

1	Awarding Institution	UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
2	Teaching Institution	UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
3	Final Award	BA (HONOURS)
4	Programme title	SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY
5	Programme Accredited by:	UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE
6	UCAS Code	LL34
7	QAA Subject Benchmarking Group(s)	SOCIOLOGY SOCIAL POLICY & ADMINISTRATION
8	Date of production/revision	JUNE 2004

9	Programme Aims:
	The aims of this programme are:
1	to enable students to gain a firm grounding in the essentials of sociology and social policy including sociological concepts, theories, methodologies, and applications, and to provide a sound basic understanding of the process of policy making and implementation with special reference to the development of welfare policies in the UK and elsewhere.
2	to enable students to study a range of self-chosen specialisms within these subjects and to undertake a research project;
3	to produce graduates who are capable of following a wide variety of careers in the private, voluntary, statutory, and professional services sectors and/or of undertaking postgraduate courses in either subject;
4	to provide an award which meets the requirements at H level in the Framework for Higher Education Qualification and which meets the requirements of the relevant national subject benchmarks.

10(a)	Programme Intended Learning Outcomes:
A	Knowledge and understanding
1	To identify, understand and analyse some of the major social scientific approaches to studying the social world and to understand their relevance to issue of social policy
2	To develop competence in using major theoretical perspectives and concepts in sociology to understand and analyse aspects of social life at local, national and global levels with special reference to issues of welfare and public policy

3	To formulate and investigate sociologically informed questions, and to understand and evaluate the appropriateness and validity of a range of research approaches for investigating different social issues and problems, including a recognition of the ethical dimension to social research
4	To develop a capacity to critically analyse, assess and communicate empirical sociological evidence and to analyse the origins and development of welfare institutions in the UK and other countries
B	Subject-specific/professional skills
1	To develop the ability to identify the nature and appropriateness of different research strategies and methods, and assess their relative contributions to the production of sociological knowledge and the evaluation of policy initiatives.
2	To deepen understanding of the distinctive character of sociology in relation to other forms of understanding, such as its relation to other disciplines and to lay explanation, with special attention to issues of policy development.
3	To develop an understanding of the complexity of human behaviour, and a recognition of social context, social diversity and inequalities and their impact on the experiences of individuals and groups
4	To facilitate a recognition of the usefulness of social scientific theory and evidence for the evaluation of specific social problems, issues and events, and an ability to make assessments of the merits of competing explanations and perspectives
C	Cognitive skills
1	To think logically and critically about social problems, including the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to the understanding and assessment of empirical, practical and policy issues
2	To gather, synthesise and evaluate the significance and validity of information and evidence from a wide variety of sources and to evaluate the use of evidence in the formation of social policy
3	To marshal, construct and propose reasoned, coherent and structured arguments, drawing upon appropriate sociological and allied sources of evidence
4	To be critically reflexive of one's own and others' production of knowledge, theory and evidence
D	Key (transferable) skills
1	To communicate effectively, clearly and concisely, in a variety of modes (eg: written and oral), and in a variety of contexts (ie. different audiences)
2	To learn, study and work in an organised, time-efficient and self-directed manner and to identify those factors which facilitate the individual learning process
3	To work collaboratively as part of a team to plan tasks, make decisions, collate and co-ordinate information, organise practical action and propose solutions to problems posed
4	To be conversant with and competent in information technology and its uses and applications

10(b) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes: Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies

A Knowledge and understanding

The primary method for imparting knowledge is lectures (A1-A4). These are supplemented by seminars, workshops and student-centred group work, computer-assisted learning and film sessions (A2). Students are also encouraged to develop knowledge through independent and guided reading which draws imaginatively on a range of source material (journal articles, conference papers, Internet postings, research programme briefs, and research work in progress) (A4). To enhance understanding of the relationship between research, the production of sociological knowledge, the investigation of social problems and the evaluation of policy initiatives (A3), the curriculum draws on current and contemporary Departmental research publications.

B Subject-specific/professional skills

Understanding and experience of the principal approaches to social research (B1) are provided in lectures, seminars, workshops and practicals in a series of compulsory modules spanning all stages of the degree programme. In each stage, students' research skills are further developed through seminars, workshops and individual tutorials which encourage the identification of the contribution of research to the production of sociological knowledge. Through group discussion, problem-solving exercises, presentations, portfolio and project work, students deepen their understanding of the distinctive character of sociology in relation to other forms of understanding (B2), and develop a critical appreciation of the contribution to and application of this knowledge to substantive areas of sociological concern (B3-B4), with specific reference to issues in social policy and the welfare state.

C Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills of logical and critical thinking (C1), as well as skills in gathering, synthesising and evaluating information and data (C2) are introduced and developed in compulsory, core and optional modules across all stages of the degree programme. Methodology modules, in particular, encourage the development of specific cognitive skills in data inputting, management and analysis (C2). Other modules encourage students to construct and propose reasoned and structured arguments via individual and group presentations, case study analysis and seminar discussions (C3, C4). All cognitive skills (C1-C4) are exercised significantly during the course of a final year dissertation, the completion of which is supported by a series of workshops and individual and group tutorials. Attendance at the Departmental Seminar Programme provides an additional opportunity to develop and demonstrate critical and reflexive sociological understanding (C4).

D Key (transferable) skills

Key skills are formally taught from Stage One, and across all stages of the degree programme students are encouraged to develop and practice skills in essay and report writing, and oral presentation (D1); in accessing library, bibliographic and Internet resources (D4); in time-management and independent learning (D2); and in team-working, decision-making, problem-solving and organising practical action (D3). Students are introduced to all key skills in the compulsory Study Skills module in Stage One, and develop and refine them in compulsory, core and optional modules to Stage Three. Advanced key skills (in communication, IT, library research, team-working, time-management and independent study) are developed in selected modules at Stage Two and Three through coursework, seminar, workshop and dissertation preparation and practical group exercises (D1-D4).

10(c) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes: Assessment Methods and Strategies

A Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding (A1-A4) are assessed by means of written examination and coursework. Both employ a range of approaches in order to accurately assess and grade student abilities. These include:

- Seen examinations
- Unseen examinations
- Essay
- Portfolio
- Project
- Oral presentation (individual and group-based)
- Seminar participation
- Dissertation

B Subject-specific/professional skills

Subject-specific skills (B1-B4) are assessed by means of written examination and coursework. Both employ a range of approaches in order to accurately assess and grade student abilities. These include:

- Seen examinations
- Unseen examinations
- Essay
- Portfolio
- Project
- Oral presentation (individual and group-based)
- Seminar participation
- Dissertation

C Cognitive skills

Cognitive skills (C1-C4) are assessed by means of written examination and coursework. Both employ a range of approaches in order to accurately assess and grade student abilities. These include:

- Seen examinations
- Unseen examinations
- Essay
- Portfolio
- Project
- Oral presentation (individual and group-based)
- Seminar participation
- Dissertation
- Peer moderation

D Key (transferable) skills

Key skills (D1, D2, D4) are assessed by a variety of means which include:

- seen examinations
- unseen examinations
- essay
- portfolio
- project
- individual oral presentation
- seminar participation
- dissertation.

D3 is primarily assessed by group-based oral presentation.

11 Programme Features, Curriculum and Structure:

i Programme Features

The programme is studied over three years full-time based on 30 weeks attendance per annum. Each year or stage requires the study of modules with a credit value of 120. A 10 credit module consists of 100 hours of student effort, covering lectures, small group teaching, independent study, completion of coursework and revision for examination. Modules can vary in size from 10 to 40 credits, although the majority across the programme have a valency of 20 credits.

Stage One provides a foundation in the three social science disciplines of sociology, social policy and anthropology. The emphasis in each of these disciplinary areas is to develop students' ability to describe and discuss differing theories of the social world, and begin to demonstrate how theoretical knowledge can be used to understand empirical, practical and policy issues. It is in this Stage that students are encouraged to make the distinctions between the disciplinary fields, and also to recognise their interconnectedness. Stage One also enables students to gain a preliminary understanding of the way that sociological questions about the social world are generated; to gain awareness of the major theoretical perspectives and concepts in sociology, and have rudimentary skills in their application to specific social issues; and to develop an understanding of the principles and practices of communicating sociological knowledge. All joint honours students take a module in Social Policy which is concerned with the development of welfare in the UK and introduces key concepts in policy-making and implementation.

Stage One requires students to take 100 credits of compulsory modules in sociology, anthropology, social policy and research methodology. The Stage also allows students to take 20 credits of options in either sociology or related social science disciplines such as human geography, economics, politics and religious studies. Alternatively, students may select 20 credits of options in other disciplines such as modern languages, law, psychology and the natural sciences. Options taken outside the Department are subject to approval from the Degree Programme Director and timetabling synergies.

Stage Two focuses on the disciplinary areas of sociology and social policy. At this stage, the emphasis is to deepen students' ability to undertake scholarly sociological work through empirical and library-based research, and to deepen their understanding of the key concepts and theoretical approaches that have been developed and are developing in sociology and social policy.

Stage Two students are required to take 40 credits of compulsory modules, 40 credits of designated modules, and 40 credits of options. One of the compulsory modules is specially designed for joint honours students with the teaching equally divided between sociology and social policy. Designated modules are chosen to develop understanding of the process of policy making and implementation. Students can choose to further develop their knowledge and understanding of sociology and anthropology by selecting from Stage Two optional modules. Students can also choose to develop their studies in other disciplines up to the value of 20 credits, subject to the approval of the Degree Programme Director and timetabling synergies.

Whatever their combination of designated and optional module choices, Stage Two students are expected to gain a recognition of social context, social diversity and inequalities, their impact on the experiences and opportunities of individuals and groups and the relevance of these factors to policy making and implementation; to recognise the impact of power and culture on social relationships and the formation of social policies; to develop an understanding of social structural change and the ways in which social policy is influenced by these; to understand the ethical implications of sociological inquiry, especially when this is related to human need and policy formation; and to recognise the relevance of sociological knowledge to social, public and civil policy at local, national and global levels of analysis.

In Stage Three, students are able to consolidate their disciplinary expertise and subject-specific skills, as well as expand their opportunities to develop the skills integral to autonomous and life-long learning. The first objective is achieved through the provision of a range of specialist modules, which students may select to the value of 80 credits – 40 credits of designated modules, which have a specific relevance to the

application of sociology to policy issues and 40 credits of optional modules, which enable students to develop the knowledge and understanding acquired in stage two of the degree.

The second objective is met through the 40 credit compulsory dissertation which gives students the chance to embark upon an extended, self-initiated study of their own choosing and their own design. The dissertation reflects the culmination of students' programme of study, and allows the demonstration of specialist interest, subject-specific skills (most especially research skills), cognitive and key transferable skills. The structure of Stage Three, with its dual emphasis on specialisation and choice, enables students to select modules according to their academic interests and their aspirations in relation to both post-graduate study and career paths. The opportunities for both choice and specialisation in Stage Three is the important dynamic behind the production of high quality student work.

ii Curriculum and Structure

Module Code	Title	Credits	Comp/Desig/Opt
STAGE ONE			
SPS113	Major Contributions to Social Thought	20	Compulsory
SPS121	Sociology	20	Compulsory
SPS122	Social Policy	10	Compulsory
SPS123	Anthropology: Ways of Life	10	Compulsory
SPS124	Introduction to Social Research	20	Compulsory
SPS125	Study Skills for Social Scientists	20	Compulsory
SPS105	Studying Social Problems	10	Optional
SPS116	Popular Culture	10	Optional
Various	Module(s) in other disciplines	20	Optional
STAGE TWO			
SPS253	Key Issues, Key Theories: Sociology and Social Policy	20	Compulsory
SPS251	Investigating the Social World	20	Compulsory
SPS228	Crime, Governance and Culture	20	Designated
SPS232	Socio-economic Change and Social Policy	20	Designated
SPS244	Consumer Culture	20	Designated
SPS248	Comparative Social Policy	20	Designated
SPS257	Citizenship and Emotion	20	Designated
SPS238	Conceptualising Gender	20	Optional
SPS241	Issues in Urban Sociology	20	Optional
SPS242	Political Sociology	20	Optional
SPS243	Anthropology of India	20	Optional
SPS252	Ethnic and Racial Studies	20	Optional
SPS254	Social Studies in Technology	20	Optional
SPS255	Ethnography, Culture and Movement	20	Optional
SPS256	Sociology of Health and Illness	20	Optional
Various	Module(s) in other disciplines	20	Optional
STAGE THREE			
SPS397	Dissertation	40	Compulsory
SPS334	Households and Livelihoods	20	Designated
SPS336	Food in Society	20	Designated
SPS341	Adoption: A Worldwide Perspective	20	Designated
SPS344	Cyberspace and the Information Society	20	Designated
SPS352	Contemporary Theories in Sociology and Social Policy	20	Designated

SPS353	Gender and Work in Europe	20	Designated
SPS315	Local Cultures and Global Processes	20	Optional
SPS339	Social Movements	20	Optional
SPS340	Romani Studies	20	Optional
SPS342	Sociology of Crime and Punishment	20	Optional
SPS345	Regulating Sexuality	20	Optional
SPS346	Youth in Transition	20	Optional
SPS347	Modernity, Culture, Society	20	Optional
SPS349	Risk, Embodiment and Society	20	Optional
SPS351	Re-reading the Canon: Theory and Methods in Key Social Science Writing	20	Optional
SPS354	Anthropology and the Environment	20	Optional
SPS385	Erasmus Exchange	40	Optional
Various	Module(s) in other disciplines	20	Optional

Students are assessed for Honours performance on the basis of all modules taken at Stage Two and Stage Three. Modules taken in Stage Two have equal weighting with modules taken in Stage Three – see also *Section 15: Regulation of Assessment*.

See also *Appendix 1: Intended Learning Outcomes* (by module); and *Appendix 2: Key Skills* (by module)

12 Criteria for Admission:

School/College Leavers

- Generally three A levels required for entry.
- A level grades range from BBC to BCC
- No specific subjects required (although Sociology would obviously be helpful).
- Scottish Highers: BBBB. Combinations of Highers and Advanced Highers accepted.
- BTEC Generally two Distinctions and an overall Merit. (Those offering graded Access courses require two Merits and one distinction or three Credits.)

Under the new Post 16 arrangements in England

- 6 credit Vocational A level accepted as one of three A levels
- Applicants with 12 credit Vocational A levels will be considered on their merits
- Points offers using the new UCAS tariff will generally not be made
- Two AS levels accepted instead of one of the three A2 levels required
- Skills qualifications are useful but will generally not be included in offers

Overseas students

- Appropriate overseas qualifications will be considered, such as the
- International Baccalaureate (generally 28-30 points).
- A levels are also accepted.
- Evidence of adequate English language skills to complete the programme successfully required.

Admissions Policy

Students to whom offers are made are invited to an open day to meet staff and current students, and look round the Department. Attendance is not compulsory but is recommended. Applicants with non-standard qualifications may be interviewed by a member of the Admissions team.

Mature students

We strongly encourage applications from mature students. Each case is considered on its own merits, although evidence of successful recent study is generally required (for example, an accredited Access course). Relevant paid/unpaid work experience is also very useful and is taken into consideration.

13 Support for Students and their Learning

Induction

A series of introductory lectures, meetings, visits and field trips designed to assist student orientation to the University, Department, Departmental teaching and administrative staff and degree programmes, are offered to students in an Induction Week. This takes place in the first week of the autumn term, and is conducted at the beginning of each academic year for both new and returning students. Stage One Induction Week provides students with a comprehensive introduction to the University, through centrally-organised induction sessions; to the Department, through introductory sessions and a departmental lunch; and to the degree programme, through meetings with personal tutors.

Stage Two Induction Week consists of a detailed introduction to the Stage Two curriculum. Students are guided and supported in their module selections in meetings with personal tutors. Talks are provided by the Careers Service in the first teaching week of the academic year. Stage Three Induction Week provides students with a comprehensive introduction to the various options open to them with respect to the specialist modules offered in this stage of the degree programme. This is undertaken through meetings with personal tutors. Stage Three students also have an initial meeting with their respective dissertation tutors – assigned and notified to students over the summer recess – and this takes place in the first teaching week of the academic year. In addition, Stage Three students are provided with an introduction on taught postgraduate study and doctoral research. Personal tutors, the Faculty Postgraduate Programme Director (who is also a member of the Departmental teaching staff), and/or the Degree Programme Directors of Departmental Masters Programmes are available not only in Induction Week, but also throughout the academic year, to advise, assist and support students who express an interest in postgraduate studies. In Induction Week, Stage Three students are also reminded of the support and guidance available from the University Careers Service.

Study skills support

Interpersonal study skills support

- Sessions within relevant modules on skills development
- Personal tutor
- Faculty Liaison Librarian
- University Computing Service
- Language Centre (for students not having English as a first language)
- E-mail and Blackboard

Independent Study Skills Support

- Student handbooks and module guides
- University skills guides – in particular those provided by the University Library and the University Website
- Departmental Website information
- Blackboard

Academic Support

The Degree Programme Director has overall responsibility for the management of the degree programme. In addition, students are assigned a personal tutor to monitor academic performance and assist with module selection. For specific modules, module leaders and contributing staff such as tutorial leaders (where appropriate) are contactable and/or personally available for student queries and support.

Pastoral Support

Each student is assigned a personal tutor at the beginning of Stage One who is available to discuss both academic and pastoral concerns. Personal tutors remain with students for the full three years of the degree programme. Within the University there are additional support services such as the Student Counselling

Service, the University Medical Centre and the Student Union Welfare Office. Students are also advised and informed of the variety of financial support schemes organised and provided by the University Bursar.

Support for Special Needs

The University Disability Unit provides assistance and guidance for students with special needs.

Learning resources

- Comprehensive University Library facilities including a wide variety of databases (eg: BIDS, AHCI, SSCI, BOPCRIS), on-line services, and private study rooms (for individuals and groups).
- Careers Advisory Service
- Up-to-date IT facilities both within the Department and throughout the campus

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning:

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- *Board of Studies (BoS)*. Monitoring and evaluation of quality and standards is primarily the responsibility of the BoS. Membership of the BoS consists of all teaching staff, plus a student member nominated from the Staff-Student Committee. Here, for example, External Examiners' Reports are discussed. The full terms of reference for the BoS can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/internal/teaching-office/dpdhandbookindex.htm>
- *Board of Examiners (BoE)*. Issues related to degree structure, examinations, marks and awards are discussed. The BoE is composed of all teaching staff and the External Examiners.
- *Staff-Student Committee (SSC)*. Wider student issues, including the quality and standards of teaching and learning may be raised at SSC by Student Representatives. The SSC is chaired and convened by a member of the teaching staff, and is composed of a student representatives from each year group (approximately two per stage), and two additional members of teaching staff.
- *School Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC)*. The STLC is composed of staff with teaching, examining and recruitment responsibilities across all subject area degree programmes within the School. STLC discusses specific programme and module improvements within a wider strategic framework; it also discusses more routine issues in respect of the day to day management of the degree programme – for example, STLC is the forum for the development and review of peer observation procedures, module and stage evaluation mechanisms, and student feedback processes. STLC reports regularly to the *Boards of Studies*, *Subject Area* and *School Meetings*, and to *School Executive Committee* and *Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee* as appropriate..
- *Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee (FTLC) and University Teaching Committee (UTC)*. Major changes to existing modules, the introduction and/or deletion of existing modules, are amongst the teaching and learning related activities of these Committees. FTLC and UTC are responsible, *inter alia*, for monitoring and evaluating Departmental responses to External Examiners' Reports.

Mechanisms for the review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum and outcome standards

- Student module evaluation questionnaires
- Programme reviews by STLC and BoS
- Module reviews by module leaders in the light of staff (STLC), student evaluation and External Examiners' Reports (where appropriate).
- Peer observation of teaching

- External Examiners' Reports
- Taught programme review (UTC) and internal subject review (FTLC)
- Feedback obtained from past graduates eg: Departmental surveys and Careers Service Graduate Destination Surveys
- Feedback from actual and potential employers of graduates
- Feedback from independent external reviews (QAA, HEFCE)

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Staff-Student Committee and student representation at BoS
- Under-graduate report presented by student representatives at Departmental Meetings (seven meetings per annum)
- Module and degree programme evaluation questionnaires
- Graduate surveys (School and Careers Service)

15 Regulation of Assessment

Pass marks

- Minimum pass mark is 40 for each module of the degree programme (including those taken in other disciplines)

Course requirements

- Most modules are assessed by a combination of continuous assessment and examination (seen and unseen), although some may be 100% assessed by either method
- Information on assessment is available in the degree programme handbook and in module outlines. Both are also available on the intranet (Departmental website)
- The Board of Examiners must be satisfied that students at Stage One and Stage Two have achieved a pass mark in all modules before progression to subsequent stages can take place. There are two opportunities to resit failed modules.

Honours degree classification

Degree classification is based upon the Combined Method - this means that the degree awarded is whichever is the highest of the two classes of degree determined by the *average* (mean) mark, and the *preponderance* of marks across all modular assessments in the relevant stages. Stages Two and Three carry an equal weighting in respect of the honours degree classification. Honours classifications are based on the following University scale:

<i>Mark</i>	<i>Degree Class</i>
>70	First
60-69	Upper second
50-59	Lower second
40-49	Third
<40	Fail

Common Marking Scheme

A common marking scheme for continuous and examination assessment is used by all Departmental teaching staff. In Stage One, examination scripts are blindly first-marked, and moderated internally; continuous assessments are first-marked and moderated internally. In Stages Two and Three, examination

scripts are blindly first-marked, second-marked internally and externally moderated.; continuous assessments are first-marked, second-marked internally and externally moderated..

Role of External Examiners

The External Examiner is appointed by the Board of Studies, and approved by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. An External Examiner is a distinguished member of the academic community whose knowledge spans the range of sociological, anthropological and methodological areas covered by the degree programme. The External Examiner's role is that of moderator, and include:

- Reviewing and approving examination questions
- Reviewing examination scripts and making comments upon standards of marking
- Reviewing coursework and making comments upon standards of marking
- Examining dissertations
- Attendance at the June Board of Examiners
- Reporting to the University regarding standards and comparability of standards

16 Indicators of Quality and Standards:

The degree programme meets the QAA Subject Benchmarking Statements for *Sociology and Social Policy & Administration*.

Internal Review Reports

Degrees in the Department have been reviewed in the past as part of the University Programme and Subject Review. This internal Degree Programme Review will be submitted in April 2002.

QAA Reports

The Department was subject to a HEFCE Review in 1995-96 as part of the 1995 Quality Assessment Exercise. The degree programmes at that time included Honours degree in Social Policy and Social Studies and joint degrees in Politics & Social Policy and Economics & Social Policy. The outcome of this review process was the award of 'excellent'.

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

In addition, information relating to the degree programme is provided in:

- The University Prospectus
- The Departmental Prospectus
- The University and Degree Programme Regulations
- The Degree Programme Handbooks (Stages One, Two and Three)
- The Departmental Website (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/sociology>)
- HEFCE Review Report 1995-96
-