



PPE with Foundation Year

Course Handbook

2025-26

1 Introduction

1.1 Statement of coverage

This handbook applies to students starting PPE with Foundation Year at the University of Oxford in Michaelmas 2025.

Please note that this handbook applies to 2025 entry; the information in this handbook may be different for students starting in other years.

This document only contains information about the PPE Foundation Year course, not the undergraduate course it can lead into. For information about the undergraduate course see the [PPE undergraduate handbooks](#).

1.2 Version

This is version 1.0, published on 28/09/25 . The changes made in this version are summarised in this table:

1.3 Disclaimer

The Examination Regulations relating to this course are available at [Examination Regulations - Contents](#). Please note that both the [General Regulations for the Foundation Year Certificate of Higher Education](#) and the related regulations for the [Certificate of Higher Education in Philosophy, Politics and Economics](#) apply. If there is a conflict between information in this handbook and the Examination Regulations then you should follow the Examination Regulations. If you have any concerns please contact the Foundation Year Programme Team at admin@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

The information in this handbook is accurate as of 28/09/25, however it may be necessary for changes to be made in certain circumstances, as explained on the [University website](#). If such changes are made, the department will publish a new version of this handbook together with a list of the changes and students will be informed.

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1.5 Welcome

Message from the Director of the Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme

Hello, and welcome to the Astrophoria Foundation Year programme. I am very excited that you are joining us here.

The aim of this handbook is to provide you with information to help you navigate your Foundation Year Course. Please make sure that you are reading the correct handbook for your specific course and that you also read the handbook given to you by your College. Entering this new, complex learning environment can be daunting, and while the information given here tries to make processes as clear as possible you may still have questions. If this is the case, the handbook gives links for other key sources of information, but the Foundation Year Programme team is also here to support you so please do not hesitate to ask if you need help.

The Astrophoria Foundation Year programme has been designed thinking about the different skills that will benefit you in the transition to studying your subject at university level. Obviously, this will include a lot of academic skills, but we also recognise that this is a transition away from something familiar to the new and quite unique environment of Oxford University. We have therefore thought hard about what other skills might be involved and tried to incorporate them. We may have missed some! If there are skills that you think that we could include for future years, please let me know. Your course tutors are here to support you in your learning whether it is on your subject course or on the Preparation for Undergraduate Studies course, so please don't hesitate to talk to them.

One of the traits that I am particularly keen to encourage on the Foundation Year is curiosity: when you ask questions about the world this tends to be reflected in asking questions about your academic work too. Being here on the Foundation Year programme will present you with many opportunities for having different experiences and for asking questions. Please make the most of all of these opportunities and enjoy your year!

Dr Jo Begbie

Message from the PPE Foundation Year Course Lead

As Course Lead for the PPE Foundation Year, I'm delighted to welcome you and excited to be embarking on the programme with you.

My PPE colleagues and I have designed a course that will give you the opportunity to explore fascinating topics of real-world importance in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, while building the academic skills needed to thrive as an undergraduate student of PPE. We hope that the knowledge and skills that you gain in the coming year will prove helpful, not only in your continuing undergraduate studies but also in your future life and career.

PPE is a demanding course and you will have to work hard to fully benefit from the Foundation Year programme, but the rewards from doing so are great. I and all of your PPE tutors are here to support you, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us, should you have any questions or need any support with academic matters.

Dr Natalie Quinn

1.5.1 Purpose of this handbook

This handbook contains useful information about the Foundation Year (year 0) of PPE with Foundation Year, which is part of the University of Oxford's Astrophoria Foundation Year programme. The Handbooks for PPE Prelims (year 1) and Finals (years 2-3) are [published separately](#).

1.5.2 Other key sources of information

The [Current Students section](#) of the [Astrophoria Foundation Year website](#) has a list of contact details for academic and administrative staff.

The Oxford Students website provides information about the services and resources available to students across the University: www.ox.ac.uk/students.

For general information and guidance and formal notification and explanation of the University's codes, regulations, policies and procedures, refer to the University student handbook: www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/student-handbook.

For college regulations, refer to your college handbook.

The Examination Regulations are the formal rules that govern your examinations for the PPE Foundation Year; they are available at [Examination Regulations - Contents](#). Please note that you will need to read both the [General Regulations for the Foundation Year Certificate of Higher Education](#) and the related regulations for the [Certificate of Higher Education in Philosophy, Politics and Economics](#).

The Examination Conventions set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award. The Conventions for the PPE Foundation Year can be viewed on the [Current Students section](#) of the [Astrophoria Foundation Year website](#).

We use Canvas as our Virtual Learning Environment. Please see Canvas for information relating to your teaching in your subject course and the Preparation for Undergraduate Studies Course. Your course material, including lecture lists, reading lists and assignments, will be available on Canvas. You will be able to access your Canvas account at <https://canvas.ox.ac.uk>.

1.6 Useful contacts

The Foundation Year Programme Team can help with queries relating to the Astrophoria Foundation Year programme as a whole. They can also assist with administrative queries related to bursaries and grant payments. They can be contacted via email at admin@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk

The Foundation Year Welfare Lead is Catherine Purtell. She can help with queries relating to welfare, disability and access requirements. She can be contacted via email at welfare@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

The PPE Foundation Year Course Lead is Natalie Quinn. She can help with queries relating to subject-specific learning. She can be contacted via email at natalie.quinn@economics.ox.ac.uk.

The acting Preparation for Undergraduate Studies (PUGS) Course Lead is Catherine Purtell. She can help with queries relating to the PUGS course. In this role she can be contacted via email at pugs@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

Once appointed, student representatives (see section 6.1) will be listed on the Current Students section of the [Astrophoria Foundation Year website](#) and can also be reached by contacting the Foundation Year Programme Team: admin@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk

1.7 Buildings, locations, maps and access

Teaching will take place across the University of Oxford including the colleges; more detail can be found on the Canvas course pages.

Foundation Year students have access to University libraries, but you may need to activate your University card for some of the more specialist libraries.

Foundation Year students have access to libraries and study spaces in the University of Oxford's [Department of Continuing Education](#).

The Foundation Year Programme Team have offices in Rewley House (Department of Continuing Education) found at 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA.

The access guide website provides interactive maps, floor plans, and access information for all University buildings: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/access.

1.8 Important dates

The Oxford year is divided into three terms (called Michaelmas Term, Hilary Term and Trinity Term) and three vacations. Note that because Oxford terms are relatively short, there is usually an expectation of some academic work being done in the vacations.

Each term has a main teaching period of eight weeks (labelled weeks 1-8), this is called "full term". However, activities also happen in the weeks either side of full term, before (labelled week 0) and after (labelled week 9). Please see table below for term dates including weeks 0 and 9. NOTE: students are expected to be in residence during full term and for compulsory activities in weeks 0 and 9. You may have to make arrangements with your college if you need to be absent during that time (see your college handbook for details).

Astrophoria Foundation Year students will arrive earlier than undergraduate students in their first term, coming in Michaelmas Term week -1 for Orientation Week before most other students are in Oxford. Students will then join undergraduates in Freshers Week (Michaelmas Term week 0). Week 1 of Michaelmas Term will be an Academic Induction Week with some Preparation for Undergraduate Studies course and some subject course teaching. These first three weeks will help Foundation Year students settle into the University and the city.

Term dates, including the weeks outside full term, are detailed in the table below.

Michaelmas Term		
	Orientation Week (Week -1)	Sunday 28 September 2025 – Saturday 4 October 2025
	Freshers Week (Week 0)	Sunday 5 October 2025 – Saturday 11 October 2025
	Full term (Weeks 1 -8)	Sunday 12 October 2025 – Saturday 6 December 2025
	Assessment week (Week 9)	Sunday 7 December 2025 – Saturday 13 December 2025
Hilary Term		
	Assessment week (Week 0)	Sunday 11 January 2026 – Saturday 17 January 2026

	Full term (Weeks 1 -8)	Sunday 18 January 2026 – Saturday 14 March 2026
	Assessment week (Week 9)	Sunday 15 March 2026 – Saturday 21 March 2026
Trinity Term		
	Assessment week (Week 0)	Sunday 19 April 2026 – Saturday 25 April 2026
	Full term (Weeks 1 -8)	Sunday 26 April 2026 – Saturday 20 June 2026
	Possible re-assessment week (Week 9)	Sunday 21 June 2026 – Saturday 27 June 2026

The schedule of teaching and assessments is summarised in the table below.

Teaching	Most teaching takes place during Full term: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1 - Week 8 of Michaelmas Term • Week 1 - Week 8 of Hilary Term • Week 1 - Week 4 of Trinity Term Small amounts of teaching may take place outside these weeks.
Formative Assessments¹	All PPE Foundation Year subject module assignments are formative assessments. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will complete and receive feedback on three assignments every week throughout the main teaching periods Collections (mock exams) will be set during the following weeks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 9 of Michaelmas Term • Week 9 of Hilary Term • Weeks 5 and 7 of Trinity Term
Summative Assessments²	The full schedule of summative assessments is detailed in the Examination Conventions which can be viewed on the Current Students section of the AFY website. Summary of submission and exam weeks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 9 of Michaelmas Term (one PPE submission) • Week 0 of Hilary Term (three PPE exams) • Week 4 of Hilary Term (one PUGS presentation) • Week 9 of Hilary Term (one PPE submission) • Week 0 of Trinity Term (three PPE exams) • Week 4 of Trinity Term (one PUGS presentation) • Week 5 of Trinity Term (two PPE submissions) • Week 6 of Trinity Term (one PUGS submission) • Week 8 of Trinity Term (three PPE exams and two PUGS submissions)
Resits or resubmissions	If you fail your first attempt at a summative assessment you will be given an opportunity to resit or resubmit in the next available assessment window, or early in September

¹ Formative assessments are informal assessments on which students are given feedback to help them improve their learning; any marks from formative assessments do not count towards the final grade. See section 4.2 for more information.

² Summative assessments are formal assessments that count toward the final mark. Students who fail a summative assessment will be given an opportunity to resit or resubmit it, usually in the next available assessment window.

2 Course Content and Structure

2.1 Course overview

The *PPE with Foundation Year* course is designed to help students bridge the gap between pre-university study and the challenging undergraduate PPE degree at Oxford. It will also enable students to thrive at another high tariff university, should progression to the Oxford undergraduate PPE programme not be possible or desirable.

Students who pass the one-year Foundation Year course (Year 0) will be awarded a Level 4 Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) qualification. Students who pass the course at the required level will, should they wish, automatically progress to the undergraduate programme in PPE at Oxford, without the need to re-apply.

PPE at Oxford is a course that encourages students to think about the challenges of the modern world from three different but complementary perspectives. The PPE Foundation Year course will offer students the opportunity to develop the academic skills needed to thrive as a student of PPE at Oxford, through the study of subject-specific modules across Politics, Philosophy and Economics as well as a Mathematics for PPE module and a general Foundations in PPE module.

In addition to this, students take part in a Preparation for Undergraduate Study Course. Different parts of this course provide support in building general academic skills including academic writing, communication skills to support verbal discussion, and broader personal development.

2.2 Course aims

The course aims to enable its students to:

- Achieve the level of academic competence and confidence necessary to thrive in their chosen undergraduate degree - ideally at Oxford, or at another highly-selective university
- Acquire the subject-specific knowledge and skills that are necessary for undergraduate study in PPE, in particular to develop their:
 - Capacity for sustained study; motivation and interest; independent and reflective approach to learning
 - Ability to analyse and solve problems using logical and critical approaches; ability to assess relevance; capacity to construct and critically assess arguments; flexibility and willingness to consider alternative views
 - Willingness and ability to express ideas clearly and effectively in English on paper and orally; ability to listen; ability to give considered responses.
- Develop skills in independent thought, writing for academic purpose and critical analysis
- Develop confidence in their academic self to foster academic exploration

2.3 Intended learning outcomes

All students who successfully complete an AFY course will be able to:

- Apply the methodological approaches relevant to the study of their chosen field
- Interpret and evaluate sources critically in a manner relevant to their chosen field
- Discuss key issues within their field in an academic context
- Construct persuasive arguments and understand how to respond to alternative views
- Undertake research and construct independent opinions in their chosen field

- Confidently express their academic ideas

Intended learning outcomes specific to the PPE subject modules are outlined in section 2.5 below.

The Preparation for Undergraduate Study Course will provide a range of opportunities for students to develop and practise skills that will support undergraduate level study:

- general academic skills
- communication skills
- reflective approaches to academic and personal development

2.4 Course structure

The *PPE with Foundation Year* course pathway is a four-year programme. Its first year (Year 0) is the PPE Foundation Year. Years 1-3 are the undergraduate programme in PPE.

The PPE Foundation Year (Year 0) comprises eight compulsory subject modules, covering *Foundations in PPE*, *Philosophy* (two modules), *Politics* (two modules), *Economics* (two modules) and *Mathematics for PPE*. Students also take a compulsory *Preparation for Undergraduate Study* module which runs alongside the subject modules.

For students who progress to the Oxford undergraduate programme in PPE, Year 1 will comprise three compulsory papers: Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Politics and Introductory Economics, all examined at the end of the year.

Years 2 and 3 of the undergraduate programme are more flexible. Students may choose to specialise in two of the three subjects, or to continue with all three. Within each route there are a small number of compulsory core papers and a wide variety of optional papers amongst which students may choose, with certain restrictions on the combinations that may be taken. All students take eight papers in total; most are examined at the end of Year 3.

2.4.1 Outline of course structure

Year 0				
Foundations in PPE			Maths for PPE (MT)	Preparation for Undergraduate Studies (MT)
Philosophy 1 (MT)		Economics 1 (MT)		
Examination of MT modules				
	Politics 1 (HT)	Economics 2 (HT)	Maths for PPE (HT)	Preparation for Undergraduate Studies (HT)
Examination of HT modules				
Philosophy 2 (HT-TT)	Politics 2 (HT-TT)		Maths for PPE (TT)	Preparation for Undergraduate Studies (TT)
Examination of TT modules				

Year 1		
Introduction to Philosophy	Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Politics	Introduction to Economics
<i>Examination: PPE Prelims</i>		

Years 2 and 3			
Bipartite: Philosophy and Politics	Bipartite: Philosophy and Economics	Bipartite: Politics and Economics	Tripartite: Philosophy, Politics and Economics
Core and optional papers	Core and optional papers	Core and optional papers	Core and optional papers
<i>Examination: PPE Finals</i>			

2.5 Syllabus

Detailed syllabus information can be found on the Canvas site for each module. Once you have your Oxford Single Sign On you will be able to access your Canvas account at <https://canvas.ox.ac.uk>. The topics covered in each module and their intended learning outcomes are summarised here.

2.5.1 Foundations in PPE

Foundations in PPE (1): A New Social Contract

This two-week intense module introduces the course in PPE. It focuses on a single accessible text, Minouche Shafik's *What We Owe Each Other: A New Social Contract*, which is of relevance and interest to all three subjects. A carefully-planned programme of lectures, workshops, seminars and independent study sessions provide students with supported opportunities to:

- Develop effective note-taking skills for lectures and from books
- Develop effective (strategic and efficient) academic reading skills
- Develop effective paragraph-writing skills
- Build confidence in developing and defending their own views as well as engaging respectfully with others'

Themes from this module will be revisited throughout the Foundation Year; the skills that students develop are essential preparation for the PPE subject modules.

Foundations in PPE (2): Skills for Success

Foundations in PPE continues with approximately-fortnightly workshop sessions alongside the subject modules, which provide an opportunity for students to build skills that are essential for success in the PPE Foundation Year as well as the undergraduate programme in PPE. Topics to be covered include:

- Understanding PPE assessment criteria
- Responding to feedback and re-drafting written work
- Reflection on New Social Contract in light of MT and HT subject modules
- Preparing for examinations and aiming for excellence in P, P and E

Students who successfully complete the **Foundations in PPE** module will be able to:

- Understand the methods and practice of close reading, and offer specific and accurate references to a text;

- Understand the way in which a long text may be interpreted as sustaining a single argument, recognise the core components of this argument and provide a brief evaluation of the argument's strengths and weaknesses;
- Propose and assess alternative arguments with peers in an open-minded and respectful exchange of views.

2.5.2 Philosophy modules

Philosophy 1: Introduction to Philosophical Analysis

This module provides students with an introduction to philosophical modes of writing, reasoning, and analysis. Using brief, relatively simple philosophical texts as a focus, it aims to make students comfortable with critical discussion of philosophical questions and to provide them with the tools to analyse philosophical arguments. It familiarises them with important and common patterns of argument, teaches them to identify common errors and gaps in argumentation, and trains them to distinguish the argumentative content of a piece of philosophical writing from other aspects, such as its style and provocativeness, in order to extract and critically assess it. The module also introduces students to the notions of a philosophical position and a philosophical theory and the way in which such positions and theories bear on particular philosophical questions.

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Distinguish different patterns of argument, including deductive, inductive, abductive, and analogical argument
- Recognise common errors of argument such as affirming the consequent, mistaking a necessary for a sufficient condition, and the like
- Interpret clearly written philosophical texts, accurately identifying the conclusions being argued for the arguments being offered in support of those conclusions
- Create diagrammatic or more formally structured representations of the arguments presented in clearly written philosophical texts
- Identify clear errors, hidden premises, and gaps in the arguments presented in clearly written philosophical texts
- Propose and assess possible objections to such arguments
- Make and justify assessments of the strength of such arguments based on an assessment of the plausibility of their premises in light of objections they have identified
- Describe philosophical positions and theories and explain their implications for particular questions.
- Discuss philosophical arguments, positions, and theories with peers, engaging respectfully and open-mindedly and showing understanding of the different assessments of reasons as the source of philosophical disagreements (rather than causal or character-based explanations)

Philosophy 2: Problems of Philosophy

This module introduces students to some important philosophical problems and arguments, giving them the opportunity to deploy the concepts and skills they have learned in application to genuine philosophical research (both historical and contemporary), as contrasted with the bespoke texts used in the earlier Philosophy module. In each of three two-week blocks, students read, analyse, discuss, and assess philosophical texts in which competing arguments and positions are defended, before writing an essay in answer to a question on which the arguments they have been studying bear. The three two-week blocks cover topics in ethics, metaphysics, and political philosophy. Students who have completed this module are comfortable extracting arguments from complex philosophical texts, assessing them and comparing them to competing arguments extracted from

other such texts, identifying lines of objection and argument, and defending one position over another. In addition, they have some familiarity with important problems and arguments across three domains of philosophical inquiry.

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Set out important philosophical problems or questions in ethics, metaphysics, and political philosophy, explain their significance, and describe some possible philosophical responses
- Interpret complex philosophical texts from different eras, accurately identifying conclusions being argued for and arguments being offered
- Compare and contrast competing arguments being offered in such texts, identifying key points of difference that explain their conflicting conclusions
- Propose and assess possible objections to such arguments
- Propose and assess possible replies to such objections
- Write an essay defending one solution/answer to an important philosophical problem/question in ethics, metaphysics, or political philosophy over others
- Orally present and defend (or modify in response to argument) the argument of an essay to peers, and respond with constructive philosophical criticism and discussion to such presentations by others

2.5.3 Politics modules

Politics 1: Theory of Politics

This module provides students with an introduction to some of the major debates in political theory, through engagement with a range of political thinkers. The aim is to increase familiarity with some of the core concepts that will inform a student's studies throughout their degree, as well as to introduce a range of significant, canonical figures who have shaped the discipline of political theory.

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Identify and understand questions in political theory, recognise major contributions from five key thinkers (command of material);
- Recognise and evaluate concepts, theories, methods and approaches, and data (analysis);
- Present clear oral and written answers to questions (exposition);
- Identify ideas that are relevant and irrelevant to addressing a question (judgement); and
- Come up with their own ideas to solve new problems (independence).

Politics 2: Practice of Politics

This module assesses how power is used around the world. Students will be able to compare different countries to test their ideas. Linking the six topics will be a theme of sustainable power – in the sense of how and why power lasts at some times, in some places, and for some purposes. This is relevant for other uses of the word sustainable, such as sustainably living with our environment.

Students will build on the writing, reasoning and critical thinking skills developed in the previous Politics module. This unit will also entail critical analysis of quantitative data in political science, with a lecture, tutorial and problem sheet looking to assess the relative development of OECD countries.

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- identify and understand questions in comparative political science and their application to six countries (command of material);
- Recognise and evaluate concepts, theories, methods and approaches, and data (analysis);
- Present clear oral and written answers to questions (exposition);
- Identify ideas that are relevant and irrelevant to addressing a question (judgement); and

- Come up with their own ideas to solve new problems (independence).

2.5.4 Economics modules

Economics 1: Economic Development, Inequality and the Environment

The overall purpose of this module is to build students' core skills in economic reasoning and communication, and data visualisation and analysis, through an overview of some of the 'big picture' questions in Economics. Specifically, the module will cover:

- Economic development and inequality, and their co-evolution in recent decades.
- Engines of economic growth: economic/political institutions and technological change.
- Economic growth and environmental sustainability.
- Interpretation of economic data presented in tables and in charts (time series, histograms, centile charts, scatterplots).
- Visualisation of economic data using a variety of charts.
- Calculation and interpretation of simple descriptive statistics for one variable (measures of location, dispersion and inequality).

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Independently discern and synthesise information about economic concepts and topics from a variety of sources (lectures, textbooks, non-technical articles, reference books and multimedia) (learning skills);
- Write clearly and analytically about key economic concepts and topics covered in the module (writing skills);
- Apply problem solving skills, basic mathematical skills and knowledge of key economic concepts to analyse simple economic problems within the scope of the module content (problem solving skills);
- Accurately interpret economic data represented in tables and charts (data interpretation skills); and
- Visualise and analyse economic data using appropriate visualisation and statistical tools (data analysis skills).

Economics 2: Economics of Society and Public Policy

The overall purpose of this module is to build students' economic reasoning, problem-solving and communication skills to the point where they are ready to engage successfully with the undergraduate programme in Economics. Specifically, the module will cover:

- Elementary game theory as a tool for understanding and modelling social interactions
- Types of social interactions including 'social dilemmas', the canonical game models that represent them and the efficiency (or otherwise) of their equilibria
- The roles of social preferences, punishment strategies and institutions to resolve social dilemmas
- Empirical evidence about social preferences in different locations
- Fairness and efficiency as objectives of public policy
- Implementation and evaluation of public policy: causal inference and unintended consequences; an introduction to experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation methods
- Visualisation and analysis of relationships between economic variables using charts and simple descriptive statistics

Students who successfully complete this module will be able to:

- Independently discern and synthesise information about economic concepts and topics from a variety of sources including accessible academic journal articles (learning skills);
- Write appropriately-structured and analytical prose that demonstrates good command of the key economic concepts and topics covered in the module (writing skills);
- Apply problem solving skills, mathematical skills and knowledge of key economic concepts to analyse economic problems within the scope of the module content (problem solving skills);
- Accurately interpret economic data represented in tables and charts (data interpretation skills);
- Identify and apply appropriate tools to visualise and analyse economic data in order to respond to questions posed (data analysis skills); and
- Identify appropriate economic concepts and models from among those covered in the units and apply them to analyse everyday situations (application skills).

2.5.5 Mathematics for PPE

This module will run throughout the academic year. Its overall purpose is to provide students with the mathematical skills and confidence that they will need to access and succeed in the first year of the PPE undergraduate programme. Specifically, the course will cover:

- Core topics: key mathematical methods that students are assumed to command in the Introductory Economics course.
- Applications of these methods to simple economic (and where possible political and philosophical) models and problems, to start to build the modelling and problem-solving skills that will be further developed in the undergraduate programme.
- Selected topics in more advanced mathematics (sets and probability) to start to build the abstract reasoning skills that will be required for the first year Logic course (Philosophy). These topics will also lay strong foundations for quantitative methods courses in the undergraduate programme (Politics and Economics) and are relevant for certain Philosophy finals options.

The core topics will be familiar to students who have studied A-level mathematics, but new to those who have not, while the economics applications and advanced topics will be new to all students. Where students are already familiar with a topic, the objectives will be (1) to strengthen their understanding and thus ability to apply the methods appropriately in unfamiliar contexts, and (2) to improve their skills in communicating their mathematical reasoning. Outline of topics by term:

	Michaelmas	Hilary	Trinity
Preliminaries	Arithmetic & Algebra		
Functions, Graphs & Equations	Linear functions Power of x functions	Polynomial Functions Exponential & logarithm Functions	
Sequences, Limits & Calculus		Sequences & their limits The derivative as a limit Differentiating complicated functions	Integration
Measurement & Data Analysis	Quantities, units & indices Changes, rates of change & growth Distribution of a single variable	Joint distribution of two variables	

Sets & Probability	Introduction to sets, numbers & functions		Binary Relations, preferences & social choice Set operations & probability
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Students who successfully complete the **Maths for PPE** module will be able to:

- Demonstrate competency with all of the mathematical methods covered in the core topics, through their accurate application to solve straightforward problems.
- Identify and apply appropriate mathematical methods from among those covered in the core topics to analyse simple economic models and solve applied problems.
- Communicate their mathematical reasoning clearly and precisely, using appropriate conventions of language and notation.
- Demonstrate comprehension of definitions and concepts in the advanced topics through their application to solve simple problems (seen and unseen) and prove simple standard results

2.5.6 Preparation for Undergraduate Study modules

The Preparation for Undergraduate Study course will run throughout the academic year alongside the subject specific teaching. The course can be broadly divided into 3 different areas which we refer to here as modules. Descriptions of these different modules are below:

General academic skills

This module aims to provide a foundation in the general academic skills required for success at undergraduate level. There will be opportunities to discuss the differences between learning in a school environment and a university setting and how to approach the new challenge. This will include discussion of issues relating firstly to transition to university in the context of the foundation year course, then in relation to progression to full undergraduate status.

Students will be encouraged to share ideas and strategies, and to test different approaches to identify those that work best for them as individuals. Students will be expected to reflect on their progress and to become active participants in learning rather than simply being recipients of information.

Students will be given individual support in academic writing to facilitate development of that skill to a level suitable for first year undergraduate study. They will also have one-to-one academic mentoring to discuss their progress throughout the course.

This will cover:

- Transition to a university setting and university level learning
- Different approaches to learning
- Where to find academic information
- How to use resources effectively
- How to effectively question sources
- How to read effectively for an academic purpose
- Note taking for academic purposes
- Good academic practice (including appropriate citation and referencing)
- Plagiarism
- Building academic vocabulary

- How to write for different academic audiences
- How to critically analyse sources and ideas
- How to use feedback to improve work
- Time management
- Reflective learning
- Group working

Communication skills

This module aims to enable students to develop additional communication skills alongside their academic writing development (which happens as part of the general academic skills module). In particular, there will be focus on building students' confidence to articulate their ideas verbally, enabling them to contribute to academic discussion in different situations.

Over the course of the year students will explore how they might present academic ideas verbally in a number of different formats as usually required during an undergraduate course and beyond. It is intended that in the first term students will work on finding their academic voice verbally and having the confidence to begin to express their ideas in a group setting. In the second term the aim is to work more specifically on presenting an academic concept orally using visual aids, this enables students to bring in things they have learnt in the academic writing sessions and see how they can be applied to other forms of communication – e.g. structuring a presentation, being specific and concise. In the third term there will take part in a poster session together with peers and use a poster format to present an academic concept to members of their academic community.

This module will cover:

- Presenting a verbal argument (Michaelmas Term)
- Presentation skills (Hilary Term)
- Poster presentation (Trinity Term)

Students will be working to develop skills in:

- How to present a verbal argument
- How to effectively listen and engage with a verbal argument and academic presentations
- How to structure an academic presentation
- How to present an academic topic verbally using visual aids
- How to generate an academic poster
- How to verbally present an academic poster

Society and Culture

This module aims to introduce students to a wide variety of topics and experiences that will underpin the successful navigation of undergraduate life and beyond. Whilst other modules will cover the academic skills required to thrive at university, this module provides a forum for students to engage with new and varied forms of knowledge outside that studied in their subject or school life. Through a series of different activities students will be encouraged to broaden their knowledge and experience base in ways that are relevant to successful study at and progression from a highly-selective university.

This module will include:

- Talks and presentations from invited speakers from different occupations and positions in society
- Exploration of student directed topics
- External visits to museums, heritage sites, galleries and theatres
- Career development opportunities

3 Teaching and Learning

3.1 Organisation of Teaching and Learning

PPE Foundation Year teaching will take place through a mixture of lectures, seminars, classes and tutorials. Each of these modes of teaching will contribute to your learning and to your performance in assessments, alongside substantial amounts of independent study. Your study time will be spent both on subject specific work for PPE subject modules, including the Mathematics for PPE module, and work related to the Preparation for Undergraduate Study modules. It is intended that the PUGS course work is complementary to the subject specific work.

If you have any issues with your teaching or with any of your lecturers or tutors, please raise these as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly. Students can raise concerns with their Course Lead or with the Foundation Year Programme Team in the first instance. For further information about how to make a complaint or academic appeal see the Department of Continuing Education website <https://lifelong-learning.ox.ac.uk/about/appeals-complaints-policy>.

3.1.1 Teaching patterns

The exact pattern of teaching will vary over the course of the year and between different modules; for example, in Week 1 of Michaelmas Term you will have much greater contact time for Preparation for Undergraduate Study. Detailed information is available on Canvas to help you know what to expect: <https://canvas.ox.ac.uk/courses/270523>. Weekly teaching patterns across the course of the year are summarised in the table below.

Term	Weeks	Philosophy	Politics	Economics	Maths for PPE	Prep for UG Study
MT	W1	Foundations: 8 seminars in total			2 seminars & 2 tutorials	5 sessions
	W2					
	W3 – W8	Philosophy 1: 1 lecture & 1 class		Economics 1: 1 lecture, 1 tutorial & 1 computer class	1 seminar & 1 tutorial	Weekly full-group workshops, weekly/ fortnightly individual sessions, additional activities
HT	W1 – W6		Politics 1: 1 lecture & 1 tutorial	Economics 2: 1 lecture & 1 tutorial, 1 computer class/fortnight	1 seminar & 1 tutorial	
	W7 – W8	Philosophy 2: 2 lectures, 1 individual and 1 paired tutorial/ fortnight				
TT	W1 – W4		Politics 2: 1 lecture & 1 tutorial		1 seminar & 1 tutorial	
	W5 – W6					

Teaching for most of the PPE subject modules is delivered in two different modes each week: a lecture or a seminar, and a class or a tutorial.

Lectures typically last for one hour and will be delivered to the whole PPE Foundation Year cohort together. They are a teaching mode in which the lecturer can impart a lot of information about a topic to students and will include some, but limited, opportunities for interaction. It is important for you to engage actively in learning before, during and after the lecture, to get the most benefit from it; you are unlikely to learn much if you just sit passively in a lecture. Your subject and Preparation for Undergraduate Study tutors will advise you on good strategies for active learning during lectures.

Seminars typically last for 1.5 hours and will be delivered to the whole PPE Foundation Year cohort together. Like lectures, they are a teaching mode in which the lecturer (seminar leader) will impart information to students, but they will include more structured activities for student participation and interaction than a lecture.

Classes typically last for 1.5 hours and will be delivered to the whole PPE Foundation Year cohort together. They will primarily consist of structured activities for student participation and interaction, facilitated by the class tutor. In many cases, you will have to prepare and submit a structured assignment ahead of the class, and the class will provide an opportunity for discussion of and feedback on that assignment. In other cases, you will build skills during a class that you will apply to subsequent assignments. For example, during the computer classes which form part of the two Economics modules, you will develop and extend your skills in using standard software (Excel) to visualise, analyse and interpret empirical data on economic topics covered in these modules.

Tutorials typically last for 1 hour and are for smaller groups of students, typically two students and occasionally a single student with a tutor. They provide the opportunity for highly interactive and student-centred teaching and learning. They are a distinctive element of teaching and learning at the University of Oxford, differentiating it from most other universities around the world. You will typically write an essay or complete a structured assignment ahead of a tutorial, submitting it in advance so that the tutor can prepare the tutorial. Tutorials provide the opportunity for deep discussion of a topic with your tutorial partner and tutor, focussing on the students' particular interests and individual strengths and weaknesses.

Preparation for Undergraduate Studies course teaching will be delivered in larger group (whole Foundation Year cohort), with mentoring delivered on a one-to-one basis.

3.2 General guidance for formatting academic writing for submissions

Your course tutors will give you guidance on how to format and present your work. These are not just arbitrary rules; they are important guidelines that help your audience (such as examiners) read your work more easily.

When work is submitted for assessment by the examiners, students are advised to use the following guidance **unless there is specific guidance on Canvas for your assessment which is different (please check).**

1. **Work submitted on Inspira must be typed** as a Word document or similar, and then saved as a PDF file for submission. It cannot be a photo or a scan of a handwritten or typed document.

2. **Formatting your work.** Unless it says otherwise in the specific guidance for your assessment, it is recommended that work submitted on Inspira should be:
 - a. A4 sized page. Margins should be no greater than 2.85cm.
 - b. Black font on a white background. Students should use a sans serif font (such as Arial, Helvetica, Calibri or Aptos). Normal text should be size 12pt, with titles no larger than size 14pt. The list of references and captions for tables and figures may a smaller font, though no smaller than 10pt.
4. **Double space your work.** The body of your essays should be double-spaced. The list of references and captions for tables and figures may be single-spaced.
5. **Formatting of paragraphs.** Do not indent the first line of the first paragraph, or the first paragraph of a new section of the essays. Ensure that paragraphs have clear paragraph breaks between them.
6. **Formatting of quotations.** Short quotations of a sentence or less should not be set in a paragraph by themselves. Longer quotations should be set in a separate paragraph, indented and single-spaced.
7. **Pages should be numbered.** You should have consecutive page numbers on each page of your written submission.
8. **Decide to use double or single quotation marks.** In academic writing, there isn't a fixed rule about whether single or double quotation marks should be used. Therefore, you can make a choice, but be consistent; if you start using double quotation marks, continue using them throughout your assignment.
9. **Understand how to format references.** Please check the specific guidance for your subject so that you format your references and citations as required in your subject.

Guidance on general grammatical practices

9. **Abbreviations:** Abbreviations, where used, should be defined in full with the abbreviation in brackets the first time the phrase is mentioned, and after that only the abbreviation used.
10. **Numbers:** The convention is that we write out the numbers zero to ten in words, and then use numerals for the numbers 11 onwards. However, there can be important exceptions and specific cases depending on what the number represents, where it appears in a sentence, and the subject you are writing for. Further guidance can be found here:
<https://www.eapfoundation.com/writing/skills/numbers/>.

Remember to proof-read your work before submission.

Remember to check that you are submitting the correct version of your work, and that it is for the correct assessment.

3.3 Expectations of study and student workload

Please note that this handbook should be read alongside the [University of Oxford Student Handbook](#) and the relevant college handbook. These three documents give a full explanation of the expectations of students.

The PPE Foundation Year is a full-time course and you are expected to treat it like a full-time job. During full term, you will be expected to devote at least forty hours per week to your studies. You may not undertake paid work during full term except under exceptional circumstances and in consultation with the Director of the Astrophoria Foundation Year.

During the foundation year you will spend time on both work for your PPE subject modules and work related to the Preparation for Undergraduate Study (PUGS) course.

For the PPE subject modules, you may have around 2 hours of lectures, 2-4 hours of seminars and classes, and 2-3 hours of tutorials in a typical week during full term.

For the PUGS course there will be classes spread across each term that cover general academic skills, communication skills and broader aspects of the university academic environment. These classes will usually take approximately three hours a week, but there may be occasions where there is an external visit (which may also be in the evening). You will have a regular one-to-one 30-minute meeting with your academic development tutor to discuss your academic reflective journal and progress. This will be weekly in Michaelmas Term, reducing to fortnightly in the later part of Hilary Term and for Trinity Term. Support will also be provided for the development of academic writing through the PUGS course.

The rest of your time will be devoted to independent study, including reading and other ways of accessing information, and completing essays and assignments in preparation for classes and tutorials. Each week you will be expected to submit 2-3 assignments, each of which may be an essay or a structured assignment, including assignments that are preliminary to writing an essay. You will be given guidance on independent study and time management within the Preparation for Undergraduate Study course; your subject tutors will also advise and support you.

While there is no formal teaching during the university vacations, 'vacation' is not synonymous with 'holiday'. Vacations should include some holiday time, and we recognise that for most students vacations will include money-earning time and/or home obligations. However, it is also essential to devote substantial time during the vacations to independent study, especially consolidation of the units covered in the previous term and preparation for examinations taking place on your return to Oxford.

3.3.1 General expectations

You are expected to attend **all** teaching sessions. In the event that you are unable to attend, you must email the member of teaching staff taking the session as well as the Foundation Year Programme Team at admin@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk in advance of the start of the session to explain your absence. All staff will keep a record of attendance and students who show a pattern of non-attendance will be flagged through the Academic Engagement Concerns Process (see section 3.3.2).

You are expected to arrive in good time for **all** teaching sessions (by this we mean arriving at the room to be ready for teaching before the session is scheduled to start). All staff will keep a record of punctuality and anyone who shows a pattern of repeated lateness will be flagged through the Academic Engagement Concerns Process. You are reminded that lateness affects the learning of other members of the cohort and shows disrespect for the teaching staff.

You are expected to complete **all** assignments set in the time allocated. Please see your subject specific guidance for more detailed instructions about the timing of work submission. In cases where it is unavoidable that a piece of work may be late you must contact the member of teaching

staff in good time to ask for an extension. The tutor has the right to refuse depending on the situation. Staff will keep a record and anyone who shows a pattern of repeated failure to submit, or to submit on time will be flagged through the Academic Engagement Concerns Process.

You are expected to respond to individual correspondence in a timely fashion. Where correspondence is to or from a mailing list a response is not expected (unless one is specifically requested). It is expected that you check your Oxford email and Canvas at least once every day.

Should academic staff have concerns about any matters outlined above, these will be flagged through the Academic Engagement Concerns Process. As outlined in the process this will escalate to the Foundation Year Director should concerns continue. Ultimately the process may lead into your college's disciplinary procedure related to "good academic standing" (as outlined below). The information about the Academic Engagement Concerns Process can be found on the AFY website.

You may raise concerns about your progress or about other issues which might affect your academic fitness to study at any time with your Subject Lead, Course Lead, PUGS mentor or the Foundation Year Welfare Lead as appropriate (see section 3.3.2).

While the course is designed to help you prepare to pursue study of your chosen subject at university, it is recognised that sometimes you may need some additional support. You are expected to ask for clarification in cases of uncertainty, and to ask for support if necessary (welfare@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk).

3.3.2 Good academic standing

Academic engagement is fundamentally important in making the transition to university level learning. This means more than "working hard" and we will discuss it further in PUGS course sessions, but it will be hard to engage fully with academic study if you do not attend sessions or complete work to a reasonable standard to be able to participate in sessions.

Each College has its own disciplinary procedure. This will include information about what is required for a student to be in "good academic standing" but please note that there is variation in the wording used to describe what this is. Foundation Year students are first members of their College, and then members of the Foundation Year, therefore each student is expected to remain in "good academic standing" as defined by their College (see College Handbook).

Academic behaviour whilst on the Foundation Year is expected to reflect the general principles of good academic standing as follows:

- You are expected to attend all teaching sessions punctually
- You are expected to participate fully in all teaching, making active contributions to the sessions
- You are expected to complete all work for teaching sessions to a good standard (sufficient to enable contribution to teaching session), having spent an adequate amount of time in preparation
- You are expected to respond promptly to correspondence from staff, whether teaching or administrative staff
 - You are expected to take assessments as appropriate

In all of these cases, these expectations may be excused with permission of the teaching staff or Foundation Year Director. Students who fail to remain in good academic standing will be referred to the Academic Engagement Concerns process, more details of which may be found on the AFY

website. If failure to remain in good academic standing is deemed to be related to your fitness to study, the Fitness to Study process, also outlined on the AFY website, may apply.

4 Assessment

The Examination Regulations are the formal rules that govern your examinations for the PPE Foundation Year. You can find the Regulations for this course at <https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk>. Please note that you will need to read both the [General Regulations for the Foundation Year Certificate of Higher Education](#) and the related regulations for the [Certificate of Higher Education in Philosophy, Politics and Economics](#).

4.1 Assessment structure

The PPE Foundation Year is a modular course and each subject module is assessed separately. All subject assessments are marked on a 100-mark scale and your overall result will depend on a weighted average of your marks for the different assessments. The marking criteria for the PPE Foundation Year are specified in the Examination Conventions (see section 4.3 below).

The structure, types and weighting of assessments for each subject module are summarised below and are set out in full detail in the Examination Regulations and the Examination Conventions.

- There is no formal assessment for the *Foundations in PPE* module.
- The *Philosophy 1: Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* module accounts for 9% of the final grade. Assessment: closed book examination in week 0 of Hilary Term.
- The *Philosophy 2: Problems of Philosophy* module accounts for 21% of the final grade. Assessment: submission of a revised tutorial essay (20%) in week 5 of Trinity Term and closed book examination (80%) in week 8 of Trinity Term.
- The *Politics 1: Theory of Politics* module accounts for 9% of the final grade. Assessment: submission of a revised tutorial essay (20%) in week 9 of Hilary term and closed book examination (80%) in week 0 of Trinity Term.
- The *Politics 2: Practice of Politics* module accounts for 21% of the final grade. Assessment: submission of a revised tutorial essay (20%) in week 5 of Trinity Term and closed book examination (80%) in week 8 of Trinity Term.
- The *Economics 1: Economic Development, Inequality and the Environment* module accounts for 9% of the final grade. Assessment: submission of a data analysis report (20%) in week 9 of Michaelmas Term and closed book examination (80%) in week 0 of Hilary Term.
- The *Economics 2: Economics of Society and Public Policy* module accounts for 21% of the final grade. Assessment: closed book examination in week 0 of Trinity Term.
- The *Mathematics for PPE* module accounts for 10% of the final grade. Assessment: three closed book examinations in week 0 of Hilary Term (25%), week 0 of Trinity Term (25%) and week 8 of Trinity Term (50%).

The Preparation for Undergraduate Study course assessments are mandatory for progression through the course but do not contribute towards the final mark. Over the course of the academic year students will be required to complete the following:

- Two revised pieces of academic writing,
- One written report,

- Two oral presentations (one to be a presentation with visual aids and one to be a poster presentation) and
- One reflective learning journal.

4.1.1 Assessment outcomes

The precise requirements for award of the Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE) and progression to the undergraduate programme in PPE at Oxford are set out in the Examination Regulations and Examination Conventions.

In summary, in order to pass the course and be awarded the CertHE, you will be required to attain a passing mark of 40 or more in every assessment. A Pass will not be sufficient for progression to Oxford undergraduate study. In order to progress to Year 1 of the undergraduate programme in PPE at Oxford, you will be required to attain an overall mark of 60 or more, including subject marks of 60 or more in at least two of Philosophy, Politics and Economics, with no subject mark (including Mathematics for PPE) below 50.

During the Foundation Year you will be supported to apply to other universities through UCAS, in case you do not achieve the progression requirements or you decide that you would prefer to complete your undergraduate degree elsewhere.

4.2 Feedback on learning and assessment

Feedback on your work is an important part of the learning process. During the PPE Foundation Year you will receive feedback from your tutors in several different forms. The feedback that you receive will focus on the academic skills that you are developing as much as your command of the subject content.

It is essential that you seek to understand this feedback and put your tutors' recommendations into action in subsequent learning activities: the students who thrive most academically at Oxford are those who do this. If there is anything that you find confusing in the feedback that you receive, you should discuss this with your subject tutor or a member of the Preparation for Undergraduate Study team. We are here to support you academically and will always be happy to help students who are eager to improve their academic performance.

For each subject module, one of the teaching sessions each week (typically a class or tutorial) will focus on an essay or structured assignment that you have completed. In many cases, you will submit this essay or assignment in advance, and the tutor will give written feedback (for example, marking comments) as well as verbal feedback in the class or tutorial. In some cases, the feedback will primarily be given in one form or the other (written or verbal). You will also have regular meetings with a Preparation for Undergraduate Study mentor who will help you to keep a reflective journal of your progress so that you can take charge of your own learning.

Your subject tutors will not typically give feedback on assignments in the form of numerical marks. However, they may give you an indication of the broad level at which your work would be assessed, to help you focus your efforts for improvement. This may include the use of particular words or *descriptors*, which indicate broad levels of achievement. The table below will help you to interpret the feedback that you receive.

Descriptor	Numerical mark band		CertHE result	Notes
<i>Excellent</i>	High Distinction	80 – 100	Distinction	

<i>Very Good</i>	Distinction	70 – 79		Marks of 60 or more are required for progression to the undergraduate programme (see section 4.1.1)
<i>Good</i>	Merit	60 – 69	Merit	
<i>Improvement required</i>	High Pass	50 – 59	Pass	CertHE awarded but progression is not possible
<i>(Poor)</i>	Pass	40 – 49		
<i>Very poor</i>	Fail	0 – 39	Fail	CertHE not awarded

Note: *Poor* is not available on TMS but will be used as a feedback descriptor.

Formal feedback will be provided at the end of each term through the TMS reporting system. Tutors for each of your subject modules will summarise your progress and their recommendations for improvements in their TMS report. They will use descriptors similar to those used for feedback on assignments. You will have an opportunity to discuss your TMS reports in a termly meeting with the Foundation Year Director.

You will also have the opportunity to complete practice or mock examinations (called *collections* in Oxford jargon) for many of your subject modules. Your subject tutors will give a numerical mark and return the script to you with written comments.

Feedback on University examinations is given via marks and information on generic cohort performance published by the examiners (see section 4.11), but individual scripts are not commented on or returned, in line with standard University policy.

If you have any concerns about your academic progress or about other issues which might affect your academic fitness to study, you may raise them at any time with your tutors, the PPE Foundation Year Course Lead, your PUGS mentor or the Foundation Year Welfare Lead as appropriate (see sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

4.3 Examination conventions

Examination Conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how your examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of your award. They include information on: marking scales, marking and classification criteria, scaling of marks, progression, resits, use of viva voce examinations, penalties for late submission, and penalties for over-length work.

The Examination Conventions for the PPE Foundation Year can be viewed on the [Astrophoria Foundation Year website](#). The Examination Conventions for the academic year 2025/26 will be published here at the beginning of Michaelmas Term 2025.

4.4 Good academic practice and avoiding plagiarism

The Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme will follow the University of Oxford's [guidelines relating to plagiarism](#). The University defines plagiarism as follows:

“Presenting work or ideas from another source as your own, with or without consent of the original author, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition, as is the use of material generated wholly or in part through use of artificial

intelligence (save when use of AI for assessment has received prior authorisation e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a student's disability). Plagiarism can also include re-using your own work without citation. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence."

Please note the Preparation for Undergraduate Study Course will include sessions relating to plagiarism that you will be expected to attend.

All staff who set and mark assessments will also be aware of University guidelines relating to plagiarism.

Additional guidance documents relating to the Astrophoria Foundation Year (including guidance on the use of AI) can be found at <https://foundationyear.ox.ac.uk/current-students>.

4.5 Entering for University examinations

For the Astrophoria Foundation Year programme all students will be automatically entered for their summative examinations/assessments. You will be able to see your assessments by logging on to Student Self Service.

There is a lot of useful information relating to examinations on the [Oxford Students website](#).

4.6 Examination dates

Examinations for the PPE subject modules will take place in the following weeks:

- Hilary Term Week 0 – Examinations
- Trinity Term Week 0 – Examinations
- Trinity Term Week 8 – Examinations

Should they be needed, re-assessment opportunities will take place in the windows above or in an additional re-assessment window in September.

Dates for submitted assessments and presentations are detailed in section 4.8 below.

Exam Timetable: The exam timetable for your subject will be finalised and published no less than 5 weeks in advance of your assessment and can be found on the University's exam timetable pages here: [Oxford Student website](#). In addition, you will be sent a personalised email with your examination timetable around two weeks in advance of your exams.

4.7 Sitting your in-person examinations

All assessed PPE subject modules will be assessed through an in-person closed-book examination, in some cases alongside a coursework submission. Some examinations will be handwritten while others will be typed.

You will be told where to go to take your in-person examination and given guidance about arrival at the location.

NOTE: When attending Foundation Year examinations students must wear academic dress, as specified in the Examination Regulations (i.e. subfusc, gown and mortar board).

Conduct: Full details of how to sit Oxford examinations and the relevant guidelines can be found at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/guidance>.

Calculators: Calculators may be used in all Economics and Mathematics for PPE exams. As specified in the Examination Conventions, calculators used in these exams must be from the list of permitted types as specified by the Department of Economics on the [Economics Undergraduate Information Canvas site](#).

4.8 Submitted work

All submitted assessments will be submitted online via Inspera. Ensure you are familiar with the online submission process in advance of any deadline and that you have read the rubric guiding what is to be submitted properly. Full information is provided on the Oxford Students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/submission).

Provisional submission deadlines for PPE subject module submitted work in the 2025-26 academic year are as follows:

- Economics Paper 1 report submission: 12 noon on Wednesday of week 9 of Michaelmas Term (10 December 2025)
- Politics Paper 1 essay submission: 12 noon on Wednesday of week 9 of Hilary Term (18 March 2026)
- Philosophy Paper 2 essay submission: 12 noon on Wednesday of week 5 of Trinity Term (27 May 2026)
- Politics Paper 2 essay submission: 12 noon on Wednesday of week 5 of Trinity Term (27 May 2026)

Provisional submission deadlines for PUGS submitted work in the 2025-26 academic year are as follows:

- Academic writing portfolio submission: 12 noon on Friday of week 6 of Trinity Term (5 June 2026)
- Reflective journal submission: 12 noon on Friday of week 8 of Trinity Term (19 June 2026)
- Society & Culture report submission: 12 noon on Friday of week 8 of Trinity Term (19 June 2026)

4.9 Assessed presentations

The PUGS course is assessed through presentations as well as coursework submissions. You will be given full information about preparing for and delivering the assessed presentations.

The provisional presentation dates for the 2025-26 academic year are as follows:

- Communication Skills 1 oral presentation: week 4 of Hilary Term (9-13 February 2026)
- Communication Skills 2 oral presentation: week 4 of Trinity Term (18-22 May 2026)

4.10 Problems completing your assessment

There are a number of University processes in place to help you if you find that illness or other personal circumstances are affecting your assessments or if you experience technical difficulties with an online exam or submission. Full information is available on the Oxford Students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment).

You can also call or email the Foundation Year Welfare Lead if you need support (welfare@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk).

4.11 External examiner and examiners' reports

You will be able to read the Examiners' reports for previous years' assessments. These are yet to be published, and you will be informed when they are available.

The name, position and institution of the external examiner for the PPE Foundation Year may be found in the Examination Conventions. Students are strictly prohibited from contacting external examiners directly and should not discuss assessments with internal examiners.

If you are unhappy with an aspect of your assessment you may make a complaint or appeal (see section 7.2, *Complaints and Appeals*).

4.12 After the exams

Following each assessment period the assessors will mark and provide provisional results.

If you have achieved a mark of over 40 this remains provisional until the final Exam Board finalise them at the end of the year. These provisional results will be given to you by email from the Foundation Year Programme Team.

If you have achieved a mark lower than 40, the External Examiner will review and finalise (ratify) your result as a Fail. You will then be offered the opportunity of one resit which is capped at a mark of 40/pass. Please see the Exam Regulations and Conventions for further details.

Your results that give the final mark for the course outcome will be approved and finalised by the Foundation Year Exam Board in July. The final results will be available after this exam board meeting via Student Self-Service.

NOTE – you may hear the term “ratified”. This is another word that means that the results have been finalised by the Examiners.

5 Skills and Learning Development

5.1 Academic Progress

Your academic progress will be monitored by your subject tutors and by the PPE Foundation Year course lead. Feedback will be given in tutorials and classes, through termly TMS reports and via termly meetings with the PPE Foundation Year course lead.

If you have any concerns about your academic progress, do not wait for termly reports or meetings to raise them. You are encouraged to reach out to your subject tutors, the PPE Foundation Year course lead or your Preparation for Undergraduate Study mentor as soon as any concerns arise. The earlier we know about your concerns, the better we can work with you to address them.

5.2 Learning development and skills

The core purpose of the PPE Foundation Year course is to offer students the opportunity to develop the academic skills needed to thrive as a student of PPE at Oxford. These include subject-specific skills, which are developed through the study of subject-specific units across Politics, Philosophy and Economics as well as Mathematics for PPE. They also include general academic skills, which are predominantly covered in the Preparation for Undergraduate Study units that run throughout the

Astrophoria Foundation Year programme. A summary of each of these units and their intended learning outcomes may be found in section 2, *Course Content and Structure*.

5.3 Induction

Foundation Year students take part in an orientation week (week -1) and an academic induction week (week 1) at the beginning of Michaelmas Term.

An introduction to general academic skills will be given in the orientation week (Michaelmas Term week -1) with a series of classes and activities designed to get you to think about the transition to working in a university setting. The academic induction week (Michaelmas Term week 1) will provide a series of interactive seminars designed to enable you to develop a “toolkit” of academic and study skills. This will sit alongside introductory teaching for your subject course. The general academic skills teaching will continue throughout the year predominantly on Wednesday mornings, giving you the opportunity to continue this development.

5.4 Opportunities for skills training and development

As noted above, the core teaching and learning activities on the PPE Foundation Year focus on specific and general skills development.

If you wish to explore further resources, a wide range of information and training materials are available to help you develop your academic skills – including time management, research and library skills, referencing, revision skills and academic writing – through the Oxford Students website <http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills>.

5.5 Employability and careers information and advice

The academic and college environment at Oxford University is rich with opportunities for you to develop many transferable skills that are eagerly sought by employers. Undertaking an intellectually demanding academic course will equip you for the demands of many jobs.

It is intended that by taking part in the Foundation Year Programme you will develop skills, self-belief and academic confidence. The course will prepare you for a challenging undergraduate course at a high tariff university, whether at Oxford or elsewhere, which could be the next step towards your desired career.

In college and university sports teams, clubs and societies within and outside the University, you will have the chance to take the lead and play an active part within and outside the University.

Surveys of employers report that they find Oxford students better or much better than the average UK student at key employability skills such as problem solving, leadership, and communication. Hundreds of recruiters visit the University each year, demonstrating their demand for Oxford undergraduate and postgraduate students, fewer than 5% of whom are unemployed and seeking work six months after leaving.

Comprehensive careers advice and guidance is available from the Oxford University Careers Service, and not just while you are here: our careers support is for life. We offer tailored individual advice, job fairs and workshops to inform the job search and application process, whether next steps are within academia or beyond. You will also have access to thousands of UK-based and international internships, work experience and job vacancies available on the Careers Service

website at www.careers.ox.ac.uk. Further information can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/experience.

6 Student Representation, Evaluation and Feedback

Consultation of students takes a number of forms. It is important that you give us your views and feel free to do so, in order that we may deal with problems that arise both relating to you personally and to the course. Confidentiality is preserved when we seek feedback and will be maintained if you wish it when you discuss issues of concern to you. We will seek and welcome your feedback in various ways.

6.1 Department representation

Student representatives will be selected to represent the AFY cohort and provide feedback.

The Foundation Year Programme is governed at a Departmental Level by the AFY Joint Standing Committee, which includes representatives from all participating subject departments and other stakeholders. There will be one student representative from PPE on this committee, alongside student representatives from other Foundation Year courses.

6.2 Division and University representation

The Foundation Year Programme is governed through the Department of Continuing Education processes with strategic oversight by the AFY Management Committee. There will be one student representative from the Foundation Year Programme on this committee.

6.3 Opportunities to provide evaluation and feedback

The feedback which you provide to lecturers and tutors is valued and is taken seriously. It has an important role in maintaining the quality of the education you receive at Oxford.

You are welcome to provide feedback informally in person or via email to your subject lecturers and tutors or to the PPE FY Course Lead at any point during the course.

More formally, as a Foundation Year student you will be given the opportunity to provide termly evaluation and feedback via anonymous questionnaires. This feedback will be reviewed by the PPE FY Academic Leadership Team and the Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme Team, and will be considered during future development of the programme. The Foundation Year Programme is still very new, and we welcome all feedback for reviewing the courses. The AFY Director and/or the PPE FY Course Lead are responsible for ensuring that any problems reported through the questionnaires are addressed.

Students on full-time and part-time matriculated courses are surveyed once per year on all aspects of their course (learning, living, pastoral support, college) through the Student Barometer. Previous results can be viewed by students, staff and the general public at: www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/student-engagement?wssl=1.

Students are reminded that any concerns about teaching should be raised as soon as possible so that they can be addressed promptly. Students can raise concerns with their Course Lead or with the Foundation Year Programme Team in the first instance. For further information about making an

appeal or a complaint please see [this webpage](#) which outlines the process in the Department of Continuing Education.

7 Student Life and Support

7.1 Who to contact for help

The Foundation Year Programme Team can help with queries relating to the Astrophoria Foundation Year programme as a whole. They can also assist with administrative queries related to bursaries and grant payments. You can reach them via email at admin@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk. The team are located in Rewley House (Department of Continuing Education), 1 Wellington Square, OX1 2JA.

The Foundation Year Welfare Lead is Cat Purtell. She can help with queries relating to welfare, disability and access requirements. You can reach her via email at welfare@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

The PPE Course Lead is Natalie Quinn. She can help with queries relating to subject specific teaching and learning. You can reach her via email at natalie.quinn@economics.ox.ac.uk.

The Course Administrator (maternity cover) is Nick Clements. He can help with queries related to the administration of the course. You can reach him via email at ppe@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

The acting Preparation for Undergraduate Study Course Lead is Cat Purtell. She can help with queries relating to the Preparation for Undergraduate Study course. You can reach her via email at pugs@foundationyear.ox.ac.uk.

Every college has their own systems of support for students, please refer to your own college handbook or website for more information on who to contact and what support is available.

Details of the wide range of sources of support available more widely in the University are available from the Oxford Students website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare), including in relation to mental and physical health and disability. The Foundation Year website also has useful resources linked to student support, welfare and financial support. The website can be accessed here: <https://foundationyear.ox.ac.uk/welfare>.

7.2 Disability Advisory Service

Students are encouraged to register with the Disability Advisory Service in advance of commencing their studies at Oxford. The Disability Advisory Service are able to offer advice, support and guidance, as well as support in the registration for a Student Support Plan to enable academic staff to make appropriate reasonable adjustments to support students. More information can be found here: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability>.

7.3 Complaints and appeals

The University has procedures for students should they believe a formal complaint or appeal is required. The Astrophoria Foundation Year Programme sits in the Department of Continuing Education, and will follow the guidance as set out by the webpage ([here](#)). Before embarking on any formal procedure, students are advised to approach a relevant senior figure with their concern and discuss it informally as soon as they think there is a problem.

7.4 Student societies

There are a number of student societies at the University of Oxford. See the full list of non-sport societies at the University of Oxford at <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/clubs/list>. In addition, a list of registered sports clubs can be found at <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/sports-a-to-z>.

Each individual college has a large number of clubs and societies, including music, drama and sport, and a Junior Common Room for its undergraduate students, including Foundation Year students.

7.5 Policies and regulations

The University has a wide range of policies and regulations that apply to students. These are easily accessible through the A-Z of University regulations, codes of conduct and policies available on the Oxford Students website www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/regulations/a-z.

Please also be aware of the [University's policy](#) regarding the recording of lectures or classes at the University of Oxford. There is also a [form](#) students are required to complete if they wish to record a lecture or class.

Additional guidance documents relating to the Astrophoria Foundation Year (including guidance on the use of AI) can be found at <https://foundationyear.ox.ac.uk/current-students>.

8 Facilities

8.1 Workspace

There are a wide variety of workspaces available to you in Oxford which can be used for studying outside of teaching contact hours. There are University, department and college libraries. First-year student rooms typically come with a desk and chair should you wish to work in your room. There are many outdoor spaces including parks and college gardens to make the most of during warmer weather. There are also numerous cafes across Oxford which some students choose to work in during the day.

8.2 Libraries/museums

A list of museums that you may wish to visit while you are in Oxford can be found at www.ox.ac.uk/visitors/visiting-oxford/visiting-museums-libraries-places.

A comprehensive list of all libraries associated with the University of Oxford, their locations, subject areas, and opening hours is at www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/subjects-and-libraries/libraries. The blue University Card provides you with access to the libraries. If this card is lost, stolen, or damaged, you should inform your college. They will advise on how to replace it.

8.3 IT

A wide range of IT facilities, software and training is available to you as an Oxford student. For further information see www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/it.