

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION
(Taught Postgraduate)**



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MSc
4	Programme Title	Public Policy
5	Programme Code	5525 F/P
6	Programme Accreditation	N/A
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	N/A
8	FHEQ Level	Level 7
9	Last updated	February 2026

10 Programme Aims

The MSc in Public Policy is designed to equip students with a comprehensive understanding, both theoretical and practical, of policy-making processes at local, regional, national, and international levels. This program aims to:

1. To offer a research environment in which students can learn from knowledgeable staff, their own study, and interaction with other students
2. To equip students with the conceptual and analytical skills needed to achieve an advanced knowledge and understanding of their chosen field
3. To develop students' skills in undertaking and completing self-designed research papers and dissertations
4. To provide a conversion course for students whose undergraduate degree is not in any of the areas covered by these MA/MSc degree programmes
5. To produce graduates who, if suitably qualified, will be capable of embarking upon research degrees in their chosen field
6. To produce graduates capable of successfully pursuing careers in government agencies, business, the media and other areas where an advanced knowledge and understanding of their chosen field is needed or desirable
7. To meet the needs of stakeholders
8. To provide a programme which meets the FHEQs requirements of level 7
9. To comply with prevailing University policies and QAA codes of practice

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 relevant and specific to the degree programme and more broadly social science methods and methodologies; international and regional studies; politics topics; independent learning; cooperative group work; individual communication and presentations skills.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should:

- A1** Have an advanced knowledge and understanding of Public Policy.
- A2** Have knowledge of approaches and methods in social science research and of techniques required to carry out advanced research
- A3** Have a foundation of specialist knowledge, research and methods skills from which they can embark upon careers with significant policy making dimensions or pursue a postgraduate research degree in Public Policy.
- A4** Understand the theoretical basis of research in Public Policy.

Teaching and Learning Methods

The primary means of imparting knowledge and understanding is seminars (A1-A4). Throughout the programme students are strongly encouraged to engage in independent reading for which they are given extensive support and guidance on reading materials and their appropriate use. Students are strongly supported by staff in their completion of self-designed research projects.

Assessment Strategy

Knowledge and understanding are primarily assessed by research projects, policy briefs and policy evaluations, which are designed to assess theoretical and conceptual understanding and the capacity of students to relate knowledge through case studies and other empirically focused projects (A1-A4).

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- B1** Synthesise information from a variety of primary and secondary sources
- B2** Analyse, evaluate and interpret the principal source materials for their chosen field
- B3** Plan, conduct and communicate research through research papers
- B4** Have the theoretical and practical skills that will enable them to successfully complete an MSc dissertation.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Cognitive skills are developed through seminars, workshops and lab sessions (B1-B2), research projects (B2-B3, B4) and through working with the supervisors of their research projects and dissertations (B3). Students are encouraged to develop cognitive skills through analysis of case studies (B1), independent reading and designing research projects (B2-B4).

Assessment Strategy

Intellectual skills are examined through research papers, policy briefs/evaluations and the MSc dissertation (B1-B4).

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

- C1** Critically evaluate key arguments
- C2** Critically evaluate the most important texts and themes
- C3** Present a reasoned and informed position both in writing and in spoken presentations
- C4** Identify, locate, and retrieve scholarly and other materials relevant to their degree
- C5** Collate and analyse relevant data and present efficiently subsequent evidence needed for evidence-based policymaking

Teaching and Learning Methods

Critical skills are developed through independent reading and encouraging active participation individually and in groups in seminar settings (C1-C3). Formal spoken presentations (C3) and written research projects (C1-C4) are informed by appropriate materials some of which references are provided to students and others of which students have to locate.

Assessment Strategy
Practical skills are assessed through research projects (C1-C4).
Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: D1 Take responsibility for his/her own learning and personal professional development D2 Manage time and prioritise tasks by working to deadlines D3 Communicate effectively to others when working in seminar group settings. D4 Make effective use of appropriate resources including journals, open data sources, and other online materials.
Teaching and Learning Methods
Student self-learning, time management and task management is encouraged in weekly seminars and one to one research supervision sessions (D1-D2). Communication is practiced in weekly seminars (D3). Students are directed to appropriate journals, data sources, and provided information concerning appropriate internet usage (D4).
Assessment Strategy
Self-learning is assessed in the context of the timely submission of research projects (D1-D2). Effective use of electronic resources is assessed in the context of their analysis and correct presentation in research projects (D4).

12 Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme
One year full time or two years part time. 180 credits (120 coursework, 60 dissertation) 140 credits compulsory (4 x 20 credit modules and 1 x 60 credit dissertation), 40 optional credits
Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
Rigorous compulsory training in Public Policy.
Programme regulations (link to on-line version)
Programme Regulations 2026-27

13 Support for Student Learning
Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link. Generic Information

14 Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning
Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link. Generic Information

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

15 Regulation of assessment

Generic information regarding University provision is available at the following link.

[Generic Information](#)

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

The University Prospectus: [Find a Degree | Postgraduate | Newcastle University \(ncl.ac.uk\)](#)
Degree Programme and University Regulations: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/>

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.