

The University has accepted the following definition of employability as articulated in 'Future Fit: preparing graduates for the World of Work' published by UUK/CBI (2009):

**“A set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy”**

The University has agreed the following attributes as important in the development of an employable graduate: self management; teamworking; business and customer awareness; problem solving; communication and literacy; application of numeracy; application of information technology.

**Self management** – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning

**Teamworking** – respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others

**Business and customer awareness** – basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty

**Problem solving** – analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.

**Communication and literacy** – application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy – including listening and questioning

**Application of numeracy** – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimation and applying formulae).

**Application of information technology** – basic IT skills, including familiarity with work processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines

Underpinning all these attributes, the key foundation, must be a **positive attitude**: a 'can-do' approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen.

**BUT**

**HOW WILL THESE SKILLS BE DEVELOPED THROUGHOUT YOUR POLITICS DEGREE?.....**

A Politics Degree from Cardiff School of European Studies gives you the opportunity to develop many of the employability skills which employers look for in graduates.

## TUTORIALS AND SEMINARS

Politics modules are taught via a combination of lectures and seminars. In preparation for seminars, you are expected to prepare essential reading so that you can confidently address particular questions and contribute to discussion of the issues involved. This requires thorough research as well as confident presentation skills. During tutorials you will often be required to analyse primary sources and secondary commentaries, and to assess and evaluate the opinions advanced by your classmates, tutors and political thinkers whose work you have read. This requires skills in critical analysis, evaluation, synthesis and interpretation.

Through tutorials and seminars you will have ample opportunity to develop your **communication skills** as you will be required to lead tutorial discussion on a regular basis. Small student numbers in seminars (no more than 15) ensure plenty of opportunity for discussion, comparison and participation and provide close contact with members of staff. Some tutorial and seminar work involves working in groups to discuss particular questions, examine case studies, and critically analyse the views of differing political thinkers. Other modules such as Analysing Political Lives require you to collaborate with others and contribute effectively to the achievement of common goals. These opportunities will help to develop your **teamwork skills** as well as your **oral communication skills**.

In addition, you are expected to spend approximately 28 hours per week on private study which will develop your **self management** skills, your ability to work independently and your organisation skills in order to plan your work, achieve the required standard and meet deadlines.

## RESEARCH SKILLS AND ANALYSIS

Your research skills will be continually developed and improved throughout your degree through the study of a range of modules which require you to use primary and secondary sources to formulate informed and reasoned arguments. All modules will develop your skills of comprehension, analysis and evaluation with some focusing on critical analysis of policy, political argument or views of political figures, with others focusing on comparative analysis of the political systems of different European countries. The first year module Introduction to Political Thought aims to develop both a familiarity with the literature in political thought and to focus on the development of each student's analytical and critical abilities. All modules require you to undertake directed tasks and plan and undertake independent research.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, an optional Politics Dissertation module is available. Should you choose this route, you will be required to undertake, with supervision, an in depth study of a politics topic which will develop your skills of enquiry, analysis, evaluation and interpretation and which will enhance your critical and **communication skills**. The dissertation will enable you to develop skills in categorising and utilising data information in order to reach considered conclusions on the basis of available evidence. You will demonstrate **self management skills** by managing your time effectively - planning the work, setting and achieving targets and meeting deadlines.

In addition, you will develop your **written communication skills** by presenting a detailed and carefully constructed written report of 10,000 words. Most employers are very keen to hear about this type of experience and what you have learnt from it. The dissertation is particularly useful for those wishing to pursue postgraduate study or a research based career.

## COMMUNICATION AND LITERACY

You have considerable opportunity during the Politics degree to develop your **communication skills** and are required to present accurately and succinctly orally and in writing throughout the degree programme and to transform research into well constructed, persuasive arguments.

First year modules aim to develop your skills in applied reading and comprehension of challenging texts and introduce you to expository and argumentative essay writing. In first year you are required to analyse texts, synthesise key arguments and evaluate different perspectives. Second year modules develop your skills in critically analysing, debating and interpreting texts. History of Modern Political thought for example concentrates your attention on a single author or text in order to develop the key close reading skills necessary for prolonged engagement with political thought. Your coursework essays require you to research, describe, analyse and evaluate and provide your tutors with the opportunity to assess your analytical and discursive skills. By third year you are expected to be competent in analysing and evaluating different types of argument and in developing your own reasoned argument which you will present and defend during tutorials– developing your **oral communication skills** and your presentation skills.

A few modules use role play exercises to simulate real situations. As an example, in Global International Organisation in World Politics, students make presentations through role play on the UN Security Council deliberations on situations such as the Iraq invasion by the USA/UK. In the module on Diplomacy, students research and make presentations at seminars on real life diplomacy situations such as the Good Friday Agreement, EU-3/Iran and Dayton Accord. These activities provide a good opportunity for you to further develop your public speaking and oral presentation skills.

All Politics modules (with the exception of dissertation modules) are assessed by a combination of coursework essay, exam and classroom assessment (eg class test), the completion of which will develop your **written communication skills**. You are required to express yourself clearly, compare and critically analyse different arguments and competing explanations and evaluate your conclusions. These are skills which are highly valued in the workplace.

## APPLICATION OF IT AND NUMERACY

All Politics assessments must be word processed - which will develop your proficiency using Microsoft Word - and must be submitted electronically. Many modules will involve detailed literature research via internet search engines and via background notes on Blackboard. Engagement with various printed, broadcast and electronic media is encouraged (for example for the Year 3 module on Analysing Political Lives) which will increase your familiarity with various relevant websites, videocasts etc. You are expected to use communication and information technologies for the retrieval, analysis and presentation of information – this will help to develop your expertise and confidence in using the internet and MS Office programmes such as PowerPoint, and you are supported in learning the skills in finding information for your studies, during the first year.

The Politics degree provides limited opportunities to develop/apply numeracy skills. However some modules require you to make use of statistical data in order to develop an informed and reasoned argument.

## PROBLEM SOLVING

Your **problem solving skills** are developed during the Politics degree through modules, such as Modern Welsh Politics, which test your ability to apply the theory to practical issues. There are opportunities through case study analysis to apply knowledge and concepts to empirical evidence and examples during Public Policy in Britain and Comparative Politics modules amongst others.

## CAREER MANAGEMENT SKILLS (CMS)

CMS sessions delivered in year 2 will show you how to make sense of the **employability skills** developed throughout your degree and help you articulate these skills effectively both on paper and at interview to an employer. This link between academia and employment is essential, especially for those wanting to enter employment straight after their study. The Careers Service is available to help you further with this throughout all stages of your academic degree.

In addition, a lecture slot within Global International Organisation in World Politics includes a Careers Service presentation on career opportunities available in the UN and international organisations.

**Business and customer awareness** is highly rated by employers when selecting candidates for graduate and placement positions. The second year module on Politics and Policies of the EU includes guest lectures from the Committee of the Regions, Welsh Local Authorities and the European Commission. These sessions give students an excellent insight into the practical workings of these organisations and help them to start developing their **business awareness**.

The Careers Service mounts a full programme of fairs, employer presentations and employer-led skills sessions which gives undergraduates opportunities to meet

employers and start developing their **commercial awareness** and enables them to better prepare for the job search and application processes.

## **EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

As well as your politics degree, consider the skills developed through your other activities such as paid work, volunteering, sport, membership of societies, leadership roles etc. A number of politics related societies are available to join at Cardiff University such as The Politics Society, Alpha, Unicef, Amnesty as well as party specific societies including Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green student societies. The Model United Nations, Cardiff University (MUNCU), is a student led society open to students from all degree disciplines, intended to simulate the United Nations and aiming to educate participants about globalization, multilateral treaties, diplomacy, economics and finance, environmental issues, human rights, world health, universal education, international aid and much more. Joining this society will give you a good introduction to global issues and is very relevant for students interested in pursuing careers with international organisations.

Student Volunteering Cardiff offers varied opportunities to get involved in the community on a voluntary basis – experience which always looks good on future job applications.