“My single piece of advice to any prospective students would be to choose Sociology as your first choice degree. You won’t be sorry!”

Shelley Robertson, Graduated 2017
Sociology is the study of modern societies. It examines how societies work, how they are changing, and how individuals are affected in multiple ways by social change. Sociology allows students to understand the world around them in ways that are both novel and critical.

Why Study Sociology at Aberdeen?

Sociology at Aberdeen is widely regarded as one of the best sociology departments in the UK. In the last onsite review by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, we were judged to be ‘Excellent’ (the highest grade possible) in its Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) exercise. Sociology also consistently achieves very high rankings for undergraduate teaching quality in various guides for students and parents and it has consistently achieved high student satisfaction ratings in the National Student Survey (NSS).

We are strongly committed to providing students with outstandingly good teaching, through a range of absorbing courses on many areas of contemporary social importance. Sociology is also recognised by the UK government’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) as an outlet for providing top quality research training and supervision for postgraduate Masters and PhD students.

Sociology at Aberdeen has many leading scholars who are internationally recognized experts in their fields. The department is particularly well known for its work in the areas of the sociology of conflict and peace processes; globalization; religion; political and economic sociology; European societies; social inequalities, and animal-human relations.

Publication of the results of the UK Government’s 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) confirmed the status of Sociology as one of the leading research units in the field in the UK. With more than half of the research judged by a panel of experts to be world-leading (4*) or internationally excellent (3*) and all of its work meeting national standards of excellence, the department was also ranked as one of the top two sociology units in Scotland. The panel noted not only significant evidence of world-leading quality in relation to its research outputs but also evidence of a research training environment of high quality.

Aberdeen is, in every way, a great place to study the fascinating and highly relevant subject of Sociology.
In the Aberdeen undergraduate degree there are two initial years of study before you specialize: In both first year and second year, you take various different subjects. Alongside your Sociology courses, you can take almost any subject in the Arts & Social Sciences. In the third and fourth years, you can study Sociology as a Single Honours degree or you can study for Joint Honours in Sociology with another subject. For those who wish to graduate after three years, there is a Designated degree in Sociology.

First & Second Year
The four-year degree enables students to understand their chosen subjects in-depth. In first year, sociology courses explore the relationships between individuals on the one hand and social forces and institutions on the other. We also examine the character of societies in the present day. We examine a range of key topics, including issues such as self-identity and group behaviour, deviance, consumerism, urbanization, crime, modern organisations, religion, mass media, surveillance, education, social inequalities, and gender.

In second year, we examine the nature of modern societies in more detail and we consider what special insights sociology can give us about them.

We look both at microsociology – the study of people in small groups and in everyday life – and macrosociology – the study of largescale social forces and institutions, often worldwide in scope, that can affect whole societies and all the individuals who live within them.

Third & Fourth Year
Third year consists of courses in Social Theory, Modernisation, 10 Sociology Studies and Social Research Methods. The Methods course prepares students to pursue their own research topic in fourth year. In the final year, you choose option courses from a broad range of staff specialisms, exploring major sociological themes in-depth and addressing some of the key issues confronting contemporary societies.

Our Honours courses usually include:

- European Societies
- Sociology of Religion and Culture
- Sex, Death and the Afterlife
- Animals and Society
- Political Sociology
- Politics and Religion
- Between Conflict and Peace: Transitions in Society and Politics

At Aberdeen, you can take Sociology as a single degree or in a variety of joint degrees, including the recently added joint MA Criminology and Sociology.
“I went back to education as a mature student and I’ve loved my time here at Aberdeen University.”

Sarah McVey, Graduated 2017
Our Students

Our programmes are very popular. In the academic year 2019-2020 over 600 undergraduates studied Sociology courses. In third and fourth year, there were around 140 Honours students.

Teaching Objectives

The Department ensures that its graduates have excellent knowledge of sociology and the ability and imagination to apply this information to real-life situations. Our courses provide considerable insight into the workings of modern societies and into the behaviour of people in social groups. We teach both how to conduct research and how to evaluate the research of others. We also develop and enhance skills of critical enquiry, clear communication, good presentation, and independence of judgement – all in very practical ways. Sociology complements other disciplines such as Psychology, Politics, International Relations, Anthropology, History, English, and many others.

Careers

By providing a broad insight into social life and a training in how to study social behaviour, Sociology offers an excellent qualification for entry into many careers. Sociology graduates can be found in areas such as management (including HR), national and local government, media and journalism, advertising and marketing, teaching, as well as NGO’s and social and community services, amongst many others. Our graduates have found the advanced training we offer in social research techniques particularly helpful in enhancing both their employability and their personal potential.

How do I apply?

Applications to this degree programme are made through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). You apply online at www.ucas.com and may apply to up to five institutions on the full-price UCAS application. Prospective students (and their parents/guardians/teachers) are welcome to visit the University at any time, or attend our University-wide Open Day in August or October.

Please contact the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service, who will be happy to make arrangements for a visit. www.abdn.ac.uk/study
“The best part about studying Sociology is that you are able to pick the courses that you would like, it means that the course is tailored to you and you are able to do subjects that you enjoy.”

Amanda Adams, Graduated 2017