

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION– POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

KEY FACTS

Programme name	Research Methods
Award	MSc
School	School of Policy & Global Affairs
Department or equivalent	Multiple
Programme code	PSRESM
Type of study	Full Time, Part Time
Total UK credits	180
Total ECTS	90
Partner (partnership programmes only)	
Type of partnership	

PROGRAMME SUMMARY

City's MSc in Research Methods offers theoretical and practical education in research methods and analysis for the social sciences. It is designed to provide you with an understanding and appreciation of qualitative and quantitative research methods over a range of disciplines. It is also designed to equip you with practical skills in collecting and analysing empirical data, using leading edge technologies where these aid the process. There is a strong emphasis on communicating research findings effectively, and developing a critical appreciation of the impact of social research within and beyond academia. It is suitable for those seeking to undertake foundational training for doctoral level research, as well as those planning to work in an environment where they might need to commission, undertake, or otherwise critically engage with empirical social research. Some students come to us with prior experience of conducting empirical research, or using it, while some are new to the field – the programme thrives on the diversity of experiences and interests of its students.

The course is offered by the School of Policy & Global Affairs, whose staff cover a diverse range of substantive research interests. Staff are experts in a plethora of methodologies, from personal interviewing to large-scale survey research. Teaching is research-led, so you are introduced to the latest thinking on given research topics, and exposed to first-hand insights on the challenges of conducting empirical research.

City, University of London is a centre for pioneering research in a wide range of distinct fields. In the recent Research Excellent Framework exercise, more than 60% of submitted publications in all research areas were assessed as internationally excellent or world leading research. The School of Policy & Global Affairs is home to experts in such diverse areas as behavioural economics; health economics; economics of migration; organisational psychology; counselling and health psychology; human memory; cognitive neuroscience; international political economy; foreign policy and diplomacy; international social and political justice; crime and justice; law, justice and journalism; food policy; work and employment; media and communications; culture and creative industries; and comparative survey methodology: the internationally renowned and award-winning European Social Survey is housed within the School.

Aims

The aims of the programme are:

- To provide you with a broad and comprehensive understanding and appreciation of qualitative and quantitative research methods over a range of disciplines
- To equip you with practical skills in formulating research questions and designs, and in collecting and analysing empirical data, both qualitative and quantitative
- To provide you with training in industry-standard data analysis software for both quantitative and qualitative data, to achieve high quality analysis with maximum efficiency and professionalism
- To support you in developing your skills in communicating the results of empirical research effectively and clearly, for both academic and wider audiences
- To help you develop a critical awareness of the impacts of social research within and beyond academia
- To encourage you to reflect on and practise high levels of ethical integrity in own your research and to demonstrate sensitivity and commitment to principles and practices of good research ethics in the evaluation of others' research.
- To provide you with a systematic understanding of the philosophical themes, debates and dilemmas that underpin empirical research methods, and their implications for research design and interpretation of findings
- To encourage you to develop as a researcher, exercising critical judgement, independence of thought and originality in your work
- To encourage you to develop as a researcher, being reflexive about your role and continuing professional development
- To support you in becoming a skilled empirical researcher with a focus on a substantive discipline

Typically, you will complete the entire course, leading to an MSc award. However, the programme is designed with three possible exit points:

1) PG Certificate. You can achieve this award through the successful completion of 60 credits-worth of taught core modules. In your choice of modules you will be guided by the Programme Director, taking into account your knowledge of research methods at entry point and your desired learning outcomes. It allows you, for example, to focus more on qualitative than on quantitative methods if you wish, or to focus more on applied analysis than design and philosophical issues if you wish. On completion of the PG Certificate you should have achieved comprehensive knowledge of some applied analysis techniques, and/or of broader design and philosophical issues.

2) PG Diploma. You can achieve this award through the successful completion of 120 credits-worth of taught modules. At this stage, you will have systematic understanding of qualitative and quantitative methods, and of research design and philosophical issues more broadly. You will have experience of conducting analyses on data of various formats. You will have developed the capacity to synthesise knowledge about research methods across a range of areas of application, and to critique research findings based on the methods used to obtain them.

3) MSc. You can achieve this award through the successful completion of 120 credits worth of taught modules, plus a dissertation. In addition to the expectations of the PG Diploma (above), you will have demonstrated the ability to design and implement a substantial piece of scientific research addressing a question of current academic relevance, using one or more state of the art research methods.

WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?

On successful completion of this programme, you will be expected to be able to:

Knowledge and understanding:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the principles and applications of core methodologies used in social and political research
- Demonstrate a critical awareness of the scopes and limitations of core methodologies used in social and political research
- Demonstrate a systematic understanding of how to select and apply appropriate data collection and analysis techniques to research given empirical research questions
- Demonstrate broad knowledge of the ontological and epistemological foundations of empirical research, and an appreciation of their implications for research methodologies
- Demonstrate a sensitive and sophisticated appreciation of the societal contexts of empirical research, including ethical, social and political considerations for researchers and subjects
- Demonstrate the ability to engage with empirical research in a variety of substantive contexts, with a specialist focus on a key area of your choosing

Skills:

- Critically analyse research findings in a variety of contexts in the social sciences, with particular focus on the methodologies used to obtain those findings
- Systematically gather, synthesise and critically evaluate evidence from a number of different sources in order to understand the complexities of social reality
- Develop clear, coherent and apposite research questions within a given field of study, which are amenable to empirical research
- Skilfully employ a range of data collection and data analysis techniques, for both quantitative and qualitative data, to answer particular research questions
- Locate and obtain secondary qualitative and quantitative data; store them appropriately and manage them responsibly, adhering to relevant principles and practices of good research ethics
- Communicate research findings clearly and effectively, for both academic and wider audiences

Values and attitudes:

- Be reflective and independent in your study, identify and question your

assumptions, and strive to continue to advance your knowledge and understanding

- Appreciate the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge
- Respect and acknowledge the work of others
- Acknowledge and value of diversity of opinions and ideas
- Demonstrate sensitivity and commitment to the principles and practice of good research ethics, both in your own empirical work and in the evaluation of others’.

The programme structure and content accords with the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, as specified in the Quality Assurance Agency’s *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies*. The *Quality Code* specifies the levels of skills and types of learning outcomes that are appropriate for various levels of academic study. By adhering to the principles of the *Quality Code* in designing the MSc, you can be assured that its standards meet nationally-recognised criteria for higher education provision.

HOW WILL I LEARN?

Teaching and learning is mostly a combination of lectures, interactive sessions, practical workshops (including computer laboratory work) and small group classes, including individual and group presentations. Independent study and wide reading are essential for making the most of the contact time you have with teachers and student colleagues, and for developing a sophisticated understanding of the programme content.

You will be guided by reading lists and other teaching materials, but also encouraged to pursue your own lines of enquiry. Resources are organised via City’s virtual learning environment, Moodle. Our personal tutorial system, as well as the welfare services provided by City, offer further bespoke support to meet your needs.

As a general guide, a 15-credit module delivered over ten weeks of teaching will typically comprise an hour-long lecture and an hour-long seminar or workshop each week. Over the course of the year, we would notionally expect you to spend 150 hours in independent study for each 15-credit module (this time includes time spent reading, working through exercises, preparing for examinations, writing coursework, using online resources, navigating Library resources, and so on.)

WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?

Assessment and Assessment Criteria

Assessment is primarily in the form of coursework (written assignments, essays or reports), class tests, unseen written examinations and dissertation. The types of assessment used vary from module to module according to the nature of the module content and the corresponding knowledge and skills that need to be assessed: please see individual module guides for further information.

Assessment Criteria are descriptions, based on the intended learning outcomes, of the skills, knowledge or attitudes that you need to demonstrate in order to complete an assessment successfully, providing a mechanism by which the quality of an assessment can be measured. Grade-Related Criteria are descriptions of the level of skills, knowledge or attributes that you need to demonstrate in order to achieve a certain grade or mark in an assessment, providing a mechanism by which the quality of an assessment can be measured and placed within the overall set of marks. Assessment Criteria and Grade-Related Criteria will be made available to you to support you in completing assessments. These may be provided in programme handbooks, module specifications, on the virtual learning environment (Moodle) or attached to a specific assessment task.

Feedback on assessment

Feedback will be provided in line with our Assessment and Feedback Policy. In particular, you will normally be provided with feedback within three weeks of the submission deadline or assessment date. This would normally include a provisional grade or mark. For end of module examinations or an equivalent significant task (e.g. an end of module project), feedback will normally be provided within four weeks. The timescale for feedback on final year projects or dissertations may be longer. The full policy can be found at:

https://www.city.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0009/452565/Assessment-and-Feedback-Policy...pdf

Assessment Regulations

In order to pass your Programme, you should complete successfully or be exempted from the relevant modules and assessments and will therefore acquire the required number of credits. For how each Part of your programme is weighted, please see 'What Award Can I Get?' below.

The Pass mark for each module is 50%. If you fail an assessment component or a module, the following will apply:

1. Compensation: where you fail up to a total of 20 credits at first or resit attempt (15 for a Postgraduate Certificate), you may be allowed compensation if:
 - Compensation is permitted for the module involved (see the What will I Study section of the programme specification), and
 - It can be demonstrated that you have satisfied all the Learning Outcomes of the modules in the Programme, and
 - A minimum overall mark of no more than 10% below the module pass mark

- has been achieved in the module to be compensated, and
- An aggregate mark of 50% has been achieved overall.

Where you are eligible for compensation at the first attempt, this will be applied in the first instance rather than offering a resit opportunity.

If you receive a compensated pass in a module you will be awarded the credit for that module. The original component marks will be retained in the record of marks and your original module mark shall be used for the purpose of your Award calculation.

2. Resit: where you are not eligible for compensation at the first attempt, you will be offered one resit attempt.

If you are successful in the resit, you will be awarded the credit for that module. The mark for each assessment component that is subject to a resit will be capped at the pass mark for the module. This capped mark will be used in the calculation of the final module mark together with the original marks for the components that you passed at first attempt.

If you do not meet the pass the requirements for a module and do not complete your resit by the date specified you will not progress and the Assessment Board will require that you be withdrawn from the Programme.

If you fail to meet the requirements for the Programme, the Assessment Board will consider whether you are eligible for an Exit Award as per the table below.

If you would like to know more about the way in which assessment works at City, please see the full version of the Assessment Regulations at:
[http://www.city.ac.uk/ data/assets/word doc/0003/69249/s19.doc](http://www.city.ac.uk/data/assets/word_doc/0003/69249/s19.doc)

WHAT AWARD CAN I GET?

Master's Degree:

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
Taught	7	120	67	With Distinction	70
Dissertation	7	60	33	With Merit	60
				Without classification	50

Postgraduate Diploma:

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
Taught	7	120	100	With Distinction	70
				With Merit	60
				Without classification	50

Postgraduate Certificate:

	HE Level	Credits	Weighting (%)	Class	% required
Taught	7	60	100	With Distinction	70
				With Merit	60
				Without classification	50

WHAT WILL I STUDY?*

The programme consists of six taught modules from interdisciplinary core subjects, plus two department-specific elective modules. You also write a dissertation comprising original research on a topic of your choice.

You will take the following core modules:

- Research design, methods and methodology
- Rationale and philosophical foundations of social research
- Quantitative research methods (two core modules from a selection)
- Qualitative research methods (two core modules)
- Research methods thesis (dissertation)

For the Quantitative research methods component you will take two modules from a selection. These modules are called 'core electives': 'core' reflects the fact that they contain compulsory material for the MSc, while 'elective' denotes that you may choose which of these compulsory modules to follow. The default route is to follow the introductory module SAM003, and choose one other quantitative module from the list of core electives. You may however be exempted from SAM003 if you have prior knowledge of quantitative modules. In that case, with the approval of the Programme Director, you may choose two quantitative modules from the list of core electives. Please note that PSM208 or SAM011 can be taken, but not both, due to their overlap in content. In addition to the core components of the programme, you will be able to tailor your study according to your specific research interests by choosing two elective modules (worth 15 credits each; or one module worth 30 credits) in methodologically or substantively focused topics, offered by the Departments of Economics, International Politics, Journalism, Psychology and Sociology. The following substantive pathways are currently available: criminology, culture and creative industries, economics, international politics, media and psychology. You can opt to take modules across disciplines or within one discipline.

The MSc programme is home to students from a range of academic backgrounds, so special provision is made to help you choose the best modules for your experience and needs, from the broad range available. You will meet the Programme Director when you arrive for the MSc to discuss and agree your module selection. It is important that you follow modules for which you have the necessary prerequisite knowledge, but also that you stretch yourself intellectually with new and advanced material.

Module Title	SITS code	Module Credits	Core/ Elective	Compensation Yes/No	Level
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Research Methods Dissertation	SAM010	60	C	N	7
Research Design, Methods and Methodology	SAM001	15	C	N	7
Rationale and Philosophical Foundations of Social Research	SAM002	15	C	N	7
Introduction to Quantitative Inference	SAM003	15	C**	N	7
Statistical Models	PSM208	15	CE***	Y	7
Applied Econometric and Psychological Research Methods	PEM107	15	CE	Y	7
Multivariate Data Analysis	SAM009	15	CE	Y	7
Statistical Modelling	SAM011	15	CE***	Y	7
Qualitative Research Methods	SAM004	15	C	N	7
Applied Qualitative Research Methods	SAM005	15	C	N	7
Culture	AMM429	15	E	Y	7
Cultural Policy	AMM432	15	E	Y	7
Reading as a Writer	CWM965	15	E	Y	7
Macroeconomics	ECM170	15	E	Y	7
Then Economics of Micro-Finance	ECM153	15	E	Y	7
Corporate Finance	ECM152	15	E	Y	7
Asset Pricing	ECM171	15	E	Y	7
Applied Econometrics	ECM309	15	E	Y	7
Understanding Security in the 21st Century	IPM101	15	E	Y	7
Political Economy of Global Finance	IPM106	15	E	Y	7
Global Governance	IPM108	15	E	Y	7
Economic Diplomacy	IPM114	15	E	Y	7
Foreign Policy Analysis	IPM115	15	E	Y	7
Fundamental Processes in Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology I	PSM204	15	E	Y	7
Mental Health, Wellbeing & Neuroscience	PSM203	15	E	Y	7

Research Methods & Programming	PSM207	15	E	Y	7
Survey Research Methods	SAM008	15	E	Y	7
Global Media Industries	SGM308	30	E	N	7
Democratisation and Networked Communication	SGM311	30	E	N	7
Communication, Culture and Development	SGM312	30	E	N	7
Celebrity	SGM314	15	E	Y	7
Analysing Crime	SGM301	30	E	N	7
Criminal Justice Policy and Practice	SGM303	30	E	N	7
Criminal Minds	SGM304	15	E	Y	7
Victims: Policy and Politics	SGM305	15	E	Y	7
Crime, News and Media Justice	SGM306	15	E	Y	7
Digital Data Politics	SGM315	15	E	Y	7

****SAM003 may not be compulsory if you have prior training in quantitative methods.**

****You may study PSM208 or SAM011, but not both.**

***Please note that this is an indicative list. These modules are subject to change depending on staff availability, student demand and some are offered on a biennial basis. There is no guarantee that every elective module listed above will run.**

TO WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON?

Graduates from the MSc in Research Methods should find themselves well equipped for careers which require critical engagement with empirical research, whether in commissioning, designing, conducting, or making use of its results. Likely destinations include local and central government, public and private sector research organisations, companies involved in marketing, charities and non-governmental organisations. Recent graduate destinations of students studying research methods include the UK Government's Cabinet Office; Ministry of Defence; Department of Energy and Climate Change; National Health Service; London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham; Eurofound (EU agency); Rhetoric Solutions (market knowledge provider); Ipsos MORI (leading UK market research company); NatCen (leading social research organisation in the UK); and a range of charities and universities.

The course is also an ideal foundation for students who wish to pursue doctoral research in social sciences.

If you would like more information on the Careers support available at City, please go to: <http://www.city.ac.uk/careers/for-students-and-recent-graduates>.

WHAT STUDY ABROAD OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

The programme does not currently entail study abroad options.

WHAT PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?

The programme does not currently entail placement opportunities.

WILL I GET ANY PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION?

The programme does not currently entail any professional accreditation.

HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

Applicants should have a first or upper second class honours degree in a social science discipline, but other relevant subjects will be considered. Applications are also welcome from those with experience of working in a relevant area. An equivalent qualification from an overseas university will be considered.

English Language Requirement

For students whose first language is not English, the following qualifications will meet the English language requirement for entry to the programme:

A first degree from a UK University.

- A first degree from an overseas institution on the UKVI list of approved

majority-English speaking countries

- A national of a country on the UKVI list of approved majority-English speaking countries

GCE O Level/GCSE English language or English literature, grade C minimum.

Cambridge ESOL CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English) at grade C or above.

- An overall score of 7 in the English Language Testing System (IELTS) with at least 7.0 in the writing component

Maths Requirements

Students are required to have a grade C or above in Mathematics at GCSE or equivalent.

Overseas Qualifications

Equivalent qualifications from an overseas university will be considered.

IT Skills

All students are expected to be computer literate.

RPL/RPEL Requirements

RPL/RPEL: Students may apply for RPL/RPEL for a minimum of one module and a maximum of 25% of the overall credits for the programme (taught modules only).

Exemptions are not awarded for programme/qualifications that were awarded five years ago or longer, prior to the enrolment date for the intended programme of study at City.

Programmes/qualifications which were awarded over five years ago may be considered towards RPL/RPEL requests if the candidate can provide supporting evidence which gives an account of ways in which learning achieved through the programme/qualification has been applied actively and updated within the past five years.

Former students of City who have been withdrawn from a programme due to academic failure are not normally permitted RPL/RPEL any awarded credits back onto the same programme within the School.

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