



School of Politics & International Relations (SPIRe)

# Graduate Studies Handbook

**for MA, MSc, MEconSc, GradDip,  
ProfCert programmes**

**2024/25**

*Updates:*

*Page 11 “Transfer from Graduate Diploma to Masters” updated in December 2024*

*Page 15 “Guidelines on Theses” minor updates, February 2025*

*Page 16 The late submission procedure in the “Thesis Submission” section, July 2025*

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## Welcome to SPIRe

Welcome to the UCD School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe), the oldest and the largest school of politics in the Republic of Ireland.

Our graduate programmes cover traditional areas of political science such as comparative politics, international relations, and political theory, as well as specialized and/or multi-disciplinary subjects such as European public affairs, human rights, international development, gender, political economy, and nationalism and ethnic conflict. Regardless of which programme you have chosen, we work hard to offer an academic environment that allows you to ensure that your time in SPIRe is both intellectually challenging and professionally valuable.

This handbook is designed to answer your basic questions about the school's and university's requirements and procedures for graduate study. For more information about the school and its staff, I recommend that you start by browsing the SPIRe website

<http://www.ucd.ie/spire/>.

If you have questions that neither this handbook nor the school website can answer, please do not hesitate to ask for help (see Contacts).

Professor Ben Tonra, MRIA  
Chair, Graduate Studies Committee  
UCD School of Politics and International Relations

## Contacts

There are several points of contact best suited for different enquiries.

If you have a general question about registration, scheduling, assessment, theses, etc and you cannot find the answer in this Handbook, please contact the school's graduate administrator. Please email your inquiries to: [graduatespire@ucd.ie](mailto:graduatespire@ucd.ie).

**Please reference your student number in all correspondence. Failure to do so may result in a delayed response to your query.**

If you have a specific question regarding your degree or programme requirements etc. and you cannot find the answer in this Handbook, please contact the coordinator for your programme:

Programmes	Directors	Email
MA/MSc Politics	Dr Alexander Dukalskis	<a href="mailto:alexander.dukalskis@ucd.ie">alexander.dukalskis@ucd.ie</a>
MA/MSc International Relations	Dr Joshua Alley	<a href="mailto:joshua.alley@ucd.ie">joshua.alley@ucd.ie</a>
MA/MSc/GDip International Development	Dr Krishna Vadlamannati	<a href="mailto:krishna.vadlamannati@ucd.ie">krishna.vadlamannati@ucd.ie</a>
MA/MSc Peace and Conflict	Dr Vincent Durac (Interim) Dr Stephanie Dornschneider-Elkink	<a href="mailto:vincent.durac@ucd.ie">vincent.durac@ucd.ie</a> <a href="mailto:stephanie.dornschneider@ucd.ie">stephanie.dornschneider@ucd.ie</a>
MA/MSc International Political Economy	Dr Sam Brazys	<a href="mailto:samuel.brazys@ucd.ie">samuel.brazys@ucd.ie</a>
MA/MSc European Politics and Policy	Prof Niamh Hardiman	<a href="mailto:niamh.hardiman@ucd.ie">niamh.hardiman@ucd.ie</a>
MA/MSc Gender, Politics and International Relations	Dr Dawn Walsh	<a href="mailto:dawn.walsh@ucd.ie">dawn.walsh@ucd.ie</a>
MA Political Theory	Dr Alexa Zellentin	<a href="mailto:alexa.zellentin@ucd.ie">alexa.zellentin@ucd.ie</a>
MA Middle East Politics	Dr Vincent Durac	<a href="mailto:vincent.durac@ucd.ie">vincent.durac@ucd.ie</a>
MEconSc European Public Affairs & Law	Dr Aidan Regan	<a href="mailto:aidan.regan@ucd.ie">aidan.regan@ucd.ie</a>
MSc Human Rights	Dr Graham Finlay	<a href="mailto:graham.finlay@ucd.ie">graham.finlay@ucd.ie</a>
MSc/GDip Politics and Data Science	Dr Stefan Müller	<a href="mailto:stefan.mueller@ucd.ie">stefan.mueller@ucd.ie</a>
MA/GradDip Politics & International Relations	Dr Tobias Theiler	<a href="mailto:tobias.theiler@ucd.ie">tobias.theiler@ucd.ie</a>
MSc European Governance (Liaison)	Dr Aidan Regan	<a href="mailto:aidan.regan@ucd.ie">aidan.regan@ucd.ie</a>
Prof Certs in Programming for Soc Scientists & Quant.	Dr Stefan Müller	<a href="mailto:stefan.mueller@ucd.ie">stefan.mueller@ucd.ie</a>

If you have questions about modules and assessments etc., please contact the module coordinator for the module in question. When emailing module coordinators, please make sure that you put the relevant module code in the subject line, along with your student number.

Please note that we try to reply to requests as quickly as possible and should normally be able to respond within three working days.

## Orientation

There is an orientation event in the first week of term. More details will follow by email.

There will also be a separate introduction for each programme organised by the relevant programme director.

Please see some information about general orientation across the university:

<https://www.ucd.ie/newstudents/>

## Registration

You will need to register online before you can begin your graduate studies. Registration allows you to obtain your Student Card (UCARD) and gain access to the wide range of facilities available to our students.

**You can find a helpful Guide to Registration [here](#).**

An FAQ for common queries about registration and choosing your modules is available [here](#).

Online registration for 2024/25 will open for you from **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024** onwards. You will be allocated an individual Start Date and Start Time, which will be sent to your UCD Connect email address. To access UCD Connect email, you will need to go to [www.ucd.ie/connect](http://www.ucd.ie/connect) and click on the Mail icon. Enter your username (UCD student number) and your password (Date of Birth in ddmmyy format).

Once online registration is open for you, please confirm your registration for 2024/25 by clicking on the 'My Registration' button in [SISWeb](#).

All graduate students must go online to confirm their registration to their programme. This is a formal requirement for all students at all levels.

## Accessing Registration

To access online registration, go to UCD Connect and click on the SISWeb icon. Enter your UCD Connect username and password when asked.

- Your username is your UCD Student number.
- If you created a SISWeb password during the application process, please use that to log in. Otherwise, your password is your date of birth (in the format ddmmyy). **For your own security, make sure you change that password by using the [Change Password tool](#) in UCD Connect.**

Your UCD Connect account will be available 48 hours in advance of online registration. Brightspace access will be available within 24 hours of registering to your programme.

If you want assistance with Document verification, have a fee query, or if you are having trouble accessing your UCD Connect Account or email, please contact [the Student Desk](#).

If you are having issues with module registration, please contact the SPIRe Graduate Team at [graduatespire@ucd.ie](mailto:graduatespire@ucd.ie). When doing so, please provide the following information:

- Your Name and Student Number
- Your Programme (ie. MSc Human Rights)
- Relevant module Names and Codes

We ask that all registration queries are sent in via email only. This is a busy time of year, however, we endeavour to reply to everyone as soon as possible.

Please find a [step by step guide to registration](#) for support.

If you decide not to continue with a module you initially selected, **you MUST withdraw from it by emailing to [graduatespire@ucd.ie](mailto:graduatespire@ucd.ie) before **Week 8 of the term****. Failure to do so will result in an ABS grade (Grade Point zero), which will **significantly impact your overall GPA**.

## Module Assessment and Submission Procedures

The methods of assessment vary from module to module, but may contain a combination of written assignments, presentations, and/or final exams. Details can be found in the course outlines or from the module coordinator. Where exams take place, they will be at the end of each trimester, and are scheduled by the UCD Assessment and Logistics Unit.

All students will be required to submit assessed written work in the course of the trimesters. The modalities for the submission process vary between courses. If a hard copy has to be submitted (instead or in addition to an electronic copy via Brightspace or email to the lecturer), a signed “Declaration of Authorship” form must be attached to the essay (and handed in to the location specified by the lecturer).

All written work must be submitted on or before the due dates. Submission deadlines can be found on the course outlines distributed in the first session of each module.

In accordance with the University’s procedures for anonymous marking, please do not put your name on the work submitted. Please do ensure, however, that your student number, the module number and title for which work is being submitted, the lecturer to whom it is being submitted, all appear on any piece of work you submit.

Generally, coursework submitted at any time **up to and including 5 working days after the due date** will have the grade awarded reduced by one grade point (for example, from B- to C+). Coursework submitted **more than five working days but up to and including ten working days after the due date** will have the grade reduced by two grade points (for example, from B- to C).

The onus is on you to ensure that you receive a receipt for all work submitted and you should retain this receipt as proof of submission should it be needed at a later date. ***If you have any questions about deadlines, contact your lecturer.*** If you have questions about submission receipts, contact the lecturer or the school office.

All work submitted for assessment must comply with the policy on plagiarism (below) and the policy on re-use of assessed work (below).

Where circumstances beyond your control prevent you from submitting on time, please follow the **‘Late Submission of Coursework’** procedure, as outlined on the next page of this handbook. Please note that module coordinators can extend deadlines for **a maximum of 10 working days**; for longer extensions, please follow the guidelines for extenuating circumstances below.

## Late Submission of Coursework

Where circumstances beyond your control prevent you from submitting on time, please apply for a new deadline via the Google form available on the [website](#). You should consult with your module coordinator in advance of submitting the Google form.

Please note that module coordinators can extend deadlines for **a maximum of 10 working days**.

Generally, coursework submitted at any time **up to and including 5 working days after the due date** will have the grade awarded reduced by one grade point (for example, from B- to C+). Coursework submitted **more than five working days but up to and including ten working days after the due date** will have the grade reduced by two grade points (for example, from B- to C).

***A late submission application results in preventing these grade reductions, as long as you submit by the new deadline.*** Note that if an extension of e.g. 8 days is awarded, this is 8 days from the original deadline. No coursework received more than ten working days after the due date is required to be accepted by the School.

## Extenuating Circumstances

SPIRe understands that you might have circumstances outside your control which means that you will be unable to complete assessments and sit exams. The School of Politics and International Relations and UCD generally have a variety of excellent support services for students who are in need (see other sections on this page). It is important that you advise us of problems **as early as possible**; preferably in advance of the deadlines that you are concerned about.

Problems of various kinds may be taken into account in marking work, or considering whether or not a late penalty should apply for an essay. It is important that you speak to the module coordinator.

If you require a longer extension than 10 days, you should follow the guidelines for [Extenuating Circumstances](#) and submit an Online Extenuating Circumstances Application.

You will need to provide a form of proof for extenuating circumstances. In the case of illness, this must be in the form of a medical certificate (a letter from a GP or clinic specifying the dates of your illness or incapacity). Without supporting documentation, it is not possible to get extenuating circumstances approved. If you have questions about this, please contact the school office.



## Module Assessment Scheme

Assignments are graded on a letter scale from A to FM. Ranges A to FM are further subdivided (A+, A, A-, etc. ) For complete, up to date information on grading, please consult [UCD Assessment](#).

Grade	Criteria more relevant to module levels 0, 1 and 2 in the categories of knowledge, understanding and application	Additional criteria more relevant to module levels 3 and 4 in the categories of analysis, synthesis and evaluation
<b>A+</b>	<p><b>Outstanding</b> A comprehensive, very well-structured, highly focused and concise response to the assessment task, consistently demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an exceptionally extensive and detailed knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>a highly-developed ability to apply this knowledge to the task set</li> <li>evidence of extensive background reading and demonstration of synthesis of this material</li> <li>clear, fluent, stimulating and original expression</li> <li>excellent presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical) with essentially no presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>An exceptionally deep and systematic engagement with the assessment task, with consistently impressive demonstration of a comprehensive mastery of the subject matter and discerning judgement, reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a deep and broad knowledge and highly-developed critical insight, as well as effective synthesis of extensive reading</li> <li>a critical comprehensive and perceptive appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>an exceptional ability to organise, analyse and succinctly present arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis, supported by very convincingly deployed evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>a highly-developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking</li> </ul>
<b>A</b>	<p><b>Excellent</b> A comprehensive, highly-structured, focused and concise response to the assessment task, consistently demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an extensive and detailed knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>a highly-developed ability to apply this knowledge to the task set</li> <li>evidence of extensive background reading</li> <li>clear, fluent, stimulating and original expression</li> <li>excellent presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical) with minimal or no presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>A deep and systematic engagement with the assessment task, with consistently impressive demonstration of a comprehensive mastery of the subject matter, reflecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a deep and broad knowledge and critical insight as well as extensive reading</li> <li>a critical and comprehensive appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>an exceptional ability to organise, analyse and present arguments fluently and lucidly with a high level of critical analysis, amply supported by evidence, citation or quotation;</li> <li>a substantial capacity for original, creative and logical thinking</li> </ul>
<b>B</b>	<p><b>Very Good</b> A thorough and well-organised response to the assessment task, demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a broad knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>considerable strength in applying that knowledge to the task set</li> <li>evidence of substantial background reading</li> <li>clear and fluent expression</li> <li>quality presentation with few presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>A substantial engagement with the assessment task, demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a thorough familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>well-developed capacity to analyse issues, organise material, present arguments clearly and cogently well supported by evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>some original insights and capacity for creative and logical thinking</li> </ul>

C	<p><b><u>Good</u></b> An adequate and competent response to the assessment task, demonstrating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>adequate but not complete knowledge of the subject matter</li> <li>omission of some important subject matter or the appearance of several minor errors</li> <li>capacity to apply knowledge appropriately to the task albeit with some errors</li> <li>evidence of some background reading</li> <li>clear expression with few areas of confusion</li> <li>writing of sufficient quality to convey meaning but some lack of fluency and command of suitable vocabulary</li> <li>good presentation with some presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>An intellectually competent and factually sound answer with, marked by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>evidence of a reasonable familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>good developed arguments, but more statements of ideas</li> <li>arguments or statements adequately but not well supported by evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>some critical awareness and analytical qualities</li> <li>some evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>
D	<p><b><u>Satisfactory</u></b> An acceptable response to the assess with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>basic grasp of subject matter, but somewhat lacking in focus and structure</li> <li>main points covered but insufficient detail</li> <li>some effort to apply knowledge to the task but only a basic capacity or understanding displayed</li> <li>little or no evidence of background reading</li> <li>several minor errors or one major error</li> <li>satisfactory presentation with an acceptable level of presentation errors</li> </ul>	<p>An acceptable level of intellectual engagement with the as task showing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>some familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>mostly statements of ideas, with limited development of argument</li> <li>limited use of evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>limited critical awareness displayed</li> <li>limited evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>
D-	<p><b><u>Acceptable</u></b> The minimum acceptable standard of response to the assessment task which</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shows a basic grasp of subject matter but may be poorly focussed or badly structured or contain irrelevant material</li> <li>has one major error and some minor errors</li> <li>demonstrates the capacity to complete only moderately difficult tasks related to the subject material</li> <li>no evidence of background reading</li> <li>displays the minimum acceptable standard of presentation (spelling, grammar, graphical)</li> </ul>	<p>The minimum acceptable level of intellectual engagement the assessment task with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the minimum acceptable appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>ideas largely expressed as statements, with little or no developed or structured argument</li> <li>minimum acceptable use of evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>little or no analysis or critical awareness displayed or is only partially successful</li> <li>little or no demonstrated capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>
FM	<p><b><u>Unacceptable</u></b> A response to the assessment task which is unacceptable, with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a failure to address the question resulting in a largely irrelevant answer or material of marginal relevance predominating</li> <li>a display of some knowledge of material relative to the question posed, but with very serious omissions / errors and/or major inaccuracies included in answer</li> <li>solutions offered to a very limited portion of the problem set</li> <li>an answer unacceptably incomplete (e.g. for lack of time)</li> <li>a random and undisciplined development, layout or presentation</li> <li>unacceptable standards of presentation, such as grammar, spelling or graphical presentation</li> <li>evidence of substantial plagiarism</li> </ul>	<p>An unacceptable level of intellectual engagement with the assessment task, with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</li> <li>no developed or structured argument</li> <li>no use of evidence, citation or quotation</li> <li>no analysis or critical awareness displayed or is only partially successful</li> <li>no demonstrated capacity for original and logical thinking</li> </ul>

## Policy on Plagiarism

Students are required to familiarise themselves with standard academic practice in the preparation and presentation of their written work. In short, all work you present as your own must be the result of your own efforts only. It is not permissible to submit an essay or project reproducing wholly or in part the essay or project of any other person. Nor may any student pass on their own writings for such a use by others.

All students, when submitting an assessment project for examination purposes, will be required to sign a formal declaration that the work they are submitting is their own original work. All the sources on which you draw must be duly acknowledged in the text or in footnotes, and the full source cited in the bibliography. Direct quotes must be contained in quotation marks and duly referenced. If you paraphrase someone else's argument, you must indicate the source you have used, including page references. For guidance on how to reference correctly, please see the School's pamphlet [Guidelines for Essay Writing](#) and UCD's [Plagiarism Policy](#). The bibliography should cite all the works you have consulted, and none that you have not personally used.

Failure to take account of these guidelines in their writing constitutes plagiarism.

Plagiarism is defined as:

*"The copying of another person's writings or works or ideas in any thesis, essay, project, laboratory report or other exercise which forms part of the requirements for an academic course, where such copying is either unauthorised by the copyright owner or unacknowledged in the thesis, essay, project, laboratory report or other exercise, or both." Failure to cite sources properly, and recourse to copying sections of text without proper referencing, counts as plagiarism just as much as use of another person's essay or project work.*

Plagiarism is a serious breach of academic standards. The College regards plagiarism as cheating, and as such, a wholly unacceptable breach of discipline, as indicated in Section 6 of the [Student Code](#) for University College Dublin, which is given in full in the UCD Student Information Handbook.

Plagiarism will be penalised heavily and may result in no marks at all being given for a project or essay, exclusion from your examination, or expulsion from the programme. The School retains the right to refer suspected cases of plagiarism to the University's Disciplinary Committee.

**If in doubt about any of these guidelines, you must consult the lecturer for your module, in plenty of time before the date of submission.**

## Transfer from Graduate Diploma to Masters

1. Students enrolled in SPIRe's three Graduate Diploma programmes may apply for mid-year transfer into certain of the school's master's programmes.
  - a. Students in the Graduate Diploma in Politics and International Relations may apply for transfer into the MA Politics, MA International Relations, MA Peace and Conflict, MA Political Theory, MA International Political Economy, MA European Politics and Policy, MA Middle East Politics, MA Gender, Politics and International Relations, MA Politics and International Relations (part time students only), MSc Human Rights, or MEconSc European Public Affairs and Law.
  - b. Students in the Graduate Diploma in International Development may apply for transfer only into the MA International Development.
  - c. Students in the Graduate Diploma in Politics and Data Science may apply for transfer only to the MSc Politics and Data Science.
2. Due to the structure of their core curricula, the school's other master's programmes are generally not available for mid-year transfer. In special cases, exceptions may be made for students who have earned final marks of B or higher in the research design/method modules that these programmes require in the autumn trimester.
3. Students who wish to transfer must complete the core modules of the programme they wish to pursue. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they are registered on the core modules of the relevant programme, which can be found in the Graduate Handbook.
4. In order to be eligible for transfer into one of the master's programmes listed above, full-time Grad Dip students must pass (minimum D-) all marked modules taken in the autumn trimester and earn a minimum overall GPA of 3.2 (B-). A single IX in the autumn trimester will not disqualify a student from applying for transfer; students with multiple IXs who wish to transfer will be reviewed by the Graduate Studies Committee on a case-by-case basis. (For part-time students, see point 6)

5. In order to apply for transfer, students must submit the [SPIRe Thesis Proposal 2024-25](#) no later than **4pm on Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

Failure to submit the proposal will be interpreted as a lack of interest in transferring to the Master's programme.

It is solely the student's responsibility to ensure that this application is submitted by the deadline. Applications will not be considered if they are submitted after the deadline.

6. Once applications (thesis proposal) are submitted, the school's Postgraduate Administrator will confirm each applicant's eligibility for transfer and then forward all eligible applications to the Graduate Studies Committee for review and decision. Decisions shall be communicated to the student by the Postgraduate Administrator.
7. Part-time GradDip students are covered by this same policy, but all requirements related to autumn trimester and spring trimester apply instead to Year 1 and Year

**The deadline for part-time application is Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025.**

8. Students approved for transfer will be required to pay the difference in fees that will apply. Students whose transfer applications are not approved will remain enrolled in their original Grad Dip programme.

## Guidelines on Internship

1. Internship opportunities are limited to those on MA graduate stream in SPIRe and certain other designated graduate programmes, specifically;
  - MA Politics
  - MA International Relations
  - MA Peace and Conflict
  - MA International Political Economy
  - MA European Politics and Policy
  - MA Middle East Politics
  - MA Gender, Politics and International Relations
  - MA Politics and International Relations PT
  - MSc Human Rights
  - MEconSc European Public Affairs and Law
  - MSc Politics and Data Science
2. Internships *\*must\** be relevant to the graduate programme and if there is any doubt, must be agreed with the relevant programme director.
3. The internship module is taken instead of writing a thesis, and as such is a core feature of the degree programme. As a result, no student registered to this module can be awarded a masters degree without passing the internship.
4. NO internship will be credited without a signed and returned internship agreement and completed and submitted Host Agreement – all through UCD online internship management system.
5. We are flexible as to the timing of the internship but no retrospective credit is possible, i.e. the clock on an internship only commences with the final receipt of all necessary documentation (see above). Students must complete 480 hours of placement/work experience in the Summer Trimester.

6. Assessment is on a pass/fail basis to accrue the associated and necessary credit. This assessment has three elements:
  - five reflective journal reports (submitted roughly fortnightly over the
  - course of the internship), a host evaluation and final reflective essay
  - A workshop is held to advise on reflective writing.
7. Internships may be undertaken on a global basis - no restriction as to location. However, all documentation must be submitted - no exceptions. This includes the Host Agreement between the School and the Host (which must specify your Learning Goals) and an internship agreement between the School and the Student. Internships may also be paid or unpaid - this is a matter between you and the host.
8. All internships are secured by you - there is no bank of internships available. A list of previous internship hosts and associated contact details will be distributed. Workshops with UCD Careers' service will be held to assist in targeting, identifying and acquiring internship opportunities.
9. The requisite number of internship hours (480) must fulfill the specified ECTS credit requirements and must be validated by your host.
10. Regardless of your registration on the Internship module, you **MUST** complete thesis research training, submit a thesis outline/title as required therein and you will be assigned a thesis supervisor.

ALL internship documentation must be signed, sealed and delivered by **Friday, 25th April 2025**.

This is done through the Internship portal on SISWeb, which you will be given information about in due course. If the forms have not been completed by this date, you **WILL** be automatically transferred to thesis registration and required to submit a graduate research thesis in the normal way.

Internships in recent years have been secured in:

European Economic Social Committee, Guatemala Housing Alliance, Future Sense Foundation, RED FM, IBON International, ICP Rwanda, Amnesty International Ireland, CSO Ireland, Unilever EU, Pavee Point Traveller and Roma centre, Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Safran India Private Limited, Sinn Fein, Empower a Child, Transparency International Dublin, FLAC, Self Help Africa, Institute of Public Administration, Italian Chamber of Commerce, Matheson (formerly Matheson Ormsby Prentice), Fine Gael, Embassy of Chile, Embassy of Italy, Embassy of the USA, Friends of the Earth Brussels, Foreign Ministry of Italy, Embassy of Peru, US Justice Department, US State Department, Offices of TDs and Senators, Fianna Fáil, Offices of US Senators / Representatives, Amnesty International, Libraries without Borders, Concern International, World Trade Centre Ireland, Hume Brophy, Border Angels, Plan International, UN Mine Action Service, Enterprise Ireland, DCU Brexit Institute, Dochas

For module assignments, the final summative essay deadline is Monday, **18th August 2025**.

Dr Tobias Theiler <[tobias.theiler@ucd.ie](mailto:tobias.theiler@ucd.ie)> is the academic point of contact for Internships.



## Guidelines on Theses

With the exception of those on the Internship, all MA, MSc and MEconSc students are required to complete an independent research project, that is a 'thesis' or 'dissertation'). The thesis is a core feature of the degree programme. As a result, no student registered to the thesis module can be awarded a master's degree without achieving a passing grade for the thesis.

The topic of the thesis is first proposed by the student, and then discussed and approved by the supervisor assigned by the school.

In the end, the student is fully responsible for the topic, structure and content of the thesis that s/he submits. In the event that a student submits a thesis that lacks sufficient academic merit to earn a passing grade, s/he will be invited to resubmit. The student is responsible for any consequent examination and continuation fees. Cases of plagiarism are handled differently; see policy in this handbook.

### Thesis Proposal

The first required step is to submit a clear and focused proposal. You will receive an email in December requesting you to fill out an online Google form. In this form, you will need to specify the following:

- Name/student number
- Masters programme
- Proposed thesis title/topic
- Three keywords
- Three suggested supervisors

The deadline for submitting this form is **4 pm on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025**. We encourage students to complete this as soon as they are able to and not to leave it to the last minute.

**EVERYBODY must complete the form, regardless of whether you have registered for the internship or thesis.** The only exceptions to this are students that are in the first year of their Part-Time programme, or those on the MSc European Governance.

Full-time Graduate Diploma students who are applying for transfer to a Masters programme should also complete this form.

At the end of January/beginning of February, we will allocate you a supervisor. Your supervisor will subsequently be in touch to arrange an initial meeting. Note that some of you will need to seek ethical approval and/or exemption from SPIRe's ethics committee based on the proposed research project.

Information will be sent out about this at a later date. If you have any questions, please contact your programme coordinator before submitting the proposal.

## Thesis Supervision

The school will allocate supervisors on the basis of the thesis proposals. Your allocated thesis supervisor might not themselves be an expert in your chosen topic but will aid you in methodological questions and other key aspects of conducting and presenting your research.

The student is then responsible for arranging for feedback from the supervisor during the preparation and writing of the thesis, culminating in a final meeting usually no later than the end of July. Please discuss with your supervisor when they will be available to provide feedback over the summer as many of us are unavailable for parts of the summer due to annual leave and/or fieldwork. You may submit one full draft of the thesis for feedback from the supervisor during the agreed period of supervision.

Please also keep in mind that supervisors usually need any materials they are to comment on **at least three working days in advance** of any meeting. For longer pieces of work, more time might be necessary, so please discuss with your supervisor as to what best works for both of you.

Finally, as experience has shown that last minute feedback is often more stressful than helpful, no further feedback will be given in the last two weeks before submission. Any technical questions about the thesis or submissions process should be directed to the school office.

## Thesis Submission

The deadline for thesis submission this academic year is **4 pm on Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2025**. A signed "Declaration of Authorship" (see [Appendix](#)) should accompany this. All theses should be submitted on **Brightspace**, with a copy also emailed to your supervisor.

Failure to submit by this deadline will result in a late submission penalty and the automatic exclusion of the thesis from the grading process. Extensions may only be granted by your supervisor and the Thesis Module Coordinator. For further details, please refer to [the UCD Late Submission of Coursework Policy](#).

Applications for extenuating circumstances (i.e. anything longer than a 10 working day extension) should also be directed initially to the supervisor and the Thesis Module Coordinator. Following discussion with your supervisor, an online application can be made by the student through [SISWeb](#).

## Length

The length of the thesis shall be **10,000-12,000 words in TOTAL length** (including literature, footnotes, referencing, bibliography, tables etc.). Before submitting a thesis that departs from this rule by more than 500 words in either direction, students must receive formal authorisation from their supervisor.

## Referencing

You must make sure that your referencing and bibliography reflect the highest academic standards. Thesis with poor referencing and bibliography will lose marks unnecessarily.

Please see the information on the UCD Library website at:

<http://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/referencingandcitation>

The School has a preference for the Harvard referencing system (author, date, page), though supervisors may advise otherwise in individual cases. Whichever system you use, it must be fully adhered to and consistently implemented with appropriate typography.

For full details on the Harvard system:

<https://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/harvardstyle>

Details on other referencing systems are at:

<http://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/referencingandcitation>

You might want to consider using referencing software such as, e.g. Endnote (available via UCD IT) to ensure that your referencing is complete and consistent. For further information see here: <https://libguides.ucd.ie/endnote>

## Layout

Theses should be presented in double spacing, except for indented quotations, references and footnotes, where single spacing should be used. Only one standard typeface may be used throughout the thesis. Italics may be used for book titles, foreign terms and other cases that are appropriate in conjunction with the standard face used in the text. Italics are not recommended as a standard typeface. Text that is entirely in upper case is not acceptable.

**Recommended layout:** Margins should be 40mm at the binding edge and other margins should be not less than 20mm. Page numbers are placed without punctuation at the bottom centre of the page within the margin.

Preliminary pages are numbered in consecutive lower-case roman numerals. The Title page number does not appear but the page is counted (as page 'i'). Pages appearing before the

Table of Contents are numbered and counted but are not listed on the Table of Contents. The first page of the Introduction or first chapter of your thesis is numbered page 1; the rest of the Text and reference materials are numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals.

## **Preliminaries**

The thesis preliminaries consist of the Title Page, Dedication (optional), Acknowledgements (optional), Table of Contents, List of Tables (optional), List of Figures (optional), Lists of Symbols, Abbreviations, Nomenclature (if these appear in the thesis); Glossary (optional) and Summary. These preliminaries should be numbered in consecutive lower-case roman numerals. If there is more than one volume in the thesis, each volume shall carry its own pagination.

### ***Title Page (required)***

- a) The full title of the thesis (including a subtitle, if any) which should describe the thesis contents concisely and accurately. The Title Page should not be numbered.
- b) The full name of the author, followed (if desired) by any prior qualifications
- c) The name of the school and university: School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin
- d) The following phrase: "This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of \_\_\_\_\_." (Degree name should be fully spelled out — e.g. Master of Arts in Politics, Master of Science in International Relations, etc.)
- e) The month and year of submission

### ***Dedication and Acknowledgements***

Most theses include a brief statement of appreciation or recognition of special assistance, and some include a dedication, but both are optional. Neither is listed in the Table of Contents. If a dedication is included it should be centred on the page and no heading is necessary on the page on which it appears. The Dedication is not listed in the Table of Contents. The Heading ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, in capital letters, is centred without punctuation at the top of the page.

### ***Table of Contents (required)***

The Table of Contents page should follow the Title page unless a Dedication and/or Acknowledgements page has been included. The Page is headed TABLE OF CONTENTS (without punctuation) and all material following the Table of Contents is listed in it. The titles of parts, sections, chapters and their principal subdivisions should be listed in the Table of Contents and must be worded exactly as they appear in the body of the thesis.

### ***List of Tables***

This is optional and if included follows the Table of Contents. The title LIST OF TABLES appears centred at the top of the page without punctuation. The List of Tables should use exactly the same numbers and captions as appear above the tables in the text or in the Appendices.

### ***List of Figures***

This is optional and follows the List of Tables. The title LIST OF FIGURES appears centred at the top of the page without punctuation. The List of Figures should use exactly the same numbers and captions as appear below the figures in the text or in the Appendices.

### ***Lists of Symbols, Abbreviations, Nomenclature; Glossary***

If needed in your thesis, these lists appear after the Lists of Tables and Figures in the Preliminaries. Examples of such lists can be found in textbooks.

### ***Summary (required)***

A summary of the thesis should be included and is typically of approximately 300 words. The title SUMMARY appears centred at the top of the page without punctuation. The summary should give a statement of the thesis problem, a brief exposition of the research, and a condensed summary of the findings. Mathematical formulas, diagrams etc. are not recommended for the summary. The Summary page should be numbered in lower case roman numerals.

## **The Text**

The first chapter of the thesis may be the Introduction. Alternatively, an Introduction may precede the first chapter. Whichever option you choose, the first page of the introduction should be numbered as page 1 of the thesis. The introduction describes the thesis problem and usually outlines the structure of the thesis: i.e. how the problem will be addressed and where the problem will be addressed.

The Body of the Thesis is the substance of the dissertation, the detailed written statement of your research. The internal organisation of this material into chapters, sections and subsections is up to you and your supervisor.

The Summary and Conclusions are usually treated as the last major division of the Text. If all of the Notes have been deferred to the end of the thesis, their placement here constitutes the last major division of the Text.

## **Reference Material**

The reference material consists of Bibliography or List of References and Appendices.

## ***Bibliography or List of References***

Any thesis that makes use of other works, either in direct quotation or by reference, must contain a bibliography listing these sources. Pertinent works that have been consulted but not specifically cited should be listed under the subheading General References. Do not list those works under the general Bibliography.

## ***Appendices***

This section, if needed, is usually added to contain supplementary illustrative material, original data, and quotations too long for inclusion in the Text or not immediately essential to an understanding of the subject. This section of the thesis is separated from the preceding material by a cover sheet with the heading APPENDICES, in capital letters (or APPENDIX if there is only one), centred and without punctuation. This sheet is neither counted nor numbered. The Appendices may be divided into Appendix A, Appendix B etc., depending on the kinds and amounts of material used. The letter and title for each Appendix should be shown at the top of the first page of the individual Appendix. Each Appendix with its title should be listed separately in the Table of Contents as a first order subdivision under the heading APPENDICES. Tables and figures in the Appendices must be numbered and captioned and listed in the List of Tables and Figures in the Preliminaries.

The overall thesis coordinator and point of contact is Dr Thomas Däubler ([thomas.daubler@ucd.ie](mailto:thomas.daubler@ucd.ie)).

## **Late Submissions and Extensions**

Extensions may only be granted by the Thesis Module Coordinator, Dr Thomas Däubler ([thomas.daubler@ucd.ie](mailto:thomas.daubler@ucd.ie)) based on a written request from the student.

Students will need to fill out an Online Extension Request Form available on [this page](#); your request will be sent to your thesis supervisor and the module coordinator. The decision will be made based on the merits of the request and the supervisor's support.

Applications for extenuating circumstances (i.e. anything longer than a 10-day extension) should also be directed initially to the supervisor and Graduate Studies Director. Following discussion with your supervisor, an online application can be made by the student through [SISWeb](#).

## **Additional Resources**

Please note that UCD offers excellent supports with regard to

- Referencing & Citation <https://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/referencingandcitation>
- Using referencing software <https://libguides.ucd.ie/endnote>
- Writing a literature review <https://libguides.ucd.ie/litreview>
- Thesis writing <https://libguides.ucd.ie/academicintegrity/writingdissertationstheses>
- Writing support <https://www.ucd.ie/writingcentre/>

You can find many further helpful guides through the UCD library:

<https://www.ucd.ie/library/students/>

## PhD Application

If you would like to discuss the possibility of applying for admission to one of SPIRe's PhD programmes, please see [www.ucd.ie/spire/study/prospectivephdstudents/](http://www.ucd.ie/spire/study/prospectivephdstudents/) for basic information.

If you have any further questions, please contact the school's PhD Director, Professor Ben Tonra ([ben.tonra@ucd.ie](mailto:ben.tonra@ucd.ie)) for all academic concerns and the school's PhD administrator, Ms Dara Gannon ([dara.gannon@ucd.ie](mailto:dara.gannon@ucd.ie)) regarding any queries relating to the application materials not already answered on the website.

## Conferral

Graduation, or conferral from UCD, generally takes place at the end of November / beginning of December for Masters and Graduate Diploma students.

This is managed by the [Conferring Unit](#). You can find out more by looking on their website. All students eligible to confer will be emailed directly by the Conferring Unit.

## Leave of Absence and Withdrawal

A Leave of Absence is an extended period of time away from a programme of study, at the request of the student, and approved by the relevant Governing Board.

A Leave of Absence enables you to take an approved and specified period of time away from your programme. Please see here for additional information and instructions on [the Leave of Absence process](#).

If you wish to [Withdraw from the programme](#), please complete the online form via your SISWEB account.

The date you submit your withdrawal application will impact the amount of fees you owe. Please see [here](#) for detailed information.

In both instances, it is important that you speak with either your programme coordinator or the postgraduate administrator before you submit an LOA or withdrawal request.

## Key Dates for Academic Year 2024/25

Autumn Trimester (Monday, 2 September 2024 – Sunday, 19 January 2025 inclusive)		
Student Orientation Activities	w/c Monday, 2 September	No. of days varies depending on course
Teaching term	Monday, 9 September – Friday, 29 November <sup>1</sup>	12 weeks
Revision	Saturday, 30 November – Friday, 6 December	1 week
Exams	Saturday, 7 December – Saturday, 21 December <sup>2</sup>	2 weeks
Spring Trimester (Monday, 20 January 2025 – Sunday, 18 May 2025 inclusive)		
Teaching term	Monday, 20 January – Friday, 7 March <sup>3</sup>	7 weeks
Fieldwork/Study period	Monday, 10 March – Sunday, 23 March <sup>4</sup>	2 weeks
Teaching term	Monday, 24 March – Friday, 25 April <sup>5</sup>	5 weeks
Revision	Saturday, 26 April – Friday, 2 May <sup>6</sup>	1 week
Exams	Saturday, 3 May – Saturday, 17 May	2 weeks
Summer Trimester (Monday, 19 May 2025 – Sunday, 31 August 2025 inclusive)		
Teaching term	Monday, 19 May – Friday, 8 August <sup>7</sup>	12 weeks
Revision	Saturday, 9 August – Friday, 15 August	1 week
Exams	Saturday, 16 August – Saturday, 23 August	1 week

<https://www.ucd.ie/students/keydates/>



# Academic Calendar 2024-25 with UCD Week Numbering

## UCD academic calendar

2024 to 2025

Sep 2024							Oct 2024							Nov 2024						
WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	WK	M	T	W	T	F	S
	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5						1	2
1	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	9	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	16	17	18	19	20	21	6	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
3	23	24	25	26	27	28	7	21	22	23	24	25	26	11	18	19	20	21	22	23
4	30						8	28	29	30	31			12	25	26	27	28	29	30

  

Dec 2024							Jan 2025							Feb 2025						
WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	WK	M	T	W	T	F	S
13	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4							1
14	9	10	11	12	13	14	18	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	22	3	4	5	6	7
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	19	13	14	15	16	17	18	4	23	10	11	12	13	14
16	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	20	21	22	23	24	25	5	24	17	18	19	20	21
17	30	31					21	27	28	29	30	31		6	25	24	25	26	27	28

  

Mar 2025							Apr 2025							May 2025						
WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	WK	M	T	W	T	F	S	WK	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1			1	2	3	4	5					1	2	3
7	26	3	4	5	6	7	10	31	7	8	9	10	11	14	35	5	6	7	8	9
-	27	10	11	12	13	14	11	32	14	15	16	17	18	15	36	12	13	14	15	16
-	28	17	18	19	20	21	12	33	21	22	23	24	25	16	37	19	20	21	22	23
8	29	24	25	26	27	28	13	34	28	29	30			17	38	26	27	28	29	30
9	30	31																		31

### Dates that the UCD campus is closed

- Monday, 28 October 2024: October Bank Holiday
- Christmas Dates: <https://www.ucd.ie/hr/a-z/christmasclosuredates/>
- Monday, 3 February 2025: St Brigid's Day
- Monday, 17 March 2025: St. Patrick's Day
- Friday 18 - Monday 21 April 2025: Easter Break
- Monday, 5 May 2025: May Bank Holiday
- Monday, 2 June 2025: June Bank Holiday
- Monday, 4 August 2025: August Bank Holiday

## Assessment Key Dates & Grade Approvals Process

	<b>Autumn</b>	<b>Spring</b>	<b>Summer</b>	<b>Graduate Taught</b>
<b>Exam Timetable Published</b>	Fri, 01 November 2024	Fri, 21 March 2025	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
<b>Exam Dates</b>	Sat 7 - Sat 21 December 2024	Sat 3 - Sat 17 May 2025*	To be confirmed	Sat 16 - Sat 23 August 2025
<b>SMEC Meetings (School Exam Board)</b>	Wed 15 - Wed 22 January 2025	Tues 3 June - Tues 10 June 2025	Thurs 14 - Fri 15 August 2025	Fri 12 - Wed 17 September 2025
<b>ECAC Meetings</b> (Extenuating Circumstances Approval Committee)	Ongoing up to Wed 22 January 2025	Ongoing up to Tues 10 June 2025	Ongoing up to Fri 15 August 2025	Ongoing up to Wed 17 September 2025
<b>Faculty Grade Entry - System Closing Date</b>	Wed 22 January 2025	Tues 10 June 2025	Fri 15 August 2025	Wed 17 September 2025
<b>PEB Meetings</b> (Programme Examination Board)	Tues 28 - Wed 29 January 2025	Wed 18 - Thurs 19 June 2025	Wed 20 - Thurs 21 August 2025	Tues 23 - Wed 24 September 2025
<b>Final Grade Results Release</b>	Thurs 30 January 2025	Fri 20 June 2025	Fri 22 August 2025	Thurs 25 September 2025

<https://www.ucd.ie/registry/staff/registryservices/assessment/assessmentkeydates/>

## Appendix

### *Sample Declaration of Authorship Form*



UCD School of Politics and International Relations

## **Assessment Project: Declaration of Authorship (Thesis Cover Sheet)**

A completed copy of this form must accompany every project submitted for assessment.

Module Code:

**POL42310 Thesis**

Supervisor:

Title of Project:

I have read and understood the **Guidelines for the Preparation of Assessment Projects** issued by the UCD School of Politics and International Relations, and I hereby confirm that the work submitted for assessment in **this project is my own original work** in accordance with those guidelines. I also confirm that **I have not previously submitted the same work in full or in part at UCD or any other university.**

Signature:

Name in Block Capitals:

Student Number:

Date:

## **Guidelines for the Preparation of Assessment Projects**

**Students writing essays and projects are required to familiarise themselves with standard academic practice in the preparation and presentation of their work. Please take careful note of the following points:**

- All the sources on which you draw must be duly acknowledged in the text or in footnotes, and the full source cited in the bibliography. Direct quotes must be contained in quotation marks and duly referenced. If you paraphrase someone else's argument, you must indicate the source you have used, including page references. For guidance on how to reference correctly, please see the School's pamphlet **Guidelines for Essay Writing**.
- The bibliography should cite all the works you have consulted, and none that you have not personally used.
- All work you present as your own must be the result of your own efforts only.
- It is not permissible to submit an essay or project reproducing wholly or in part the essay or project of another student. Nor may any student pass on their own writings for such a use by others.
- Please note that all students, when submitting an assessment project for examination purposes, will be required to sign a formal declaration that the work they are submitting is their own unaided and original work.

Students must note that failure to take account of these standards in their writing constitutes **plagiarism**. Failure to cite sources properly, and recourse to copying sections of text without proper referencing, counts as plagiarism just as much as use of another person's essay or project work. This is a serious breach of academic standards. Furthermore, the College regards plagiarism as **cheating**, and as such, a wholly unacceptable breach of discipline, as indicated in Section 6 of the Student Code for University College Dublin, which is given in full in the Student Information Handbook. Plagiarism is defined as:

"Plagiarism, that is the copying of another person's writings or works or ideas in any thesis, essay, project, laboratory report, oral, poster or slide presentation or other exercise, which forms part of the assessment requirement for a module or programme of study without due acknowledgement either wholly or in part of the original source of the material through appropriate citation. For further details on Plagiarism, please see UCD's Plagiarism Policy."

**Plagiarism will be penalised heavily and may result in no marks at all being given for a project or essay, exclusion from your examination, or exclusion from your course.**

Please note also that the School retains the right to refer suspected cases of plagiarism to the University's **Disciplinary Committee**. If in doubt about any of these guidelines, please consult [UCD's Academic Integrity Policy](#).