

# Political Science and Social Policy BA

Our Political Science and Social Policy degree programme enable students to study two complementary subjects alongside each other to Honours degree level. Joint Honours students work to the same academic standard as students taking each subject through our Single Honours programmes. Joint Honours students take core modules from each subject area, and choose options from the range of modules available in each half of the programme. BA Social Policy and Political Science welcomes applications from international students.

A Joint Honours degree programme involves the study of two subjects to Honours degree level. If you study a subject as a Joint Honours programme, you work at exactly the same level and to the same academic standard as students taking that subject in a Single Honours programme.

Our students particularly enjoy the opportunities to hear from influential guest speakers about their lives in politics. Recent speakers have included Alistair Darling, David Miliband and John Bercow. Learn more about [your student experience \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/teaching/enhancing-student-experience/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/teaching/enhancing-student-experience/index.aspx).

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

## Course fact file

UCAS code: LL42

Duration: 3 years

Typical Offer: ABB ([More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details \(?OpenSection=EntryRequirements\)](#))

Start date: September 2013

## Related courses

[Political Science BA \(/undergraduate/courses/govsoc/political-science.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/govsoc/political-science.aspx)

[Political Science and Social Policy with Year Abroad BA \(/undergraduate/courses/govsoc/political-science-social-policy-year-abroad.aspx\)](/undergraduate/courses/govsoc/political-science-social-policy-year-abroad.aspx)

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[School of Government and Society \(/schools/government-society/index.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/index.aspx)

[School of Social Policy \(/schools/social-policy/index.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/index.aspx)

[Department of Political Science and International Studies \(POLSIS\) \(/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/index.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/index.aspx)

[Institute of Applied Social Studies \(IASS\) \(/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/index.aspx\)](/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/index.aspx)

## Details

These degree programmes help you acquire important analytical skills. You learn to find your way among different arguments, rival theories and alternative explanations. You also learn about campaigns, elections, protest movements, policy issues and political ideals.

Politics may be studied with another subject as part of a Joint Honours degree programme. In each year of the degree you take two or three political science courses together with courses in your second subject. In the first year you take a foundation course and a module in Classical Political Thought. In the second year you take any two or three courses selected from the many options available to Single Honours students. In the final year you select two or three courses from those available to third-year Single Honours students.

Social Policy is an interdisciplinary degree, drawing on subjects such as sociology, politics, psychology, history, media studies, and philosophy; hence the degree is suitable for students currently studying a range of A level subjects. Social Policy joint honours degree programmes enable students to blend the interdisciplinary approach to Social Policy with the study of a complementary discipline. Social Policy at Birmingham has been ranked among the top Social Policy programmes in the country.

In addition to your core modules from each of the main disciplines which comprise your joint honours degree programme, you will have the opportunity to take modules provided by experts in a range of fields, including:

- Criminology
- Youth and Children
- Poverty, Assets and Wealth
- Migration and Superdiversity
- Globalisation
- Political History
- The Voluntary Sector

- Policy Analysis
- Faith and Policy

## Year in industry

It is possible for you to gain a range of agency based experiences on our Social Policy Degree Programme and there are various opportunities for you to do so. For example, optional modules such as Policy into Practice provide placement opportunities, which students find helpful, both to illuminate their academic studies, and to demonstrate their practical experience when they apply for jobs. Some students also choose to undertake placements linked to their dissertation work. We also have our own specialist Internship and Careers advisors who provide students with a wide range of advice, support and facilitate contacts for work experience, placements and internships.

## Why study this course

The Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS) is one of the largest and best of its type in the UK. It consistently scores high in the National Student Survey and has consistently been viewed as one of the best departments in the country since the Guardian started publishing their League Tables in 2000.

Our expertise covers all areas of the discipline allowing you to learn from true specialists, with long-established strengths in the fields of political theory, European politics, international relations theory, security studies, diplomatic studies, political sociology, political economy, environmental politics, Pacific Asian politics and British politics.

As well as benefiting from our world-leading expertise, you'll also get the chance to take part in a range of in-house activities that vary by year and are designed to complement your curriculum and enrich your time at Birmingham. These have included:

- Annual Student Conference
- Research Assistance Scheme, where students are paired with a member of staff to help them in specific research tasks
- Simulation exercises using real case examples
- Simulation events and research visits to local and national places of interest

Learn more about our **Student Experience activities** (<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/teaching/enhancing-student-experience/index.aspx>) and the work of the Department.

Studying Social Policy at the University of Birmingham will provide you with a highly stimulating educational experience, support from academics whose work is internationally recognised, and your learning will take place in state-of-the-art, high-tech teaching and learning environments.

Social Policy degree programmes are interdisciplinary, and suitable for students who have studied a range of subjects at advanced level, including sociology, politics, history, philosophy and ethics and media studies. Our programmes are broad based and flexible and provide opportunities to specialise, enabling you to tailor your degree programme to your evolving academic skills and interest. Over the course of your studies you will be supported by our academic staff, who are highly committed to engaging in cutting edge social policy debates, contributing new insights and knowledge and enabling students to develop their confidence and skills to do the same. Our ethos of staff and student collaboration is embedded through our interactive approach to learning, staff-student committees, and our one-to-one approach both for personal tutoring and the supervision of students' research projects.

We also support the social dimension of students' experiences, for example visits to places of interest are organised. There is an active Social Policy Student Association and a student common room within the Department. Careers advice and support for students is both integrated into and provided alongside our academic programmes.

## Modules

### First year

Most people have not studied social policy at advanced level, so the first year is designed to help you find your feet and get up to speed both with social policy and the other main discipline which you have elected to study. Modules studied include the core module 'Introduction to Social Policy' and 'Social Issues' plus the core modules from the other part of your joint honours degree, and Research Methods. You can also choose a further module which reflects your particular interests from a range of subject areas such as Psychology, Sociology, Media Studies and Politics, providing you with the opportunity to personalise your degree.

### Second year

In the second year, courses include the core social policy modules, Social Theory, and Social Research where you will focus upon gaining research skills for your third-year dissertation, plus the core modules from the other main discipline which you have elected to study. You will also have opportunities to tailor your degree to reflect your developing skills and interests through a range of specialist module choices. Specialist modules include, for example:

- Crime Victims and Society
- Children and Young People
- Managing Health and Social Care
- Social Inclusion
- Comparative Social Policy
- Policy into Practice

Policy into Practice is an optional module which provides students with practical experience in that it involves a placement, and the opportunity to link this experience to your academic learning. You can also choose to study modules from other departments, providing you with further opportunities to personalise your degree.

### Third year

The core social policy course in your third year is 'Prospects for Social Policy'. In the Prospects module, as a member of a working party, you will undertake a project on a social issue or debate of your choice. You will produce a briefing paper, a Wiki, a policy report and you will also learn how to form and operate a working party, engage in team work and develop further important, transferable skills. You will also take the core module from the other main discipline which you have chosen to study. You will also take Dissertation module and you can choose a module from a range of specialist options which include:

- Criminal Justice
- Migration and Superdiversity
- Social Difference and Diversity
- Health
- Policy and Practice
- Comparative Social Policy
- Poverty, Assets and Wealth

- Agency and Morality

You will also undertake a supervised, research-based dissertation supported by a specialist academic supervisor, centred on a question or issue of your choice, and hence a topic which particularly interests and inspires you. Your dissertation is worth around a third of your final-year marks and your ability to choose a topic which particularly interests and inspires you will provide you with an excellent opportunity to enhance your marks in your final year.

## Fees and funding

Standard fees apply

Learn more about [fees and funding \(/undergraduate/fees/loans.aspx\)](#)

Scholarships

Learn more about our [scholarships and awards \(/undergraduate/fees/fees.aspx\)](#)

## Entry requirements

**Number of A levels required:** 3

**Typical offer:** ABB

**General Studies:** Not accepted

**Additional information:**

Typical offer grades are for guidance only, and will depend on the subjects you are combining. Please read the entries for both subjects for the offer grades required in each subject. Where there is a disparity between the typical offer for Subject A and the typical offer for Subject B, the higher offer should be taken as the usual offer level for the combination of the two.

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about [entry requirements \(/undergraduate/requirements/index.aspx\)](#)

**International students:**

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 34 points

Standard English language requirements apply

Learn more about international entry requirements

Depending on your chosen course of study, you may also be interested in the Birmingham Foundation Academy, a specially structured programme for international students whose qualifications are not accepted for direct entry to UK universities. Further details can be found on the [foundation academy web pages \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/foundation-academy/Pathways/index.aspx\)](#).

## How to apply

Apply through UCAS at [www.ucas.com \(http://www.ucas.com/\)](#) using code: **LL42**.

Learn more about [applying \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/students/ug/courses/apply\)](#).

University of Birmingham's UCAS code number is **B32**.

## UCAS

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) is a UK organisation responsible for managing applications to university and college.

UK, EU and international students applying for most undergraduate degree courses in the UK will need to apply through UCAS.

You submit an application via the [UCAS website \(http://www.ucas.co.uk/\)](#) with a list of up to five courses. All choices are confidential during the application process so universities and colleges considering an application cannot see your other choices. Applications must be completed by mid-January of the year that you wish to start university.

You can monitor the progress of your application using the [UCAS Apply \(http://www.ucas.com/students/apply\)](#) system.

The Adobe Flash Player or QuickTime is required for video playback.  
[Get the latest Flash Player](#)  
[Get the latest version of QuickTime](#)

Key Information Sets (KIS) are comparable sets of information about full- or part-time undergraduate courses and are designed to meet the information needs of prospective students.

All KIS information has been published on the Unistats website and can also be accessed via the small advert, or 'widget', below. On the [Unistats website \(http://unistats.direct.gov.uk\)](http://unistats.direct.gov.uk) you are able to compare all the KIS data for each course with data for other courses.

The development of Key Information Sets (KIS) formed part of HEFCE's work to enhance the information that is available about higher education. They give you access to reliable and comparable information in order to help you make informed decisions about what and where to study.

The KIS contains information which prospective students have identified as useful, such as student satisfaction, graduate outcomes, learning and teaching activities, assessment methods, tuition fees and student finance, accommodation and professional accreditation.

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## Learning and teaching

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example, preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates).

As a Birmingham student you are part of an academic elite and will learn from world-leading experts. From the outset you will be encouraged to become an independent and self-motivated learner. We want you to be challenged and will encourage you to think for yourself.

Your learning will take place in a range of different settings, from scheduled teaching in lectures and small group tutorials, to self-study and peer group learning (for example preparing and delivering presentations with your classmates). You can see a sample [Social Policy lecture \(http://as-coursecast-1.adf.bham.ac.uk/Panopto/Pages/Viewer/Default.aspx?id=46936cd7-fdb5-459a-bdf7-e0812b69d494\)](http://as-coursecast-1.adf.bham.ac.uk/Panopto/Pages/Viewer/Default.aspx?id=46936cd7-fdb5-459a-bdf7-e0812b69d494), 'Perceptions of and Responses to Youth Crime'.

To begin with you may find this way of working challenging, but rest assured that we'll enable you to make this transition. You will have access to a comprehensive support system that will assist and encourage you, including personal tutors and welfare tutors who can help with both academic and welfare issues, and a formal transition review during your first year to check on your progress and offer you help for any particular areas where you need support.

As a student, you will be based in Muirhead Tower, a fully WiFi enabled, sophisticated, hi-tech learning environment. There are nine libraries supporting your learning through access to one of the biggest research library facilities in the UK. Open access computing facilities are widely available across campus.

Our Academic Skills Centre also offers you support with your learning. The centre is a place where you can develop your mathematical, academic writing and general academic skills. It is the centre's aim to help you to become a more effective and independent learner through the use of a range of high-quality and appropriate learning support services. These range from drop-in sessions with support with mathematics and statistics based problems provided by experienced mathematicians, to workshops on a range of topics including note taking, reading, writing and presentation skills.

## Our approach

We are committed to enabling all of our students to profit from a culture of learning, aligned with our research ethos, which is based upon active enquiry and critical reflection around continually emerging developments in the dynamic field of social policy.

We utilise an approach known as [enquiry-based learning \(http://www.gel.bham.ac.uk/Enquiry-basedlearning.shtml\)](http://www.gel.bham.ac.uk/Enquiry-basedlearning.shtml), in which learning comprises a conversational, collaborative enterprise, where academic staff work with you in the process of gaining the crucial academic and life skill, of becoming an active and independent learner. Within this process, we are strongly committed to ensuring our students develop a range of transferrable skills as part of the process of enhancing their future employability.



Employers value Social Policy graduates on the basis of our reputation for academic excellence and our students' considerable suite of skills and experiences gained over the course of their degree programme; our graduates are highly employable. Supporting our students in acquiring skills and experiences to enhance their employability is a key priority for us and is reflected in the way that we structure our academic programmes. Systematic assessment and review is firmly built into the programme through our 'Progress' and tutoring systems.

## Progress and tutoring

Your skill-set and talents, which you bring with you to your Social Policy degree programme, are valuable resources and a baseline upon which we will build over the course of your degree programme. Key sources of support in that process are our 'Progress' and tutoring systems which include intensive academic tutoring by senior tutors for first year students and one-to-one tutoring for students in all three years of the programme, providing you with a personal and systematic approach to reviewing your progress, achievements and aspirations. Social Policy programmes provide a range of opportunities for enhancing your skill base, experiences and your employability.

## Agency placement experiences

Agency placements are firmly integrated into an academic module and so will provide you with a critically informed and animated insights into the links between your academic work and the work of employers. Placements can be valuable in that they can provide you with a further gateway to gaining employment relevant experiences such as developing insights into what happens when an issue emerges within an agency and how the issue unfolds, is negotiated and managed. An agency placement can also be a great help in developing your sense of self-confidence and competence in an agency setting.

## Internships

Internships provide students with the opportunity to spend a longer block of time with an agency or organisation, and there are a range of interesting opportunities available to students. In addition to a dedicated Careers Advisor, we also have a specialist Internship Officer located in the School of Social Policy, who works with and facilitates students in securing internship opportunities. In addition to structured inputs into the programme our Careers and Internship officers have an active relationship with our student Social Policy Society, arranging events, workshops and talks in collaboration with our students. Both placements and internships can provide you with an excellent means of developing a vivid and tangible sense of the connections between your academic studies and the world of employment.

## Work experience

If you are interested in gaining work experience over the course of your social policy degree programme, our specialist Careers and Employability Advisor, who holds regular surgeries, several days each week in the building which we are based, will be able to provide you with support, advice and information about the many employers who are keen to offer opportunities to our undergraduates. The Guild also has a facility called [Jobzone \(http://www.guildofstudents.com/jobshop\)](http://www.guildofstudents.com/jobshop) which provides a wide and interesting range of opportunities for students. In addition, if you want to gain work experience in an area which is interesting or inspires you, but perhaps is low paid or unpaid, the University has a range of bursaries available which can enable you to do this.

## Volunteering

Volunteering is a fantastic way to demonstrate your commitment to civic engagement, develop your employability skills, gain crucial work experience, and meet new people. We actively encourage our students to gain volunteering experiences, both through our modules as well as our links to the [Student Volunteering Service \(http://www.guildofstudents.com\)](http://www.guildofstudents.com), who provide our students with access to a range of experiences both in the UK and abroad.

## Learning settings

This degree is taught by our internationally renowned Department of Political Science and International Studies (POLSIS) which is located in Muirhead Tower on our main Edgbaston campus.

Departments from across the School of Government and Society are all based within the recently refurbished Muirhead Tower. Following a £50million refurbishment, Muirhead Tower offers state-of-the-art teaching and research study facilities including free wifi throughout the building and dedicated study areas for postgraduate research students.

Muirhead Tower comprises 12,000sq.m of floor space between two towers. The tower includes a number of sustainable features including solar shading (known in the trade as brise soleil) to control temperatures, as well as low energy fans; timed lighting to reduce energy waste; natural ventilation systems and a heat source taken from the University's combined heat and power generator.

If you can see this message rather than a virtual tour then please [click here to install the adobe flash player](#).

If you are still unable to view the virtual tour then you may need to enable javascript in your browser ([click here for instructions](#)).

If you are still experiencing problems then please email Revolution Viewing at [support@revolutionviewing.com](mailto:support@revolutionviewing.com)

The space has been designed to create modern, attractive spaces for teaching and research accommodating 150 academic offices, 230 "hubs" for post graduate research students, teaching rooms for up to 100 people and a 200 seat lecture theatre.

Your lectures and teaching will take place in a variety of versatile lecture theatres and breakout rooms which have moved on a lot since the traditional whiteboard and pen. Our rooms are all equipped with wireless connection and constantly updated technology including all the audio-visual equipment that you would expect from one of the UK's premier insitutions.

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Small-group tutorials/personal tutorials run alongside our lectures, addressing any individual problems you may have and allowing you to consolidate lecture material, as well as test your understanding through problem-solving exercises.

Self study is an essential part of the programme and requires self motivation and enthusiasm for your subject. It also allows you to pursue your own lines of enquiry and become an independent thinker.

## Assessment methods

Studying at degree-level is likely to be very different from your previous experience of learning and teaching. You will be expected to think, discuss and engage critically with the subject and find things out for yourself. We will enable you to make this **transition to a new style of learning** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/transitionreview/index.aspx>), and the way that you are assessed during your studies will help you develop the essential skills you need to make a success of your time at Birmingham.

You'll be assessed in a variety of ways, and these may be different with each module that you take. You will be assessed through coursework which may take the form of essays, group and individual presentations, laboratory-based work (depending on your chosen degree) and formal exams.

During your first year you will undergo a **formal 'transition' review** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/student/transitionreview/index.aspx>) to see how you are getting on and if there are particular areas where you need support. This is in addition to the personal tutor who is based in your school or department and can help with any academic issues you encounter.

At the beginning of each module, you'll be given information on how and when you'll be assessed for that particular programme of study. You'll receive feedback on each assessment within four weeks, so that you can learn from and build on what you have done. You'll be given feedback on any exams that you take; if you should fail an exam we will ensure that particularly detailed feedback is made available to enable you to learn for the future.

## Employability

Preparation for your career should be one of the first things you think about as you start university. Whether you have a clear idea of where your future aspirations lie or want to consider the broad range of opportunities available once you have a Birmingham degree, our **Careers Network** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/careers/index.aspx>) can help you achieve your goal.

Our unique careers guidance service is tailored to your academic subject area, offering a specialised team (in each of the five academic colleges) who can give you expert advice. Our team source exclusive work experience opportunities to help you stand out amongst the competition, with mentoring, global internships and placements available to you. Once you have a career in your sights, one-to-one support with CV's and job applications will help give you the edge. In addition, our employer-endorsed award-winning **Personal Skills Award** (<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/psa/index.aspx>) recognises your extra-curricular activities, and provides an accredited employability programme designed to improve your career prospects.

Your Birmingham degree is evidence of your ability to succeed in a demanding academic environment. Employers target Birmingham students for their drive, diversity, communication and problem-solving skills, their team-working abilities and cultural awareness, and our graduate employment statistics have continued to climb at a rate well above national trends. If you make the most of the wide range of services you will be able to develop your career from the moment you arrive.

Careers advice, skills development and opportunities for work experience are available to Social Policy students through our University wide Careers Network and our specialist Careers Advisor.

### Specialist Social Policy Careers Advisor

Social Policy students are supported by our specialist Social Policy Careers Advisor in various ways, for example:

- Careers advice and support built into each year of your programme
- Careers surgeries are regularly held in our building
- Specialist careers fairs
- Talks from our Alumni and visiting professionals
- Specialist online support services
- Advice and support for social policy students is also available through our Careers Network.



### University wide Careers Network

Available to all social policy students, offering an extensive, well resourced service.

- Advice Desks
- CV Clinics
- Careers profiling
- Careers Events and Fairs
- Work Experience Fairs
- Skills Workshops
- Careers vacancy data base
- Work experience data base
- Online interactive careers Service

The University has a range of bursaries available which can enable you to take up low or unpaid work experiences. Visit our Careers Network for more information.

### The Personal Skills Award

The University's award winning employability programme, is supported by our Careers Network. This module is accredited on your official academic transcript and will provide you with the opportunity to broaden and develop your skills in preparation for your career. The Personal skills Award will provide you with opportunities to undertake training in areas such as:

- Leadership and teamwork
- Project management
- Introduction to journalism
- Media and press writing skills
- International communications

The Guild also offers a range of services to help students enhance their employability. **Jobzone** (<http://www.guildofstudents.com/jobshop/>) provides students with information about job fairs as well as a wide range of opportunities for students to gain part time work experience both within the University, for example as student ambassadors, as well as in many of wide range of agencies and organisations located in the City of Birmingham.

### Career pathways

Our Social Policy degree programmes are broad ranging and this is reflected in the range of professional career pathways open to Social Policy students upon graduation.

### Professions and career pathways

Professions and career pathways which our student's typically pursue include:

- Graduate management training schemes in health, housing, police, think tanks or specialist agencies, the voluntary sector
- Policy analyst, in voluntary organisations, local government, think tanks
- Research work in political and agency settings
- Legal work, for example through the **Graduate Diploma in Law** (</undergraduate/courses/law/llb-graduates.aspx>)
- Policing, probation, working with young offenders
- Working with children and young people

- Personnel and human resources
- International development work

Some Social Policy graduates go on to undertake further professional training, for example in law, teaching, educational welfare, counselling, human resource management. Some of our graduates choose to go on to post-graduate studies, for example masters and doctoral degrees in a range of subject areas.

<p>Additional accreditation</p> <h1>No</h1>	<p>To see more details and compare with other courses</p>
<p>BA (Hons) Social Policy and Political Science Full time</p>	<p>Visit <b>UNISTATS</b> ▶ Official data collected by HEFCE</p>