Sociology and social policy postgraduate study
Welcome to the school

The School of Sociology and Social Policy is a vibrant and diverse centre for social science teaching and research. It links sociology, social policy, criminology, social work, public policy and public administration.

Our outstanding postgraduate teaching is underpinned by our world-leading research, which has a tangible impact on policy decisions.

Our research centres are unified by a common concern with social and global justice, and provide a basis for interdisciplinary and collaborative work that engages with the fundamental societal issues of our time.

The Centre for Social Work is a recognised centre for professional social work education. We also offer MA programmes and professional doctorates in public policy and management through the International Centre for Public and Social Policy.

We attract high-achieving students from all over the world to study with us, in what is an intellectually stimulating and lively learning environment.

Professor Ian Shaw
Head of the School of Sociology and Social Policy
Why study with us?

The School of Sociology and Social Policy is based on the beautiful University Park Campus – take a virtual tour at nottingham.ac.uk/virtualnottingham

Find your future at Nottingham

Inspirational location
The School of Sociology and Social Policy is situated in the idyllic surroundings of this beautiful 300-acre University Park Campus – the hub of student life and the perfect location for studying and accessing first-class facilities.

Academic excellence
Taught by academic experts within their respective fields, our postgraduate programmes attract graduates from all around the world, contributing to the vibrant research and learning culture that makes Nottingham a truly unique place to study. Each programme is highly specialised and strongly linked to the school’s research interests.

Research in the school is conducted through four research centres, which group together academic staff and postgraduate students with similar interests. Each of our research centres is aligned with one or more of the school’s eight research themes. These include:
- children and families
- social work and social care for adults
- health and wellbeing
- policy analysis
- identities
- mobilities and migration
- work and inequalities
- science, knowledge and society

A support network built around you
Students are at the heart of everything we do and the school is committed to ensuring you are fully supported. The University of Nottingham provides a wide range of support services for postgraduate students. The Graduate School offers induction events, training opportunities, funding, careers support and social and sporting events. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/graduateschool

Outstanding careers support

Postgraduate study develops vital skills and can give you a head start in the job market, enabling you to develop self-discipline and motivation that is essential for a variety of fields.

You will graduate with expertise and knowledge that will equip you for a range of roles, and our students have gone on to successful careers in their chosen fields. Our graduates are spread around the globe, working in a wide range of areas.

Each year a number of our graduates enjoy their degree so much that they take further courses of study or research posts. Opportunities for further study within the school include taught postgraduate courses in global citizenship, identities and human rights, international social policy, public policy, and research methods.

Recent graduate destinations
Our postgraduate students move into an extraordinarily wide range of careers following their time in the school. Recent graduate destinations include:
- Stonewall
- Youth Movement for Reform Judaism and Zionism
- Nottingham Labour Party
- Ministry of Justice
- Mitsubishi
- Sky
- Taylor Wessing

Employability and average starting salary
96.3% of postgraduates from the School of Sociology and Social Policy who were available for employment secured work or further study within six months of graduation. £27,900 was the average starting salary, with the highest being £31,000.*

* Known destinations of full-time home postgraduates 2016/17.
Salaries are calculated based on the median of those in full-time paid employment within the UK.

Lifelong careers support
The University’s award-winning Careers and Employability Service offers specialist support and guidance while you study and for life after you graduate. They will help you explore and plan your next career move, through regular events, employer-led skills sessions, placement opportunities and one-to-one discussions.
Masters courses

The School of Sociology and Social Policy offers an exciting range of masters programmes, many of which have a 20-year history of excellence and we have an outstanding reputation for providing high-quality teaching.

With so much emphasis in contemporary politics on social justice, welfare reforms, austerity measures, immigration, crime, community and identity, there has never been a better time to study sociology, criminology, social work or social policy and learn how we can all make a difference in society.

MA/PGDip Criminology

Designed to develop an advanced critical understanding of crime in its social context, this course draws on insights across the humanities and social sciences.

It incorporates sociology, law, psychology, geography, history, and cultural and media studies, and reflects the nature of criminology as a fast-developing, interdisciplinary subject concerned with understanding crime in its local, regional, national and international contexts.

This course offers you the opportunity to study criminology in a social-scientific environment with teaching by experts in sociology, criminology, criminal justice, social work and social and public policy. You will be taught by researchers with world-leading reputations in these subjects, and our research-led criminology, sociology, social work and social and public policy.

Course details

Across the autumn and spring semesters, you will take 120 credits of core and optional modules. You will also be encouraged to undertake voluntary work with a non-governmental organisation.

MA students will complete a 60-credit 15,000-word dissertation over the summer, and an appropriate dissertation supervisor will oversee your progress.

Career and professional development

This course is particularly beneficial if you wish to pursue a career in non-governmental organisations, academia, civil service or journalism, as it provides advanced-level sociological knowledge of human rights, citizenship, globalisation and identities. It also offers opportunities to develop specialist understanding of post-conflict cultures, human rights law and/or of media and globalisation, rights and identities.

Course details

Across the autumn and spring semesters, you will take 120 credits of core and optional modules. MA students will complete a 60-credit 15,000-word dissertation over the summer, and an appropriate dissertation supervisor will oversee your progress.

Career and professional development

This course will equip you with research, intellectual, cognitive and transferable skills required for a career in fields such as the police force, probation/prison service, criminal justice, non-governmental organisations, victim support, academia, civil service or journalism.

MA/PGDip Global Citizenship, Identities and Human Rights

This course explores recent changes to the global cultural and political landscape, and what these mean for individuals and groups accessing their human rights.

Demand for various forms of expertise on human rights, citizenship and identities is rapidly expanding as governments, international agencies, non-governmental and private sector organisations become increasingly sensitive to, and interested in questions about rights and identities.

In the current global context, national versions of citizenship have reached crisis point. Yet what does it mean to think of yourself as a global citizen? This course investigates critical global issues such as war, migration, climate change, credit crunch, nationalism, global media, sex tourism, modern slavery, gender and sexuality, and contemporary racism.

Course details

Across the autumn and spring semesters, you will take 120 credits of core and optional modules. You will also be encouraged to undertake voluntary work with a non-governmental organisation.

MA students will complete a 60-credit 15,000-word dissertation over the summer, and an appropriate dissertation supervisor will oversee your progress.

Career and professional development

This course equips you with the skills to understand the new challenges of our increasingly interdependent world.

It is no longer possible to study national social policies in isolation. Global interconnections are multiplying and intensifying across a range of fields, including economics, politics and the natural environment. This course provides an introduction to comparative social policy and recent developments in welfare reforms from around the world.

You will compare welfare models of developed welfare states, such as European countries, and explore the relevance of recent developments and debates for developing countries. This course also considers the future of social policies and comparative analyses.

Training in research methods allows you to evaluate policy outcomes, not only in terms of their effectiveness and efficiency, but also their wider socio-economic and political contexts.

The school’s teaching and research focuses on the fields of social policy, criminology, sociology, cultural studies, health studies, social work and public policy. You will be taught by researchers with world-leading reputations in these subjects, and our research-led culture allows you to develop your interests in particular themes and topics.

Course details

Across the autumn and spring semesters, you will take 120 credits of core and optional modules. MA students will complete a 60-credit 15,000-word dissertation over the summer, and an appropriate dissertation supervisor will oversee your progress.

Career and professional development

This course draws on carefully selected material to cover the whole area of international social policy, from formulation to implementation and outcomes. It is designed to equip you with the skills needed for a variety of careers, such as:

- international development organisations including the World Bank, United Nations and International Labour Office
- departments and ministries concerned with social policy in national governments
- public and third sector organisations including research or managerial roles in health, housing and social services
- academic and non-academic research
- journalism

MA/PGDip International Social Policy

This course focuses on critical issues and key developments relating to public management, such as leadership, strategy, and performance and human resource management.

It is an internationally recognised qualification and provides you with the competencies and knowledge for managing creatively in challenging policy environments. It is suitable for new graduates and those with managerial and/or public or third sector work experience.

With the current developments around the world, this is one of the most exciting times to be studying the public sector, governance and government, and the delivery of services to meet people’s needs.

We aim to provide you with the skills, knowledge and tools to make sense of the world of public policy and management, so that you can analyse situations and problems, and use this to improve practice.

This course is designed to blend practitioner and academic perspectives on public management, and the wide range of modules draws on examples from around the world.

It features international curricula focusing on key public sector developments in the UK, EU, USA and other countries and is informed by world-leading research, reflecting the expertise of staff in the fields of public management, policy analysis and social policy.

Course details

Across the autumn and spring semesters, you will take 120 credits of core and optional modules. MA students will complete a 60-credit 15,000-word dissertation over the summer, and an appropriate dissertation supervisor will oversee your progress.

Career and professional development

Recent graduates have pursued careers in the public and voluntary sectors as managers and policy analysts. The MPA is rapidly becoming a standard global qualification for public servants.
MA Social Science Research (Social Work) | MA Social Science Research (Social Policy and Social Work)

Providing broad-based training in social science research, this course will equip you with the skills to manage a successful research career and contribute to wider society in a number of ways.

It is part of the Midlands Graduate School ESRC Doctoral Training Partnership, which recognises the importance of bringing cutting-edge expert knowledge to the heart of doctoral training. Core modules provide a comprehensive basis to progress to advanced training in research methods. You will be able to undertake advanced subject-specific training in our areas of expertise, providing a wide range of opportunities to deepen and broaden your skills.

Primarily aimed at students following an ESRC-funded pathway onto a PhD, this course may also be suitable if you are intending to apply for +3 ESRC funding (to cover a PhD) or are interested in undertaking advanced subject-specific training in our areas of expertise, providing a wide range of opportunities to deepen and broaden your skills.

Course details
Across the autumn and spring semesters, you will take 120 credits of core and optional modules. MA students will complete a 60-credit 15,000-word dissertation over the summer, and an appropriate dissertation supervisor will oversee your progress.

Career and professional development
If you have previously studied politics, sociology, law, geography, finance, economics or a science subject, this course enables you to further your knowledge for a career in the broad policy community. It is also suitable if you are already working in the public or not-for-profit sector and wish to enhance your career prospects.

Graduates have pursued careers in the public and voluntary sectors as public sector managers and policy analysts.

This course will give you thorough preparation for a challenging yet enormously rewarding career as a social worker.

We believe that the role of social worker is a position of privilege that enables you to collaborate with people who need your help, and to empower them to transform their lives. It therefore requires social work education of the highest standard to ensure you are fully prepared to register and practice when you graduate.

As a member of the D2N2 Teaching Partnership we contribute to the establishment of a social work academy of excellence, providing a holistic approach that not only gives you an essential broad-based, practical skillset, but also develops your deeper academic learning that will form the foundation of your practice.

Our teaching is delivered through the Centre for Social Work. You will learn from academics with years of expertise as practising social workers, and who have first-hand experience of working on the front line of social care.

Course details
The majority of academic teaching takes place in the autumn semester of each year and teaching methods include lectures, seminars, tutorials, case discussions and experiential exercises, designed to encourage the integration of theory and practice.

Placements
In February of your first year, you will begin your first 80-day placement with a local social care agency, where you will be given a caseload appropriate to your level. You will be supported and guided by your Practice Educator – a fully experienced senior social worker with years of experience in the sector and who is specifically trained to enable your reflective practice in a safe environment.

You will also undertake a 90-day placement in your second year, where you can develop your experience, skills and analytical thinking to an even deeper level.

Each placement will be assessed against the requirements of the Professional Capabilities Framework and the Key Skills Statements from the Chief Social Workers in England. You will also be fully supported throughout by your personal tutor, who will meet with you to monitor your learning development and wellbeing.

Career and professional development
Graduates of this course are eligible to register as qualified social workers with the Health and Care Professions Council.
The School of Sociology and Social Policy has a strong and vibrant community of postgraduate research students and we are dedicated to developing our students’ research skills, expertise and career in a supportive and collegial environment.

We offer PhDs in:
- Criminology
- Public Policy
- Sociology
- Social Policy
- Social Work
- Science, Technology and Society

We also offer Professional Doctorates:
- Doctor of Public Policy
- Doctor of Public Management

Facilities and support
Our research students are offered excellent facilities and support, including:
- two supervisors and additional support through membership of one of the school’s research centres
- dedicated workspace, equipped with a networked computer
- generous photocopying and printing allowance
- opportunity to apply for funding to attend workshops and conferences

Research training
Working closely with academic schools, the Graduate School’s dedicated training team contribute to faculty specific and doctoral training programmes. They deliver core training in line with the standards set out by the UK’s major research funders through their researcher development programme.

Doctoral funding
We are part of the Midlands Graduate School ESRC and Midlands4Cities AHRC doctoral training partnerships, which offer funding opportunities for postgraduate students each year. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy/how-to-apply

Doctor of Public Policy DPP | Doctor of Public Management DPM

These programmes allow you to combine taught courses on public policy, public management and research methods, while carrying out a substantial piece of independent, doctoral-level research.

Professional doctorates are doctoral-level qualifications, equivalent to traditional PhDs. They are rigorous programmes of advanced applied study and research, specifically designed to meet the needs of practising professionals. They provide a framework for the integration of professional expertise and scholarly inquiry to explore specific areas of interest.

This programme provides critical reflection on public sector reforms, including evidence-based policy and practice. It supports creating greater capacity within the public and voluntary sectors to conduct, commission and evaluate research as a contribution to the achievement of public goals.

The School of Sociology and Social Policy undertakes cutting-edge local, national, international and cross-national research through its combination of staff that work within and across the disciplines of sociology, criminology, cultural studies, social and public policy and social work.

By bringing together and synthesising these disciplines around common interests and issues, we produce theoretically innovative and empirically robust knowledge that is valued by the academic community, policymakers, professionals and service providers.

Leading research

Applying, fees and funding

Funding your studies
A wide range of international scholarships are available for specific countries and regions. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/politics and can also be found on the Graduate School website at nottingham.ac.uk/graduateschool

How to apply

Tuition fees
Tuition fees are listed on our online course pages and at nottingham.ac.uk/fees

Entry requirements
Taught courses
Entry requirements vary by course. For full entry requirements, please see individual course listings at nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy

Research opportunities
DPP and DPM applicants typically require a 2:1 (or international equivalent) in any discipline and two years of work experience in a related field, while PhD candidates should have a masters with an average of 60% or above, plus 2:1 (or international equivalent) in any discipline.

For full entry requirements, please see individual course listings at nottingham.ac.uk/pgstudy

EU and international applicants
At Nottingham, our global community is made up of staff and students from more than 150 countries. Staff regularly travel to meet prospective students, hosting events in China, Ghana, India, Malaysia and more. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/go/countryevents

If you need a visa to study, the University can provide all the information and advice you need. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/go/student-visa

For country-specific information including entry requirements, contact details and representatives, see nottingham.ac.uk/go/yourcountry

English language requirements
For applicants whose first language is not English, we require IELTS 6.5 (no less than 6.0 in any element), except for MA Social Work, our MA Social Science Research degrees and our PhD, DPP and DPM, which require IELTS 7.0 (no less than 6.0 in any element).

For more information and a list of the alternative English language requirements we accept, see nottingham.ac.uk/go/alternativerequirements

Academic English preparation and support
Accredited by the British Council for the teaching of English in the UK, the University’s Centre for English Language Education provides high-quality preparation and support.

Our presessional courses take your English language and academic skills to the level you need to progress to postgraduate study without retaking IELTS or equivalent. Find out more at nottingham.ac.uk/cele

Home from home
We guarantee all new postgraduate students University-arranged, single-occupancy accommodation for one year to help make your move to Nottingham as simple and stress-free as possible. To qualify for the guarantee, you must accept a place on one of our postgraduate courses and apply for accommodation by the date specified on our website. Find out more about our accommodation, including details of our guarantees at nottingham.ac.uk/accommodation

Equal opportunities policy
The University aims to create the conditions whereby students and staff are treated solely on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential, regardless of gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, age, socioeconomic background, disability, religious or political beliefs, trade union membership, family circumstances, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction.