



UCD School of Politics & International Relations (SPIRe)

Graduate Studies Handbook 2025-26

for MA, MSc, MEconSc, GradDip Programmes

Version History

December 2025 - The thesis proposal submission deadline has been updated from 16 January to 21 January.
(Ref: pages 10 & 13)

January 2026 - Amended an error in the eligible programmes (MA Intl Development was missing. Page 11)

Disclaimer: The information contained in this handbook is, to the best of our knowledge, true and accurate at the time of publication, and is solely for informational purposes.

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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 David Farrell, MRIA, MAE
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.

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 and on [our website](#), please contact the coordinator for your programme:

Programmes	Directors	Emails
MA/MSc Politics	Dr Alexander Dukalskis	alexander.dukalskis@ucd.ie
MA/MSc International Relations	Dr Nikita Khokhlov	nikita.khokhlov@ucd.ie
MA/MSc/GDip Intl Development	Prof Supriya Garikipati	supriya.garikipati@ucd.ie
MA/MSc Peace and Conflict	Dr Stephanie Dornschnieder-Elkink	stephanie.dornschnieder@ucd.ie
MA/MSc International Political Economy	Dr Sam Brazys	samuel.brazys@ucd.ie
MA/MSc European Politics and Policy	Prof David Farrell	david.farrell@ucd.ie
MA/MSc Gender, Politics and International Relations	Dr Dawn Walsh	dawn.walsh@ucd.ie
MA Political Theory	Dr Alexa Zellentin	alexa.zellentin@ucd.ie
MA Middle East Politics	Dr Vincent Durac	vincent.durac@ucd.ie
MEconSc European Public Affairs & Law	Dr Aidan Regan	aidan.regan@ucd.ie
MSc Human Rights	Dr Graham Finlay	graham.finlay@ucd.ie
MSc/GDip Politics and Data Science	Dr Stefan Müller	stefan.mueller@ucd.ie
MA Politics & International Relations (Omnibus I Part-time only)	Dr Tobias Theiler	tobias.theiler@ucd.ie
MSc European Governance (Liaison)	Dr Aidan Regan	aidan.regan@ucd.ie

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/>

Confirmation of Attendance & Module Registration

You will need to register online and confirm attendance 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.

[How to log into SISWeb, Brightspace & UCD Email \(YouTube\)](#)

[How to confirm your registration to UCD and access the My Registration page \(YouTube\)](#)

Note:

- UCD IT Services will send an email to the personal address you registered with us, notifying you when your UCD email account is ready.
- Your username is your application number or UCD student number (8 digits), and your password is the same one you use to log into the application portal.

Module Registration

Online module registration for Graduate Taught Students in the Colleges of Social Science and Law (i.e. SPIRe Masters/GradDip students) will open from **Friday, 15th August 2025** onwards. You will be allocated an individual Start Date and Start Time, which will be sent to your UCD Connect email address. Module registration remains open until 19 September.

Full Time MA/MSc Students

You'll be automatically registered for your programme-specific core modules. You are required to select option modules. Please read the instructions outlined on the module registration page. If an internship option (POL42300) is available as an alternative to writing a thesis (POL42310), you are required to select one of these options so that your total credits amount to 90.

Part Time MA/MSc Students

Module registration takes place at the beginning of each academic year. **You'll be selecting modules for this year only.** Ideally, you should select 30 credits in both Year 1 and Year 2.

- **Year 1 Students:** It's **strongly recommended** that you complete your **core modules** first.
- **Year 2 Students:** Please ensure you select all required **core modules**, and that your total credits from taught modules amount to **60**. You must also select either the thesis module (POL42310) or the internship module (POL42300).

Graduate Diploma Students

You must select **the core modules** of the MA/MSc programme you wish to transfer to. Please refer to [the Transfer from Graduate Diploma to Masters section](#) for further information.

If you are not sure which module to select, please contact the **SPIRe Graduate Team** at graduatespire@ucd.ie.

Useful Links

- ★ [Video/PDF Registration Guides](#)
- ★ [SPIRe Current Students' FAQs and Forms](#)
- ★ [UCD Key Dates](#)

Further Questions

Please refer to [the Video/PDF Registration Guides](#) and [SPIRe Current Students' FAQs and Forms](#). If you can't find the answers you need there, please contact us.

Specific Contacts for Queries

- For **document verification, fees**, or issues accessing your **UCD Connect Account or email**, please contact [the Student Desk](#).
- For issues with **module registration**, please contact the SPIRe Graduate Team at graduatespire@ucd.ie. When doing so, please provide the following information:
 - Your Name and Student Number
 - Your Programme (e.g., MSc Human Rights)
 - Relevant module Names and Codes
- The School Office (Room G301) is open from 10:00-16:30, Monday to Thursday (closed for lunch from 13:00-14:00)

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

If you decide **not to continue** with a module you initially selected, **you MUST withdraw from it by emailing to 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). Coursework submitted more than ten working days after the due date will not be graded.

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 below 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 in [the Assessment section of our FAQ page](#). 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** for cases that have legitimate reasons.

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.

Exenuating 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. 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.

Please note that applications for extenuating circumstances are reviewed and decided by the Graduate Taught Board at the College of Social Sciences and Law, not by SPIRe.

[The College website](#) provides full details on their procedure and deadlines.

You must submit an online application for [Extenuating Circumstances through SISWeb](#).

You will receive the outcome directly from the College office staff.

Module Assessment Scheme

Assignments are graded on a letter scale from A to FM. These grades are further subdivided into categories like A+, A, and A-. Certain modules or components are assessed on a pass (PX) or fail (FX) basis. A pass grade is neutral and is not factored into your GPA calculation. For instance, the POL42300 SPIRe Internship is pass/fail, which means your GPA will be based on the average grade points of the other taught modules you completed.

For complete, up to date information on grading, please consult the following links.

- [Understanding Grades](#)
- [Overall/Final Module Grades](#)
- [Module Grade Descriptors \(PDF\)](#)
- [GPA Calculations](#)

Policy on Academic Misconduct and 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 Academic Integrity Policy](#). The bibliography should cite all the works you have consulted, and none that you have not personally used.

Examples of academic misconduct include:

Plagiarism: *Presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism is a failure to cite or otherwise acknowledge ideas or phrases used in any paper, exercise, assessment or project submitted in a course but gained from another source, such as a published text, another person's work, or materials on the internet.*

Self-plagiarism: *Presenting work for an assignment which has also been submitted (in part or whole) for another assignment at UCD or another institution, is not permitted. However, students are allowed to reuse their own work in a progressive academic context. For example, a literature review or research design formulated during research methods modules can be adapted and used as a foundation for a Master's thesis. If in any doubt, you should check with your thesis supervisor.*

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.
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 thesis proposal** no later than **5:00 pm on Wednesday, 21st January 2026**. The form is on [the Thesis Information page](#).

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 (integrated into the thesis proposal form) 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 2.

The deadline for part-time application is Friday, 1st 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.

Internship Option: Guidelines & Requirements

This option involves substituting an internship for the thesis requirement. It is only available to students enrolled in the MA graduate stream in SPIRe and certain other designated graduate programmes. The programmes are:

- MA Politics
- MA International Relations
- MA International Political Economy
- MA International Development
- MA European Politics & Policy
- MA Middle East Politics
- MA Peace and Conflict
- MA Gender, Politics and International Relations
- MA Politics and International Relations (Part-Time)
- MSc Human Rights
- MSc Politics and Data Science
- MEconSc European Public Affairs and Law

A decision to substitute a thesis with an internship should be made with careful consideration. While internships may provide useful work experience, they hold less academic prestige than successfully completing a thesis. This could place students at a disadvantage if they later choose to pursue a PhD or other academic or professional qualifications. Students receiving funding must also consult their funding body to confirm that the substitution is acceptable.

Guidelines and processes:

- 1) Students are fully responsible for sourcing their internships. A list of previous internship hosts is available.
- 2) Internships must be directly relevant to a student's graduate programme and they must be approved by the Internship Coordinator.
- 3) For an internship to be approved the following is required:
 - a) A signed Internship Agreement (between the School and the student)
 - b) A completed Host Agreement (between the School and the host), which must outline the student's learning goals.
- 4) All documents must be submitted through the UCD online internship management system via SISWeb. The submission deadline is **Friday, 24 April 2026**. It is essential that students ensure they complete a minimum of 480 work hours by 21 August 2026

and that the agreement with the employer provides for this.

- 5) Employers must sign the SPIRe internship agreement as is. Changes to any of its clauses are not possible. SPIRe is unable to sign any other agreement with the employer.
- 6) Internships may begin no earlier than the day following the conclusion of the Spring teaching term. As noted, a minimum of 480 hours of work experience must be completed by no later than 21 August 2026.
- 7) Internships can be undertaken globally with no geographic restrictions. Internships may be paid or unpaid – this is a matter between the student and the host organisation.
- 8) To receive course credit, students must complete the following assessment components:
 - a) Five reflective journal reports submitted every two weeks during the internship;
 - b) A final reflective essay due **no later than Friday, 21 August 2026**.
- 9) All written submissions must adhere to the University's guidelines on plagiarism. The use of AI tools is strictly prohibited. This may lead to a failure of the internship module and further disciplinary action.
- 10) A host evaluation must be submitted **no later than Friday, 28 August 2026** to the Internship Coordinator (tobias.theiler@ucd.ie) and the Graduate Administrator (graduatespire@ucd.ie)

Additional Notes

- Even if you are registered for the Internship Module, you must complete thesis research training and submit a thesis title/outline. You will be assigned a thesis supervisor accordingly. If you do not secure an internship by 24 April 2026 you must switch to the thesis option. If this is the case, please notify the Graduate Administrator immediately via graduatespire@ucd.ie so your module registration can be updated.
- An information session will be held during the Autumn Term with further details and guidance pertaining to all aspects of the internship experience. Students **must** attend that session to remain eligible for the internship option.

Useful Links

- ★ [SPIRe Internship Programme](#)
- ★ [UCD Careers Network](#)

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, which will be available on [the Thesis Information page](#). In this form, you will need to specify the following:

- Identify your research interests/topics in 3 key words (e.g. *European Politics; Human Rights; Dictatorships; Authoritarian States; International Security; Irish Politics; International Justice; Electoral Behaviour, International Political Economy; Gender & Politics; Political Communication; Computational Methodology*)
- Identify three SPIRe faculty members that you would like to work with.
- Identify your topic and research question (Maximum 600 characters, approximately 100 words)
- What are the proposed methodology and research techniques to be employed? (e.g. *Case study, Qualitative / qualitative text analysis, Statistical modeling etc.*)

The deadline for submitting this form is **5:00 pm on Wednesday, 21st January 2026**. 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, 14th August 2026**. 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 (See [the Late Submission of Coursework section](#)). Extensions may only be granted by your supervisor and the Thesis Module Coordinator. See the Thesis Late Submissions and Extensions section below for further information.

Thesis Format

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>

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 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.

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).

Thesis Late Submissions and Extensions

Extensions may only be granted by the Thesis Module Coordinator, Dr Thomas Däubler (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 [the Thesis Information page](#); your request will be sent to your thesis supervisor and the module coordinator. Before submitting this form, you must consult with your supervisor. The decision will be made based on the merits of the request and the supervisor's support. 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](#).

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/writingdissertationtheses>
- 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 [the Prospective PhD Students page](#) for basic information.

If you have any further questions, please contact the school's PhD Director, Professor David Farrell (david.farrell@ucd.ie) for all academic concerns and the school's PhD administrator, Ms Dara Gannon (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 about a month prior to your graduation.

Leave of Absence and Withdrawal

A Leave of Absence (LoA) 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 on the amount of fees you owe. Please see [the Fee Implications](#).

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

After you submit either a LoA or withdrawal request via SISWeb, **you must notify the postgraduate administrator** by emailing graduatespire@ucd.ie. They don't receive automated emails for each submission, so your request won't be processed otherwise.

Key Dates for Academic Year 2025/26

Autumn Trimester (Monday, 1 September 2025 – Sunday, 18 January 2026 (inclusive))		
Student Orientation Activities	Wednesday, 3 September – Friday, 5 September	No. of days varies depending on course – check your Orientation Timetable
Teaching term	Monday, 8 September – Friday, 28 November ¹	12 weeks
Revision	Saturday, 29 November – Friday, 5 December	1 week
Exams	Saturday, 6 December – Saturday, 20 December ²	2 weeks
Spring Trimester (Monday, 19 January 2026 – Sunday, 17 May 2026 (inclusive))		
Teaching term	Monday, 19 January – Friday, 6 March ³	7 weeks
Fieldwork/Study period	Monday, 9 March – Sunday, 22 March ⁴	2 weeks
Teaching term	Monday, 23 March – Friday, 24 April ⁵	5 weeks
Revision	Saturday, 25 April – Friday, 1 May ⁶	1 week
Exams	Saturday, 2 May – Saturday, 16 May	2 weeks
Summer Trimester (Monday, 18 May 2026 – Sunday, 30 August 2026 (inclusive))		
Teaching term	Monday, 18 May – Friday, 7 August ⁷	12 weeks
Revision	Saturday, 8 August – Friday, 14 August	1 week
Exams	Saturday, 15 August – Saturday, 22 August	1 week
Grade Approvals Process ⁸	Grade Approvals Website	

¹ October Bank Holiday: Monday, 27 October 2025

² Campus closure commences :
(see <https://www.ucd.ie/hr/a-z/christmasclosuredates/>)

³ St Brigid's Day: Monday, 2 February 2026

⁴ St. Patrick's Day: Tuesday, 17 March 2026

⁵ Good Friday, 3 April 2026; Easter Sunday, 5 April 2026; Easter Monday, 6 April 2026

⁶ May Bank Holiday: Monday, 4 May 2026

⁷ June Bank Holiday: Monday, 1 June 2026; August Bank Holiday: Monday, 3 August 2026

⁸ Incorporates Grading, Grade Entry, Processing, School Module Review Boards, Release of Final Grades

Academic Calendar 2025-26 with UCD Week Numbering

2025/26 Academic Calendar with UCD Weeks

September 2025						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	8	9	10	11	12	13
2	15	16	17	18	19	20
3	22	23	24	25	26	27
4	29	30				

October 2025						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6	13	14	15	16	17	18
7	20	21	22	23	24	25
8	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
9	3	4	5	6	7	8
10	10	11	12	13	14	15
11	17	18	19	20	21	22
12	24	25	26	27	28	29

December 2025						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
13	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	8	9	10	11	12	13
15	15	16	17	18	19	20
16	22	23	24	25	26	27
17	29	30	31			

January 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	
18	5	6	7	8	9	10
19	12	13	14	15	16	17
20¹	19	20	21	22	23	24
21²	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
22³	2	3	4	5	6	7
23⁴	9	10	11	12	13	14
24⁵	16	17	18	19	20	21
25⁶	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
26⁷	2	3	4	5	6	7
27⁸	9	10	11	12	13	14
28⁹	16	17	18	19	20	21
29¹⁰	23	24	25	26	27	28
30¹¹	30	31				

April 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
31¹⁰	6	7	8	9	10	11
32¹¹	13	14	15	16	17	18
33¹²	20	21	22	23	24	25
34¹³	27	28	29	30		
35¹⁴	31					

May 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2		
35¹⁴	4	5	6	7	8	9
36¹⁵	11	12	13	14	15	16
37¹⁶	18	19	20	21	22	23
38¹⁷	25	26	27	28	29	30

June 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
39¹⁸	1	2	3	4	5	6
40¹⁹	8	9	10	11	12	13
41²⁰	15	16	17	18	19	20
42²¹	22	23	24	25	26	27
43²²	29	30				

July 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
44²³	6	7	8	9	10	11
45²⁴	13	14	15	16	17	18
46²⁵	20	21	22	23	24	25
47²⁶	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2026						
Wk	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1			
48²⁷	3	4	5	6	7	8
49²⁸	10	11	12	13	14	15
50²⁹	17	18	19	20	21	22
51³⁰	24	25	26	27	28	29
52³¹	31					

Dates that the UCD campus is closed

- October Bank Holiday: Monday, 27 October 2025
- Christmas Dates: <https://www.ucd.ie/hr/a-z/christmasclosuredates/>
- St Brigid's Day: Monday, 2 February 2026
- St. Patrick's Day: Tuesday, 17 March 2026
- Easter Break: Friday Friday 3 - Monday 6 April 2026
- May Bank Holiday: Monday, 4 May 2026
- June Bank Holiday: Monday, 1 June 2026
- August Bank Holiday: Monday, 3 August 2026

Assessment Key Dates & Grade Approvals Process

	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Graduate Taught
Exam Question Paper Portal Opens	Wed, 1 October 2025	Tues, 17 February 2026	Wed, 24 June 2026	Wed, 24 June 2026
Draft Timetable Circulated	Fri, 10 October 2025	Tues, 24 February 2026	NA	NA
Responses Due Back	Fri, 17 October 2025	Tues, 3 March 2026	NA	NA
Final Draft Circulated	Fri, 24 October 2025	Thurs, 12 March 2026	Wed, 1 July 2026	Wed, 1 July 2026
Responses Due Back	Tues, 28 October 2025	Mon, 16 March 2026	Thurs, 2 July 2026	Thurs, 2 July 2026
Exam Timetable Published	Fri, 31 October 2025	Fri, 20 March 2026	Mon, 6 July 2026	Mon, 6 July 2026
Exam Paper Upload Deadline	Wed, 19 November 2025	Wed, 15 April 2026	Tues, 7 July 2026	Tues, 7 July 2026
Exam Dates	Sat 6 - Sat 20 December 2025	Sat 2 - Sat 16 May 2026*	No fixed examination period.	Sat 15 - Sat 22 August 2026
Grade Entry Deadline and Grade Sign Off in Infohub	Up until 12 pm on Wed 14 January 2026	Up until 12 pm on Tues 2 June 2026**	Up until 5 pm on Wed 12 August 2026***	Up until 12 pm on Fri 11 September 2026
SMEC Meetings	From 1 pm Wed 14 - Wed 21 January 2026	From 1 pm Tues 2 June - Tues 9 June 2026**	From Thurs 13 - Fri 14 August 2026	From 1 pm Fri 11 - Wed 16 September 2026
ECAC Meetings	Ongoing up to Wed 21 January 2026	5 pm on Tues 9 June 2026	Ongoing up to Fri 14 August 2026***	Ongoing up to Wed 16 September 2026
Faculty Grade Entry - System Closing Date and Commit to Academic History	5 pm on Wed 21 January 2026	5 pm on Tues 9 June 2026	5 pm on Fri 14 August 2026	5 pm on Wed 16 September 2026
Assessment Bulk Processing (incl. compliance)	Thurs 22 - Mon 26 January 2026	Wed 10 - Tues 16 June 2026	Mon 17 - Tues 18 August 2026	Thurs 17 - Mon 21 September 2026
PEB Meetings	Tues 27 - Wed 28 January 2026	Wed 17 - Thurs 18 June 2026	Wed 19 - Thurs 20 August 2026	Tues 22 - Wed 23 September 2026
Final Grade Results Release	Thurs 29 January 2026	Fri 19 June 2026	Fri 21 August 2026	Thurs 24 September 2026****

SMEC = School Modular Examination Committee

ECAC = Extenuating Circumstances Approval Committee

PEB = Programme Examination Board

Links

- ★ [UCD Key Dates](#)
- ★ [Assessment Key Dates](#)
- ★ Please also refer to the [Key Dates Section of our website](#).

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 \(PDF\)](#).
- 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 2 of [the Student Code for University College Dublin](#). Examples of academic misconduct include:

Plagiarism: Presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism is a failure to cite or otherwise acknowledge ideas or phrases used in any paper, exercise, assessment or project submitted in a course but gained from another source, such as a published text, another person's work, or materials on the internet.

Self-plagiarism: Presenting work for an assignment which has also been submitted (in part or whole) for another assignment at UCD or another institution, is not permitted. However, students are allowed to reuse their own work in a progressive academic context. For example, a literature review or research design formulated during research methods modules can be adapted and used as a foundation for a Master's thesis. If in any doubt, you should check with your thesis supervisor.

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](#).