University of Birmingham

Social Policy with Year Abroad BA

international-open-day

The Social Policy degree at Birmingham provides an excellent opportunity to actively engage in the analysis of cutting edge social issues and debates from policing, crime and social unrest to gender inequalities, teenage pregnancy and the significance of globalisation, to name just a few. These, and a wide range of related issues, not only have a high profile on political and public agendas in all forms of contemporary media, but also form the focus of the work of a wide range of agencies and professions in the public, voluntary and private sectors.

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Social Policy is a highly contemporary, dynamic and grounded academic subject and this degree will provide you with a route into a range of careers and professional pathways.

- 88% of our graduates to on to work or undertake further study after graduation
- Top 10 in Complete University Guide 2015

We welcome applications from international students.

On this 4-year programme, you will spend a year abroad in your third year at a university in the EU or elsewhere in the world.

Follow

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

UCAS code: L40A

Duration: 4 years

Places Available: 129 Thoughout the Department

Applications in 2013: 761

Typical Offer: BBB (**More detailed entry requirements and the international qualifications accepted can be found in the course details (?OpenSection=EntryRequirements)**)

Start date: September

Related courses

Social Policy and Sociology BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-sociology.aspx)

Social Policy: Crime, Policing and Community Justice BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-policing-community-justice.aspx)

Social Policy: Housing and Communities BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-housing.aspx)

Policy, Politics and Economics with Year Abroad BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/policy-politics-economics-year-abroad.aspx)

Social Policy and Criminology BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-and-criminology.aspx)

Social Policy BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-ba.aspx)

Social Policy: Health and Social Care BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-policy-health-social-care.aspx)

Policy, Politics and Economics BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/policy-politics-economics.aspx)

Social Work BA (/undergraduate/courses/social-policy/social-work.aspx)

Contact

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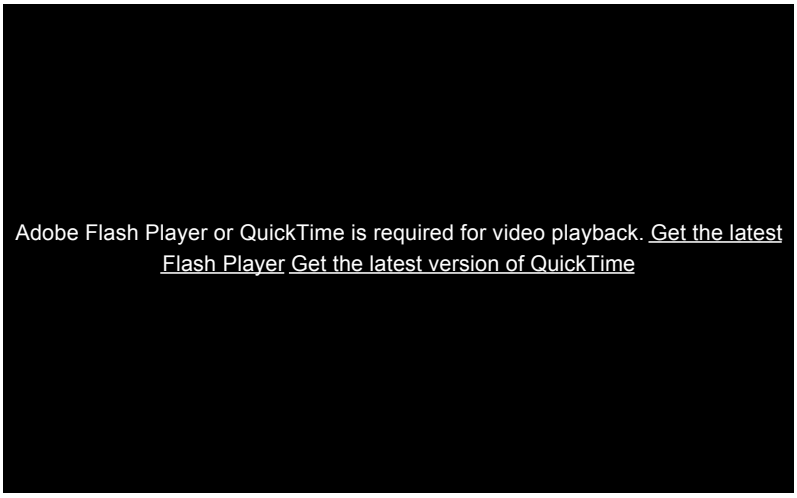
Tel: +44(0)121 414 2505/5709
Email: **t.hearn@bham.ac.uk (mailto:t.hearn@bham.ac.uk)**

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

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

Details



The BA Social Policy is an interdisciplinary degree, drawing on subjects such as sociology, politics, psychology, history, media and cultural studies and is suitable for students currently studying a range of A level subjects, and who have an interest in highly contemporary social issues and debates. The BA Social Policy is ranked among the top four social policy programmes in the country. Social Policy is located in a vibrant research institute and is led by academics who are specialists in their fields.

BA Social Policy course brochure (/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/course-brochures/2014/ba-social-policy-programmes-oct2014.pdf)

First year

Most people have not studied social policy at advanced level, therefore the first year is designed to help you find your feet and get up to speed with the subject through the study of some of the main disciplines that are relevant to social policy.

Second year

In the second year, your core courses include Social Theory, and Social Research. Social Theory will help you to develop a deeper appreciation of how contemporary social issues and debates are formed, framed and negotiated. In your social research module, you will focus upon gaining research skills for your third-year research based dissertation, which will be on a topic of your choice.

Third year

In your third year, you will spend a year abroad at a university in the EU or elsewhere in the world. There are a wide range of countries and universities from which you can choose. As well as a range of European universities, you may also choose from a **range of current partners worldwide (/undergraduate/studyabroad/outgoingstudents/index.aspx)** . These include countries in which a variety of different languages are spoken, including universities at which courses are taught in English.

Fourth year

The core modules in your fourth year are Prospects for Social Policy and the Dissertation Module. 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 transferrable skills. In the dissertation module you will undertake an in-depth research based dissertation, which will focus on a topic of your choice, supported by a specialist academic supervisor.

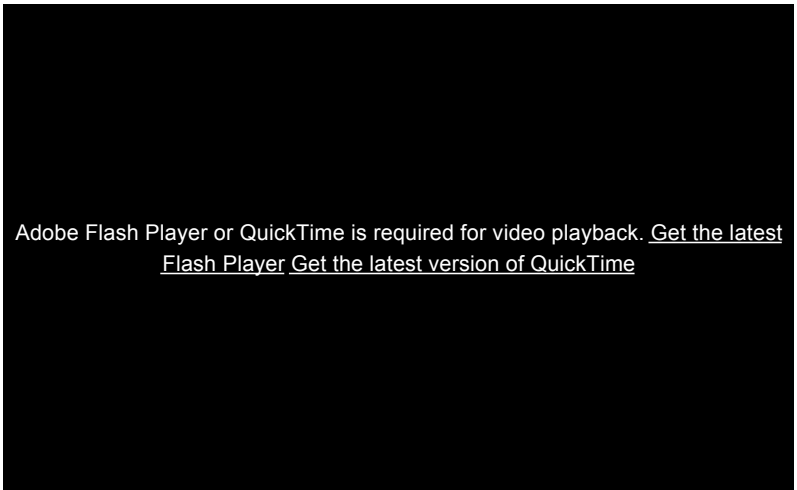
Internships

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 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/)** 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.

Why study this course

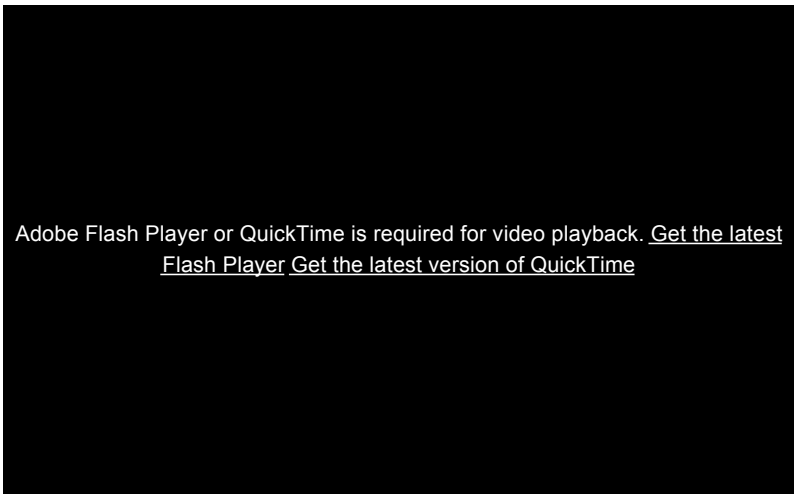


The Institute of Applied Social Studies is both friendly and supportive and students are encouraged to become involved in the work of the Institute and the University more broadly. There is a staff–student committee which provides a forum for regular meetings and discussion between staff and students. We also have an active Social Policy Student Society who arrange events, talks and debates. The Institute also organises and funds student events: for example, our student group recently visited London and the Houses of Parliament. Each student will also meet with their personal tutor on a regular basis to review their academic and broader developmental progress. The Institute also provides a welfare tutoring system for students who may have specific support needs.

Your experiences as a student will of course be enhanced by the fact that you will undertake your studies on a beautiful campus, situated in 256 acres of parkland, at a University with outstanding cultural, sporting and social facilities. You will also benefit from studying at a University which is within easy reach of a vibrant, modern City which has so much potential to contribute to your learning experiences as a Social Policy student.

Learn more about our Student Experience activities (/schools/social-policy/teaching/enhancing-student-experience/index.aspx) .

The Institute places an emphasis upon ensuring that students benefit from studying in a vibrant research environment. There is a carefully crafted relationship between research activity in the department, module content and teaching, providing students with core skills in both utilising and undertaking research.



Students are actively facilitated to secure internships and undertake voluntary placements and paid work. Academically supported placements in the voluntary sector are available for students who wish to gain experience and so enhance their personal development during their degree. Our Internship and Careers Officers also meet with our students on a regular basis to share information about and facilitate work opportunities.

Read more about careers and employability (/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/social-policy/outreach/careers.aspx)

Your year abroad

A year abroad is undoubtedly one of the best opportunities that is available to you during your undergraduate career, and is something you will remember throughout your university and professional life. The benefits of spending a year abroad are many and will enhance your career prospects by developing relevant, marketable skills, such as problem-solving, communication, analytical and study skills, as well as perseverance, determination, and self-motivation. 99% of students who have studied abroad say that it was the best year of their lives!

Find out more about the benefits of studying abroad (/undergraduate/studyabroad/why-study-abroad.aspx) .

Modules

Modules available within Social Policy degree programmes will enable you to acquire a range of skills which are valued by employers, including: critical enquiry; analytical skills; workload planning and management; problem-solving; research competencies; goal-setting; convening working parties; team working; presentations; writing policy reports and producing briefing papers. Optional modules such as the **Personal Skills Award (/undergraduate/careers/psa.aspx)** are also available, which provide students with the opportunity to develop further employment specific skills, for example in leadership and project management. Optional modules are also available which provide opportunities to visit policy organisations and gain placement experiences.

First year

Most people have not studied social policy at advanced level, therefore the first year is designed to help you find your feet and get up to speed with the subject through the study of some of the main disciplines that are relevant to social policy. Core first year modules include introductions to Social Policy, Social Issues, and Research Methods. You can also choose a further three modules which reflect your particular interests from a range of subject areas such as Psychology, Sociology, Media Studies, History and Politics. Taken together, your core and optional module will provide you with opportunities to develop and consolidate your understanding of social policy, and the space to explore new areas of academic study as well as familiar subjects in more depth.

Second year

In the second year, your core courses include Social Theory, and Social Research. Social Theory will help you to develop a deeper appreciation of how contemporary social issues and debates are formed, framed and negotiated. In your social research module, you will focus upon gaining research skills for your third-year research based dissertation, which will be on a topic of your choice. You will also have opportunities to tailor your degree to reflect your developing skills and interests through a range of specialist module choices, for example:

- Crime Victims and Society
- Children and Young People
- Managing Health and Social Care
- New Migration and Superdiversity
- 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. In your second year you can also choose to study modules from other departments if you wish, such as Urban Studies, Politics, Psychology, Sociology and History, providing you with further opportunities to focus upon developing areas of interest and so further personalise your degree.

Third year

During your year abroad, you will study a range of social policy related modules. Your precise choice of modules will be dependent on where you are studying, but you will be encouraged to select relevant modules from within the social sciences, as well as some modules outside the discipline, such as languages. Your mark for the year will be determined through two pieces of work assessed by academic staff from your programme of study at the University of Birmingham.

Fourth year

The core modules in your fourth year are Prospects for Social Policy and the Dissertation Module. 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 transferrable skills. In the dissertation module you will undertake an in-depth research based dissertation, which will focus on a topic of your choice, supported by a specialist academic supervisor. Your dissertation is worth around a third of your final year marks and your ability to choose a topic or issue which particularly interests and inspires you, will provide you with an excellent opportunity to enhance your marks in your final year. To complement these two modules, you can choose from a range of specialist options which include:

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

You can also choose to study modules from other departments to reflect specific interests which you have developed over the course of your programme.

Placement opportunities

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. Some students also choose to undertake placements linked to their dissertation work. We also have our own specialist Internship and Careers advisors.

Fees and funding

Standard fees apply (/undergraduate/fees/fees.aspx)
Learn more about **fees and funding (/undergraduate/fees/fees.aspx)**

Scholarships
Learn more about our **scholarships and awards (/undergraduate/fees/funding/index.aspx)**

We encourage applications through the University's **Access to Birmingham (A2B) Scheme (/undergraduate/requirements/a2b/index.aspx)**

Entry requirements

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: BBB

Additional information:

Number of A levels required: 3

Typical offer: BBB

General Studies: accepted

Other qualifications are considered – learn more about **entry requirements (/undergraduate/requirements/index.aspx)**

International students:

International Baccalaureate Diploma: 32 points to include English

Standard English language requirements apply
Learn more about **international entry requirements (/undergraduate/requirements/international/index.aspx)**

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 (/International/foundation-academy/index.aspx)** .

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)**
Learn more about **applying (/undergraduate/courses/apply/how-to-apply-for-ug-courses.aspx)**

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.com/)** 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 system (http://www.ucas.com/apply)** .

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Key Information Set (KIS)

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)** 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.

Learning and teaching

Social Policy lectures take many different forms, some may be talks followed by a workshop, others are combined with small group exercises, group discussions, seminars, project or placement work.

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).

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.

Learning settings

As a Social Policy 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.

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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

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://diglibdr.bham.ac.uk/clad/GEL.html)** , 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.

Skills and experience

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. 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 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.

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/)** , who provide our students with access to a range of experiences both in the UK and abroad.

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, 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.

"**Professor Nick Ellison, Professor of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds**, "BA Social Policy at the University of Birmingham provides the very best in social policy teaching, offering a wide choice of modules with plenty of opportunity to learn about research methods and the 'practice' of research. There are also opportunities to undertake placements, which are useful for gaining experience and future employment."

During your first year you will undergo a formal 'transition' review 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.

Teaching and learning mediums

The design of the Social Policy curriculum reflects the full range of our research expertise and you will be taught by academics who are specialists in their field. As a Social Policy student, your learning will take place through a range of different mediums, including:

- A key emphasis on direct contact, which includes interactive, academic lectures, seminars, workshops, project work, group and individual tutorials.
- A range of e-learning mechanisms such as Canvas, Wikis, podcasts and iVLE our integrated virtual learning environment through which you will have both on-campus and off-site access to a wide range of learning materials, 24 hours a day.

Our Information Services provide a suite of training, designed to facilitate students in using the wide range of information technology services, research databases and online data sources, which you will use within your social policy degree studies.

Your research dissertation

In your 3rd year, you will undertake a research based dissertation on a subject of your choice, providing you with an excellent opportunity to focus upon a theme or topic which really interests and inspires you. You will carry out your research in a vibrant research environment where the quality of tuition and academic support is excellent. Specialist modules on research methods and dissertation advice and support, will be provided in each year of your studies. In addition, you will receive one-to-one academic supervision from a specialist in the Social Policy academic team, which has a balance of expertise that covers all areas of the discipline, and has long-established strengths in a range of fields such as: criminal justice; the voluntary sector; politics and social policy; poverty; health policy; wealth and assets; social inclusion and equalities; housing issues; faith-based organisations and movements; new migration; comparative social policy; and young people and families. The breadth and quality of expertise available to support you in your research work is considerable. In the last Research Assessment Exercise, 95% of our research work was adjudged as 'internationally recognised', 45% as 'internationally leading' and 15% as 'world-leading'.

Employability

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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 (/undergraduate/careers/careers-network.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 (PSA) (/undergraduate/careers/psa.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.

Social Policy and employability

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Experiences you can gain as a Social Policy student, through placements, internships, working experiences and volunteering, are an excellent way of enriching your CV so that it includes that all important 'experience' that employers so often look for. When interviewed for your first job, you will often find that employers have a keen interest in how far you have developed your appreciation of the connections between your academic subject and the work of their organisations - through experiences of placements, voluntary work, internships, work experience and beyond, Social Policy students are very well placed to respond with confidence and competence.

Graduate Internship case study: Amy Davenport, Health Exchange (/schools/social-policy/teaching/student-profiles/davenport-amy.aspx)

Amy Davenport, **BA Social Policy (2013)** "Overall, I feel that my internship has served me well and has given me a lot of confidence and a better skill set for my career. My view on social enterprises has changed enormously, as I now have a new understanding of its fast-paced nature and the importance it has in delivering to communities that may find it difficult to get help and support from other, more traditional access points. Looking beyond my internship, I now find myself looking for what social enterprises there are and what opportunities they have."

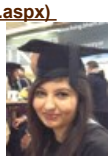
Opportunities to secure a career that is right for you, can be enhanced not only through experiences that are available to you on your Social Policy degree programme, but also through our specialist Careers Network Service.

Read more about Social Policy, careers and employability (/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/social-policy/outreach/careers.aspx)

Richard (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/sp-richard.aspx)
Richard works in prisons directly with the residents and is on a fast-track scheme to becoming a prison governor working his way through the operational roles in prison. **More.. (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/sp-richard.aspx)**

Naqeeb Ahmed (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/ahmed-naqeeb.aspx)
Naqeeb now works for the Citizenship Foundation in London where his work involves coordinating the nationwide Young Muslim Leadership Network, an initiative designed to promote civic engagement amongst young people. **More.. (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/ahmed-naqeeb.aspx)**

Naila Begum (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/begum-naila.aspx)
Naila successfully completed the Graduate Diploma in Legal Studies (GDLs) at the College of Law, and found that the knowledge gained from studying Social Policy is very relevant to different areas of Law. **More.. (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/begum-naila.aspx)**



Caroline Cresswell (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/cresswell-caroline.aspx)
"I have recently started my PhD here in Social Policy. The decision to come to University as a mature student has definitely changed the course of my life. There's not much else I would rather be doing!" **More.. (/schools/social-policy/alumni/profiles/cresswell-caroline.aspx)**

View more social policy student profiles (/schools/social-policy/departments/applied-social-studies/social-policy/outreach/profiles.aspx)

85% Students agreed staff are good at explaining things

BA (Hons) Social Policy
Full time
Year abroad

To see more details and compare with other courses
Visit UNISTATS
Official data collected by HEFCE

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