



**MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
LITHUANIA**

**ORDER
ON APPROVAL OF THE DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF POLITICAL
SCIENCE**

November 30, 2022 No V-1903
Vilnius

In accordance with Paragraph 11 of Article 53 of the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania:

1. I approve the Descriptor of the Study Field of Political Science (enclosed).
2. I determine that the higher education institutions have to adjust their study programmes to the Descriptor of the Study Field of Political Science approved by Clause 1 hereby until 1 September 2023.
3. I recognise Order No V-828 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of July 23 2015 “On Approval of the Descriptor of the Study Field of Political Science” as invalid.

Minister of Education, Science and Sport

Jurgita Šiugždinienė

APPROVED BY Order No V-1903 by the
Minister of Education, Science and Sport
of the Republic of Lithuania of 30
November 2022

DESCRIPTOR OF THE STUDY FIELD OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Descriptor of the study field of Political Science (hereinafter referred to as the “Descriptor”) regulates the special requirements for the study programmes in the study field of Political Science (J02) (hereinafter referred to as the “field of Political Science”). The Descriptor regulates the studies in the field of Political Science in the scope not covered by the General Requirements for the Provision of Studies approved by Order No V-1168 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 30 December 2016 “On Approval of Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies”.

2. The Descriptor has been prepared in accordance with the conference proceedings of the International Political Science Association (IPSA), as well as sources (*ECPR Standing group Teaching and Learning Politics, Publications and Resources* (<https://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/tlp/activities/publications-and-resources/>) provided by the European Policy Research Consortium (EPCR) Teaching and Learning Politics Working Group, the American Political Science Association (APSA), and the *APSA Educate* platform (<https://educate.apsanet.org/>).

3. Studies in the study field of Political Science can be carried out only as university studies. This Descriptor regulates first and second cycle studies in the study field of Political Science.

4. Graduates are awarded a Bachelor’s/Master’s qualification degree in social sciences corresponding to the sixth/seventh level of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, and the first/second level of the European Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area, as attested by the Bachelor’s/Master’s diploma and the diploma supplement issued by the higher education institution.

5. Study programmes may be organised as either full-time or part-time studies. When studies are organised in different modes, the duration and intensity of the studies vary, but the content and the results must not be different. It is recommended that priority be given to the full-time mode of study.

6. First cycle study programmes, aimed at providing students with a basic knowledge of political science and research methods, may intended for:

6.1. exclusively for studies in the field of Political Science. In this case, the volume of studies must be at least 180 study credits (including internship and preparation of the final thesis);

6.2. for two-field studies (in the field of Political Science and a second field of study defined by the higher education institution and chosen by the student) leading to a double Bachelor’s qualification degree in social sciences and the second field of study. In this case, the minimum number of study credits in the field of Political Science shall be 120 (including internship and the preparation of the final thesis);

6.3. for interdisciplinary studies. If political science is the main field of study of the interdisciplinary study programme, the minimum number of study credits in political science must be 120 (including internship and the preparation of the final thesis). If political science is not the main field of study of the interdisciplinary study programme, it may not be less than 90 study credits for two-field studies and 60 study credits for three-field studies.

7. There are no specific requirements established in the Descriptor for admission to the first cycle study programmes.

8. Second cycle studies are designed to develop disciplinary expertise and to prepare for independent research work, which requires theoretical and methodological knowledge of political science and the ability to critically evaluate and apply it. The studies shall comprise of at least 90 study credits (including internship and the preparation of the final thesis).

9. It is recommended that the following persons be admitted to the second cycle studies:

9.1. those who have completed first cycle university studies in political science and meet the other requirements set by the higher education institution;

9.2. those who have completed first cycle university studies in other fields of study, bridging courses (if required by the higher education institution), and meet the other requirements set by the higher education institution;

9.3. those who have completed college studies, the necessary bridging courses and meet other requirements set by the higher education institution.

10. The list of subjects, content and scope of bridging courses shall be determined by the higher education institution in accordance with the following requirements:

10.1. where the field of study of the applicant's completed first cycle university studies belongs to the social sciences group of study fields, the volume of bridging courses may not exceed 30 study credits;

10.2. where the field of study of the applicant's completed first cycle studies does not belong to the social sciences group of study fields or where the applicant has completed college studies, the volume of bridging courses may not exceed 60 study credits;

11. The higher education institution may impose other additional requirements (both permanent and temporary) for admission to Master's degree study programmes in the field of Political Science. It is recommended that such or similar requirements be imposed: a minimum level of completion of first cycle studies (minimum average of all or some of the grades), the necessary academic or professional experience, and other academic, competence or professional requirements. The level of preparation is assessed by the higher education institution. Admission must be based on pre-announced selection criteria.

12. The main objectives of all cycles of study are:

12.1. to develop political science competences: the ability to understand, evaluate and apply political science theories and analytical tools to explain complex and ever-changing political phenomena and processes;

12.2. to develop critical thinking, strong analytical skills, wide erudition, civic mindedness and responsibility for one's actions and their implications for societal development, the economy, culture and environment;

12.3. to develop one's interest in political phenomena and strong appreciation for evidence-based analysis;

12.4. to develop the ability to maintain and further develop professional competencies through lifelong learning.

CHAPTER II CONCEPT AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY FIELD

13. The study object of political science is politics and the relationships, processes, structures, organisations, institutions and issues involved. Political science research aims to directly or indirectly address the key questions regarding power (authority), justice, legitimacy, order, conflict, accountability, sovereignty, security, governance, decision-making and decision implementation.

14. Political science is closely related to other disciplines in social sciences and humanities (law, economics, management, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy) in its object of study and theoretical and methodological approaches.

15. The studies of political science must reveal the complexity of political phenomena and their developments at all levels (individual, societal, local, regional, national, international and global). The interpretation and understanding of politics and political phenomena must be characterised by a diversity of theoretical approaches and debates, and research must be based on the application and/or combination of different methodologies. Interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary is characteristic to Political science.

16. The study field of Political Science consists of the following key branches: political science research methods, political theory, history of political thought, comparative politics, international relations, area and nation-states studies, public administration, and public policy. Given the wide spectrum of specialisations of researchers working in the field, a number of sub-fields or narrower areas of political science can also be distinguished: studies of political systems and constitutionalism, parliaments, the executive, parties, elections, interest groups, as well as studies of security, war, peace, strategy, sustainable development, foreign policy analysis, etc. Political science study programmes may focus on selected branches or sub-branches of political science.

17. The field of Political Science also has interdisciplinary studies that have formed from two (or more) separate academic disciplines, such as: political anthropology, political economy, political philosophy, political geography, geopolitics, political history, political communication, political psychology, political sociology, studies of organizations and others.

18. The study of political science must convey both the close relationship between political science and the other social sciences and the humanities, and the substantive and methodological diversity of political science itself, ranging from the history of political ideas to the analysis of contemporary political decisions and processes.

19. Research in the field of Political science draws on a wide variety of research strategies and methods and uses a range of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods from the fields of social sciences and humanities. Political science curricula need to capture this diversity and introduce students to a wide variety research methods, tools, and techniques.

20. Graduates of both first and second cycle study programmes can work as experts, advisors, consultants, analysts, in all levels of government, private companies, and NGOs; as well as policy analysts and commentators in the mass media, pursue professional careers in international organisations, continue their studies at the doctoral level, become university teachers, academics or directly involved in politics, pursue careers in associations and political organisations, political parties, and become well-equipped politicians.

21. Taking into account the specificities of the object of political science and the international and national experience in political science research and curriculum development, it is recommended that political science study programmes should:

21.1. focus on how politics is conducted at different levels and forms of societal organisations (local communities, states, regions, international arena) and in different spheres of social life;

21.2. ensure that students acquire basic knowledge of political science and are exposed to the main methodological schools of thought, theories and research methods that explain it, and are able to analyse, compare and evaluate political phenomena and policies in their own separate areas;

21.3. help students to understand the dynamic nature of political science and its inherent need for constant renewal and the search for new tools and approaches to study, as well as understand and explain politics;

21.4. encourage students to relate the academic study of political phenomena to current state and societal issues, and theories to practice, and to creatively apply their knowledge and skills to specific issues of local, national, regional and international political development;

21.5. help students to acquire not only academic knowledge, but also more general intellectual and social skills necessary for their further intellectual, professional and personal activity, and the need to continuously develop and improve them;

21.6. create a learning environment that respects students, takes account of their needs and encourages them to reach their full potential.

CHAPTER III GENERAL AND SPECIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

22. By studying political science, students deepen their subject-specific knowledge, develop their ability to apply it in practice, as well as develop their research, special, social and personal skills and abilities in order to understand, analyse, critically assess and collaboratively address complex contemporary issues in Lithuanian and Global politics, such as democracy, technological change, migration, climate change, globalisation, economic sustainability and more.

23. The following learning outcomes must be achieved by the graduates upon completion of first cycle studies:

23.1. knowledge and its application. The graduate:

23.1.1. is able to identify, explain, interpret and critically assess key theories and models in political science;

23.1.2. has the knowledge of the latest developments in political science research and is able to draw on its findings;

23.1.3. is able to apply the acquired knowledge when dealing with practical global, national or local political issues;

23.1.4. has the basic knowledge and understanding of the related disciplines in social sciences and humanities (law, economics, management, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy), and understands the place of political science within the social sciences;

23.2. research skills. The graduate:

23.2.1. is able to independently select a research topic and formulate a research problem relevant to the studies of political science;

23.2.2. is familiar with the main research methods (qualitative and quantitative) in the social sciences and is able to select and apply those appropriate to the analysis of political phenomena and processes;

23.2.3. has an advanced knowledge and understanding of at least one data collection and analysis tool and is able to design, conduct, transcribe interviews, surveys and use statistical data;

23.2.4. is able to locate, collect, interpret and critically evaluate information relevant to the research from a variety of sources;

23.3. special abilities. The graduate:

23.3.1. is able to understand, analyse and critically evaluate the changing content, actors and forms of expression of politics in the contemporary environment;

23.3.2. is able to select complex methodological tools to analyse political phenomena and processes;

23.3.3. is able to plan, organise and carry out a wide range of professional or analytical activities in the civil service, public or private companies, institutions or organisations, both in Lithuania and abroad (e.g. policy analysis, recommendations, strategic planning, policy communication, etc.);

23.4. social abilities. The graduate:

23.4.1. is able to express themselves correctly in writing and orally in the language of the study programme (as well as at least one other foreign language if the study programme is conducted in a national language), to speak concisely, clearly and comprehensibly to a wide range of audiences, to use

political science terms appropriately, and to coherently present and properly visualise the ideas conveyed and the results of the research;

23.4.2. is able to work as part of a team, takes responsibility for the quality of the work, and is able to organise the work in order to achieve the objectives set;

23.4.3. bases their work on professional ethics and civic mindedness;

23.5. personal abilities. The graduate:

23.5.1. is able to learn independently, understand the importance of lifelong learning and plan their personal professional development;

23.5.2. is able to adapt to unpredictable changes brought about by rapid development of knowledge and technology, and integrate and apply the knowledge and experience acquired in political science to the needs of different professional activities;

23.5.3. respects copyright and other intellectual property rights; properly, legally and fairly quotes from sources and other authors, and does not support plagiarism in any way;

23.5.4. is aware of the moral responsibility for the impact of their activities and their results on the development of society, the economy, culture, well-being and the environment.

24. The following learning outcomes must be achieved by the graduates upon completion of second cycle studies:

24.1. knowledge and its application. The graduate:

24.1.1. understands and is able to explain, interpret, compare and critically assess various theories and methods in political science;

24.1.2. draws on an in-depth knowledge of the sub-disciplines in the field and on the latest research findings in argumentation or research;

24.1.3. understands the impact of the international environment and international relations on local, regional, national or global politics;

24.1.4. is able to apply acquired knowledge creatively when solving problems related to the assessment and analysis of political phenomena and processes in new or unfamiliar environments, doing research or professional activities, and introducing innovation in the public, non-governmental or private sectors;

24.1.5. is able to explain and critically assess the links between political science and related fields such as economics, law, management, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy and others;

24.2. research skills. The graduate:

24.2.1. is able to justify the novelty and scientific relevance of their chosen research topic on policy phenomena or processes;

24.2.2. has an advanced knowledge and understanding of political science research methodology and is able to independently plan and carry out research, as well as apply quantitative and qualitative research methods, collect and analyse data;

24.2.3. is able to collect, interpret and critically evaluate information relevant to the research from a variety of sources, to justify the relevance of this information and to assess its reliability;

24.2.4. is able to articulate and highlight the limitations and added value of the findings of a study of a policy phenomenon or process, and to make evidence-based recommendations to address the issues;

24.3. special abilities. The graduate:

24.3.1. is able to analyse and evaluate contemporary political processes at the national, European, international and global levels using the theoretical, empirical and methodological knowledge acquired, as well as to assess them in the more general conceptual context of political science;

24.3.2. is able to operate in a complex and ever-changing environment, and make innovative decisions based on research findings, assessment of alternatives and potential social and ethical implications;

24.3.3. is able to work in an international context and engage in international academic and political communication networks, and in the design and implementation of collective research projects and other activities on political phenomena or processes;

24.3.4. is able to write academic texts and develop analytical models in the field of Political Science;

24.4. social abilities. The graduate:

24.4.1. is able to express themselves correctly in writing and orally in the language of the study programme (as well as at least one other foreign language if the study programme is conducted in a national language), to speak concisely, clearly and comprehensibly to a wide range of audiences, to use the terms of political science and closely related disciplines appropriately, and to coherently present and properly visualise the ideas conveyed and the results of the research;

24.4.2. is able to participate in substantive debates in the public sphere and reflect on their scientific and practical position in the context of social diversity;

24.4.3. is able to work in national or international teams, initiate, plan and organise group activities; takes responsibility for the quality of their own performance and that of others, its assessment and improvement, and is able to provide constructive feedback;

24.4.4. bases their work on professional ethics and civic mindedness;

24.5. personal abilities. The graduate:

24.5.1. is able to plan independently for further learning, to choose the direction of development and to continuously improve and develop their professional competences, as well as to reflect and critically evaluate their profession and the challenges it faces;

24.5.2. is able to adapt to unpredictable changes in the environment and make innovative decisions by assessing the possible social and ethical consequences of their activities, and being aware of their moral responsibility for the impact of their activities and their results;

24.5.3. is able to summarise available information and use it as a basis for constructing critical assessments of political phenomena and processes, and for taking a reasoned position;

24.5.4. is able to draw on research in political science and other disciplines, has experience in research work and the skills of strategic and systemic thinking;

24.5.5. respects copyright and other intellectual property rights; properly, legally and fairly quotes from sources and other authors, and does not support plagiarism in any way.

CHAPTER IV TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

25. Teaching, learning and assessment must be based on the articulated objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme, taking into account the changing international and national context of political science studies and research.

26. The study process must be based on the latest research results published in the specialised scientific press, as well as on other primary and secondary sources (official documents, journalistic articles, etc.) dealing with current issues in policy processes.

27. The study methods chosen must ensure the achievement of the learning outcomes, foster critical thinking, promote versatility, active participation in the study process and taking responsibility for one's own learning. Study methods must be varied and flexible, combining traditional methods (e.g. demonstration, discussion, presentation, independent and team work) with modern methods (e.g. problem-based learning, simulation, role-playing, technology-enhanced teaching and learning, virtual mobility).

28. The requirements for students' independent written assignments must be formulated taking into account the differences in the established learning outcomes between study cycles. During the first study cycle, which aims to provide students with a basic knowledge of political science, the initial

scientific skills in the preparation and writing of a political science research paper are developed. The second study cycle, which aims to provide students with advanced knowledge and the ability to apply this knowledge in the context of their chosen specialisation, provides students with the basic skills of conducting scientific research, critical reading and writing scientific texts in the field of Political Science. A final thesis/project (Bachelor's and Master's) is essential to ensure the development of consistent basic research and academic writing skills.

29. The assessment system must allow teachers to monitor the dynamics of the result, to identify changes, to provide feedback, and to create preconditions for improving the results. The assessment system must ensure that students are oriented towards the required balance of knowledge and skills. It must include a variety of assessment methods to ensure fairness, clarity and validity. The higher education institution must ensure that the teacher has the right to choose the most appropriate assessment methods when establishing assessment procedures.

30. The system for the assessment of learning outcomes must be established in the documents of the higher education institution. Assessment must be based on the principles of validity, reliability, clarity, usefulness and impartiality.

CHAPTER V REQUIREMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STUDY PROGRAMMES

31. Requirements for teachers of first and second cycle study programmes in political science:

31.1. at least 60 % of the teachers of the first cycle study programme must hold a doctorate, and the remainder must hold a Master's degree or equivalent higher education qualification. Teachers may be scholars, doctoral students and practitioners in the field they teach;

31.1.1. scholars must have a publication and/or research record and/or practical experience relevant to the subject taught. Doctoral students must be engaged in research related to the subject taught;

31.1.2. practitioners must have at least 5 years of practical experience related to the subject taught;

31.2. at least 80 % of the teachers teaching study subjects in the second cycle study programme in the field of Political Science must hold a doctoral degree. The others may be practitioners with at least 5 years of professional experience relevant to the applied study subjects taught, acquired in the last 7 years. 20 % of the teachers teaching study subjects in the second cycle study programme in the field of Political Science must be professors. Scholars teaching a second cycle study programme in the field of Political Science must be actively involved in research.

32. The studies shall be complete by publicly defending a final thesis/project:

32.1. in the first cycle study programme, a minimum of 15 study credits must be allocated for the preparation and defence of the final thesis/project. In the case of a double degree study programme, it is recommended that a single final thesis/project integrating the results of the two fields of study be carried out;

32.2. in the second cycle study programme, a minimum of 30 study credits must be allocated for the preparation and defence of the final thesis/project;

32.3. final theses/projects of first and second cycle students shall be evaluated by an assessment board. The assessment board for the final theses in the field of Political Science must be composed of competent teachers and representatives of the social partners. At least one member of the assessment board (preferably the chairperson) must come from a different research and study institution from the one where the studies took place, or be a social partner.

33. The material and methodological resources of the higher education institution must be sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes of the study programme in the field of Political Science:

33.1. the number, arrangement and layout of classrooms, other study and independent work spaces, and the number of workstations in them must be appropriate to the needs of the studies and to the requirements of occupational safety and hygiene. Classrooms must be suitable for theoretical lectures,

seminars, practical training, group work and individual consultations; they must be adapted for persons with special educational needs. The classrooms must be equipped with modern audio-visual, computer, software and other modern technical equipment used in the educational environment, as well as the necessary methodological tools;

33.2. classrooms must have Internet access and wireless Internet connection; there must also be a sufficient number of computers with software for students' independent work, quantitative and qualitative research data processing software, innovative teaching and assignment software. Conditions must be created for learning in a virtual environment;

33.3. libraries and reading rooms must have access to relevant specialised literature in political science and related disciplines, literature on research methodology, access to national and international databases, and access to an integrated library information system.

34. Requirements for professional internship in study programmes in the field of Political Science are as follow:

34.1. higher education institutions must establish and approve internship procedures and regulations, formulate goals and objectives, and coordinate them with host organisations;

34.2. the total duration of internships in a first cycle study programme must be at least 15 study credits;

34.3. it is recommended that the first cycle programmes in the field of Political Science should combine the internship with the preparation of the Bachelor thesis;

34.4. students may choose the location of their professional internship in agreement with their higher education institution;

34.5. it is recommended that the higher education institution's unit responsible for the study programme in the field of Political Science should develop a system of supervision of the student's compulsory internship, which would allow academic supervisors to be involved in the formulation of the aims and objectives of the student's practical placement, to monitor the student's progress, and to ensure effective feedback from the students who have completed the internship and from the institution of practical placement;

34.6. professional and/or scientific internship may also be included in the second cycle study programmes if this is necessary to achieve the objectives or learning outcomes of a particular study programme.

35. Academic support is provided to students in the following ways:

35.1. the administration of the higher education institution must ensure that students have access to the necessary consultations;

35.2. teachers must encourage, motivate and oblige students to participate in the research activities of the faculty or department;

35.3. higher education institutions must provide regular advice on various aspects of study planning and improvement, career and financial management, and psychological support;

35.4. higher education institutions must provide opportunities for students with special needs to study;

35.5. higher education institutions must provide opportunities for students to organise cultural events on the premises of the higher education institution, to set up and participate in the activities of clubs, societies and student organisations;

35.6. higher education institutions must provide opportunities for students to continuously improve their studies, to provide feedback to teachers and the administration, to participate in curriculum committees and other governing bodies of the higher education institution.

36. Higher education institutions must encourage academic mobility of students and teachers and facilitate the recognition of qualifications.

37. Higher education institutions offering study programmes in the field of Political Science must ensure the quality of studies, continuously improve study programmes, take into account the latest

developments in the field of politics and related fields of study, the needs of the labour market and the needs of the students.
