



# nottingham graduate school for social and policy research

## Postgraduate Certificate in Social Science Research Methods

The first element in a three-stage programme of study leading to the award of a MSc in Research Methods

### Aim of course

The Postgraduate Certificate in Social Science Research Methods aims to develop a generic awareness of the research process by providing an insight into the practice of being a researcher, and specifically to develop an understanding of:

- The design and management of research;
- The range of methodological approaches in social science research;
- The historical and philosophical perspectives related to research methodology and to framing research enquiry;
- The skills required in retrieving, analysing and presenting material for research purposes;
- The discourse of research enquiry;
- The assessment and evaluation of published research.

The PgCert is designed for people with academic qualifications in the social sciences, humanities or business studies, or for workers in social research

areas who have identified an interest in understanding the ground rules of social science enquiry.

### Structure and delivery of course/Modes of study

The PgCert Social Science Research Methods course is available full-time, part-time and by distance learning. The full-time mode lasts 15 weeks, while the part-time and distance learning modes each last one year. The PgCert full-time mode involves the four compulsory modules set out below. The part-time and distance learning modes utilise the same modules (with the exception of the Concepts in Career Planning).

Courses are delivered through a combination of lectures, seminars and discussion groups, computer-based exercises and workshops. There is a heavy emphasis on practical experience of project design, project management, fieldwork and data analysis, and this emphasis is reflected in the formal assessment of students' work.

### Postgraduate Certificate in Social Science Research Methods

(all modules are 20 M level credits unless specified)

Modules in the programme are:

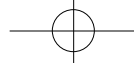
#### Quantitative-Qualitative Methodology

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controversies in social science research - epistemology and method</li> <li>• Triangulating methodologies and methods</li> <li>• Designing research strategies</li> <li>• Ethics in social research</li> <li>• Quantitative research approaches I - the survey method</li> <li>• Quantitative research approaches II - experimental research design</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designing a small scale study using quantitative research - sampling, inference and validity</li> <li>• Qualitative research approaches - observations and in-depth interviews</li> <li>• Case studies in social research</li> <li>• Action research</li> </ul> |
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#### Philosophy and Social Methodology

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explaining the natural world: Positivism, Popper and Kuhn;</li> <li>• Explaining the social world;</li> <li>• Explaining the actions of rational individuals;</li> <li>• Ethnography: understanding individuals;</li> <li>• The social construction of (social) reality;</li> <li>• Postmodernism: is social science possible?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positivism and constructionism: Rorty on political policy and feminism;</li> <li>• Attempts to link structure and agency (a): Giddens' structuration theory; (b): social realism;</li> <li>• Debates about the underclass: beyond essentialism?</li> </ul> |
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#### Research and Presentational Skills

- Introduction to library resources: constructing a research strategy;
- Introduction to online abstracts and indices/statistical sources. Assessing and evaluating information sources;
- Advanced word processing skills;
- Introduction to essential writing skills: structuring reports, planning arguments, reviewing literature, referencing and citation;
- Internet navigation, email lists and newsgroups;
- Specialised social research sites on the Internet;
- Quantitative data analysis using SPSS - frequency analysis and univariate statistics; graphical presentation and data manipulation; cross-tabulation and bivariate analysis.

#### Concepts of Career Planning

(only taken in conjunction with the above modules on the FT version of the PgCert)

This module is designed to provide course participants with practical and intellectual skills to help them devise career action plans and strategies for gaining access to the labour market after graduation.

#### Course fees

The course fees for the PgCert Social Science Research Methods by full-time or part-time study are £1,200. The course fees for the distance learning mode are £1,350.

#### Help with fees

Places fully funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) are often available on the PgCert SSRM for full-time study only. If you are eligible to receive a funded place under the terms and conditions set out by the ESF, you will have your course fees waived (£1,200) and you will receive a training allowance of £89 per week.

The Graduate School's Postgraduate Studentship Scheme is available to both full-time and part-time students who have been accepted on to one of the university's taught masters programmes. The studentship covers full or partial payment of the course fees.

The Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences has a small number of postgraduate bursaries available in various disciplines.

**Please ask for information on the above schemes when requesting information packs.**

#### Further details

For further information, please:

**write to:** Programme Administrator  
The Nottingham Graduate School for Social and Policy Research  
Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences  
The Nottingham Trent University  
Burton Street  
Nottingham NG1 4BU

**email:** [gsr@ntu.ac.uk](mailto:gsr@ntu.ac.uk)

**telephone:** +44 (0)115 848 2500 or +44 (0)115 848 5554

**fax:** +44 (0)115 848 6808

Further details about the range of postgraduate opportunities and professional development courses offered by the Nottingham Graduate School for Social and Policy Research can be found at:

[www.gsr.ntu.ac.uk](http://www.gsr.ntu.ac.uk)

