

MSc in Policy Research



What will I study?

This programme builds on the links between research and policy in developing the particular skills and capacities needed by policy-oriented researchers, professionals, and postgraduate students interested in carrying out public policy, social policy and social welfare research.

Programme structure

The programme is delivered through a combination of intensive block teaching and weekly delivery so as to be most accessible to postgraduate students, busy policy professionals and practitioners. The delivery of units on the programme is designed to allow students to accumulate credits flexibly and organise the patterns of attendance to suit their own needs and circumstances.

The programme provides core research training in philosophy and research design in the social sciences, along with introductions to, and further approaches in, quantitative and qualitative methods in the social sciences. It also offers optional units in our particular areas of research expertise, such as child and family welfare, gender and violence, health and social care, poverty and social exclusion, and policy-oriented evaluation.

The MSc consists of four core units and two optional units, along with a dissertation of 10,000 to 15,000 words.

Core units are taught in collaboration with other postgraduate programmes, providing a co-learning environment and giving students the opportunity to interact and share insights with other students working towards research degrees in disability studies and social work research.

Why choose Bristol?

The School for Policy Studies at the University of Bristol is one of the leading centres for public policy and social policy research in the UK. The programme is taught by many of the leading UK experts in the field, all of whom are engaged in national and international research projects. Our research is characterised by a strong empirical approach which employs a large range of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The MSc Policy Research takes full advantage of being situated within the multi-centred School for Policy Studies and shares close ties with the MSc Social Work Research and MSc Disability Studies offering a range of mandatory and optional course units within a challenging research and learning environment.

The programme is recognised by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as a research training programme for the South West Doctoral Training Partnership SWDTP Pathway in Social Policy.

Careers in Policy Research

The MSc in Policy Research emphasises the development of policy research and analysis methods, as well as substantive knowledge. Graduates from our MSc Policy Research can go on to work as policy researchers and analysts, or research commissioners/managers in public or private agencies, both in the UK and internationally.

Potential employers include local or central government departments, voluntary or charitable organisations, national or international non-governmental organisations, or global institutions such as the United Nations.

Further Information

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