

Programme Specification for Postgraduate Programme Leading to: MSc Political Communication

Applicable for all postgraduate students starting in September 2020

<u>Version No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Notes – QUALITY ASSURANCE USE ONLY</u>	<u>QA</u>
1	October 2019	Programme specification for September 2020 start	BJR
1.1	26 June 2020	Programme intake suspended. Next scheduled intake is September 2021.	JP

Postgraduate Taught Programme	
1. Awarding institution	Brunel University London
2. Teaching institution(s)	Brunel University London
3. Home College/Department/Division	College of Business, Arts and Social Sciences/Dept of Social and Political Sciences / Division of Social Science and Communication.
4. Contributing College/Department/Division/ Associated Institution	N/A
5. Programme accredited by	N/A
6. Final award(s) and FHEQ Level of Award	MSc Political Communication FHEQ Level 7
7. Programme title	MSc Political Communication
8. Programme type (single honours/joint)	N/A
9. Normal length of programme (in months) for each mode of study	12 months (FT) or 24 months (PT)
10. Maximum period of registration for each mode of study	Normal length of programmes plus two years up to a maximum of five years.
11. Variation(s) to September start	N/A
12. Modes of study	FT/PT
13. Modes of delivery	Standard

V1.7 Maintained by Quality Assurance. Owned by UEC

Location: <https://intra.brunel.ac.uk/s/QSO/Team/Programmes/Templates and Proformas/Programme Specification Templates>

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14. Intermediate awards and titles and FHEQ Level of Award	Postgraduate Diploma in Political Communication FHEQ Level 7 Postgraduate Certificate in Political Communication FHEQ Level 7
15. UCAS Code	N/A
16. HECos	100491 100444
17. Route Code	2H3PPPOLCOMM
18. Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external and internal reference points used to inform programme design	UK Quality Code for Higher Education which includes the English Framework for Higher Education Qualifications within Part A on Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards. Most Recent QAA Subject Benchmark Statement: there are currently no relevant subject benchmark statements for political communication. Brunel 2030
19. Admission Requirements	Details of PGT entry requirements are provided on the University's and College website. Levels of English for non-native speakers are outlined on Brunel International's language requirements pages. Applicants should normally have a good Honours degree from a UK institution, an equivalent overseas qualification, or an equivalent professional qualification (e.g. from a social science background or similar). Candidates not fully meeting these criteria may, nevertheless, be considered. Students whose first language is not English must have IELTS of at least 6.5 or equivalent.
20. Other relevant information (e.g. study abroad, additional information on placements)	N/A
21. Programme regulations not specified in Senate Regulation 3. Any departure from regulations specified in Senate Regulation 3 must be stated here and approved by Senate.	N/A
22. Further information about the programme is available from the College website.	https://www.brunel.ac.uk/study/postgraduate/political-communication-msc

23. EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

- To provide postgraduates with a sophisticated and critical knowledge and understanding of political communication in its different manifestations and cultural forms across platforms and in diverse contexts.
- To equip students with a range of research skills to enable them successfully to complete independent research in an area of political communication
- To plan and create new content pertinent to political communication
- To develop advanced skills in the techniques, strategies and analysis used in political communication and valued by employers running political campaigns, social movements or PR/marketing operations

24. PROGRAMME AND INTERMEDIATE LEARNING OUTCOMES

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding (K) cognitive (thinking) skills (C) and other skills and attributes (S) in the following areas:

Level	Category (K = knowledge and understanding, C = cognitive (thinking) skills, S = other skills and attributes)	Learning Outcome	Masters Award Only	Associated Assessment Blocks Code(s)	Associated Study Blocks Code(s)	Associated Modular Blocks Code(s)
5						
	K	A critical and systematic knowledge and understanding of how different forms of political communication operate in different contexts, platforms and relationships.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5617 Political communication • PP5618 Politics & Digital Cultures • PP5620 Dissertation • PP5622 Political Satire & Comedy • PP5621 Elections & Campaigns • JR5613 Fake News, Images & Websites • JR5612 International Media Ethics
	K	An advanced knowledge and understanding of analysing, synthesising and producing knowledge in the area of political communication by producing a well-argued piece of critical and reflexive research.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5619: Researching Social and Political Sciences • PP5620 Dissertation

	C	Critically evaluate existing theories and concepts, strategies and debates relevant to the operation of political communications				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5617 Political communication • PP5618 Politics & Digital Cultures • PP5620 Dissertation • PP5622 Political Satire & Comedy • PP5621 Elections & Campaigns • JR5613 Fake News, Images & Websites • JR5612 International Media Ethics
	C	Critically evaluate the wider national and international contexts in which political communication and its related cultural forms operate.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5617 Political communication • PP5618 Politics & Digital Cultures • PP5620 Dissertation • PP5622 Political Satire & Comedy • PP5621 Elections & Campaigns • JR5613 Fake News, Images & Websites • JR5612 International Media Ethics
	C	Organise, evaluate and analyse sources and data into a well-evidenced and well-argued piece of research or practical work				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5617 Political Communication • PP5619 Researching Social and Political Sciences • PP5620 Dissertation • PP5621 Elections & Campaigns • PP5622 Political Satire & Comedy • JR5613 Fake news, images & websites
	K, C and S	An independent piece of work from identification of				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5620 Dissertation

		the topic to contextualisation and positioning of 'findings'.				
	S	Appropriately tailor the oral or written communication of concepts, arguments or creative content for a clearly defined audience that may include public, politicians, policymakers or academics.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All modules
	S	Effective use of equipment, software or measurement tools to analyse existing data/content.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5621 Elections & Campaigns • JR5613 Fake News, Images & Websites
	S	Create new content appropriate for a particular domain of political communication				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PP5621 Elections & Campaigns • PP5622 Political Satire & Comedy

Learning/teaching strategies and methods to enable learning outcomes to be achieved, including formative assessments

Core knowledge and understanding is acquired through lectures, seminars, debates, working in small groups to solve problems and guided independent study. Students are provided with comprehensive outlines for each module which specify both the topics covered and indicative reading for the module but, as appropriate for advanced study, they are also expected to source much of their own readings. Systematic knowledge and cognition of the field is built through all the theoretical modules but most explicitly in a piece of independent yet supervised research in the form of a 15,000 word dissertation.

Seminars provide a learning environment that encourages independent thought, criticality and self-reflection as well as dialogic engagements (for example, where students will present their own work in progress for constructive class discussion). Discussions are also intended to encourage students to interrogate at an advanced level the inter-relationship between theory and practice particularly at an international or global level.

The program also draws on a range of other teaching and strategies including:

- Activity-based strategies that engage students in individual or group experiential learning opportunities through project planning (e.g. Elections & Campaigns) and product creation (e.g. Political Comedy & Satire)
- Direct-instruction strategies including lectures, guided reading and seminar, discussions/debates (e.g. Political Communication); Socratic dialogue (e.g. International Media Ethics and Fake News, Images & Websites)
- ICT-based strategies where students are taught to source and assess databases and use software to analyse content (e.g. Fake News, Images & Websites)
- Independent learning strategies include independent reading and independent study on all the modules but particularly on the dissertation; briefing reports (Political Communication; Elections & Campaigns)
- Thinking-Skills Strategies include the analysis of bias/stereotyping, the use of case studies and concept definition/formulation (Political Communication, International Media Ethics).

Summative assessment strategies and methods to enable learning outcomes to be demonstrated.

The range of assessments ensures that knowledge, understanding and skills in different areas of political communication are cultivated and tested. In keeping with the theory-practice focus of the programme:

- Assessments in theoretical modules require students to comprehend and reflect critically on the implications of the shifting socio-cultural and technological contexts for political communication

- Some modules have practice and theory fully integrated with summative assessments covering both elements
- The dissertation, essential for the award of the MSc, facilitates a more sustained engagement with the field and where detailed knowledge is tested.

Practical work is assessed by a range of activities throughout the programme, some individual and others collaborative intended to build team-work, interpersonal skills and project management.

Marking criteria for written work emphasises the importance of lucidity, well-researched arguments underpinned by evidence, and independent, evaluative thought. Marking criteria for practical components emphasise the importance of innovative, ideas targeted at a clearly defined audience and rigorous research and validation of facts.

Practical assessments are geared towards developing advanced communication skills highly valued by employers looking to recruit in areas such as campaigns, marketing and PR, creative content and the curation of online content.

25. Programme Structure, progression and award requirements

Programme structures and features: levels, assessment blocks, credit and progression and award requirements

- **Compulsory block:** one which all students registered for the award are required to take as part of their programme of study. These will be listed in the left hand column;
- **Optional block:** one which students choose from an 'option range'. These will be listed in the right hand column;
- A **core assessment** is an assessment identified within an assessment block or modular block (either compulsory or optional) which must be passed (at grade C- or better) in order to be eligible to progress and to be eligible for the final award. All core assessments must be specified on the programme specification next to the appropriate assessment or modular block:

Where students are expected to pass the block at C- or better, but not necessarily all elements, then the block itself is core.

e.g. AB5500 Project (40)

Core: Block

Where only some elements of assessments are required to be passed at C- or better, these will be identified by listing each element that is core

e.g. ABXXX1 Title (XX credits)

Core: 1 & 4

Where students are expected to pass all assessments in a block then this will be identified. By setting the assessment this way, students are also required to pass the block by default. This will be identified thus:

e.g. ABXXXX Title (XX credits)

Core: All, Block

- A **non-core assessment** does not have to be passed at grade C- or better, but must D- or better in order to be eligible for the final award.
- The structure of the programme is as follows:
Compulsory modules: 120 credits
Electives: 4 x 15 credits

Level 5	
Compulsory assessment block codes, titles and credit	Optional assessment block codes, titles and credits
Compulsory study block codes, titles and credit volume All modules are 15 credits unless otherwise specified	Optional Study block codes, titles and credit volume All modules are 15 credits unless otherwise specified

Compulsory modular block codes, titles and credits	Optional modular block codes, titles and credits
<p>All modules are 15 credits unless otherwise specified</p> <p>Total of 120 credits</p> <p>PP5617 Political Communication (30 credits)</p> <p>PP5618 Politics & Digital Cultures</p> <p>PP5619 Researching Social & Political Sciences</p> <p>PP5620 Dissertation (60 credits)</p> <p>Term 1:</p> <p>JR5612: International Media Ethics</p> <p>PP5621 Elections & Campaigns</p> <p>Term 2:</p> <p>PP5622 Political Satire & Comedy</p> <p>JR5613 Fake News, Images & Websites</p>	<p>All modules are 15 credits unless otherwise specified</p>

Full time route

Compulsory term 1 and 2:

- Political Communication

Compulsory term 1:

- Politics & Digital Cultures
- International Media Ethics
- Elections & Campaigns

Compulsory term 2:

- Researching Social & Political Sciences
- Political Satire & Comedy
- Fake News, Images & Websites

Compulsory term 2 and 3:

- Dissertation

Part time route (Year 1)

Compulsory term 1 and 2:

- Political Communication

Compulsory term 1:

- International Media Ethics

Compulsory term 2:

- Political Satire & Comedy

Part time route (Year 2)

Compulsory term 1:

- Politics & Digital Cultures
- Elections & Campaigns

Compulsory term 2

- Researching Social & Political Sciences
- Fake News, Images & Websites

Compulsory term 2 and 3:

- Dissertation

Level 5 Progression and Award Requirements

As per [Senate Regulation 3](#)

PGDip may not be awarded by substitution of the dissertation for modular/assessment blocks in the taught part of the programme.

Please note: this specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods can be found in the modular block, assessment and study block outlines and other programme and block information. The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed by the University from time to time and whenever a modification occurs.