

MA

Social Research Methods

Study mode

Full-time

Part-time

Duration

12 months

24 months

Apply by: **11 September 2026**Starts on: **28 September 2026**

About this course

This MA provides research training with a specific focus on developing the skills needed to examine and analyse how societies, cultures, institutions and practices came into being, how they are organised today and how they continue to change.

Introduction

You'll be part of a department at the forefront of research that supports social justice. We aim to give you a stimulating and supportive environment where you can explore what it means to be social, where society might be heading and how we can shape our shared futures.

World-leading experts from across the social sciences teach our programmes, and a specialist in your chosen area will supervise your independent research project. You'll gain advanced research and communication skills, along with the ability to think analytically. These are vital for a successful career across many sectors and also provide an excellent foundation for further postgraduate study.

You'll study the politics and practice of social research, looking at the role of the social scientist and the opportunities and challenges of different approaches. We'll also introduce you to the debates that have shaped the relationship between method and knowledge, and how these continue to influence the social sciences today.

This master's has Economic and Social Research Council 1+3 recognition status and is designed for those intending to pursue professional or academic research in sociology, social policy or criminology. It will equip you to examine how societies, cultures and institutions came into being, how they are organised now and how they continue to change.

Who is this course for?

This master's is suitable for graduates in the Social Sciences or related areas. It is an excellent step for those who want to progress to postgraduate study at MPhil and PhD level, or pursue a career as an independent social researcher.

What you'll learn

- How to plan and execute sociological research
- A critical understanding of epistemological, methodological and ethical approaches in social research
- Training in general research skills
- Key debates, issues and controversies in sociological scholarship
- How social, public and civil policy can be influenced by sociological knowledge
- Project management and problem-solving skills

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Course content

Discover what you'll learn, what you'll study, and how you'll be taught and assessed.

Semester one

The MA programme consists of 120 credits of taught modules and a final project worth 60 credits.

In Semester 1, you are required to take two compulsory 20 credit modules and 20 credits of optional modules chosen from within the Department of Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and North West Social Science Doctoral Training Centre.

If you are considering progressing to a PhD (Sociology and Social Policy) or applying for any ESRC PhD funding route, you should equip yourself with a good standard of literacy in social research methods across a range of data collection, analysis and management techniques. We strongly recommend that all postgraduate students undertake modules in both qualitative and quantitative methods, including **SOCI503 Understanding Society Using Quantitative Methods** (semester 1) at the very least, or equivalent training made available elsewhere in the university or across the engage@liverpool initiative. For those applying for ESRC PhD funding, this requirement should preferably be fulfilled during your MA or MRes programme, or – if successfully awarded ESRC PhD funding – during the first year of your PhD at the latest.

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
THE POLITICS AND PRACTICES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH (SOCI500)	20
PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (SOCI505)	20

Optional modules	Credits
UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY USING QUANTITATIVE METHODS (SOCI503)	20

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Semester two

In Semester 2, you chose up to 60 credits of social research methods training modules.

Modules

Optional modules	Credits
AN INTRODUCTION TO DATA VISUALIZATION USING R (SOCI523)	10
PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH (SOCI528)	10
AN INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (SOCI531)	10
ETHNOMETHODOLOGY AND CONVERSATION ANALYSIS (SOCI536)	10

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Final project

You must take either the Dissertation module or the Extended Interchange Project module, both worth 60 credits each. This final project is normally submitted in the September ending the year of the MA programme.

Modules

Compulsory modules	Credits
DISSERTATION (SOC1403)	60
EXTENDED INTERCHANGE PROJECT (SOC1530)	60

Programme details and modules listed are illustrative only and subject to change.

Teaching and assessment

How you'll learn

You'll be taught through a mixture of large group seminars/tutorials, small group workshops, one to one tutorials and research supervision meetings. You'll also carry out project work and private study.

Teaching is delivered in an interactive, participatory and inclusive way, with extensive support of small group teaching and online learning platforms.

How you're assessed

Each of the taught modules are formally assessed by coursework on a semester basis. Depending on the learning objective of the module, this may include essays, project work, fieldwork analysis, research strategy document, report of research observation, book review or the completion and analysis of interviews.

Liverpool Hallmarks

We have a distinctive approach to education, the Liverpool Curriculum Framework, which focuses on research-connected teaching, active learning, and authentic assessment to ensure our students graduate as digitally fluent and confident global citizens.

The Liverpool Curriculum framework sets out our distinctive approach to education. Our teaching staff support our students to develop academic knowledge, skills, and understanding alongside our **graduate attributes**:

- Digital fluency
- Confidence

- Global citizenship

Our curriculum is characterised by the three **Liverpool Hallmarks**:

- Research-connected teaching
- Active learning
- Authentic assessment

All this is underpinned by our core value of **inclusivity** and commitment to providing a curriculum that is accessible to all students.

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Careers and employability

The Social Research Methods MA is designed to meet pre-employment training and post-career development needs. It will equip you with the skills required to progress directly onto doctoral level social research or to take up employment in a wide variety of careers across the government, charitable and private sectors.

This MA is recognised nationally by the [Economic and Social Research Council](#) for providing quality methods training for those seeking a career in social science. National and local government, as well as Regional Development Agencies, have highlighted the growing demand for graduates with expertise in the full spectrum of research design and analysis techniques.

Potential career pathways include, but are not limited to, roles within:

- Commercial research
- Public health sector
- Public policy
- Third/NGO sector

This MA also equips you with the skills and knowledge needed for an academic career or a university research career in the Social Sciences (Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology) or in a related discipline.

Career support from day one to graduation and beyond

Career planning

From education to employment

Networking events

Fees and funding

Your tuition fees, funding your studies, and other costs to consider.

Tuition fees

UK fees (applies to Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland)

Full-time place, per year – £12,500

Part-time place, per year – £6,250

International fees

Full-time place, per year – £28,000

Part-time place, per year – £14,000

Tuition fees are for the academic year 2026/27.

Tuition fees cover the cost of your teaching and assessment, operating facilities such as libraries, IT equipment, and access to academic and personal support.

- You can pay your tuition fees in instalments.
- All or part of your tuition fees can be funded by external sponsorship.
- International applicants who accept an offer of a place will need to pay a tuition fee deposit.

If you're a UK national, or have settled status in the UK, you may be eligible to apply for a Postgraduate Loan worth up to £12,167 to help with course fees and living costs. **Learn more about paying for your studies**.

Additional costs

We understand that budgeting for your time at university is important, and we want to make sure you understand any course-related costs that are not covered by your tuition fee. This could include buying a laptop, books, or stationery.

Find out more about the additional study costs that may apply to this course.

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Entry requirements

The qualifications and exam results you'll need to apply for this course.

Postgraduate entry requirements

We accept a 2:2 honours degree from a UK university, or an equivalent academic qualification from a similar non-UK institution. This degree should be in Social Sciences or a closely related subject.

Those with non-social science backgrounds may also be considered if their experience and references suggest support for this.

International qualifications

[Select your country or region to view specific entry requirements.](#)

If you hold a bachelor's degree or equivalent, but don't meet our entry requirements, a Pre-Master's can help you gain a place. This specialist preparation course for postgraduate study is offered on campus at the [University of Liverpool International College](#), in partnership with Kaplan International Pathways. Although there's no direct Pre-Master's route to this MA, completing a Pre-Master's pathway can guarantee you a place on many other postgraduate courses at The University of Liverpool.

English language requirements

You'll need to demonstrate competence in the use of English language, unless you're from a [majority English speaking country](#).

We accept a variety of [international language tests](#) and [country-specific qualifications](#).

International applicants who do not meet the minimum required standard of English language can complete one of our [Pre-Sessional English courses](#) to achieve the required level.

IELTS

6.5 overall, with no component below 6.0

TOEFL iBT

If you took a TOEFL test on or before 20 January 2026, you'll need 88 overall, with minimum scores of listening 19, writing 19, reading 19 and speaking 20. If you took a TOEFL test from 21 January 2026 onwards, when a new scoring system was introduced, you'll need 4.5 overall, with 4 or above in all components. TOEFL Home Edition not accepted.

Duolingo English Test

125 overall, with writing not less than 125, speaking and reading not less than 115, and listening not below 110. For academic year 2025/26 only, we will also accept the production, literacy, comprehension and conversation score set: 120 overall, with no component below 105.

Pearson PTE Academic

61 overall, with no component below 59

LanguageCert Academic

70 overall, with no skill below 65

PSI Skills for English

B2 Pass with Merit in all bands

INDIA Standard XII

National Curriculum (CBSE/ISC) - 75% and above in English. Accepted State Boards - 80% and above in English.

WAEC

C6 or above

Pre-sessional English

Do you need to complete a Pre-sessional English course to meet the English language requirements for this course?

The length of Pre-sessional English course you'll need to take depends on your current level of English language ability.

Pre-sessional English in detail

If you don't meet our English language requirements, we can use your most recent IELTS score, or [the equivalent score in selected other English language tests](#), to determine the length of Pre-sessional English course you require.

Use the table below to check the course length you're likely to require for your current English language ability and see whether the course is available on campus or online.

Your most recent IELTS score	Pre-sessional English course length	On campus or online
6.0 overall, with writing at 6.0 and no component below 5.5	6 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with writing at 5.5 and no component below 5.0	10 weeks	On campus or online
5.5 overall, with no more than one component at 5.0	12 weeks	Online
5.5 overall, with no component below 5.0	20 weeks	On campus
5.0 overall, with no more than one component at 4.5	30 weeks	On campus
4.5 overall, with no more than one component at 4.0	40 weeks	On campus

If you've completed an alternative English language test to IELTS, we may be able to use this to assess your English language ability and determine the Pre-sessional English course length you require.

Please see our guide to [Pre-sessional English entry requirements](#) for IELTS 6.5 overall, with no component below 6.0, for further details.

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