

GO BEYOND BOUNDARIES



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School of Social Science

POSTGRADUATE GUIDE



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Anthropology

→ **GLOBAL TOP 100
PROGRAMME
FOR ANTHROPOLOGY**

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024

→ **3RD IN THE UK
FOR ANTHROPOLOGY
AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

Guardian University Guide 2025

MLitt Museum Studies

Programme Overview

The MLitt Museum Studies programme draws on the University's extensive museum collections to enable you to explore critical approaches to museum theory while also studying the application of museum practice and research.

The University of Aberdeen's museum collections are among the oldest, largest and most significant in the country, having the status of a Recognised Collection of National Significance. The MLitt Museum Studies programme makes significant use of these collections to enable you to study the historical and contemporary roles of museums in society and develop skills in public engagement with research while gaining practical experience of museum work.

You will gain foundational curatorial skills and an appreciation of contemporary issues museums face. With a range of optional courses available to supplement our core courses, you can customise your degree to specific areas of interest. Our options in Museums and the Digital World and Decolonising Museums prepare students to consider some of the most pressing issues and transformations facing the museum sector.

This programme is delivered by the University's academic and museum staff, as well as guest speakers, and includes field trips and the opportunity to undertake a work placement, co-curate an online exhibition and associated displays on campus, or undertake a dissertation on a museum-based topic of your choice.

Careers

This degree provides suitable preparation for working in museums, galleries and heritage institutions, for those who wish to conduct further research in Museum Studies, and for an academic role in a variety of associated fields. It is a valuable degree for those interested in communication skills and working with people.

Graduates of this programme have gone on to work at institutions including the British Museum, the Royal Collection Trust, the National Trust for Scotland, the Chicago Field Museum, the Gordon Highlanders Museum, and the North America Native Museum in Zurich. Career prospects include collections management, curation, exhibition development, education, museum administration, visitor services, and more.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/museum-studies



MSc Anthropological Research

Programme Overview

The MSc Anthropological Research (formerly MRes Social Anthropology) offers a unique opportunity to delve into human cultures and societies within a world-renowned academic setting.

This programme combines rigorous theoretical teaching with fieldwork opportunities to equip you with both the analytical frameworks and practical skills essential for advanced anthropological study. This programme introduces you to the work anthropologists do, the methods used to conduct fieldwork, and to past and current anthropological research in perspective. The programme also encourages critical reflection on the problems and possibilities entailed in and presented by anthropological research.

The Anthropology Department at the University of Aberdeen provides world-class research expertise that combines an interdisciplinary, global focus with an established track record of research on Scotland and the Circumpolar North.

Our focus at Aberdeen encompasses multiple facets of people's everyday lives, from routine activities to special festivals and events. By observing these occurrences, researchers gain insights into other societies and reflect on their own, contributing to knowledge about distant cultures and addressing pressing issues in nearby communities.

Careers

There will be many career options open to you after completing a Masters degree in Anthropology. This degree provides suitable preparation for continued research towards a PhD in Social Anthropology/Anthropological Research, or to enter employment as a trained researcher in the public or private sectors.

Recent postgraduate researchers in Anthropology have found employment in a diverse range of roles in NGOs, governments, museums, the media, and within universities.

Start Dates

September

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at

www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/anthropological-research



MSc Environmental Anthropology

Programme Overview

MSc Environmental Anthropology gives you the chance to explore the intersection between people's everyday lives and some of the key issues of our time, including climate change, the biodiversity crisis, and multispecies relationships. You'll be introduced to theoretical and practical perspectives from across the subject.

Aberdeen's Department of Anthropology is renowned for environmental anthropology. We have a strong portfolio of projects and publications that you'll learn from, on multispecies ethnography, climate change, environmental art, mobilities and indigenous rights amongst others.

Our long-standing focus on the Circumpolar North, stretching from Siberia and northern Europe to Canada, is complemented by research in many other regions and we supervise students from all over the world. Many of our courses include field trips and there are wonderful resources in landscape and wildlife close to our campus and across north east Scotland.

This programme's core courses focus on Environmental Anthropology and Climate Policies, Realities and Justice. Optional courses are available in topics related to our expertise, along with training in research methods. Relevant courses from across the University will also be open to you. For your final research project, you will choose between a dissertation focused on your own research and a work placement, where you'll bring your skills to a project with a relevant organisation.

Careers

Environmental anthropologists work in diverse cultural and environmental settings around the world. They often use long-term ethnographic fieldwork that centres the experiences of those they work with. Their findings contribute to environmental and social policies, community rights and well-being, and academic debate.

Upon graduation, you will have the opportunity to enter a wide range of careers including environmental management, consultancy and policy-related jobs across the public and private sectors. You can also progress to a PhD in Anthropology.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/degree-programmes/2157/environmental-anthropology/





Politics and International Relations

→ 8TH IN THE UK
FOR INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

Guardian University Guide 2025

MSc Climate Politics and Policy

Programme Overview

As we witness our planet and society confront the swift and relentless consequences of climate change, we are also undergoing the largest social, technical, and political transition that humankind has ever seen.

MSc Climate Politics and Policy is a programme that provides you with a comprehensive understanding of the complex political, social, and economic dynamics underpinning climate change and challenges in its policy policymaking.

You will also gain an understanding of how climate change is impacting every corner of the political world. In Aberdeen, a city at the heart of the UK's energy transition, you also have the chance to witness how climate- and energy-oriented policies are taking effect in a historically oil-based economy that is transitioning to a low carbon one.

Careers

The MSc Climate Politics and Policy will equip you for a career in any organisation or sector engaging with the climate as a topic of policy and praxis.

You can apply your knowledge to different types of organisations, ranging from international and national NGOs and think tanks, major utilities and energy companies, independent and local companies, as well as local and national governments and agencies.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/climate-politics-policy



MSc International Finance and Political Relations

Programme Overview

The MSc International Finance and Political Relations combines the strengths of the School of Social Science and the Business School to explore the intersection between money, politics and power and the relationship between international finance and policymaking at the transnational level.

This programme is designed to train specialists for careers in the international finance or in the government/non-governmental (NGO) sectors, where an understanding of global flows of money, trade and labour, and the global distribution of wealth they engender, is required.

Over the last few decades, there has been a steady increase in cross-border financial flows, as a result of the globalisation of financial markets. At the same time, we have witnessed fundamental societal and political changes and how nation-states behave and interact with one another, as well as technological advances and financial innovation.

As a result, businesses, governments, and investors therefore face an ever-growing need to understand the relationship between political relations and international markets. By combining the key theories and themes in the study of international political economy with corporate finance and investments, this Masters programme addresses the need, by teaching the advanced skills needed to gather, analyse and evaluate information on the politics of international finance and to enable you to communicate how international finance, banking, and stock markets intersect with national and international political events.

Careers

This programme is aimed at training highly qualified specialists for careers in the international business and finance sector or in government or the non-government (NGO) organisations, where an understanding of global flows of labour, trade and finance, and the global distribution of wealth and poverty they engender, is required.

Start Dates

September or January

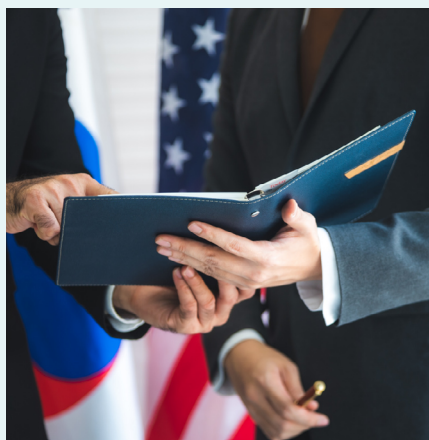
Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/int-political-relations



MSc International Political Economy

Programme Overview

Do you want to understand the sources of stability and change in the global economic order?

The MSc in International Political Economy prepares you to understand the structures, hierarchies, and power dynamics that regulate finance and trade, drive globalisation and economic nationalisms, and impact the distribution of wealth and poverty across and within states, regions, and the world.

This programme introduces you to the conceptual and theoretical terrain of international political economy, with a particular focus on the dimensions of globalisation that have re-shaped international flows of capital, goods, and labour.

You will gain a rigorous academic grounding in the scholarly debates about key substantive issues and the relation between theory and policymaking. You will also study production and the relationships with law, custom, and government along with wealth distribution, preparing you for worldwide careers in development, foreign affairs and public and private sectors.

Upon graduation you will be prepared for further studies in IPE, or for a career in policymaking, research, and more in the private and public sectors.

Careers

Careers relating to international political economy involve policymaking and research in organisations working in the fields of development, health, energy law, and migration. Many graduates choose to do public advocacy, research and project management work for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and regional and global institutions such as the European Union or the United Nations.

Graduates also forge careers in international institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, international media, the armed forces, international risk management, and international corporations involved in trade and finance.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/int-political-economy



MSc International Relations

Online study available

Programme Overview

Debates about the nature of globalisation, international institutions, development/post-development, global political economy, culture and identity, citizenship, and rights bear prominently on efforts to understand the ebb and flow of contemporary international relations.

Understanding the modalities of power in constituting the 'international,' as well as challenges to hegemonic stabilisations of it, has gained a particular urgency, making the study of international relations central to apprehending the complexity of global social life.

The MSc in International Relations offers you the opportunity to study international order/disorder in relation to the interaction among states; transnational institutions; non-governmental organisations; multinational corporations; popular culture and everyday life.

You will engage with key issues in contemporary international relations including development & political economy, critical & human security, globalisation, gender, identity, human rights and governance. We also offer a distinct and interdisciplinary pathway in **International Relations and International Law**, combining the study of global politics, diplomacy, security, and conflict with training in international law and human rights, preparing you for careers in international organisations, human rights, and transitional justice and security.

Careers

Careers relating to international relations involve public sector research and policymaking in foreign affairs, defence, development and human rights. Many graduates now choose to do public advocacy, research, and project management work for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and regional and global institutions such as the European Union or the United Nations.

Graduates also forge careers in the international media, the armed forces, international risk management, and international corporations involved in trade and finance

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

On campus

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Online

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at

www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/int-relations



MSc International Relations and Management

Programme Overview

This interdisciplinary Masters programme, delivered jointly by experts from the University's School of Social Science and Business School, combines the study of how current international political and economic issues impact on how governments, businesses and other organisations operate globally.

You will develop a comprehensive understanding of management theory – including business strategy, management, and leadership – while also engaging with topics such as terrorism, global security and globalisation in order to understand how global events impact on various areas of business.

Careers

This programme delivers a deep understanding of the different perspectives on international relations, alongside knowledge of the practices of business and management. You will be well-equipped for a wide range of careers in various sectors, such as a multinational business, the public sector, including national and local government, trade unions, and NGOs.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at

www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/int-relations-mgmt



MSc Politics and Public Policy

Programme Overview

The MSc Politics and Public Policy examines contemporary political issues and the complexity of the public policy process in a variety of economic, social and cultural settings. You will gain a deep understanding of key problems and issues in politics, the processes of policy making, the limitations of public policy responses, and how to bring about change.

You will develop the theoretical knowledge and analytical frameworks and tools to evaluate and develop policy relating to important issues including poverty, human rights, migration and the energy transition.

Through detailed case studies you will evaluate public policy, examining policy adaptation, failure and success. You will learn how policymaking can meet the challenges of modern multi-level governance and a rapidly changing world.

This programme will equip you with the necessary expertise and skills for a career in politics and policymaking in government, business, third-sector organisations, the media, the research sector, and international institutions.

We welcome applications from students from a wide range of backgrounds, including politics, business, economics, international relations, law, and sociology, who seek to develop the skills necessary for a career in politics and public policy at local, national or international levels.

Careers

This programme provides thorough training in the concepts, frameworks and methods required in the design and development of public policy.

Graduates of this programme will be well prepared for a career in various political and policy roles in government at a local or national level, the public sector (e.g. the civil service), international organisations, media, and consultancy work for private sector organisations, trade unions, charities and not-for-profit organisations.

Start Date

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/politics-public-policy



MSc Politics, Public Policy and Management

Programme Overview

Through the increased globalisation of financial markets, and fundamental changes in societal and political relationships at all levels, the development and adaptation of public policy has become increasingly complex.

Delivered jointly by experts from the School of Social Science and Business School, this programme provides a thorough grounding in the technical aspects of business management, alongside a wider understanding of the public policy frameworks and tools used in addressing contemporary political issues.

You will develop a rigorous understanding of management theory, including business negotiations, managing change, and leadership. You will also gain the theoretical knowledge, frameworks and tools to analyse, evaluate and develop policy relating to key political contemporary issues and challenges including poverty, human rights, migration, climate change and energy transition.

You will explore how key actors, such as politicians, experts, corporate interests, campaign groups, the media, social movements, activists, and the public set the agenda and shape the development of public policy at various levels. You will consider how to bring about change, negotiate the development of successful public policy, and learn how policymaking can meet the challenges of modern multi-level governance in a rapidly changing world.

This is an ideal programme for those who are interested in pursuing a career in politics and public policy at local, national or international levels.

Careers

Graduates will be well prepared for a career in various political and policy roles, including roles which require a comprehensive understanding of business management and negotiation skills.

Graduates may enter a range of careers such as the civil service, in international organisations, in research, media and consultancy work for the private sector, trade unions, charities and not-for-profit organisations.

Start Date

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/politics-policy-mgmt



MSc Strategic Studies

Programme Overview

The MSc in Strategic Studies advances your understanding of the use of force in conflict and provides you with the ability to scrutinise real-world security issues which challenge governments, armed services, international organisations, and businesses globally.

Strategy is notoriously tricky. Most strategies fail, most of the time. However logical the connection of means, ways, and ends may be on paper, it is notoriously hard to achieve. Why is this so? This Masters programme will address this question, and more.

You will learn about the contribution of strategy as a mechanism for the application of power and coercion and address issues such as the nature of strategy, causes of war, conflict deterrence, arms control, and the impact of emerging technology on strategic affairs.

This programme considers the historical background and context that has shaped key developments in strategic affairs from domestic, international, political-psychological, and strategic-cultural standpoints. While studying global defence policies, domestic and cultural factors involved in strategy, you will also develop the analytical and strategic skills needed for a range of careers in the global public and private sectors.

In addition to the MSc Strategic Studies, we offer three distinct pathways, **Strategic Studies and Energy Security**, **Strategic Studies and International Law**, and **Strategic Studies and Management**, allowing you to tailor your degree to your academic interests and career ambitions.

Careers

The MSc in Strategic Studies has produced graduates of high repute with excellent career prospects for over thirty years, with an international network of alumni who have gone on to become intelligence and political analysts, policy advisors, government and defence officials, researchers, and more.

Career prospects include public advocacy, research, and project management work for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and regional and global institutions such as the European Union or the United Nations. Graduates may also forge careers in the international media, the armed forces, international risk management, and international corporations.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at

www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/strategic-studies



MSc International Security and Diplomacy

Programme Overview

The MSc International Security and Diplomacy is a programme for all those interested in the workings and interactions of governments across various levels, concerning governments which have both friendly relations and those which endure more strained relations.

It will also be of interest for professionals interested in progressing their careers who require knowledge on diplomacy and strategic thinking within both government and non-government organisations.

We live in a global situation which is becoming ever more uncertain as the international community tackles problems as diverse as climate change discussions, migration, development aid, trade and the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Middle East. New actors have emerged on the international arena, but states remain the key actors within the international system.

This programme explores how governments interact with each other, ranging from formal state visits to more covert interactions which take place. During this programme you will learn about the different types of diplomacy that exist, conflict resolution, transnational diplomacy with several case studies also being explored including crisis diplomacy and immigration.

Careers

Along with developing a deeper understanding of strategic theory and the various factors which influence strategy, you will also hone many transferable skills essential for entering the workforce or going onto further study. These include written and oral communication, critical thinking and analysis, problem solving, teamwork, negotiation, IT skills, and more.

Career prospects include public advocacy, research, and project management work for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and regional and global institutions such as the European Union or the United Nations. Graduates may also forge careers in the international media, the armed forces, international risk management, and international corporations.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/degree-programmes/1976/international-security-and-diplomacy/





Sociology

→ 5TH IN THE UK
FOR SOCIOLOGY
AND SOCIAL POLICY

Guardian University Guide 2025

MSc Peace and Conflict Studies

Programme Overview

Conflict resolution, or “peace-making,” is vital for both physical reconstruction and intergroup reconciliation, as well as for understanding and addressing the underlying causes of said conflict. This programme familiarises students with the dynamics of well-developed approaches to conflict resolution and the more recent mechanisms of post-conflict peacebuilding which have developed over the past twenty years.

You will explore the processes through which state and non-state actors have attempted to define and build peace in areas affected by conflict, and examine the intersection and overlap between peacebuilding theory and these processes.

You will also learn to critically examine the limits to and challenges of administering mechanisms for peace, justice and development within conflict-affected societies, and the ongoing challenges for both of local ownership, evaluation, and sustainability.

This programme will provide you with in-depth knowledge of peacebuilding theories and methods, as well as the skills necessary to pursue a career in conflict intervention and peacebuilding practice, or to pursue PhD and related studies in Peace and Conflict Studies, conflict resolution or peacebuilding in the social sciences.

Careers

The MSc in Peace and Conflict Studies equips you with detailed empirical knowledge and analytical skills for understanding the central concepts and processes involved in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Graduates of this programme can apply their skills and knowledge to future employment in international diplomacy and civil service, as well as to careers in international institutions, research centres, charities, NGOs, think tanks, and more.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at

www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/peace-conflict



MSc Policy Evaluation

Programme Overview

Institutions and organisations are increasingly demanding evidence-based policy formation. However, there are few graduates with the necessary training to engage in policy evaluation and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) techniques to provide that “evidence”.

As a result, there is a high demand for graduates with the specialist social research methods for M&E, who can critically understand and evaluate policies and social interventions in areas such as health and social care, criminal justice, international development, and inequality and poverty.

The MSc in Policy Evaluation meets this demand by equipping you with the skills necessary to provide effective policy evaluation and programme M&E for government and third sector organisations, working in both domestic and international contexts.

You will acquire advanced skills in quantitative methods and analysis and research design. You will also develop a critical and informed understanding of policymaking, policy evaluation, and programme implementation required to put M&E into practice across a wide array of contexts.

Careers

Policy evaluation is of growing importance for governments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and international organisations involved in funding and delivering programmes in areas such as public health, education, transport, inequality, criminal justice, international development, humanitarian relief, post-conflict state-building, peace-building, and transitional justice.

This has led to a growth in the need for policy experts who can design, monitor and evaluate policies for implementation across these areas. This programme provides you with the practical skills and understanding of the subject needed to prepare for a career in policy formation and evaluation, and programme implementation, in these sectors and others.

Previous graduates of this programme have gone into roles in civil service, the Scottish government, and the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at

www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/policy-eval



MSc Sex, Gender, Violence

Programme Overview

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines gender-based violence as “harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender.” Gender-based violence is rooted in gender inequality and can take various forms including physical, sexual and psychological violence. Examples include domestic violence, harassment, rape, institutional and structural violence, trafficking, and violations of human rights during times of conflict and peace.

This programme engages critically with contemporary debates on this subject, providing an in-depth understanding of the ways people think about violence, understand it, and respond to it. You will consider how we decide what counts as violence or a violent act, and examine why responses to violence often seem inadequate, especially in the case of gendered and sexual violence.

You will also learn the latest advanced qualitative methods employed by social scientists, including participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, diaries, photography and film, and archived data sources.

This programme can be used as preparation for further research such as PhD study; to develop your career in sectors where violence is relevant, such as the voluntary, advocacy, charity, NGO, or policy sectors; or simply to further your interest in this fascinating area.

Careers

This MSc programme provides a critical and informed understanding of this subject, ideal for careers in international development, charities/NGOs, policy, human rights, and peacebuilding. You will also develop high-level skills in research, analysis and communication, which are in demand across many sectors and industries.

Previous graduates of this programme have gone on to roles in charities and grassroots organisations, while others have progressed on to PhD programmes to pursue academic careers.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/sex-gender-violence



MSc Sociology

Programme Overview

The MSc Sociology provides an in-depth understanding and training in the use of sociological theory and methodology, with a key focus on the distinct research specialisms of staff in the department of Sociology.

You will examine classical sociological theory (Marx, Weber, Nietzsche) before moving on to more recent social thought to develop an advanced working knowledge of the most important theoretical tools available to professional social scientists today.

You will also learn the latest advanced qualitative methods employed by social scientists, including participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, diaries, photography and film, and archived data sources.

In addition to the core theoretical and methodological concepts and debates in sociology, this MSc programme offers a series of courses that reflect the department's expertise and current research, in topics such as globalisation, peace and conflict studies, comparative European societies and gendered and sexual violence.

Careers

With a need for experts in societal theory, methodology, and policy, you will be well-placed for a career in social research, government, education, social welfare, community development, public policy, and more.

Previous graduates of this programme have gone on to work for NGOs, charities, private and public sectors, research, academia and consultancy.

Start Dates

September or January

Mode of Study/Duration

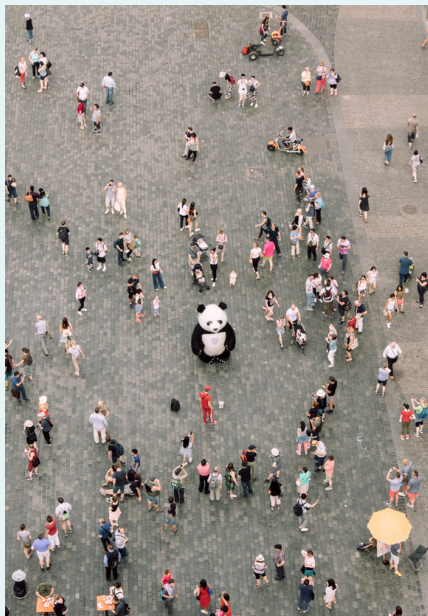
Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at

www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/sociology



MRes Social Science

Programme Overview

The MRes in Social Science combines specialist and generic methods training to equip students with transferable skills for graduate employment in the public, private and third sector.

This Masters programme, recognised under the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Scottish Doctoral Training Programme, Sociology Pathway, is tailored to provide the methodological training and critical capacity for advanced research in social science.

Combining taught courses with a supervised research project, the MRes in Social Science gives you the knowledge, understanding, and competence to deploy qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis in the conduct of theoretically informed research.

With the opportunity to gain experience in the research methods taught by applying them to topics of your choosing, you are able to customise your training around your particular social science interests.

Careers

The MRes in Social Research is a great foundation for moving into further research, such as a PhD programme, or for careers in research and policymaking in the private and public sectors, where you can apply your advanced training in quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Graduates will be prepared for careers in organisations such as universities, social research centres, market research agencies, think tanks and policy organisations, local and national government institutions, charities and NGOs, and more.

Start Dates

September

Mode of Study/Duration

Full-time/12 months

Part-time/24 months

Further Information

Learn more about this programme at www.abdn.ac.uk/pgt/social-science



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