



Programme Specification

Social Research [Frenchay]

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Section 1: Key Programme Details

Part A: Programme Information

Programme title: Social Research [Frenchay]

Highest award: MRes Social Research

Interim award: PGCert Social Research

Interim award: PGDip Social Research

Awarding institution: UWE Bristol

Teaching institutions: UWE Bristol

Study abroad: Yes

Year abroad: No

Sandwich year: No

Credit recognition: No

School responsible for the programme: CATE School of Architecture and Environment, College of Arts, Technology and Environment

Professional, statutory or regulatory bodies: Not applicable

Modes of delivery: Full-time, Part-time

Entry requirements: For the current entry requirements see the UWE public website.

For implementation from: 01 September 2026

Programme code: L90J12

Section 2: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Part A: Programme Overview, Aims and Learning Outcomes

Overview: The MRes Social Research offers a learning pathway to people wishing to develop advanced social research skills in a context that is aligned with their professional ambitions and their disciplinary context. The programme offers a series of core modules focussed on research practice, philosophy, and theory. This is combined with a large range of option modules, including a professional practice module allowing students to gain workplace-focussed research experience, as well as a range of modules aligned with six disciplinary pathways, Climate Change, Sustainability and Society, Education, Health, Wellbeing and Society, Management and Business Studies, Social Policy, and Sociotechnical Futures and Digital Methods. The pathways are aligned with the South West Doctoral Training Programme to support students on an ESRC 1+3 studentship. It also provides a training route way for students considering applying for other ESRC doctoral or post-doctoral training partnerships in the UK.

Features of the programme: The MRes Social Research at UWE offers an intensive, research-rich learning environment in which students work closely with active researchers to develop advanced critical, methodological, analytical, and research-management skills. The programme combines transdisciplinary training with opportunities to contribute to real-world research addressing a range of contemporary challenges - guided by the students' particular interests.

Students on the programme have the opportunity to focus core assessments in response their personal ambitions, whilst supported by the core team of experienced social researchers - who are also dedicated and experienced teachers. Further bespoke, specific disciplinary support is enabled through the network of disciplinary leads linked to the SWDTP pathways. This student-led approach to assessment culminates with the Master's Project, shaped by the student and supported by subject experts, which provides an opportunity to apply the concepts and principles of the taught content to an extended research project.

Educational Aims: The MRes Social Research sets out to develop students as independent, creative, and critically engaged researchers. The key educational aims are:

- To build students' capacity to design and conduct independent, transdisciplinary, and methodologically rigorous research, underpinned by critical evaluation of evidence and strong analytical competence.
- To foster creative and innovative approaches to research design, methods, and impact, with particular emphasis on future trajectories within students' specific disciplinary contexts
- To foster participation in a vibrant, collaborative research culture in which students engage with high-quality research practice, communicate their work effectively, and prepare for progression into doctoral study or research-focused careers.

The MRes Social Research is designed to provide ESRC recognised research training to support students on an ESRC funded PhD studentship within the South West Doctoral Training Partnership (SWDTP). Addendum 1 presents a mapping of core modules against the SWDTP Domains indicating how they are addressed in the programme design.

Programme Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this programme graduates will achieve the following learning outcomes.

Programme Learning Outcomes

- PO1. Design and execute independent, methodologically robust social research that demonstrates advanced understanding of interdisciplinary approaches and the ability to justify methodological choices.
- PO2. Critically evaluate, synthesise, and apply complex bodies of evidence, demonstrating high-level analytical competence and the capacity to engage with theoretical, empirical, and methodological debates.
- PO3. Develop innovative and creative research designs that respond to contemporary social challenges, with particular sensitivity to future trajectories, and responsible research praxis.
- PO4. Apply advanced qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods techniques to generate, analyse, and interpret data in ways that are rigorous, ethical, and reflexive.

- PO5. Communicate research effectively to diverse audiences, using appropriate academic, professional, and public-facing formats to articulate research aims, methods, findings, and implications.
- PO6. Demonstrate professional research skills, including project management, collaborative working, ethical decision-making, and the ability to contribute constructively to a vibrant research culture.
- PO7. Reflect critically on their own positionality, assumptions, and research practice, showing intellectual independence, creativity, and a commitment to continuous learning.
- PO8. Prepare for doctoral-level study or research-focused careers by evidencing the capacity to formulate viable research proposals, engage with scholarly communities, and contribute to impactful, real-world research.
- PO9. Discuss and critically evaluate key issues and current thinking within their disciplinary domain.

Assessment strategy: The MRes Social Research is designed to enable assessment as, for and of learning. Examples of ways by which this perspective on assessment is met are:

Assessment as learning: Students self-review to critically evaluate their work as a part of pre-submission formative feedback practice, supported by opportunities for additional discursive feedback after formal feedback has been released.

Assessment for learning: Students will pursue learning within their disciplines or aligned with their research ambitions wherever possible, with support from module staff, supervisors, subject specialists, and pathway leads ensuring they are properly equipped for professional practice upon graduation.

Assessment of learning: Clear marking rubrics and assessment briefs will allow students to respond appropriately to assessment requirements.

Student engagement with assessment is facilitated from the beginning of each module and supports students to develop a deep approach to learning. The programme and each module set out clear guidance on how students will achieve and demonstrate that they have met the learning outcomes. Ongoing-formative feedback within teaching sessions, from tutors and peers, will support students and offer timeous clarification of assessment-related queries.

This programme adopts, where possible, the principle of authentic assessment. Assessment tasks will be based on those likely to be encountered in the workplace or within students' disciplinary contexts enabling students to develop and evidence valuable transferable employability skills. Students engage in diverse authentic assessment types and formats such as:

- Research-led and enquiry-based critical evaluations of disciplinary appropriate case studies
- Reports based on skills in observation and analysis to support decision-making in the light of uncertainty;
- Oral accounts and presentations of processes and issues, including engagement with advanced research-related topics including axiology, epistemology and ontology
- In circumstances, where skills development is the focus for assessment, more prescriptive approaches may be adopted, allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of techniques.

All modules are designed with a clear progression specifically designed to scaffold skills development. Using short fat module design, the programmatic learning pathway is conceived to develop key skills early in the learning journey (Term 1), with elaborative and advanced topics extending this material into taught modules and the MSc Project, presented and initiated in Term 2.

Assessment is inclusive for all students. It is designed to facilitate learning and support students to succeed, and it is clearly linked to specified learning outcomes and/ or desired competencies. Taught content, where appropriate, engages with provocative issues linked to social research praxis, such as representation, power, and privilege in research by exploring, for example, decolonising knowledge, critical-theoretical conceptualisations power and violence in research, and the problematic idea of the researcher as dispassionate observer - all designed to challenge traditional ideas around science, knowledge and research.

Where appropriate, modified, and alternative provision will be available to avoid unfair (e.g., EDI) barriers to success. The teaching team will aim to respond sympathetically to students needs, whilst ensuring opportunities to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes are not compromised, and ensuring compliance

with the university's assessment regulations.

This approach to assessment will prepare students to continue their journey as social researchers, either as doctoral candidates or in their chosen professional research contexts.

Student support: The College of Arts, Technology and Environment and School of Architecture and Environment offers a range of learning support material and staff dedicated to student support, at all levels.

Library Study Skills provides advanced academic skills programme through online resources and workbooks and bespoke training sessions, including in Starting Block.

Cultural transitions workshops in Starting Block help to support students from other institutions, in the UK and overseas.

Students are encouraged to nominate themselves or others to represent their cohort in Student Rep Staff Forums, providing feedback to the rest of the programme team to help us to improve the teaching, learning and assessment experience.

Programme and module leaders will provide support via programme and module Blackboard sites and through e-mail as well as on a face-to-face on campus. Students are also supported with teaching materials provided in advance of taught sessions and recordings of lectures being made available immediately afterwards.

Students will have access to computing facilities with the necessary software, as well as the opportunity to install the required software on their own computer.

Part B: Programme Structure

Year 1

Full time students must take 180 credits from the modules in Year 1.

Part time students must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 1.

In addition to the compulsory modules, students will choose a further 30 credits of optional modules at UWE from within the SWDTP Pathway lists.

Any relevant 30 or 15 (x2) credit module(s) may be selected in discussion with the pathway lead and the programme team.

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Full Time)

Full time students must take 150 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Full Time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLDQ-30-M	Advanced Research Topics 2026-27	30
UBGMRK-60-M	Masters Project 2026-27	60
UBGMV8-30-M	Research Design and Methodologies 2026-27	30
UBGMVP-30-M	Research in Context 2026-27	30

Year 1 Compulsory Modules (Part Time)

Part time students must take 90 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Part Time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBLLDQ-30-M	Advanced Research Topics 2026-27	30
UBGMV8-30-M	Research Design and Methodologies 2026-27	30
UBGMVP-30-M	Research in Context 2026-27	30

Year 1 Optional Modules (Full time)

In addition to the compulsory modules, students will choose a further 30 credits of optional modules at UWE from within the SWDTP Pathway lists.

Any relevant 30 or 15 (x2) credit module(s) may be selected in discussion with the pathway lead and the programme team.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UWEOPT	UWE Optional Module Portfolio 2026-27	0

Year 2

Part time students must take 90 credits from the modules in Year 2.

Year 2 Compulsory Modules (Part Time)

Part time students must take 60 credits from the modules in Compulsory Modules (Part Time).

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UBGMRK-60-M	Masters Project 2027-28	60

Year 2 Optional Modules (Part Time)

In addition to the compulsory modules, students will choose a further 30 credits of optional modules at UWE from within the SWDTP Pathway lists.

Any relevant 30 or 15 (x2) credit module(s) may be selected in discussion with the pathway lead and the programme team.

Module Code	Module Title	Credit
UWEOPT	UWE Optional Module Portfolio 2027-28	0

Part C: Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR) Synopsis

Graduates will be able to critically engage with the philosophical underpinnings of research design; develop practical skills for collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data; develop academic writing skills. In addition it will develop knowledge and skills for working in applied and interdisciplinary research fields.

Part D: External Reference Points and Benchmarks

QAA: Framework for Higher Education Qualifications:

https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281_11

QAA: Quality Code for HE https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/uk-quality-code-for-higher-education-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=19a5b881_32

QAA: Qualification characteristics for Master's degrees

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/master%27s-degree-characteristics-statement.pdf>

Advance HE: Essential frameworks for enhancing student success

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/essential-frameworks-enhancing-student-success>

Strategy 2030

University policies

The MRes Social Research is designed to meet the objectives of ESRC Post Graduate Training, to be part of an accredited Doctoral Training Centre, and therefore reflects the objectives set out by the ESRC, and presented in Addendum 1.

Part E: Regulations

Approved to University Academic Regulations and Procedures