

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION**

<b>1</b>	<b>Awarding Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>2</b>	<b>Teaching Institution</b>	Newcastle University
<b>3</b>	<b>Final Award</b>	MSc
<b>4</b>	<b>Programme Title</b>	MSc Social Science and Health Research
<b>5</b>	<b>Programme Code</b>	4810F/P
<b>6</b>	<b>Programme Accreditation</b>	Not applicable
<b>7</b>	<b>QAA Subject Benchmark(s)</b>	Not applicable
<b>8</b>	<b>FHEQ Level</b>	Level 7
<b>9</b>	<b>Last updated</b>	May 2023

**10 Programme Aims**

- 1 Enable graduates to gain advanced knowledge and understanding of the social science disciplines related to health, illness and health care:
  - An understanding of the social factors that influence the health of individuals and populations, and the skills to research these factors
  - An understanding of the context of health, illness and health care
- 2 Produce graduates who are capable of successfully undertaking and completing advanced research projects by allowing students to undertake a general training in research methods and management within Social Sciences. Within this aim, the students will be provided with individual experience of a range of cutting edge research in population and health sciences in order to develop:
  - The ability to apply social science research methods to health, illness and health care issues
  - The capacity to integrate material across a range of disciplines
  - The ability to carry out a research project within the disciplines covered in Social Sciences related to health, illness and health care.
- 3 Contribute to ESRC, NHS and Newcastle University objectives by providing high quality research training to an increasing number of postgraduates and enhancing their key skills and employability.

**11 Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for social policy.

**Knowledge and Understanding**

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- A1 Describe and understand the theoretical traditions and concepts that shape social science disciplines and range of social science research methods related to health, illness and health care.
- A2 Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the variety of philosophical principles and epistemological frameworks that underpin approaches to social inquiry
- A3 Understanding of the way in which social divisions (including gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and disability) are generated as structures of power and patterns

	of inequality; how these are reproduced and transformed over time; and how they shape and impact health and health policy
A4	Describe appropriate research governance procedures
A5	Describe ethical issues in research
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>	
<p><i>Teaching Strategies</i></p> <p>Knowledge and understanding (A1-A5) are primarily imparted through lectures and seminars. Group exercises and student presentations of key facts and theories are used to check the students learning. Students are given extensive support in terms of reading lists, access to documents on the internet, and resource packs with relevant documents at the beginning of modules. A1, A2, A4 &amp; A5 are also achieved by project work undertaken as part of several of the modules leading to these learning outcomes.</p> <p><i>Learning Strategy</i></p> <p>Throughout the programme, students are encouraged and expected to undertake independent reading to supplement the taught component of the programme. This reading is supported by the provision of reading lists, with identified prioritised references. Understanding of the key topics is informally tested by participation in group work exercises and presentation of key issues to the class. Exercises are provided throughout the programme for self-assessment/monitoring of progress.</p>	
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>	
Knowledge and understanding of the subjects is assessed by unseen examinations (A1-A5) and written assignments (A1-A5). This is supplemented by the use of assessed oral presentations (A1-A5).	
<b>Intellectual Skills</b>	
On completing the programme students should be able to:	
B1	Discriminate between, and apply, appropriate methodological approaches to research questions.
B2	Design a study to investigate a health-related question
B3	Implement a study of a health-related question
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>	
<p><i>Teaching Strategy</i></p> <p>Skills in study conception and design (B1-B2) and study implementation (B3) are developed by lectures, seminars and individual and group exercises. Students are also taught basic data analysis (using computing packages as appropriate) (B2-B3) and undertake practical exercises on a regular basis. Students are supported in the development of these skills and their application in the dissertation by one-to-one supervision.</p> <p><i>Learning strategy</i></p> <p>Students are encouraged to develop skills B1-B3 through active participation in class exercises (statistics project, demography and information student presentations). These skills are further developed and reinforced as the students apply them to the development of a research project which is written up as their dissertation.</p>	

<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
These skills are assessed by design and implementation of a research project for the dissertation (B1-B3), by unseen examination (B2), written assignment (B1-B2), data analysis project (B1-B3) and oral presentation (B1-B2).
<b>Practical Skills</b>
On completing the programme students should be able to:
C1 Critically appraise and summarise published literature
C2 Analyse and interpret social science and health-related data
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<i>Teaching Strategy</i> Practical skills are developed through seminars (C1-C2) and individual and group exercises (C1-C2). Students are encouraged to explore and develop these skills through directed reading and student presentations, through case studies (C1) and project work to assess and solve problems (C2).
<i>Learning Strategy</i> Students are encouraged to develop practical skills through a range of exercises. These practical exercises can involve small group work in seminars or be individual pieces of work either for informal presentation to the group or by self-directed learning/directed reading.
<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
Practical skills are assessed by unseen examination and written assignments which test data interpretation, analysis and appraisal of literature (C1-C2).
<b>Transferable/Key Skills</b>
On completing the programme students should be able to:
D1 Identify appropriate information from a variety of sources
D2 Integrate material across a range of disciplines to investigate a topic
D3 Demonstrate effective communication skills using a variety of media
<b>Teaching and Learning Methods</b>
<i>Teaching Strategy</i> The skill of identifying sources of information (D1) is developed through lectures, seminars and practical group exercises. The use of web-based resources is also encouraged. A key part of the programme is integrating the material from the various modules (D2), and this is developed through seminars, lectures, group exercises and student presentations, and also by tutors cross-referencing material from relevant modules. Communication and presentation skills (D3) are developed through seminars, group exercises and student presentations.
<i>Learning Strategy</i> Students are encouraged to develop key skills D1-D3 through active participation in group exercises, through presentations to the group, both informal and assessed, and through the completion of written work. Resource packs suggesting sources of information and details of useful websites will be provided. Integration of material from across the programme content is encouraged, and is further developed in the planning and implementation of the research project for the dissertation. Students are supported by an academic supervisor, who provides support and advice throughout the dissertation.

### **Assessment Strategy**

Skills D1-D3 are assessed by a combination of written assignments, oral presentation, and the dissertation. In addition, skill D1 is assessed by unseen examination.

## **12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features**

### **Basic structure of the programme**

The MSc will provide broad-based research training in contemporary social science methodology and methods. It has been designed to meet the new ESRC 1+3 training guidelines. These guidelines emphasize the need for students to acquire key generic and subject-specific research skills in the Masters year prior to embarking on a doctoral programme. The programme will also cater for non ESRC-sponsored students, who could progress on to a doctoral programme or pursue a career in academic or non-academic research.

This is a one year full time or two year part time programme. It consists of three parts: training in research methods and skill development; modules in applied policy research and policy studies; and a dissertation project.

The core training in social science research is provided in a family of modules taught on the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Training Programme.

The credit value for the whole MSc programme is 180. Modules have credit values of 10 or 20. The taught component part of the programme has a credit value of 120, and the dissertation of 60.

### **Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)**

- Equip students from different academic and professional backgrounds with an awareness and understanding of the variety of philosophical principles and epistemological frameworks that underpin approaches to social inquiry
- Provide students with an understanding of the social factors that influence the health of individuals and populations, and the skills to research these factors
- Allow students to develop an understanding of the context of health, illness and health care
- Provide students with the ability to apply social science research methods to health, illness and health care issues
- Equip students with the capacity to integrate material across a range of disciplines
- Develop the student's ability to carry out a research project within the disciplines covered in social sciences related to health, illness and health care.

### **Programme regulations (link to on-line version)**

[R4810F, 4810P\\_2324\\_vFinal.pdf](#)

## **13 Support for Student Learning**

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: <https://my.ncl.ac.uk/students/>

### *Induction*

During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principal support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/tutorials etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

### *Study skills support*

Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is

covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/mathsaid/>) and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the University Library).

#### *Academic and Pastoral support*

Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.\* A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.

\*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

#### *Support for students with disabilities*

The University's Disability Support team provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

#### *Learning resources*

The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and the University's IT Service (NUIT), which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-session language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

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

### *Module reviews*

All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new modules are considered at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. The introduction of new modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Education Committee (FEC).

### *Programme reviews*

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to FEC. The FEC takes an overview of all programmes within the

Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Taught Programmes Sub-Committee.

#### *External Examiner reports*

External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. External Examiner reports and the response to the External Examiner from the Board of Studies are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Student-Staff Committee.

#### *Student evaluations*

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review through online questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff Committee, and the Board of Studies. The Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey is sent out every year to eligible taught postgraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

#### *Mechanisms for gaining student feedback*

Feedback is channelled via the Student-Staff Committee and the Board of Studies.

#### *Faculty and University Review Mechanisms*

Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo Learning and Teaching Review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative. Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by the University Education Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

### **15 Regulation of assessment**

Please refer to the Postgraduate (Taught) Examination Conventions at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/2019.html>

#### *Role of the External Examiner*

An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by the University following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is required to:

- i. confirm whether the standards of the University's awards meet or exceed the academic standards specified in external reference points such as the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, the UK Quality Code, subject benchmark statements, and, where appropriate, the requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- ii. confirm whether the academic standards of the University's awards are consistent with those of similar programmes in other UK higher education institutions;
- iii. report on whether the University's processes for assessment measure student achievement rigorously and fairly and are conducted in line with University policies and regulations;
- iv. identify, where appropriate, examples of exemplary practice and innovation in learning, teaching and assessment;
- v. comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning experience provided to students.

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

The University Prospectus: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses>

Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>

Please note. 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.

**Annex**

**Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules**

**MSc Social Science and Health Research**

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
HSS8001	C	1 2 4 5	1 2	2	1 2 3
HSS8002	C				1 2
HSS8003	C	1 2 4 5	1 2 3	2	1 2 3
HSS8004	C	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2
HSS8005	C	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2
HSS8007	C	1 2 4 5	1		1 3
HSC8027	O	1	1	1 2	1 2 3
HSC8040	C	1 2 3		1 2	1 2 3
HSC8042	O	1 2 3		1 2	1 2 3
HSC8045	O	2		1 2	1 2 3 4 5
HSC8047	C	1 2 3		1 2	1 2 3
HSC8048	O	1 2		1 2	1 2 3
HSC8052	O	2	2	1 2	1 2 3 4 5
HSC8054	O	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2
HSC8055	O	1 2	1 2	1 2	1 2
HSC8058	O	1 2		1 2	1 2 3
HSC8059	O	1 2		1 2	1 2 3
SOC8034	O	1 2 3		1 2	1 2 3
HSC8098	C	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2	1 2 3