

A-Level study and Social Policy



Links between Social Policy and social science advanced level studies

Social policy is concerned with analysing social issues and questions, and also with examining and evaluating possible responses to them. In order to examine these questions, issues and responses, social policy takes an inter-disciplinary approach; which means that theories and ideas are used from a range of social science subjects, such as: sociology, politics, criminology, history, media studies; psychology and international studies, as well as theories and ideas which are specific to social policy itself. This means that there are firm links between a very broad range of advanced level social

science courses and social policy.

The term 'advanced level studies' refers to a very broad range of courses:

- A-levels
- Access courses
- AGNVQs
- Diploma courses such as BTEC
- AVCEs
- HNCs
- International or European Baccalaureate

What if you have taken non-social science subjects at advanced level?

If you have taken advanced level courses which are traditionally defined as 'non-social science subjects', nevertheless, you may be a person who is interested in exploring possibilities for changing direction when you move onto higher education. We welcome applications from people who are undertaking advanced level studies in a very wide range of subjects, such as: theology, law, history, geography, philosophy, languages, biology, commerce, general studies or critical thinking. This is in part, because one of the most important features of advanced level studies, is that you develop a wide range of skills - how to research a subject; critically analyse material, frame and present an argument and so on. These skills are transferable between subjects, and hence are relevant for, and can be developed and built upon in social policy degree courses. What is most important, is that you are really interested in and feel motivated by the prospect of studying social policy.

Advanced level study to Degree level study - which degree subject should I choose?

Many people select their degree subject on the basis of which advanced level subject they enjoyed most. Whilst this can be a positive choice, you do not necessarily have to take this course of action. Many degree subjects are not available to study at advanced level. Indeed, opportunities to study social policy at advanced level are not widely available; rather social policy is a subject more commonly available at degree level. This may be in part, because social policy is an inter-disciplinary subject. It is important to be aware that at degree level there tends to be more cross-over between subjects than at advanced level and that on many degree courses students are able to take options from Departments other than their own. Hence, whatever subject you choose, your degree is likely to be inter-disciplinary to some extent. From the outset, social policy is an explicitly inter-disciplinary subject, and hence is a degree in which you can both combine and develop skills and interests that you have gained when studying at advanced level, and also add to and so broaden those interests and skills.