



University
of Glasgow

College of Social
Sciences

MSc Social Science Research Student Handbook

Academic Sessions 2013-2015

The MSc Social Science Research

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1 Introduction

Welcome to the MSc Social Science Research!

The MSc SSR is designed to help meet the increasing demand for research skills within public agencies, the voluntary sector and private industry, by providing a one year full-time or two year part-time taught course offering a basic grounding in research skills. While fulfilling a specific employment need, the course also constitutes an excellent grounding in research skills for those wishing to pursue academic research at doctoral level or as part of on-going professional development.

The course also offers you a wide range of options to choose from for the two elective elements of the degree. Most of the options detailed in the Graduate School for Social Sciences Research Training Handbook will in fact be available to you, giving you the widest range of options available on any Masters degree in the College.

Most of the information you need on class times, Graduate School regulations, and other administrative procedures are listed in the Research Training Handbook, so they will not be repeated here. This short booklet is intended to summarise the objectives and structure of the course, and repeat basic information on contact details of staff etc.

2 Aims

The course is designed to meet the needs of a variety of employees in major public, commercial and voluntary institutional settings who have a research component to their work requirements and who wish to broaden and upgrade their research skills and capacities. It is also intended to cater for newly graduated first degree holders seeking to enter employment in the research field with good general research skills, or wishing to pursue further academic research, either for a higher degree or within an existing research project.

3 Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- ❑ Be able to articulate a research problem and elaborate an appropriate research design
- ❑ Be able to evaluate critically the methods used in different research programmes
- ❑ Be aware of the theories underpinning research methodology in the social sciences
- ❑ Demonstrate familiarity with a range of research techniques both qualitative and quantitative
- ❑ Have a practical understanding of the role of computers as a research tool for data analysis including the basic use of SPSS and a variety of internet-based tools and other software packages
- ❑ Be familiar with the skills involved in the analysis and reporting of qualitative research material
- ❑ Be able to present research results clearly and concisely using graphs and tables
- ❑ Be familiar with basic statistical concepts including principles of sampling, hypothesis testing, tests of significance and model building
- ❑ Be alert to the ethical and political dimensions of research activity as well as the legal and client-based constraints which may need to be considered
- ❑ Be able to exploit internet and bibliographical resources

4 Admission

The normal basic requirement would be that the applicant has already obtained a first class or upper second class honours degree from a University recognised by Court in a Social Science subject, or possesses a comparable non-UK degree in the Social Sciences. Applicants who do not have this level of qualification may also be considered if they possess relevant work experience.

Applicants from overseas must conform to the College of Social Sciences proficiency in English language requirements.

5 Course Requirements

The course is offered on a full-time basis, the normal period of study being 12 months full-time, or 24 months part-time, starting at the beginning of the academic year in September.

Each candidate shall undertake a prescribed course of study and shall also be required to submit a dissertation.

For administrative purposes students are located in the College of Social Sciences Graduate School.

6 Course Structure

Attendance at classes is compulsory, unless exemption has been explicitly granted. Registers will therefore be taken in most classes. The course tutor should be informed if a student is unable to attend any session due to illness or other unavoidable reason. The components of the MSc in Social Science Research are as follows:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Science Statistics 1&2 | (40 credits) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative Research Methods | (20 credits) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Social Theory for Researchers | (20 credits) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Options choice | (2 electives, each 20 credits) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation | (60 credits) |
|
 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research Training Programme Induction | Not assessed, but Attendance is compulsory |

Total Credits: 180 credits

In addition to the components listed above, all students are required to obtain the University's "Certificate of Basic IT Competence".

7 Dissertation

The dissertation is an exercise in original research and is seen as essential, both in consolidating individual research skills in a larger piece of independent research, and in familiarising students with the practicalities of applied research through student contact with active academic researchers and/or external organisations. Dissertation topics are particularly encouraged to have an applied or policy relevant dimension, explored using the rigorous research methods taught on the course. Normally academic supervision will be provided by staff in the Medical Research Council or else other subject areas within the College of Social Sciences.

Where appropriate, a student can undertake the dissertation within an external institution in the private sector or in a public sector agency, but this has to be initiated and organised by the student and agreed with the course co-ordinator. While students are encouraged to develop the dissertation as an applied piece of social research in the context of a 'user' organisation, it is by no means a requirement. If this option is explored, the agreed topic will normally be jointly supervised by a member of that organisation and an academic member of staff. It is intended that the dissertation will typically be conducted over three months for full-time students and in the course of the second year for part-time students, and will offer an arena for the student to demonstrate and develop qualitative and/or quantitative skills learned in the taught components of the degree. The topic of the dissertation is agreed and registered with the course co-ordinator and the supervisor, but students need to be aware that we cannot guarantee supervision for all subject areas. Students therefore need to make sure they choose a topic that fits with the supervision expertise available.

Note that, because this is essentially an MSc in research methods, the dissertation will be marked accordingly. As such, the student should aim to demonstrate competence in at least one advanced research technique (either quantitative or qualitative). Competence is demonstrated by an understanding of the technique and the appropriate methodological literature and appropriate application of that technique. Critical reflection is encouraged as this demonstrates that the student is aware of the shortcomings in their data and application.

Dissertations should be max. 15,000 words in length (not including tables, figures and appendices). Two spiral bound copies of the dissertation must be submitted to the Graduate Office by the hand in date. One and a half line spacing should be used in all text except for text included in Tables, Figures, References, Bibliography, and Abstract. Students gaining a distinction for their dissertation may submit a hard bound copy for depositing in the University of Glasgow Library.

7.1 *Dissertation ILOs*

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- identify a topic worthy of inquiry
- critically analyse and evaluate existing knowledge on that topic, through a review of relevant literature
- formulate a coherent and answerable set of research questions
- determine an appropriate research strategy and associated methodology, taking due account of any practical, political and ethical issues affecting the conduct of their research
- identify and engage positively with academics and/or researchers in external bodies where necessary
- collect and analyse relevant empirical evidence from fieldwork and/or secondary/documentary sources
- draw appropriate conclusions from their analysis
- write up a logically structured and properly referenced research report

8 *Dissertation Supervisors - MSc Social Science Research students*

Each MSc SSR student has to find a suitable supervisor for their dissertation, usually from among the staff in the College of Social Sciences or the Medical Research Council (University of Glasgow). As far as possible the Course Co-ordinator will try to meet with all students to discuss potential supervisors who have similar research interests. It is then the supervisor's task to provide guidance and advice on the content and structure of the project, on the methods employed, the process of ethical approval and on draft chapters submitted. The supervisor will also advise on reading material. They may also become involved in providing support if problems arise due to ill-health or other personal reasons. Systematic consultation with the supervisor is an important key to presenting a project of an acceptable standard. Students who fail to seek their supervisor's guidance or ignore the recommendations made are in particular danger of presenting a project which is below the necessary standard.

9 *Dissertation Dates:*

Full-time students *starting September 2013* :

Dissertation Proposal due: **Friday 13th December 2013**

Dissertation Ethics approval due: **Friday 13th December 2013**

Dissertation final submission due: **Friday 12th September 2014**

Part-time students *starting September 2013*:

Dissertation Proposal due: **Monday 17th March 2014**

Dissertation Ethics approval due: **Friday 22nd August 2014**

Dissertation final submission due: **Monday 7th September 2015**

10 Assessment

A variety of assessment methods are used as appropriate to the subject matter of the different courses. Normally, essays, exercises and project work will be required. Submission dates and timetable information are listed in the Research Training Handbook.

Each course is usually assessed on the basis of written course work in the form of a project/lab report and/or 3,500 - 5,000 word essay.

Students who do not progress to the dissertation, or who fail to meet the standard required but who satisfy all other course requirements, may be awarded a **Diploma in Social Science Research** on satisfactory completion of course work:

A student who fails to maintain satisfactory progress may be required to discontinue studies. This decision will be taken by the relevant PGT Committee, no later than the end of the Second Semester, or on the recommendation of the Course Organiser.

Note that there are absolute restrictions on the total time allowed for completion for the MSc in Social Sciences Research (check with the MSc SSR co-ordinator for more details).

It is possible for Diploma students (both FT and PT) to upgrade to an MSc Social Science Research programme of study, however, this is subject to satisfactory performance at the end of semester 1 for full-time students or end of year 1 for part-time students. Furthermore, it is conditional on the student meeting the necessary 'progression' requirements as set out in the Handbook. Students interested in upgrading should see the course convenor in the first instance.

10.1 Marking Scale

The following is the marking scale used for core courses in the Research Training Handbook and the MSc SSR.

GRADE	BAND	SCORE	DESCRIPTOR
A	A1	22	Exemplary attainment of intended learning outcomes, secured by discriminating command of a comprehensive range of relevant materials and analyses, and by deployment of considered judgment relating to key issues, concepts and procedures. [Fluent command of theory in the analysis of empirical evidence.]
	A2	21	
	A3	20	
	A4	19	
	A5	18	
B	B1	17	Conclusive attainment of most intended learning outcomes. Grounded in a familiarity with a range of supporting evidence, constructively utilized to reveal appreciable depth of understanding. [Shows knowledge of theory as it relates to empirical evidence.]
	B2	16	
	B3	15	
C	C1	14	Clear attainment of most of the intended learning outcomes displaying sufficient familiarity with and sufficient analytical grasp of relevant materials. [Sufficient appreciation of the relation between theory and practice.]
	C2	13	
	C3	12	
D	D1	11	Partial attainment of intended learning outcomes. Mixed evidence as to depth of knowledge and competence in the deployment of arguments. [Weak command of theory as it relates to empirical evidence.]
	D2	10	
	D3	9	
E	E1	8	Deficient attainment of intended learning outcomes, with unconvincing evidence of depth of knowledge and weak deployment of arguments. [Insufficient command of theory as it relates to evidence.]
	E2	7	
	E3	6	
F	F1	5	Appreciably deficient attainment of intended learning outcomes, lacking secure basis in relevant factual and analytical dimensions.
	F2	4	
	F3	3	
G	G1	2	Minimal attainment of intended learning outcomes.
	G2	1	
N		0	No attainment of learning outcomes.

10.2 Essay Submissions

See online Research Training Handbook.

10.3 Resubmission and Progression

See online Research Training Handbook.

10.4 Penalties for Late Submission

Assignments are a key part of the assessment process. To ensure fairness and consistency, strict time limits must be observed for the submission of assessed work.

Work not submitted by the required deadline will be subject to a penalty.

10.5 Attendance

Students must attend all timetabled course sessions. Email the Graduate Training Secretary about reasons for absence from any of the Research Training Programme [RTP] core courses, and copies of self-certificate sickness forms or doctor's letters should be provided for absence due to illness. Students whose attendance is unsatisfactory will normally be barred from assessment on the subject(s) concerned at the diet of examinations immediately following the completion of the subject(s).

10.6 Overall performance

If you believe that an on-going medical condition, or other personal circumstances is causing an impairment in your academic performance over a substantial period of time you can ask the Board of Examiners to take this into account. You must inform the Course Co-ordinator **in writing**, and you must submit a full medical or other full report for the Board of Examiners meeting.

10.7 Results

Results will be recorded on MyCampus for the Core Courses -

- Social Science Statistics 1 & 2
- Qualitative Research Methods
- Introduction to Social Theory for Researchers

You should note the Registry will withhold results from any student who has a DEBT to the University (Tuition Fee; Library fines etc).

10.8 Plagiarism

During your time as a student at the University you will carry out a number of assignments - essays, projects, exercises, and the dissertation. You are expected to present your own work and thought, substantially in your own words. However, you will often draw on other people's work from books, reports and articles. Sometimes students are tempted to 'borrow' chunks of material (verbatim or with minor alteration) and use it as their own. **This is plagiarism.**

There is nothing wrong with using other people's information, ideas and occasionally their words in a brief quotation. Indeed, you will be encouraged to read widely and to develop or criticise views expressed by others. However, you must be very careful to ensure that any information or ideas which come from outside sources are acknowledged.

Where you use a book or report as a source for your discussion, the work should be cited in the text and included in the bibliography. If you are drawing on interviews then you should make this clear. Direct quotations, such as paragraphs from books or reports, must be placed in quotation marks and the source cited immediately after the quotation. If you are not sure how to acknowledge a source, seek advice from the course co-ordinator or tutor.

An extract from the University's Plagiarism Statement amended by Senate 9 June 2005 is given below:

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT

- 1 The University's degrees and other academic awards are given in recognition of a student's personal achievement. All work submitted by students for assessment is accepted on the understanding that it is the student's own effort.
- 2 Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of work, in any form, which is not one's own, without acknowledgement of the sources. Special cases of plagiarism can also arise from one student copying another student's work or from inappropriate collaboration.
- 3 The incorporation of material without formal and proper acknowledgement (even with no deliberate intent to cheat) can constitute plagiarism. Work may be considered to be plagiarised if it consists of:
 - a direct quotation;
 - a close paraphrase;
 - an unacknowledged summary of a source;
 - direct copying or transcription.

With regard to essays, reports and dissertations, the rule is: if information or ideas are obtained from any source, that source must be acknowledged according to the appropriate convention in that discipline; and any direct quotation must be placed in quotation marks and the source cited immediately. Any failure to acknowledge adequately or to cite properly other sources in submitted work is plagiarism. Under examination conditions, material learnt by rote or close paraphrase will be expected to follow the usual rules of reference citation otherwise it will be considered as plagiarism. Academic Units should provide guidance on other appropriate use of references in examination conditions.

- 4 Plagiarism is considered to be an act of fraudulence and an offence against University discipline. Alleged plagiarism, at whatever stage of a student's studies, whether before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the University.

10.9 Extensions procedure for Research Training Programme Core Courses:

See online Research Training Handbook.

10.10 Extensions Procedure for Options Courses

Application in writing with supporting evidence of extenuating circumstances should be made to the Option convenor, and copied to the Co-ordinator of the MSc SSR degree.

10.11 Extensions Procedure for the MSc SSR Dissertation

Application in writing with supporting evidence of extenuating circumstances should be made to the Co-ordinator of the MSc SSR degree.

11 Teaching Methods

The course will be taught using a range of teaching methods including lectures, workshops, seminars, case studies and practical familiarisation exercises involving group work where appropriate; visual aids are used throughout and videos are shown where relevant. Computing and Library facilities will also be used extensively. Much of the course material is available electronically via the internet.

The course comprises approximately 200 contact hours for students. In order to facilitate the participation by part-time students, many courses are run in the evening or on a block basis.

The timing of the options is dependent on a range of School needs and most will take place during the day or early evening. All options are subject to availability.

Submission dates and timetable information are listed in the Research Training Handbook.

12 Staff Names and Contact Details

In addition to the staff employed directly by the College, staff are drawn from a range of Schools. Their roles and contact details are listed below.

Enquiries should normally be made to Linda Thomson in the College Office in the first instance. Appointments with the course convenor should be made by appointment only – see contact details below:

	Staff & their RTP Roles	Area & Location	Email
Central College Staff	Professor Richard Berry (Dean of Graduate Studies)	CEES, Lilybank Gardens	Richard.Berry@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Jonathan Oldfield (Director of Graduate Training)	CEES, Lilybank Gardens	Jonathan.Oldfield@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Jo Ferrie (Co-Director of Graduate Training)	Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research, Adam Smith Building	Jo.ferrie@glasgow.ac.uk
	Ms Honor Hania (Librarian, GUL)	GU Library, Hillhead Street	H.Hania@lib.gla.ac.uk
	Mrs Myrtle Porch Admin Secretary (Postgraduate)	College Office, Room 107, Florentine House	Myrtle.porch@glasgow.ac.uk
	Miss Linda Thomson (Graduate School Training Secretary)	College Office, Room 107, Florentine House	Linda.Thomson@glasgow.ac.uk Linda.Thomson@glasgow.ac.uk
Core Course Co-ordinators	Prof Gwilym Pryce Social Science Statistics 1 Social Science Statistics 2	Urban Studies, 27 Bute Gardens	gwilym.pryce@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Jo Ferrie Qualitative Methods Advanced Qualitative Methods Introduction to Social Theory for Researchers	Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research, Adam Smith Building	Jo.ferrie@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Jon Oldfield Qualitative Methods Advanced Qualitative Methods	CEES, 8 Lilybank Gardens	jonathan.oldfield@glasgow.ac.uk ;

Option Course Co-ordinators	Dr Nicki Hedge Advance Research Methods for Doctoral Students	School of Education, St. Andrews Building	Nicki.hedge@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Duncan Ross Business in the Global Economy	Economic & Social History, Lilybank House	Duncan.Ross@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Hayden Lorimer Conceptualising Human Geography 1: Space, Policy & Power Conceptualising Human Geography 2: Geographical Engagements Researching Human Geography: Design, Methods & Ethics	Geographical & Earth Sciences, East Quad, Main Building	Hayden.Lorimer@glasgow.ac.uk
	Professor Moira Munro Contemporary Government & Governance	Urban Studies, 27 Bute Gardens	Moira.Munro@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Cathy Johnman Further Epidemiology & Statistics	Public Health, 1 Lilybank Gardens	cathy.johnman@glasgow.ac.uk
	Professor Ya Ping Wang Global Cities	Urban Studies, 29 Bute Gardens	yaping.wang@glasgow.ac.uk
	To be confirmed Globalised Economy	Economic & Social History, Lilybank House	To be confirmed
	Dr Jo Ferrie Methods of Social Research	Strathclyde Centre for Disability Research, Adam Smith Building	Jo.Ferrie@glasgow.ac.uk
	Dr Mark Freeman Poverty and Inequalities in the Modern World	Economic & Social History, Lilybank House	Mark.freeman@glasgow.ac.uk

	<p>Dr Marguerite Dupree Research Resources and Skills for historians</p> <p>Studies of the History of Medicine 1850</p> <p>Studies of the History of Medicine 1850-2000</p>	<p>History of Medicine, Lilybank House</p>	<p>marguerite.dupree@glasgow.ac.uk</p>
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12.1 Pastoral Resources

There are a range of pastoral support and student guidance systems in place for students:

12.1.1 Masters Course Co-ordinator / PhD Supervisor

The Course Co-ordinator's role is to supervise the delivery of the Course and monitor the overall student experience. He/she may be called upon to advise students as a group or individually on their performance, concerns or complaints on progression. He/she will deal with queries from students, employers and staff. The Course Co-ordinator also has responsibility for monitoring the progress of students who have temporarily withdrawn or are completing work after attendance of the course has finished. For those doing a research degree, a similar role is played by the designated supervisor(s)

12.1.2 Course Co-ordinators / Tutors

Students are encouraged to approach course co-ordinators and tutors with any concerns about issues relating to a particular course or to discuss progress. Co-ordinators must provide advice on assignments and appropriate feedback on work. They may arrange additional tutorial support in cases of individual personal extenuating circumstances and where students are required to resubmit work. Consultation hours of teaching staff are regularly posted on the co-ordinators door or on the relevant Noticeboard.

12.1.3 Dean of the Graduate School

Students may also consult the Dean of the Graduate School, if all other consultations have failed to resolve issues. To make an appointment, contact the Graduate School Training Secretary.

12.1.4 Student Learning Service (includes - Effective Learning Service)

The College of Social Sciences has an Effective Learning Advisor whose role is to assist students, particularly mature students and non-graduates, to maximise their potential. The Effective Learning Advisor runs regular study skills work-shops and students may self-refer or be referred by the Course Co-ordinator for one to one sessions. For Further information please contact - studentlearning@glasgow.ac.uk

12.1.5 Student Disability Service

The University's Student Disability Service helps applicants to assess the range of facilities available and provides advice on sources of support. The University has experience of supporting students with a range of disabilities including sight, hearing, mobility difficulties and a number of unseen disabilities including dyslexia. Support includes special teaching materials and equipment (including computers), flexible assessment and examination procedures and financial support. For further information.

Please visit the website <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/studentdisability/>.

Further details on student resources are provided in the Graduate School Research Training Handbook -

www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/info/students/graduateschool/graduateschoolresearchtrainingprogramme/