University of Birmingham

Social Research MA

This programme aims to provide students with a sound background in social research design and the most up-to-date training in methods of data collection and analysis.

The College of Social Sciences welcomes all postgraduates to the recently redesigned MA in Social Research programme which continues to enjoy full Research Training recognition by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). This programme aims to provide students with a sound background in social research design and the most up-to-date training in methods of data collection and analysis. The combination of core modules and advanced training courses on more advanced topics provides maximum flexibility for taught postgraduate and research students throughout their study

Study here and find out why the University of Birmingham was awarded The Times and The Sunday Times University of the Year 2013-14 (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/latest/2013/09/20-sep-Birmingham-announced-as-University-of-the-Year.aspx)

Course fact file

Type of Course: Taught

Study Options: Full time, part time

Duration: 1 year full-time; 2 years part-time

Start date: September/October

Contact

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Details

The core elements of the programme are delivered by staff across the entire College, many of whom are engaged in cutting-edge research in their own fields. Students benefit by undertaking this training with students from numerous diverse departments including the Business School, Economics, Education, Government and Society, Institute of Applied Social Studies and Social Policy; and within the wider College. Students will also receive more discipline-specific research training, as well as dissertation supervision, provided by individual departments. On completion of this MA, many students continue their studies as a graduate research student, or pursue a career in research in the public, private, or voluntary sector

Programme content

Term 1:

- **Introduction to Social Science Research (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/introduction-social-science-research.aspx)** (20 credits)
- **Research Design (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/research-design.aspx)** (20 credits)
- Thesis-related preparation
- Information Skills for Social Sciences
- University Programme of Skills Training (as necessary)
- Dissertation-related preparation

Term 2:

- **Social Research Methods I (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-methods-1.aspx)** (20 credits)
- **Social Research Methods II (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-methods-2.aspx)** (20 credits)
- Thesis-related preparation

Summer Term:

- Four advanced training courses (10)
- Dissertation (60)

All students registered on the MA in Social Research will take:

1) Four core modules:

- **Introduction to Social Science Research (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/introduction-social-science-research.aspx)**
- **Research Design (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/research-design.aspx)**
- **Social Research Methods I (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-methods-1.aspx)**
- **Social Research Methods II (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-methods-2.aspx)**

2) Four elective modules (10 credits each) from the advanced training programme below
3) A 14,000 word dissertation (60 credits)

Specialist pathways

- **Business (/postgraduate/courses/taught/business/social-research-business.aspx)**
- **Education (/postgraduate/courses/taught/edu/social-research-education.aspx)**
- **Local Government and Public Policy (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/social-research-local-government-public-policy.aspx)**
- **Social Policy (/postgraduate/courses/taught/social-policy/social-research-soc-policy.aspx)**
- **Social Work and Professional Practice (/postgraduate/courses/taught/social-policy/social-research-soc-work.aspx)**

Advanced Training Programme

Unless stated, all advanced training courses run as 2-day intensive workshops from 10–4pm with breaks. This list is updated regularly as new courses are approved so do check this website from time to time to see what is on offer.

These advanced training courses are open to all research students in the College (and some departments in other Colleges, such as Geography, subject to the discretion of the Programme Team). However, places on each course are limited and priority will be given to MA Social Research students.

These advanced training courses are also open to all staff in the University who may wish to attend without completing the assessments. However, all doctoral researchers and staff who wish to do so will be placed on a waiting list. Confirmation will be sent a week before the course dates.

Advanced Training courses run in Semester 3, unless otherwise stated

- **Activity Theory and its Research Applications (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/activity-theory-and-its-research-applications.aspx)**
- **Advanced Qualitative Data Analysis (using NVivo) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/advanced-qualitative-data-analysis.aspx)**
- **Analyzing Hierarchical and Panel Data (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/analyzing-hierarchical-and-panel-data.aspx)**
- **Approaches to Research on Discourse (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/approaches-to-research-on-discourse.aspx)**
- **Documentary Research in Education, History and the Social Science (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/documentary-research-in-education-history-and-the-social-science.aspx)**
- **Ethnography and Language in the Social Sciences (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/ethnography-and-language-in-the-social-sciences.aspx)**
- **Factor Analysis (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/factor-analysis.aspx)**
- **From Multiple Linear to Logistic Regression (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/from-multiple-linear-to-logistic-regression.aspx)**
- Introduction to Econometric Software (module runs in Semester One)
- **Narrative Research (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/narrative-research.aspx)**
- **Policy Evaluation (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/policy-evaluation.aspx)**
- **Q Methodology – A Systematic Approach for Interpretive Research Design (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/q-methodology-a-systematic-approach-for-interpretive-research-design.aspx)**
- **Randomised Controlled Trials (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/randomised-controlled-trials.aspx)**
- **Researching Disability (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/researching-disability.aspx)**
- **Secondary Data Analysis in Social Research (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/secondary-data-analysis-in-social-research.aspx)**
- The Role of Thinking *(subject to approval)*
- **Visual Research Methods (/postgraduate/courses/taught/socsci/modules/social-research-ma-modules/visual-research-methods.aspx)**

NB: some courses have pre-requisites, e.g. to register on Multiple Linear and Logistic Regression, Factor Analysis, or Narrative Research, you will need to have passed Social Research Methods II (20 credits module), or equivalent. You will need to provide evidence that you have passed a similar course on quantitative/qualitative data analysis where appropriate.

To register for the above advanced training courses, please e-mail: **collegessmasr@contacts.bham.ac.uk (mailto:collegessmasr@contacts.bham.ac.uk)** specifying which courses you are interested in. When registering for courses, please provide your name, student ID, department/programme you are affiliated to, and your e-mail address.

You will receive a confirmation e-mail, acknowledging your request, and advising you of availability.

Fees and funding

Standard fees (/postgraduate/pgt-fees/fees.aspx) apply
Learn more about **fees and funding (/postgraduate/pgt-fees/fees.aspx)**
Scholarships and studentships
Scholarships may be available. International students can often gain funding through overseas research scholarships, Commonwealth scholarships or their home government.

For further information contact the School directly or email **financialsupport@bham.ac.uk (mailto:financialsupport@bham.ac.uk)**

Entry requirements

Learn more about **entry requirements (/postgraduate/requirements-pgt/index.aspx)**
International students
We accept a range of qualifications from different countries – learn more about **international entry requirements (/postgraduate/requirements-pgt/international/index.aspx)**

Standard English language requirements (/postgraduate/requirements-pgt/international/index.aspx) apply

How to apply

When clicking on the Apply Now button you will be directed to an application specifically designed for the programme you wish to apply for where you will create an account with the University application system and submit your application and supporting documents online. Further information regarding how to apply online can be found on the **How to apply pages (http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/courses/postgraduate/apply-pg/index.aspx)**

Apply now (https://pga.bham.ac.uk/lpages/COS012.htm)

Related links

Integrated Study (Social Sciences) PhD (/postgraduate/courses/research/socsci/integrated-study-social-sciences.aspx)

Learning and teaching

Students are expected to engage in high-level discussion during all sessions. Teaching will be delivered by a combination of lectures, seminars and computer workshops. Some fieldwork involving primary data collection is required where appropriate.

Research interests of staff

Skills and attributes gained

Students will have acquired a solid foundation of a broad range of research methods that are widely used in the social sciences and will have developed:

- A sound understanding of the methodological debates
- An overview of the philosophy of social science and how this informs research design, methods chosen of data collection and analysis
- An ability to use a range of research techniques appropriate to their subject area
- Competence in the representation and presentation of information and data
- An ability to communicate research findings effectively to a wider range of audiences
- An appreciation of the potential use and impact of their research within and beyond academia
- An ability to engage with relevant users at all points in the research process, from devising and shaping research questions through to enhancing practice

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Assessment methods

All core modules are assessed by a 4000-word essay or report. On most advanced training courses, a 3000-report is usually required. The dissertation length is 14,000 words and students are expected to utilise the knowledge and skills they learned from the taught elements in this programme.

Employability

Many students go on to do a PhD after completing this MA. Others have followed a career in local authorities, government departments, health authorities, management consultancy, media, the voluntary sector.

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