

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

| This document applies to students who commence the programme(s) in: | | October 2016 | | | |
|---|---|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Awarding institution | | Teaching institution | | | |
| University of York | | University of York | | | |
| Department(s) | | | | | |
| Sociology | | | | | |
| Award(s) and programme title(s) | | | Level of qualification | | |
| MA Social Media and Social Research | | | Level 7 (Masters) | | |
| Award(s) available <i>only</i> as interim awards | | | | | |
| Postgraduate Certificate | | | | | |
| Postgraduate Diploma | | | | | |
| Admissions criteria | | | | | |
| <p>The minimum requirement is a 2.1 undergraduate degree or international equivalent. This will normally be in a relevant social sciences or humanities discipline but candidates with other backgrounds and relevant experience may be admitted following an interview and/or written test;</p> <p>For applicants whose native language is not English, the Departments set a minimum English language proficiency level of 7.0 with a minimum of 6.0 in writing in the British Council's IELTS test or 260 in the computer-based American TOEFL test (617 in the paper-based test or 105 in the internet based test).</p> | | | | | |
| Length and status of the programme(s) and mode(s) of study | | | | | |
| Programme | Length (years) and status (full-time/part-time) | Start dates/months (if applicable – for programmes that have multiple intakes or start dates that differ from the usual academic year) | Mode | | |
| | | | Face-to-face, campus-based | Distance learning | Other |
| MA Social Media and Social Research | 1 FT 2 or 3 PT | October | Yes | No | No |
| Language of study | | English | | | |
| Programme accreditation by Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (if applicable) | | | | | |
| N/A | | | | | |
| Educational aims of the programme(s) | | | | | |
| For the Masters, Diploma and Certificate: | | | | | |

- To enable and develop students' knowledge and understanding of the emergence of social media, and their importance for social, cultural and global processes, in a range of areas including everyday relational practices, cultural production and circulation, and political and institutional engagement;
- To develop students' knowledge and understanding of key sociological theories and concepts for, and approaches to, the study of social media and related communication technologies;
- To provide students with practical experience of the range of quantitative and qualitative research methods which are necessary for postgraduate and doctoral research in the social sciences, and which meet the requirements of vocationally oriented social research in industry, national and local government, and public services;
- To provide students with an appreciation of the social scientific utility of emerging forms of social and behavioural data (both large, and small-scale) and the relationships between social media and contemporary sociological research;
- To enable a conceptually grounded appreciation of social research, as it is applied to, and interwoven with, contemporary and emerging communication technologies in a global context;
- To provide students with extended social research expertise to enable them to critically evaluate social research, and to design research appropriate for the investigation of cultural, social, and global aspects of social media and emerging communication technologies.

Additionally for the Diploma (if applicable):

- To develop students' in-depth knowledge and understanding of selected areas of social media and social research, including the central importance of large-scale and small-scale data production and circulation as it relates to cultural production.

Additionally for the Masters:

- To allow students to conduct an academically rigorous in-depth independent study of an area of social media and social research.

Intended learning outcomes for the programme – and how the programme enables students to achieve and demonstrate the intended learning outcomes

This programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas:

The following teaching, learning and assessment methods enable students to achieve and to demonstrate the programme learning outcomes:

A: Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge and understanding of:

For the Masters, Diploma and Certificate:

1. The role of social media in contemporary societies, and the contested nature of their development and diffusion;
2. The ambiguous nature of social media as simultaneously tools for surveillance and control, and engagement and emancipation;
3. The ethical context, and practical and conceptual aspects, of the research process; particularly in relation to research design.
4. The implications of social media, and emerging communication technologies, for social research practice, scope and import;

Additionally for the Diploma:

5. How to make a critical evaluation of research literature and practice, and identify key issues for further research;

Learning/teaching methods and strategies (relating to numbered outcomes):

- The programme is designed to include lectures, seminars and practical tutorials as the main methods of enhancing knowledge and understanding (1-5);
- Lectures, seminars and practical tutorials are interactive and students are encouraged to discuss and evaluate arguments, critically engage with theory and apply ideas to examples from relevant literature and direct experience (1-5);
- Practical tutorial based modules provide substantial foundations for the appreciation and application of different research methods (*Qualitative Methods; Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis*) (3);
- A conceptually oriented module reflects on the nature of data as a 'by-product' of commercial and social behaviour (*Digital By Product Data*) (3, 4);
- Personal supervisions are utilised to develop independent thought and skills application, to produce rigorous academic texts that express novel research findings (6).

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| <p><i>Additionally for the Masters:</i></p> <p>6. How to design, conduct and write up a sociologically rigorous independent study in social media and social research</p> | <p>Types/methods of assessment (relating to numbered outcomes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge and understanding is assessed primarily through course-work assignments (1-5). In most cases this consists of a substantial essay, allowing students to demonstrate wide and critical reading and show their knowledge and use of theories and concepts, analytic approaches and analysis techniques (1-4). In practical oriented courses it consists of an analytic report, premised upon research practice (e.g. computer based statistical tests) (3, 5, 6). In addition knowledge and comprehension will also be assessed through audio-visual presentations. • A dissertation is used to assess students' knowledge and understanding of how to conduct an in-depth study in an area of social media and social research, including showing knowledge of a wide range of relevant sociological literature, the ability to engender an appropriate research design (6). |
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B: (i) Skills – discipline related

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| <p>Able to:</p> <p><i>For the Masters, Diploma and Certificate:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically interpret, analyse and evaluate theories, concepts, methodologies and arguments in the sociological study of social media, culture and globalization. 2. Apply theories and concepts to selected empirical areas and formulate sociological arguments. 3. Identify the epistemological approaches that underlie specific social scientific research | <p>Learning/teaching methods and strategies (relating to numbered outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures, seminars, tutorials and supervisions encourage (1-5); with specialised research practice modules dedicated to training in 2, 3 and 4; and the dissertation allowing for the bring together of 2, 3 and 4. • All the elements of the programme and the various learning/teaching methods and strategies, including individual supervision, contribute to the high level task of 6. |
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| <p>methodologies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Develop informed research strategies, based upon critically considering the advantages and disadvantages of different methods and approaches; 5. Effectively analyse social data through one or more methodological approach (qualitative and/or quantitative). <p><i>Additionally for the Diploma:</i></p> <p><i>Additionally for the Masters:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Undertake a sustained, rigorous, independent piece of sociological work involving extensive background research, distillation of information and critical evaluation in the field of social media and social research. | <p>Types/methods of assessment (relating to numbered outcomes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-work assignments allow for the assessment of 1-5; • The dissertation is designed to assess 1-6. |
| B: (ii) Skills - transferable | |
| <p>Able to:</p> <p><i>For the Masters, Diploma and Certificate:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effectively read, interpret, summarise and analyse complex ideas and debates. 2. Critically evaluate on-going public debates, and new examples of culture, society and technology. 3. Effectively present ideas and information in written, visual and oral form. 4. Formulate approaches to investigating 'real world' | <p>Learning/teaching methods and strategies (relating to numbered outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures, seminars and tutorials allow for the development of skills 1-5 & 7; the use of contemporary case studies encouraging the development of 2, 4 and 5; • Preparing for classes results in 5 & 6; • Class audio visual presentations underpin 3, and; • Working with others to produce presentations and in seminar tasks and to produce presentations results in 4, and 6). |

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| <p>problems.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Use the internet, and other communication technologies, effectively. 6. Manage time effectively. <p><i>Additionally for the Diploma:</i></p> <p><i>Additionally for the Masters:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. <i>Information search and independent study skills;</i> 8. <i>Project and time management skills</i> 9. <i>Undertake a sustained, rigorous, independent piece of work involving extensive background research, distillation of information and critical evaluation.</i> | <p>Types/methods of assessment (relating to numbered outcomes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course-work assignments assess skills 1, 2, the written form of 3, 4, and in some cases 5 and 6. • Portfolio (formative) tasks (for example applying a particular statistical technique) assess 1,2,4,5,6 • Presentations (formative) develop the oral, and written aspects of 3; • The dissertation allows for the assessment of 7-9. |
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C: Experience and other attributes

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| <p>Able to:</p> <p><i>For the Masters, Diploma and Certificate:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect and evaluate own performance 2. Gain experience of intellectual debate with others from a variety of backgrounds. 3. Identify, and work towards targets for personal, academic and career development 4. Competently carry out a varied range of tasks based upon differing expectations and modes of performance <p><i>Additionally for the Diploma:</i></p> <p><i>Additionally for the Masters:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Undertake a substantial project and independently plan and carry out that project. | <p>Learning/teaching methods and strategies (relating to numbered outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive lectures, seminars and practical tutorials, all encourage 1. • The overall programme encourages 2, 3 and 4. • The dissertation encourages 5. <p>Types/methods of assessment (relating to numbered outcomes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written assessments (including practical analytic pieces) encourage 1, 2, 3, and 4, with feedback elements particularly supportive of 1. • The dissertation supports and assesses 5. |
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Relevant Quality Assurance Agency benchmark statement(s) and other relevant external reference points (e.g. National Occupational Standards, or the requirements of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies)

There is no QAA subject-specific benchmark statement for Sociology at MA (Level 7) level but the undergraduate benchmark statement has been consulted and the programme designed meets all of the subject specific benchmarks. The programme has been designed to meet the aims, objectives and learning outcomes specified for Masters degrees in the QAA 'Framework for Higher Education Qualifications' (as described below). All Programme modules are designed to develop Level 7 knowledge and/or skills. The programme meets the descriptors for a qualification at Masters (M) level set out in the 'Framework for Higher Education Qualifications':

- *A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice.* Modules in the programme develop a thorough and systematic understanding of key issues in the sociological study of social media and social research. Students engage with a wide range of theoretical and conceptual and methodological material that furnishes them with a rigorous understanding of the way in which social research practice is affected by new opportunities afforded by emerging data formats, and how in turn how the social sciences are implicated in impacts of new information communication formats.
- *A comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship.*

The programme is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of relevant sociological approaches, conceptual and methodological, to allow them to undertake their own supervised independent research, requiring advanced scholarship.

- *Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline.*

The programme modules encourage the development and application of knowledge in a creative and independent manner. Course-work assignments encourage original critical engagement with material and the demonstration of the interpretation of sociological knowledge, whilst set tasks in methods modules encourage the development of 'hands on' skills. Competence in techniques of research enquiry and design is developed especially the research dissertation. The dissertation requires students to apply the knowledge and skills that they have developed in the taught modules in order to produce an original academic piece of research. The synthesis of knowledge and skills in the dissertation is appropriate to the award of an MA.

- The demonstration of self-direction, independence and autonomy in conducting scholarly enquiry is fundamental to successful completion of the programme. The compulsory core of the programme ensures that students develop robust key knowledge and skills suitable to Level 7; and the optionality (in terms of the independent study module) requires that, with advice, they take responsibility for designing a personalized programme suitable to their own professional development. The intellectual demands of addressing the complex and sometimes unpredictable field of culture, society and globalization will encourage students in developing skills for dealing with such contexts in their wider professional development.

University award regulations

To be eligible for an award of the University of York a student must undertake an approved programme of study, obtain a specified number of credits (at a specified level(s)), and meet any other requirements of the award as specified in the award requirements and programme regulations, and other University regulations (e.g. payment of fees). Credit will be awarded upon passing a module's assessment(s) but some credit may be awarded where failure has been compensated by achievement in other modules. The University's award and assessment regulations specify the University's marking scheme, and rules governing progression (including rules for compensation), reassessment and award requirements. The award and assessment regulations apply to all programmes: any exceptions that relate to this programme are approved by University Teaching Committee and are recorded at the end of this document.

Departmental policies on assessment and feedback

Detailed information on assessment (including grade descriptors, marking procedures, word counts etc.) is available in the written statement of assessment which applies to this programme and the relevant module descriptions. These are available in the student handbook and on the Department's website: <http://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/postgraduate/masters/>

Information on formative and summative feedback to students on their work is available in the written statement on feedback to students which applies to this programmes and the relevant module descriptions. These are available in the student handbook and on the Department's website: <http://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/postgraduate/masters/>

Diagrammatic representation of the programme structure, showing the distribution and credit value of core and option modules

Masters

| Autumn term | Spring term | Summer term | Summer vacation |
|---|---|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Plagiarism Awareness Module (by end of Week 6) (non-credit bearing) | | | |
| Understanding Social Media (20 credits) | <i>Metrics and Society</i> (20 credits) | Dissertation (60 credits) | |
| <i>Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis</i> (20 credits) | <i>Advanced Methods in Social Research</i> (20 credits) | | |
| <i>Qualitative Methods</i> (20 credits) | <i>Themes and Issues in Contemporary Sociology</i> (20 credits) | | |

Postgraduate Diploma (if applicable)

| Autumn term | Spring term | Summer term |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Plagiarism Awareness | | |

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| Module (by end of Week 6) (non-credit bearing) | | |
| Understanding Social Media (20 credits) | <i>Metrics and Society</i> (20 credits) | |
| <i>Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis</i> (20 credits) | <i>Advanced Methods in Social Research</i> (20 credits) | |
| <i>Qualitative Methods</i> (20 credits) | <i>Themes and Issues in Contemporary Sociology</i> (20 credits) | |

Postgraduate Certificate

| Autumn term | Spring term | Summer term |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Plagiarism Awareness Module (by end of Week 6) (non-credit bearing) | | |
| Understanding Social Media (20 credits) | | |
| <i>Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis</i> (20 credits) | | |
| <i>Qualitative Methods</i> (20 credits) | | |

Diagrammatic representation of the timing of module assessments and reassessments, and the timing of departmental examination/progression boards

| Autumn term | Spring term | Summer term | Summer vacation | Date of final award board |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Plagiarism Awareness Module (by end of Week 6) (non-credit bearing) | Assessment for modules taught in the Autumn Term are submitted Week 2 of Spring Term | Assessment for modules taught in the Spring Term are submitted week 1 of Summer Term | Resubmission board: Week 1 of Summer Vacation | |
| | | Reassessment for modules taught in the Autumn Term are submitted weeks 5 - 8 summer term (after the progression board) | | Final Exam Board: Week 7 of Autumn Term after course has finished. |
| | | Reassessment for modules taught in the Spring Term are submitted weeks 5 - 8 summer term (after progression) | | |

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| | | Progression Board: Week 5 of Summer Term | | |

Overview of modules

Core module table

| Module title | Module code | Credit level ¹ | Credit value ² | Prerequisites | Assessment rules ³ | Timing (term and week) and format of main assessment ⁴ | Independent Study Module? ⁵ |
|---|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Understanding Social Media | SOC00003M | Level 7/Masters | 20 | None | N/A | SpT Wk 2 Open Assessment | No |
| <i>Quantitative Methods and Data Analysis</i> | SOC00006M | Level 7/Masters | 20 | None | N/A | SpT Wk 2 Open Assessment | No |
| <i>Qualitative Methods</i> | SOC00007M | Level 7/Masters | 20 | None | N/A | SpT Wk 2 Open Assessment | No |
| Metrics and Society | SOC00022M | Level 7/Masters | 20 | None | N/A | SuT Wk 1 Open Assessment | No |

¹ The **credit level** is an indication of the module's relative intellectual demand, complexity and depth of learning and of learner autonomy. Most modules in postgraduate programmes will be at Level 7/Masters. Some modules are permitted to be at Level 6/Honours but must be marked on a pass/fail basis. See University Teaching Committee guidance for the limits on Level 6/Honours credit.

² The **credit value** gives the notional workload for the module, where 1 credit corresponds to a notional workload of 10 hours (including contact hours, private study and assessment)

³ **Special assessment rules** (requiring University Teaching Committee approval)

P/F – the module is marked on a pass/fail basis (NB pass/fail modules cannot be compensated)

NC – the module cannot be compensated

NR – there is no reassessment opportunity for this module. It must be passed at the first attempt

⁴ AuT – Autumn Term, SpT – Spring Term, SuT – Summer Term, SuVac – Summer vacation

⁵ **Independent Study Modules (ISMs)** are assessed by a dissertation or substantial project report. They cannot be compensated (NC) and are subject to reassessment rules which differ from 'taught modules'. Masters programmes should include an ISM(s) of between 60 and 100 credits. This is usually one module but may be more.

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| <i>Themes and Issues in Contemporary Sociology</i> | SOC00001M | 7 | 20 | None | N/A | SuT Wk 1 Open Assessment | No |
| <i>Advanced Methods in Social Research</i> | SOC00011M | 7 | 20 | None | N/A | SuT Wk 1 Open Assessment | No |
| <i>Research Dissertation</i> | SOC00009M | 7 | 60 | None | N/A | SuVac - submitted around mid-September | Yes |

Option modules

| Module title | Module code | Credit level | Credit value | Prerequisites | Assessment rules | Timing and format of main assessment | Independent Study Module? |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| None | | | | | | | |
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| Transfers out of or into the programme | |
| | |
| Exceptions to University Award Regulations approved by University Teaching Committee | |
| Exception | Date approved |
| | |
| Quality and Standards | |
| <p>The University has a framework in place to ensure that the standards of its programmes are maintained, and the quality of the learning experience is enhanced.</p> <p>Quality assurance and enhancement processes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The academic oversight of programmes within departments by a Board of Studies, which includes student representation • The oversight of programmes by external examiners, who ensure that standards at the University of York are comparable with those elsewhere in the sector • Annual monitoring and periodic review of programmes • The acquisition of feedback from students by departments. <p>More information can be obtained from the Academic Support Office: http://www.york.ac.uk/about/departments/support-and-admin/academic-support/</p> | |
| Date on which this programme information was updated: | 31/8/2016 |
| Departmental web page: | http://www.york.ac.uk/sociology/ |
| Please note | |
| <p>The information above provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and learning outcomes that a typical students might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided.</p> <p>Detailed information on learning outcomes, content, delivery and assessment of modules can be found in module descriptions.</p> <p>The University reserves the right to modify this overview in unforeseen circumstances, or where processes of academic development, based on feedback from staff, students, external examiners or professional bodies, requires a change to be made. Students will be notified of any substantive changes at the first available opportunity.</p> | |