OUR MISSION:

‘The point is not merely to understand the world, but to change it’

Karl Marx
The School of Social Policy is an internationally-leading centre for research in health policy, social policy and social work. We conduct research that makes a difference to people’s lives locally, nationally and globally.

Our doctoral research students form an integral part of a thriving community conducting internationally leading research with relevance to practice and policy, and training the next generation of practitioners and policy-makers.
The Health Services Management Centre (HSMC) – specialising in policy, practice, education, and research in health and social care services in the UK. HSMC’s key research themes are:
- Policy reform and analysis
- Strategic planning and decision making
- Service and quality improvement
- People, patients and communities
- Leadership and management
- Workforce and professions

Research in the Department of Social Policy, Sociology and Criminology – committed to both rigour and relevance, our research covers a range of issues including:
- Poverty and social exclusion
- Global communities
- Housing
- Wealth and wellbeing

Research in the Department of Social Work and Social Care – committed to both rigour and relevance, our research covers a range of social issues including:
- Families
- Child protection and safeguarding
- Disability
- Interdisciplinary mental health teaching and learning
- Communities
RESEARCH IN OUR CENTRES

- Centre on Household Assets and Savings Management (CHASM) – based jointly with Birmingham Business School
- Institute for Research into Superdiversity (IRiS) – working across four Colleges within the University
- Third Sector Research Centre (TSRC)

We also have an interdisciplinary Participatory Research theme (cutting across all research).

RESEARCH IN OUR GROUPS

- Housing and communities research group
- Welfare futures research group
- Policy Commission: Closing the Mental Health Care Treatment Gap
 WHICH COURSES DO WE OFFER?

**Doctor (or Master) of Philosophy**
These are traditional doctoral research degrees assessed by a thesis and viva (oral examination):
- Health Services Management PhD/MPhil
- Social Policy PhD/MPhil
- Sociology PhD/MPhil
- Criminology and Social Work

**Professional Doctorate**
These are combined taught and research programmes for those with a professional qualification, assessed by module assignments, a development and evaluation project, a thesis and a viva:
- Doctor of Social Work (DSW) – for those involved in social work, social policy and practice in social work and allied areas.

All our postgraduate research courses can be studied full time or part time.
All postgraduate researchers are assigned two supervisors with complementary expertise and experience to support and guide you through your PhD. You will meet with them at least once a month (or every two months if registered part-time). In addition, you have access to a vast range of foundational and advanced research methods modules. The postgraduate research community organise informal monthly seminars to share experiences and support each other through the process. Once a year, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your progress and development needs with independent academics in the department.

The University of Birmingham is one of 21 Economic and Social Research Doctoral Training Centres across the UK. This signifies research excellence, and the highest quality of doctoral research training environments. The University Graduate School offers workshops and events to support postgraduate research students – everything from ‘shut up and write’ sessions, to yoga, to careers events.
I’m a part-time PhD student in the School of Social Policy. My research focuses on how young people experiencing disadvantage are able to access social action opportunities; activities such as volunteering, campaigning and fundraising. Alongside my studies, I work as a researcher at Birmingham, seconded to a charity in London which aims to increase the number of young people involved in social action in the UK by 2020. I hope my PhD research will help the charity to understand more about how to make social action more inclusive.

‘As part of the PhD I’m taking modules from the MA in Social Research, which I’m finding especially helpful for boosting my research skills and meeting other students – I like the fact that Birmingham attracts students from a range of career stages and disciplines.

Emma Taylor PhD SoSP PT
WHAT ARE THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

We usually look for a first-class or upper second-class honours degree in social science, and/or successful completion of an appropriate postgraduate programme. Many potential candidates will have taken our MA Social Research or an equivalent programme elsewhere. The fundamental requirement is evidence of potential for doctoral research – the ability to design and undertake original, independent and rigorous research.

Those applying for Doctorate in Social Work are usually expected to have a relevant professional qualification and professional work experience.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

Please contact us to discuss your application informally, then applications should be made online: www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/apply-pg/index.aspx

You will be asked to provide a research proposal, a personal statement, references, confirmation of previous qualifications and, where required, evidence of ability to study in English.
DEVELOPING A RESEARCH PROPOSAL

If you have not done so already, we would encourage you to produce a formal proposal and identify specific academics that you think could supervise your research. The proposal should provide:

1. a rationale for the intended study (referencing some key literature and if applicable including practitioner knowledge/experience)
2. research questions or aims
3. suggested research design, including methods and analysis
4. potential contribution of the research to knowledge, theory, policy and/or practice

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I HAVE APPLIED?

After you have applied, we will assess your application and if is of high quality, we identify potential supervisors. The supervisors will then arrange an interview (in person or by video conference, such as Skype). This is an opportunity for both students and supervisors to decide if they can work well together on the proposed project. If so, a formal offer will be issued by the University.
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Every year, we welcome students from all parts of the world. For international applicants, further information is available on the University website, including country specific information (including local representatives of the University around the world), fees and funding advice, and student life in the UK: www.birmingham.ac.uk/International/students/index.aspx
My chosen field of study, young adult caregivers, is an under-researched subject in the US. Coming to Birmingham to study with my supervisor was absolutely essential to develop my knowledge of the field.

‘During my time here, I’ve also taken advantage of the opportunities to present at international conferences. The department has graciously provided financial support for several of my conference trips. The overwhelming support I’ve received from my supervisors and from the department leaves me unreservedly convinced that I made the right decision to attend UoB.’

Feylyn Lewis, PhD SoSP FT
I HAVE QUESTIONS. WHO CAN I CONTACT?

Please contact our Postgraduate Research Team at:
E: sosppgr@contacts.bham.ac.uk

Where can I find more information about
The School of Social Policy?
Please visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/social-policy