Top 5 in the UK for Social Science

Source: The Complete University Guide 2017
Student supervision and teaching engages deeply with this research background while giving each student the opportunity to explore their own unique learning interests and research goals. Through programmes such as the Scottish Doctoral Training Centre and the STAR programme (see Research), students are also linked to the wider horizons of research and training throughout Scotland. With over 40 teaching staff and 30 affiliated research fellows in total, the School provides a rich intellectual environment for postgraduate studies, whether within the taught or research Masters programmes, or at the level of full doctoral and postdoctoral research. As part of the College of Arts and Social Science, the School also seeks to provide both internal and external funding for all promising research candidates.

We hope that you find what follows helpful in deciding on your future plans. Please contact us if you have any further questions, and we look forward to seeing you at Aberdeen!

About the School

Situated on the King’s College campus at the heart of Aberdeen’s ancient research-led University, the School of Social Science provides cutting edge expertise and teaching to a diverse body of UK and international students. Home to the departments of Anthropology, Politics and International Relations, and Sociology, the School also has five affiliated research centres: The Centre for Gender Studies, the New Europe Centre, European Centre for Survey Research, the Centre for Global Security and Governance, and the Institute for Conflict, Transition and Peace Research.

Each year, we welcome students from across the UK, Europe and the world to join our thriving postgraduate community. Staff throughout the School are highly research active, with most of our research output deemed either world-leading or internationally significant, and with many senior staff being internationally recognised leaders in their fields. Our research encompasses the full horizon of the social sciences’ ambitions for advancing knowledge, from rich theoretical speculation on the nature of human society, thought and practice to highly pragmatic and policy-oriented studies.

MASTERS PROGRAMMES

MSc/MLitt/MRes Degrees

DURATION:

Full time - 12 months
Part time - 24 months.

ANTHROPOLOGY

MRes SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Founded in 2000, this is the University of Aberdeen’s flagship programme for those embarking on anthropological research or seeking to improve their anthropological research credentials. The programme combines a broad introduction to anthropological theory with a rigorous programme of social science research methods. Students will complete an independently-researched dissertation with individual supervision. This programme is open to all with good degrees in Anthropology, Cultural History, Ethnology and related disciplines such as Sociology.

MLitt MUSEUM STUDIES

In recent years, museums have become an important field of study, with a wide range of research focusing on their history, collections, practices and social roles. The MLitt Museum Studies uses the University’s own internationally important collections and museums to explore these issues and to give practical experience of working in a museum, working closely with professional as well as academic staff. In the first half-session the core courses ‘The Museum Idea’ and ‘Museum Practice’ focus on the history and theory of collecting and museums, alongside a course selected from a range of options. The second half-session includes a choice of courses, including ‘Curating an Exhibition’ and ‘Learning and Museums’ which both involve a wide range of practical experiences. Students play key roles in creating the King’s Museum’s Summer exhibition and the ‘Night at the Museums’ family event. During the summer most students take part in a 20 day work-based placement in a Scottish museum.

MSc PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Aberdeen has a growing international reputation for its innovative research in environmental anthropology, particularly in fields such as perception, landscape, conservation and human-animal relations. This expertise is the basis for a new and distinctive MSc programme exploring the complex relations between people and their environment and the issues and problems that emerge from these. The programme will be of great interest both to Anthropology graduates and to students who have studied other environmental disciplines and now wish to develop a social dimension to their thinking and approach. A flexible curriculum means that students can tailor the course to their own requirements, whilst still gaining a solid grounding in the subject.

POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MRes POLITICAL RESEARCH

This programme serves both as preparation for PhD research - by enhancing relevant general social science skills - and as a free standing programme in research methods training. Drawing on teaching skills available both within Politics and International Relations and from throughout the School of Social Science, the programme includes courses on: Qualitative Research Methodologies; Theories and Issues in Political Science and IR; Research Design and Data Collection, and; Quantitative Research Methodologies.
prepares you to understand the intersection of wealth and poverty and its impact on populations in different parts of the world. Are you interested in the changing dynamics of energy, and how this impacts flows of labour and capital, risk, finance, globalisation, state power, and trade. As a student, you will study the relationship between governments and business, international economic organisations, and non-governmental organisations to prepare you for careers in business, government and foreign affairs.

MSc INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
The MSc in International Relations provides a sustained engagement with key issues in contemporary international relations including development and political economy, critical and human security, globalisation, gender, identity, human rights, and governance. Building on a foundational course on the conceptual/theoretical underpinnings of IR, the programme offers a range of courses that enable individualised programmes of specialised study on a particular theme or region, allowing for a balance between a nuanced understanding of key concepts and paradigms and analytical tools, and the development of thematic and regional specialisation. MSc IR students also complete an in-depth extended research project.

MSc INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL LAW
The joint programme in International Relations and Law at Aberdeen is an innovative course – one of only three across the UK - that offers students seeking careers in governmental institutions, international organisations and international non-governmental organisations the opportunity to advance their understanding of law and politics in the international arena. Combining courses in the theory and practice of international relations, security, human rights, and the use of force in International Law taught by a globally distinguished Faculty, the course offers a unique perspective on a range of contemporary issues related to the transformed nature of global governance in the context of international politics and law.

MSc INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
This is a research-only programme. Delivery of a dissertation not exceeding 40,000 words provides the opportunity for in-depth analysis of an aspect of international security chosen in consultation with the supervisor. The dissertation will either display clear evidence of originality in research outcomes and argument, or it will constitute a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field selected. The research and writing may be conducted over 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time) and need not be completely campus-based.

MSc LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
A truly interdisciplinary programme, the Latin American Studies programme draws on expertise from both Hispanic Studies in the School of Language, Literature, Music and Visual Culture and the Department of Politics and International Relations. Students will study Latin American culture, development, politics and international relations of the region. The programme consists of both core courses and a variety of electives, which will allow students to tailor their own degree to their specific interests. In addition, students will write a dissertation on a topic of their own choice. The University of Aberdeen MSc Latin American Studies is not only unique to a Scottish university but is also one of only very few in the United Kingdom to have such an interdisciplinary nature.

MSc STRATEGIC STUDIES AND ENERGY SECURITY
The University of Aberdeen combines Strategic Studies, which gives you an in-depth understanding of the character and challenges of global security with a profound appreciation of the dynamic politics and economics of the international energy sector. Understanding the crucial nexus between international security and energy is vital for the delivery of national and global development, prosperity and stability. This unique programme of study will equip participants with the insights and skills to make significant contributions to a critical element in the structure of global peace and security.

MSc STRATEGIC STUDIES AND MANAGEMENT
This programme draws upon core courses from the MSc Strategic Studies and the Business School’s MBA. The combined programme will study the synergy between the strategic policies, decision-making, leadership and operational applications of national and international security institutions and those of large and small organisations in the business and non-governmental sectors. Students will examine salient security issues within the context of a globalised, international system of rapid strategic, technological and economic change.

MSc STRATEGIC STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW
This programme explains how the use of force
and power interface with the requirements and expectations of the body of international law, which addresses the conduct of conflict at international and sub-national levels. An understanding of the theory and practice of the uses of power and force by states to achieve national and international security objectives will be combined with an appreciation of the development and implementation of international law as it attempts to control coercion and to limit violence in the international arena. This programme, conducted jointly by the School of Social Science and the School of Law, provides you with an advanced understanding of the interaction of Strategic Studies and International Law and how this impacts upon the prevention, control and conduct of the use of state and non-state coercion in conflicts in the modern world.

**SOCIOLOGY**

**MRes SOCIAL RESEARCH**
This programme provides advanced training in social research. It equips students with the skills they need to undertake independent research, using a range of methodologies. Through the dissertation, students are able to develop practical, intellectual and critical skills in their specific areas of interest. For students who wish to undertake a PhD in Sociology, the programme is also designed to provide the support and training required to complete the first stages of doctoral research.

**MSc COMPARATIVE EUROPEAN SOCIETIES**
This programme is designed for those who want to understand more about Europe and learn to access data that provides information and insight into European processes. The rise of the EU to a global power means that it has become increasingly important to understand European societies and how they work. The tremendous turbulence caused by recent events such as the rise of nationalist parties, xenophobic responses to migration and BREXIT means calls for further assessment. The programme will look at what social scientists have to say about these phenomena and what information they use to develop their arguments.

**MSc GLOBAL CONFLICT AND PEACE PROCESSES**
This programme is designed for students wishing to develop an advanced knowledge of the intellectual terrain of intrastate conflict and contemporary approaches to the management of violent conflict. The programme will familiarise students with the theoretical and methodological insights from the fields of Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science and Human Rights. It analyses a range of international peace processes, themselves well known, in which these themes are explored empirically - Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Lebanon, Sierra Leone.

**MSc GLOBALIZATION**
The globalization of trade relations, political engagement and personal connectivity that has emerged since the 1980s is arguably the most important shift in human society in recent centuries, and has become a major concern of policy-makers and citizens alike. This programme will examine the nature and dimensions of this transformation from a social scientific perspective, and the impact it is having on our ways of life. It will appeal to students and professionals seeking a deeper understanding of global processes and international affairs or those pursuing research in the social sciences to the doctoral level.

**MSc POST-CONFLICT JUSTICE AND PEACEBUILDING**
This programme familiarises students with the central theoretical, conceptual, and empirical dimensions of post-conflict justice and peacebuilding and explores how these have changed over time. The programme focuses on the policies and mechanisms by which justice is claimed to assist in establishing sustainable peace and the relationship between peacebuilding and justice mechanisms. The programme allows students to critically reflect on these processes by considering the boundaries of peace, justice and reconciliation after conflict. Students will also reflect on burdens of the past, problems of forgetting, issues surrounding legal, social and economic justice and the contemporary challenges to the practices of justice and peacebuilding such as evaluation and local ownership.

**MSc RELIGION AND SOCIETY**
This programme provides a unique opportunity for postgraduate study in the sociology of religion. Taught by well-known leaders in the field, the programme provides students with study in both the sociological study of religion and training in advanced sociological methods. This programme is ideally suited for anyone considering the pursuit of doctoral studies in sociology of religion, and also provides a broad-base of social-scientific skills that are both marketable and useful for those pursuing careers either in government or in the third-sector.

**MSc SEX, GENDER AND VIOLENCE: CRITICAL APPROACHES**
This programme studies the body in the 21st century, and the proliferation of recent technologies that have profoundly challenged our understanding of what bodies are and do, and even what counts as a human body. The transgender body, the queer body, the masculine female body, ‘differently sexed’ bodies - all pose serious challenges to established patterns of living valued embodied lives. Students are given the opportunity to critically investigate these challenges from both a theoretical and empirical perspective. The programme will be based in the Centre for Gender Studies and Department of Sociology, and is open to students with a previous degree in the social sciences and cognate fields.

**MSc SOCIOLOGY**
This programme provides students with grounding in the key theoretical and methodological debates in contemporary sociology, allowing them the opportunity to take full advantage of the department’s internationally recognised research expertise. It is designed for those with a background in Sociology who wish to further their studies at postgraduate level, but is also ideal as a conversion programme for those with little or no previous experience of Sociology who are considering undertaking a PhD. The programme combines development of key skills in critical thinking, theory and methods with maximum versatility in choice of elective courses and research area.
RESEARCHING

The School of Social Science is comprised of three units: Anthropology, Politics and International Relations and Sociology. Staff across the units are active in both research and postgraduate supervision.

Our specialisms include: Anthropology; Anthropology of the North; Histories of Material Culture; Creativity of Practice; Religion, Belief and Practice; Sociology; Political Sociology; Religion and Secularisation; Cultural Sociology and Socio- Economic Inequality.

Politics/International Relations; Political Organisation; Peace, Conflict and Security Studies; Comparative Politics.

Additionally, the School of Social Science is home to the following research centres:

> Centre for Global Security and Governance
> New Europe Centre
> European Centre for Survey Research
> Centre for Gender Studies
> Institute for Conflict, Transition and Peace Research

The University of Aberdeen is a member institution of the ESRC Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Doctoral Training Centre (DTC). ESRC 1+3 and +3 doctoral studentships are available in Sociology under the Scottish ESRC DTC. Anthropology also participates in the Scottish Training in Anthropological Research (STAR) programme, a research training consortium involving all the universities in Scotland with postgraduate courses in Anthropology.

Funding may also be available through other internal and external sources. Please visit: abdn.ac.uk/cass/graduate/scholarships-available-275.php for more information.

Our international faculty (totalling 48 members across the three units) includes numerous world-recognised leaders in their fields. Staff retention and new recruitment provide for a thriving research environment, as evidenced in activities such as research away days, Postgraduate Summer Schools, weekly seminars, informal presentations, and various programmes for knowledge transfer and community engagement. In the REF2014, most of our work was judged to be international in quality, and we expect strong performances in the upcoming REF2020.

Postgraduates have access to high-quality library and IT systems and also funding for conference participation. We endeavour to provide every research student with desk space and a computer in dedicated accommodation co-located in the School. We also benefit from the University’s Special Collections, and the ethnographic collections in the Marischal Museum. The School has established a multimedia workstation for digitising diverse media for analysis, editing, producing analogue and digital media from paper print-outs to cassette tapes, DVDs and web media. Video and audio-recording equipment is also available for use in fieldwork.

PhD SUPERVISION

The University of Aberdeen School of Social Science offers PhD supervision in:

Social Anthropology: abdn.ac.uk/socsci/research/anthropology-173.php
Politics and International Relations: abdn.ac.uk/socsci/research/politics-international-relations-174.php
Sociology: abdn.ac.uk/socsci/research/sociology-175.php
How to Apply

To apply please visit: abdn.ac.uk/postgraduate/apply

Completed applications must consist of:

> A completed Postgraduate Application Form.

> Academic transcripts and/or degree certificate(s) to date.

> For international applicants, proof of proficiency in English (English Language Requirements).

> Applicants to research programmes must provide two academic references from their most recent academic institution. For taught programmes, please refer to the School website for details of reference requirements.

Applications for PhD and Masters by Research programmes require a Research Proposal to be submitted with the application. Some departments require an extended Research Profile and applicants should refer to the School website for details before submitting an application.

FINANCE AND FUNDING

Tuition fees will depend on your domiciled status. For up-to-date information on fees visit: www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/tuitionfees

> Our Funding Database is the quickest and easiest way to search for any funding sources that may apply to you.

> Graduates of the University of Aberdeen can take advantage of our Alumni Discount Scheme.

> Scholarships and bursaries are available. For full information on funding opportunities available at the University visit: abdn.ac.uk/cass/graduate/scholarships-available-275.php

I'M INTERESTED
HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE?

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