



**Political Studies
Association**

Today, we have written to leaders at the University of Dundee in support of Politics and International Relations colleagues facing redundancy to ask them to value the excellence in teaching and research in the department and to ask them to think again. We send our support and solidarity to our colleagues at Dundee.

17 July 2026

Dear Professor Seaton, Professor Blackford, and Ms Roberton

We write as the chairs of the British International Studies Association (BISA), the Political Studies Association (PSA), and the University Association for Contemporary European Studies (UACES) – the three main learned societies representing scholars in Politics and International Relations in the UK.

As fellow senior leaders, we fully understand the financial pressures and other challenges facing universities in the UK such as the University of Dundee. We also appreciate that, as a consequence, university leadership teams are having to contemplate difficult business decisions to ensure the future sustainability of their institutions. And that you have been managing this challenge now over a number of years.

Nevertheless, we are deeply concerned about the proposed redundancies to those teaching and researching Politics and International Relations within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and are writing to ask you to think again as to whether these proposals and this strategy are in the best interest of the University of Dundee and its reputation.

We are aware that the Politics and International Relations team has already lost a number of colleagues in recent years. We understand that this time the entire team of 7 has been put at risk of redundancy. We also understand that the university plans to suspend its post-graduate taught MSc International Relations programme. Clearly, changes of this scale (alongside contractions in other disciplines) risk the very future of Politics and International Relations at Dundee. Any reduction in team size would affect the team's ability to deliver programmes and has an impact on staff workload and on the first-rate undergraduate and post-graduate student experiences the team currently provides.

All higher education disciplines and institutions are experiencing recruitment, funding and other challenges at present. However, the Politics and International relations discipline has proven to be a resilient and there may be potential that Dundee could harness if these cuts are not pursued.

The Politics and International Relations team at Dundee is highly valued within our profession and within our associations. They are a small but successful team which clearly demonstrates strong teaching, innovative interdisciplinary courses, well-established and diverse research expertise and a portfolio of policy-relevant initiatives that generate real-world impact.

In the Guardian University Guide, Politics at the University of Dundee was ranked 9th in the UK for 2020, with student to staff ratio 24.3. Dundee is now (2026) ranked 57th, and 2nd in the UK for student to staff ratio (34.9).

According to this classification (2026) for Politics at Dundee, the 'Value added' score indicator (comparing students' degree results with their entry qualifications to show how effectively they are taught), positions **Dundee** an impressive **12th** in the UK. This strong performance may well be of benefit to educators and departments elsewhere in the university.

Over the last few years students at Dundee have had the opportunity to take part in (with considerable success):

- BISA/FCDO Model NATO Simulations
- BISA/Chatham House Climate Negotiation Simulations
- UN Universal Periodic Review Simulation at the University of Stirling (2026).

National Student Survey results consistently show above benchmark scores, **strong student satisfaction**, especially in areas such as staff support, clarity of explanation, and intellectual stimulation. Students rate the Politics and International Relations programme highly for engagement, feedback quality, and academic support; reflecting a deeply embedded **teaching culture**.

In terms of **research**, Politics and International relations at Dundee has particular expertise in the following areas (with notable success in being published):

- Human rights and justice
- Sustainability, environmental and energy policy
- Geopolitics including the UN, Middle East and Russia, US-China
- Nationalism, multiethnic regionalism and devolution
- Comparative Politics, British and Scottish Politics.

Politics and International Relations at the Dundee have been integral to the delivery of the **Scottish Human Rights Defender Fellowship** set up by your ex-colleague Professor Kurt Mills

and funded by the Scottish Government. This innovative project is now led by Dr Harriet Fildes, with colleagues from the Politics and International Relations team contributing to mentoring fellows and programme governance.

There has been a **marked increase in young people studying Politics** post-16 (Scottish Highers and at A Level) over the last 20 years and increasing interest in engaging with political and global issues. A recent British Academy report concluded that the skills gained by Politics and International Relations graduates are highly valued by many employers across all sectors of the economy.

Indeed, thanks to what the University of Dundee has given them, alumni have gone on to become high-ranking civil servants in the UK, Denmark, and New Zealand, interns and staff within major International and regional organisations including the UN, NATO, the EU, ASEAN and have been founders of award-winning NGOs.

The University of Dundee (and its Politics and International Relations team) could be positioned to take advantage of these **favourable opportunities**, and we urge you to consider whether further recruitment drives and development might mitigate against the need for staff and programme reductions.

Given the excellent and innovative work being undertaken by your colleagues, we urge you to take the time to work constructively with staff and students to find a way forward without compulsory redundancies – one which protects Dundee's reputation and future prospects and also provides opportunities for students and academics, especially in this region, to study and further Politics and International Relations in the future.

Professor Rose Gann

Chair, Political Studies Association of the United Kingdom

Professor Juanita Elias

Chair, British International Studies Association

Professor Toni Hastrup

Chair, University Association for Contemporary European Studies