow students.

***You are not alone!***

Almost all of the academics (even senior professors) who will mark your work also have their own research in effect ‘marked’ in the process of peer review, which involves other experts in the field evaluating the research and its suitability for publication, and commenting on its strengths and weaknesses. Like you, we may sometimes disagree with the comments and focus unduly on any negatives, but ultimately the process is very helpful for (i) explaining the evaluation and, perhaps

more importantly, (ii) offering ways to improve the work.

**Assessment Support across the University**

**Library and Computer Facilities**

Students must allow themselves plenty of time to use library and computer resources. Although, many sources included on reading lists have multiple copies available from the Short Loan Collection (SLC) of the University Library, there is no guarantee these will be obtainable when a student wants them. To ensure they get access to all the books and articles needed for an essay or tutorial, students must begin reading well in advance of the essay submission date. Students should also allocate sufficient time for the typing up of their work. If relying on University computer facilities students need to bear in mind that these will be particularly busy as essay deadlines draw near.



**PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE BACKED UP YOUR WORK TO**

**YOUR P DRIVE.**

**Failure, loss or theft of a computer or other equipment, including inability to upload work for whatever reason is NOT grounds for an extension.**

My Learning Essentials

My Leaning Essential is the Library’s award-winning skills programme

It provides a comprehensive programme of online resources, workshops and drop in skills clinics throughout the year designed to help you to develop your academic and employability skills.

You can access these resources at <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/my-learning-essentials>

**The University Language Centre**

<http://www.languagecentre.manchester.ac.uk/study-english/our-courses/>

The University Language Centre supports students who want help with written or spoken English through a wide range of services:

* Online Diagnostic Test
* In-sessional course
* Academic writing tutorial service
* Online resource

**An Overview of Transferable Skills**

Politics degrees offer students the opportunity to develop a range of generic or ‘transferable’ skills. The delivery of these skills varies, of course, according to the organisation, content, and level of our different degree programmes – however there are certain skills in social science which all Politics students will acquire.

1) *General academic skills*: All Politics degrees require – and teach – essential study skills to help students familiarize themselves with the study and research requirements of higher education. These are taught through specific level 1 study skills modules, as well as being covered on all other modules too. They include skills as time management, essay writing and referencing, reading and note taking, effective group learning, oral communication skills, and exam preparation and revision.

2) *Oral communication skills*: These are developed through participation in tutorial discussions and presentations, and also through discussions with extended essay and dissertation supervisors.

3) *Written communication skills*: These are developed through course essays and examinations from Level 1. Special mention should be made of the assessed essays; because these count towards the grade awarded in each course, students have additional incentives to hone their capacity for clear and focused communication. A key role here is also played by the larger-scale independent research projects that Politics encourages students to undertake; students on several programmes begin gaining experience of these at Levels 1 and 2, while the great majority of students specializing or jointly specializing in Politics in their final year write final year dissertations. The strengthening of written communication skills is of clear importance in assisting the development of analytic, conceptualizing, research, cognitive and time management skills discussed below.

4) *Analytic, critical and evaluative skills*: These skills are embedded in our teaching and student learning from Level 1, and are developed through the guided programme of reading assignments in each course, tutorial participation, essays, and exams. Compulsory assessed essays encourage students to apply additional rigour in the application of such skills. These skills are also developed through the opportunities to undertake independent research projects of increasing scope and complexity, as noted above. To help students understand the importance of analytic skills - and their relationship to other types of intellectual activity important to the learning process - Politics provides its students with a statement of ‘assessment criteria’ which marks out the key characteristics distinguishing the different grade classes.

5) *Skills in deploying concepts and conceptual apparatuses*: The ability to use concepts and theoretical frameworks to solve complex problems is introduced in all three Level 1 foundation courses (POLI10201/2, POLI10251, POLI10601 and POLI10702), and becomes increasingly important at Level 2 and Level 3.

6) *Skills at assembling and deploying information/evidence*: Skills of accessing a range of different sources of information and making an accurate assessment of their usefulness are developed both through essays and exams - and more especially through opportunities for independent research made available at Level 2 and the Level 3 dissertations (POLI30300 or POLI30380).

7) *Skills in constructing and sustaining arguments*: These are developed through opportunities for both oral and written communication (on course essays and exams as well as independent research projects).

8) *Research skills*: This is a derivative though nonetheless distinct category which combines skills identified separately above - e.g., assembling and deploying data and constructing and sustaining arguments - but which should be treated separately because it includes a number of additional skills that, taken together, point to capabilities that are more than the sum of the parts already mentioned. More generally, the experience gained in this way contributes to the development of problem-solving skills important for the intellectual independence discussed below.

9) *General cognitive skills*: These consist partly in the knowledge which students acquire over three years regarding the broad range of political systems, concepts and issues dealt with in our courses; the bases for the development of a variety of specialisations at Level 3 are laid through our core spine of `foundation' and `gateway' courses in the first and second years. They also are manifest in the habits of intellectual independence - and the ability to work without supervision - which we encourage students to attain through course and assessed essays, tutorial discussions, exams and independent research projects.

10) *Time management and organisation skills*: While students are expected to be developing skills of personal organisation and self-management from Level 1, they are clearly given heavier stress at Level 2 and, more especially, at Level 3, where students face heavy demands from assessed essay commitments and, for a majority of those we teach at this level, from their dissertations as well.

## **Policies and Procedures**

**Examinations**

There are three examination periods in each academic year. A standard exam period follows the end of each teaching semester (January and May/June) and a third (resit) period occurs in August/September before the start of the academic session.

**Please note that the below information refers to examinations where they can take place on campus. At the time of publishing it was not confirmed whether exams will be online or in person. If they are online then a document on the regulations for these will be made available on the Politics Hub and the Blackboard page for courses with examinations.**

***Politics Resit Examinations***

**If you are resitting course units outside of Politics please check resit arrangements with the appropriate discipline area.**

Students may be offered resit assessments if they i) are granted a mitigating circumstances appeal, or ii) fail and must resit the exam to progress.

***If you have failed the EXAM component of your Politics course unit***

Level one and two students who are sitting in August will take a two hour paper for 20 credit courses and one hour paper for 10 credit courses. If you have already passed the essay component of the course this essay mark will be taken into consideration along with the exam mark.

Exact dates of resit exams will be made available to you through ‘My Studies’ in your My Manchester. You will be able to access the composite exam timetable from the end of July via

<http://www.studentnet.manchester.ac.uk/crucial-guide/academic-life/exams/>

***If you have failed the ESSAY component of your Politics course unit***

Essay questions will be made available on the Blackboard page for the relevant course by the end of July. Students will be required to submit their work at the beginning of the resit exam period.

The mark from the failed assessment will be added to the result of the passed assessment component and this mark will be taken into consideration along with the exam mark.

***If you have failed the PARTICIPATION/ LOG/ PORTFOLIO component of your Politics course unit***

If you fail a Participation, Log or Portfolio component you may be asked to submit an alternative assessment. Details of alternative assessments with be posted along with resit essay information on Blackboard.

**If you have failed the entire course, you must complete all assessment tasks. In some circumstances, you may be required to sit a three-hour exam covering the whole course.**

**Important:**

**All students must return to Manchester to resit examinations.**

**It is NOT possible to undertake a resit examination abroad.**

Certain students may experience difficulties with the University’s normal assessment processes (students on recognized exchange or collaborative programmes including Erasmus; and students who hold an approved sports scholarship) and alternative assessment arrangements can be made for these students, see the Policy on Alternative assessments for study abroad, exchange and Erasmus students: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/list.aspx>

**Mitigating Circumstances and Applying for Extensions for Politics Assessed Work**

We understand that illnesses and difficult or distressing personal situations can occur as part of everyone’s life and that these issues may have a profound effect on your studies.

This is a normal part of life and you must not be afraid to contact us if you find yourself in a difficult situation. Each school has a mitigating circumstances procedure in place that means they can make sure you get the support you need to get back on track. There are lots of different people on hand to offer you practical advice and support. They want to help so don’t be afraid to get in touch.

**IMPORTANT: You must submit Mitigating Circumstances to your School via their method**

**School of Social Sciences**

Applications for mitigating circumstances should be made online, using the following link, but remember that Luke and Toby (Programme Administrators) are available for you to talk to prior to submitting a form and at any point during your time at Manchester. If something is upsetting you, then it is not trivial, come and see us.

<https://www.qualtrics.manchester.ac.uk/jfe/form/SV_1Bt49GtrGUz0Mpo>

Programme Administrator Contact Details

* **Politics & International Relations**

Luke Smith [ugpolitics@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ugpolitics@manchester.ac.uk)

Toby Nicholas

* **Philosophy, Politics and Economics**

Sarah Longhurst [sarah.longhurst@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.longhurst@manchester.ac.uk)

* **BA Social Sciences**

Rabia Nawaz [bass@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:bass@manchester.ac.uk)

* **BA(Econ)**

**Shau Chan** [baecon@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:baecon@manchester.ac.uk)

**School of Arts, Languages and Cultures** (Politics and Modern History /Politics with a Modern Foreign Language)

You **MUST** apply for Extensions/Mitigating Circumstances directly with SALC. You can find more information and the online form at: <http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/studentintranet/support/mitigatingcircumstances/>

(Please note that you will need your University log-in and password to access this.) If you have any problems you can email them at [salc-studentsupport@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:salc-studentsupport@manchester.ac.uk)

**School of Law**

The mitigating circumstances form is available online and the link to the online form is available in the Examinations and Assessments section on your Blackboard programme page. This will also be publicised via your student email. The supporting evidence should be submitted to the Teaching and Student Support Office within 5 working days of submitting the online form. If you are unable to meet this deadline, you must seek prior approval from the TSSO.

The**Teaching and Student Support Office** in the Law School is located on the third floor of the Williamson building, room 3.03/ 3.05,

email  tlseo.law@manchester.ac.uk (for general enquiries).

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**Important Information**

**Coursework Extensions**: Your Mitigating Circumstances form must be submitted before or on the day of the original Coursework submission date

**Exams:** Your Mitigating Circumstances form must be submitted before the exam period begins. If your mitigation refers to something that took place during the exam period then your form must be submitted by the end of the exam period.

**Criteria for extensions for assessed work in UG course units**

These guidelines are available to both staff and students.

***The purpose of penalizing unexcused late submission and of granting extensions***

It was decided to penalize unexcused late submission of assessed work in order to avoid the unfair advantaging and disadvantaging of students. Prior to the adoption of this policy, students who submitted their work on time were being unfairly disadvantaged and students who ignored deadlines were being unfairly advantaged. In addition, extensions are granted to students who suffer external interference in order to avoid unfairly disadvantaging such students. The UG team will consider this purpose when deciding whether or not to grant extensions.

1. The School’s UG team are responsible for granting extensions for assessed work in taught SoSS courses. The UG team will give a student who has been granted an extension confirmation of the extension and the new deadline. They will also inform the Programme Director and the Course Convenor.

2. A student will receive an extension for assessed work in a taught Politics course only if **two criteria** are met. **First**, a student must have suffered external interference such as medical illness, serious personal problems, computer problems (see 11. below), etc., which adversely delayed the completion of assessed work. However, such external interference is only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for receiving an extension. **Second**, the UG team will grant either a full or partial extension only if they have good reasons for thinking that the student would have submitted on time (in the case of a full extension) or earlier than the actual or projected late submission (in the case of a partial extension) if that external interference had not occurred.

3. When deciding whether external interference has adversely affected a student's ability to complete assessed work on time, the UG team will necessarily consider the timing of the external interference. All other things being equal, external interference that occurs closer to the submission date is more serious than the same external interference which occurs earlier in the year. If a student suffers external interference early in the year or semester, the student is reasonably expected to make up some or all of the lost time by working longer hours, by working on the weekends, and/or by working in the holidays.

4. Whenever evidence of external interference, i.e., medical notes, letter(s) from the counselling service or academic advisory service, death certificates, evidence of a court case, etc., is available, a student must provide it. This requirement helps to avoid unfair or different treatment of students.

5. Even if the UG team accepts that a student has suffered external interference and that such interference has adversely affected the student, they will still consider a student's work and attendance record in order to decide whether there were good reasons for thinking that, if such interference had not occurred, the student would have made the deadline or submitted earlier. In the case of a student with a good work and attendance record, the UG team would have a reasonable expectation that the student would have made the submission deadline if s/he had not suffered external interference; hence either a full or partial extension would be granted. In the case of a student with a poor or mediocre work and attendance record, the convenor would have no reason for thinking that the student would have submitted on time in the absence of such interference; hence a full extension would not be granted. Rather either an extension would be refused or a student would receive a partial extension.

6. If a UG administrator decides to grant an extension, s/he can grant either a full or a partial extension. A full extension seeks to compensate fully the time a student lost due to external interference. A partial extension only partially compensates a student for time lost due to external interference.

7. A partial extension is appropriate when a student has placed him/herself in a position where external interference has become more consequential. For example, if a student delayed starting work on her/his assessed essay and then suffered external interference (such as documented illness), then the student would only receive a partial extension at best. Similarly, if a student had not attempted to make up for the time lost because of external interference by working longer hours, by working on weekends or by working in the holidays (see 3. above), the student would receive, at most, a partial extension.

8. Similarly, in a case when the claimed external interference occurred outside the official academic year, the UG team will normally either refuse an extension or grant a partial one. If a student chooses to work less than the 40 hours weekly specified by the University's Academic Standards Code of Practice and therefore chooses to complete assessed work in the vacation, then the student is responsible for any external interference during the vacation becoming more consequential. Depending upon the student's work and attendance record, in such a case, a student either would be refused an extension or would be granted a partial one.

9. However, if a student had to use the vacation to complete assessed work because s/he was unable to work the full 40 hours per week (e.g., s/he was seriously ill during the semester or serious family problems had distracted him/her), then the UG team might grant either a full or partial extension if the student's work and attendance record was otherwise good.

10. Students are responsible for keeping sufficient backup copies of their work. They should have copies of their work on at least a pen drive and p:drive, a copy on the hard drive (when possible), and a hard (printed) copy as well. Because of the possibility of computer problems, students should make regular hard (printed) copies of their work.

11. If a student employs a typist, the student should ensure that the typist keeps multiple back-up copies of all materials. In addition, a student should keep all notes and drafts.

12. Although it is in the interest of a student who wants an extension to request one before the submission date, students may request an extension after that date. Although a student may apply for an extension after the submission date, s/he must provide an acceptable explanation for such a late application. For example, a student may have been physically or psychologically incapable of requesting an extension until after the submission date. However, even in such cases, the burden rests with the student to notify the SoSS UG Office at the earliest possible time to explain his/her failure to submit on time.

## **In Case of Ill Health**

For covid specific guidance please see:

University: <https://www.welcome.manchester.ac.uk/welcome-and-induction/arriving-on-campus/staying-safe/>

UK Government Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Greater Manchester Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/greater-manchester-local-restrictions>

<http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/taking-care/support-services/accessing-healthcare/>

a. It is a requirement of your registration with the University of Manchester that you register with a local general practitioner. A list of GP practices can be obtained from the Student Health Centre, any University hall of residence or a local Pharmacy. According to guidance issued by the General Medical Council it would not be regarded as good practice for a family member to be the registered GP or to offer treatment except in the case of an emergency.

b. **You should always consult your GP (or for emergencies the Accident and Emergency Department of a hospital) if your illness is severe, if it persists or if you are in any doubt about your health.** You should also consult your GP if illness keeps you absent from the University for more than 7 days including week-ends. If you do consult a GP and they consider that you are not fit for attendance at the University, then you should obtain a note from the doctor to that effect or ask them to complete Part III of the University form ‘Certification of Student Ill Health’ copies of which are available at local GP surgeries. You should hand this certificate to your programme director, tutor, undergraduate office or degree programme office as appropriate at the earliest opportunity.

1. If your condition is not sufficiently serious to cause you to seek medical help, then the University will not require you to supply a doctor’s medical certificate unless you are absent from the University due to illness for more than 7 days (in which case see b. above). You **must** however contact your degree programme as soon as possible and self-certify your illness (that is complete and sign the “Certification of Student Ill Health” form to state that you have been ill) as soon as you are able to attend your department. You should do this if your illness means you are absent from the University for any period up to 7 days (see d.i) or if you are able to attend the University but your illness is affecting your studies (see d. ii and iii).
2. The following sub-paragraphs explain what you should do if your illness affects your attendance at compulsory classes or if you consider that your performance in your studies/examinations has been impaired.
3. If you are unwell and feel unable to attend the University to take a compulsory class, assessment or examination then you **must** seek advicebycontacting your degree programme immediately, in person, through a friend or family member, by telephone or by email. This is to ensure that you understand the implications of being absent and the consequences for your academic progress, which might be quite serious. **You must do this as soon as possible so that all options can be considered and certainly no later than the day of your compulsory class, assessment or examination.** If you do not do this then you will normally be considered have been absent from the class without good reason, or to have taken the assessment or examination in which case you will be given a mark of zero. You **must** also complete and hand in a “Certification of Student Ill Health” form on your return.
4. You may be unwell but are able to proceed with an assessment or examination and yet you feel that your performance will have been impaired. If you wish this to be taken into account as an extenuating circumstance, you **must** inform your degree programme about this on the day of the assessment or examination and hand in to your degree programme a completed “Certification of Student Ill Health” form. If you leave this until later it will not normally be possible to take your illness into account when assessing your performance.
5. You may be under occasional and ongoing medical attention which affects your studies. If so, you should obtain a letter from your physician which should be given to your degree programme before the end of the January, May/June or August/September examination period, as appropriate, if you wish your condition to be taken into account as an extenuating circumstance.

e. Politics employs 2 criteria when deciding whether to alter the mark of a student who has been ill or suffered other external interference: *a.* evidence of such illness or external interference and *b.* evidence that the student would have performed better in the absence of such external interference.

Notes:

1. Certification of Student Ill Health forms are available in all undergraduate offices and halls of residence.
2. Your degree programme will give you guidance on the effect of any absence from your studies or if you consider your illness has affected your studies. If you have repeated episodes of ill health which is affecting your studies, your degree programme may refer you to the Student Health Centre.
3. If you are found to have been deceitful or dishonest in completing the Certification of Student Ill Health form you could be liable to disciplinary action under the University’s General Regulation XX: Conduct and Discipline of Students.
4. The use of the “Certification of Student Ill Health” forms by GPs as described above has been agreed by the Manchester Local Medical Committee. A GP may make a charge for completing the form.

**Policy on Religious Observance and guidance for students**

<http://www.exams.manchester.ac.uk/>

The University will make every effort to avoid timetabling assessments on religious days or festivals for those students whose commitment to the observance to their faith would otherwise cause them to miss the assessment.  We will not take any notice of casual preferences or social or domestic reasons.

## Policy on religious observance and guidance for students

## **Policy**

1. The University will make every effort to avoid timetabling assessments or other compulsory activities on religious days or festivals for those students whose commitment to the observance of their faith would otherwise cause them to miss the assessment or other activity. However, we are able to accommodate the needs of students only if their requirement for particular religious observance is strict. We will not take any notice of casual preferences or of social or domestic reasons.

2. The University's policy covers only aspects of religious observance that occur at times known in advance. Other aspects that are unforeseeable or unpreventable (such as the death of a close relative when specified forms of mourning are required) should be handled under the arrangements for considering mitigating circumstances.

## ***Guidance for students***

3. If religious observance affects your attendance at normal teaching and learning activities in ways that will cause problems, you should discuss the issue with your School. The School will give sympathetic consideration to your problems and will try to make reasonable adjustments. However, adjustments can only be made provided they maintain the standard of your degree (e.g. you will not simply be excused from parts of the programme affected by your religious observance or from satisfying overall attendance requirements). You should also understand that adjustments may not always be possible (e.g. a programme that runs at weekends specifically for part-time students who work on weekdays cannot be changed to accommodate the needs of students committed to religious observance at weekends or the needs of students who work at weekends).

4. If religious observance means that you miss a lecture or other class, the lecturer will provide you with a copy of any handouts issued. However, if you want notes from the lecture you must make your own arrangements to copy them from another student.

5. Similar principles apply if religious observance affects your attendance at assessments organized by your School (e.g. presentations or practical tests). You should discuss the issue with your School well before the assessment date, and the School will use its best efforts to reschedule the assessment to accommodate your needs (e.g. by changing your scheduled slot in a programme of assessed presentations). Because assessments for the semester are often scheduled in advance at the beginning, you should notify the School of your requirements for religious observance by the Thursday before the start of teaching.

6. Deadlines for handing in assessed work will not normally be extended to allow for religious observance, and you must therefore schedule your work accordingly.

7. If you have strict religious requirements that may affect your attendance at examinations arranged centrally, you must complete the Examination and Religious Observance form obtainable from the Student Services Centre in person or online. (Note that the major Christian festivals occur during vacations and hence are avoided automatically by examination periods.) You should then return the form to the Student Services Centre by dates that are published annually for each examination period. If you fail to submit a completed form to the Student Services Centre by the published date, we cannot accept responsibility if you are timetabled for an examination at a time when your religious requirements make it impossible for you to be present. The information about your faith is not given to anyone else, or used for any other purpose, or stored on computer.

8. Every effort will be made to accommodate your legitimate religious requirements, including discussing with your School whether it could make an alternative arrangement for the examination if you give adequate notice. However, if no reasonable alternative can be found, the University reserves the right to hold examinations on any days and times during examination periods. If that means you have to miss the examination, you will be required to take it when it is next held. This may involve an interruption of your programme and an extension to your period of study.

***Requirements***

If you have strict religious requirements that may affect your attendance at examinations arranged centrally, you must complete the Religious Observance Form:

<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=2013>

(Major Christian festivals occur during vacations and hence are avoided automatically by examination periods.)

You should return this form to the Student Services Centre by dates that are published annually for each examination period at:

Student Services Centre  
Burlington Street  
Manchester  
M13 9PL

The information about your faith is not given to anyone else, or used for any other purpose, or stored on computer.

Every effort will be made to accommodate your legitimate religious requirements, including discussing with your School whether it could make an alternative arrangement for the examination if you give adequate notice.

However, if no reasonable alternative can be found, the University reserves the right to hold examinations on any days and times during examination periods.

If that means you have to miss the examination, you will be required to take it when it is next held. This may involve an interruption of your programme and an extension to your period of study.

1. Robert D. Putnam (2000), *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (London: Simon and Schuster), pp. 410­‑20. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, p. 413. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)