The first two Lecturers in Politics - Ruth Atkins and Terry Hague - were appointed in 1952 within the then School of Humanities & Social Sciences. Together they formed the Department of Government, but Terry Hague left soon afterwards and Ruth Atkins was the sole lecturer in the subject for most of the 1950s, though her task at this time was only to provide general education courses for the University's various undergraduate degree programs. General education courses were compulsory courses in the humanities for all undergraduate students.

At the beginning of 1960 the Faculty of Arts was formed and at that time the Department of Government became the School of Political Science (Council 9 November 1959, 59/204). But (due mainly to the absence of an appointment of a professor of political science) in May 1961 the school was amalgamated with the School of History to become the School of History & Political Science (Council 8 May 1961, 61/68). In March 1963 they were separated again, but whereas the School of History remained a school, political science became the Department of Political Science under the control of the Dean (Council 11 March 1963, 63/3). By May 1963 it was decided that a chair in political science would be advertised and when it was filled, the department would become a school again (Council 11 May 1963, 63/60). This occurred on 13 July 1964 with the appointment of Professor Douglas McCallum (resolution 64/120), who began work in August 1964.

On 10th December, 1990 Council changed the name of the Faculty of Arts to the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (resolution CL90/108ii).

On 26 June 2000 the school was renamed the School of Politics & International Relations (CL000/39b).

As part of a Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences restructure, the School of Politics & International Relations was disestablished effective 31 January 2007. It was amalgamated with the schools of Social Work, Sociology & Anthropology and Social Science & Policy to form the new School of Social Sciences & International Studies (6 February 2007 Academic Board papers).

A rough list of the heads of the school follows. Please note that some of the dates (particularly in the latter years) are fairly rough as they were mainly obtained from the UNSW calendar:

1964 - 1978 - Douglas McCallum
1978 - 1981 - Preston King
1981 - 1986 - Douglas McCallum
1986 - 1988 - Frederick Mediansky
1988 - 1990 - Tony Palfreeman
1990 - 1992 - Elaine Thompson
1992 - 1995 - Conal Condren
1996 - 1998 - Stephen Fortescue
1999 - 2001 - Robert Steven
**Agency details**

2002 - 2004 - Marc Williams  
2005 - 2007 - Gavin Kitching

**Unregistered preceding agencies:**

**Succeeding agencies:**

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**Superior agencies:**

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**Unregistered superior agencies:**

**Unregistered subordinate agencies:**

**Record series created by this agency (in chronological order by start date):**

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