THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

RESEARCH DEGREES

IN

Sociology

Programme Handbook

MSc by Research in Sociology

MSc by Research in Socio-Cultural Studies

PhD

2016-2017

THIS HANDBOOK CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT IF REQUIRED

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INTRODUCTION

What's in this Handbook?

This Handbook contains information for students studying for the MSc by Research in Sociology, the MSc by Research in Socio-Cultural Studies and PhD degrees. It explains our research training activities and the arrangements for supervision of students and reviewing progress.

It needs to be read in conjunction with:

- **The information on Research Training Courses on the Graduate School website:**
  http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/current_students/for_phd_students/research_training/research_training_courses

  This sets out the Graduate School programme of generic social research training, and its workshops in advanced research skills. It also provides information on the wide range of training in generic and transferable skills available across the University.

- **The MSc by Research Student Handbook and/or the PhD Student Handbook:**
  http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/on_course/for_phd_students/research_student_information_and_regulations

  These provide information on resources and entitlements for Graduate School students, and on supervision, upgrading and other formal requirements for the progress of all research students. They also describe the School's procedure for ethical review of postgraduate research projects.

- The University's Code of Practice for **Postgraduate Research Students and their Supervisors**
  http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/copsupervisorsresearchstudents.pdf

About Sociology

A sociological perspective can be brought to bear on all aspects of social life, and its cultures, institutions and practices. Its distinctiveness derives from the connections it makes between private troubles and public issues, or history, biography and social structure and change.

Sociology at the University of Edinburgh is immersed in this tradition. We are one of the premier research units in the United Kingdom. In the REF 2014 they would be 34% world-leading and 49% internationally excellent. Our staff has a longstanding commitment to original empirical and theoretical work on society, and to the production of cultural and scientific knowledge. We also work closely with other colleagues in the School of Social and Political Science and supervise many cross-disciplinary projects. Full details of our current research, publications and awards are on the Sociology web pages: www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/current_research/current

About Socio-Cultural Studies

Socio-Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary area of research. Ideas about culture have always been of interest across the social sciences, both as a synonym for the social and in the sense of popular and elite culture. The development of Cultural Studies over the last few decades has challenged disciplinary preserves on such

matters. A new British Sociological Association journal, **Cultural Sociology**, was founded in 2007, and this Master's programme too is part of the discipline of Sociology's recent theoretically informed re-engagement with culture. The Masters in Socio-Cultural Studies helps students develop a sociologically informed and interdisciplinary exploration of socio-cultural topics, theories and methodologies, to underpin 'hands-on' research in these areas of inquiry.

Research Ethos and Environment

While there is a structured framework for postgraduate research training and progress review, we believe that the development of a sociological perspective, and its translation into original work, requires an interactive, diverse and supportive informal research environment. We also believe in the importance of interdisciplinary work, which underpins our commitment to the MSc by Research in Socio-Cultural Studies. These ideas are embodied in a wide range of activities, including regular research seminars, specialist conferences, student-led workshops and social gatherings. There are also a number of research clusters and research centres (governance and nationalism, families and relationships, emotions, genomics, South Asian Studies, Narrative & Auto/Biographical Studies science and technology, finance, social theory), whose activities provide opportunities for students to present their work and to interact with established scholars.

Graduate Students

Our cosmopolitan community of graduate students make a critical contribution to a thriving research environment in Edinburgh. In a typical year we have thirty to forty PhD and MSc by Research students registered in core Sociology. There are around the same number studying in linked research outlets, including Science and Technology Studies, and a significant number of others who have their second supervisor in Sociology while being registered in another discipline. Some examples of current projects can be found at:
http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/current_research/current

In addition to the research degrees detailed in this Handbook, we also offer taught MSc Degrees in Sociology and Global Change (http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/prospective/taught_masters/o_z/msc_sociology_and_global_change) and Nationalism Studies (http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/prospective/taught_masters/h_n/msc_nationalism_studies) for those who prefer to defer a decision about continuing to a PhD, or for those who prefer to take 6 courses and complete a discrete research project for a dissertation.

Postgraduate Community

The Sociology Society is the social society for Edinburgh sociology students. They organise social events, parties, quizzes and pub outings. They will help you settle in to the postgraduate community. There is also a wiki page dedicated to Edinburgh Sociology PGs. Find out more at
http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/community/postgraduate_community

Why Research Training?

All research students, whatever degree they are registered for, follow a programme of research training, drawn from the core MSc by Research courses co-ordinated by the Graduate School in Social and Political Science. See

The Sociology and Socio-Cultural Studies specific training is described in this Handbook.

The two MRes programmes we offer will equip you with professional training to a high standard, enabling you to understand and use a range of research methods, both within and across the quantitative/qualitative 'divide'.

- **In Sociology**, you will pursue specific training designed to build insight into doing sociological research up to an advanced level, through seminars, workshops and practical exercises.

- **In Socio-Cultural Studies**, you will explore approaches, methodologies and issues concerning interdisciplinary research on socio-cultural topics, also up to an advanced level through seminars, workshops and practical exercises.

- Throughout your degree, you are also strongly encouraged to **plan your personal development** through the University's wide-ranging employment-related and generic skills Training Programmes. http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development

After graduating, you will be able to apply for a wide range of social research and arts and humanities academic posts, contribute to the social science community, contribute to community-provided cultural and media activities, and participate in global networks of professional sociology or socio-cultural studies, by developing your own research experience and knowledge.

RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

Most incoming students initially register for either the MSc by Research in Sociology, or the MSc by Research in Socio-Cultural Studies, and follow the flexible training programme within that degree for their first year (if full-time) or first two years (if part-time). On completion of their MSc, students can apply to do a PhD. The PhD is a 3-year programme for full-time students (6 years part-time).

MSc/DIPLOMA BY RESEARCH in SOCIOLOGY

The MSc by Research in Sociology provides **either** a structured training for sociological research leading to the PhD, **or**, as a stand-alone degree, the basis for a research career. It is intended for students with a good first degree in Sociology or a taught Masters degree in the subject.

All students must complete an agreed programme of research training and submit a dissertation on an approved topic. For students progressing to a PhD, the dissertation will normally take the form of a research proposal. Students are invited, but not required, to take further appropriate training **either** from the courses or workshops provided by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science **or** from relevant substantive courses as advised by the supervisor. Please also see http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/16-17/dpt/drps_sps.htm for details of variants on courses and dissertation length etc.

Aims and Outcomes

The degree trains students to the standard set by the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) guidelines http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/studentships/doctoral-training-centres/postgraduate-training-guidelines/

Sociology-specific training aims to develop:

- the skills required in formulating and carrying out sociological research.
- students' substantive knowledge.
- students' capacity for independent thought and critical insight necessary for the generation of sociological knowledge.

These subject-based skills are supplemented by hands-on training in the following generic research skills:

- questionnaire and survey design, interviewing, focus groups, use of the internet for data gathering.
- descriptive statistics, measures of central tendency and dispersion, exploratory data analysis, sampling, inference and measures of association, the use, modelling and interpretation of multivariate data, working with datasets.
- the use of computer assisted data analysis, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and potentially one qualitative data programme (usually NVivo).

By the end of the degree programme students will have basic competence in general and transferable research skills, and in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
In addition in Sociology, students will:

- be able to make connections between the sociological formulation of research questions, research design, methods and data analysis.
- be able to understand the epistemological frameworks of sociological research and their implications for methodologies.
- have knowledge of a range of data sources and techniques for their analysis.
- be able to work reflexively in relation to the ethical, social and political context of research.
- have improved their ability to write effective research proposals, make oral presentations and manage a research project.

Delivery

Most subject specific training is delivered by the Sociology subject group, while generic training is provided by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science. The modes of delivery of different components have been designed around three key considerations:

- methods and methodology should not be abstracted from their theoretical or epistemological context.
- training should emphasise hands-on competence.
- wherever possible training should focus on the area of the students' own research.

- the training should be as flexible as possible, within the constraints of the programme.

Programme

The programme combines individual work on the student's own research project with his or her supervisors, with collective disciplinary training in the context of sociology seminars and workshops, and completion of key courses in generic social research methods.

A normal programme entails successful completion of the following training courses in the Graduate School of Social and Political Science.

Research Skills in the Social Sciences: Data Collection [PGSP11016]
Core Quantitative Data Analysis 1 and 2 [SCIL11009]
Research Design [PGSP11208]

Together with the following from the Sociology subject group:

Advanced Issues in Sociological Research & Sociology Writing Workshop [SCIL11007]

Students normally take at least one further appropriate training course from the programme provided by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science or opt to do a more substantive option. Those with prior training in core courses should discuss possible alternatives with the Postgraduate Advisor.
Throughout the year students also work with their supervisors in a programme of systematic review of the secondary literature in their proposed area of research. Supervisors encourage students to reflect on, monitor and review their progress, and advise students of the most appropriate further training in their area of research interest.

Students are further encouraged to plan personal and career development through participation in the University Programme in Transferable, Employment-Related and Generic Research Skills. More information on the Programme can be found in the Graduate School Research Training Courses website at
http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development.

Structure

A typical programme is structured as follows:

Semester 1				Semester 2				Summer			
Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug
Sociology subject group: Advanced Issues in Sociological Research & Sociology Writing Workshop Seminar				Seminar				Presentation			
Work with supervisors				Dissertation							
Graduate School of Social & Political Science Research Skills: Data Collection Core quantitative data Analysis 1 & 2				Research Design							
Other MSc options											
Personal Development Planning and Transferable Skills Training											

MSc/DIPLOMA BY RESEARCH in SOCIO-CULTURAL STUDIES

The MSc by Research in Socio-Cultural Studies provides **either** a structured training for socio-cultural research leading to the PhD, **or**, as a stand-alone degree, the basis for a research career. It is intended for students with a good first degree or a taught Masters degree from an area in the social sciences, arts and humanities.

It can be taken as a 1 year (full-time) or 2 year (part-time) degree.

All students must complete an agreed programme of research training and submit a dissertation on an approved topic. For formal assessment, candidates must submit a number of research-related assignments and the dissertation (see http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/16-17/dpt/drps_sps.htm for full information). For students progressing to a PhD the dissertation will normally take the form of a research proposal. Students are invited, but not required, to take further appropriate training **either** from the courses or workshops provided by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science **or** from relevant substantive courses as advised by the supervisor or Course Convenor.

Aims and Outcomes

The degree trains students to the standard set by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) guidelines (www.ahrc.ac.uk/).

The MSc by Research in Socio-Cultural Studies will:

- expose students to a range of key debates concerning methodology, methods and epistemology in interdisciplinary socio-cultural research across the social sciences, arts and humanities.

- provide students with tools for critical understanding through a grounding in appropriate social and cultural theory.

- offer training in appropriate research methods related to students' particular areas of research interest.

- provide students with an understanding of the possibilities, strengths and also limits of particular methodologies, in relation to the goals and desired outcomes and knowledge-claims of specific pieces of interdisciplinary research.

On successful completion of the programme, students will have knowledge of key concepts and methodological approaches concerning interdisciplinary approaches to socio-cultural research. They will also be conversant with the practical parameters within which specific methods are utilised, with specific reference to:

- core ideas about interdisciplinarity

- key debates in appropriate areas of socio-cultural research, in relation to students' particular research interests and focuses.

- how epistemological and theoretical concepts translate into methodological frameworks.

- research design principles and practice.

- the practical use of specific methods of inquiry in carrying out 'real world' research.

Delivery

Core courses are delivered by the Sociology subject group, while generic training is provided by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science and/or other Graduate Schools across the College of Humanities and Social Science, depending on students' existing knowledge and research interests.

The modes of delivery of different components have been designed around five key considerations:

- socio-cultural research is an interdisciplinary area of activity and its strengths and issues require specific discussion.

- methods and methodology should not be abstracted from their theoretical or epistemological context.

- training should emphasise hands-on competence.

- wherever possible training should focus on the area of the students' own research.

- the training should be as flexible as possible, within the constraints of the Programme.

Programme

The programme combines individual work on students' own research projects with their supervisors, with collective interdisciplinary training in the context of seminars and workshops, and completion of key courses in a range of research methods.

A normal programme entails successful completion of research training courses in each semester, selected from the following options (one or more of these may be substituted, given students' existing knowledge and research interests, and the agreement of the supervisor and Postgraduate Advisor):

Research Skills in the Social Sciences: Data Collection [PGSP11016] | Semester 1
Explanation and Understanding in Social and Political Research [PGSP11017] | Semester 2
Research Design [PGSP11208] | Semester 2
Analysing Qualitative Data [PGSP11110] | Semester 2

This degree is designed to be flexible and responsive to student interests. In addition to the above, therefore, and **in consultation with their Programme Director**, students may choose from a range of options offered across the university. Courses include:

Research Design in Human Geography [PRGE11002]
Listening to Children: Research and Consultation [PGSP11012]
Researching Cultures [ARCH11088]
Archives: History, Geography, Politics [PGGE11134]
Social Network Analysis: Mapping and Exploring the Network Society [PGSP11372]
Supervised Reading in Sociology and Socio-Cultural Studies [SCIL11027]
Qualitative Methods and Ethnographic Fieldwork [PGSP11188]
Documents of Life [PGSP11302]

Over and above these, there is a year-long course which all students on this programme are required to take:

Advanced Issues in Socio-Cultural Research [PGSP11101]

Students also normally take at least one further appropriate training course from the programme provided by the Graduate School of Social and Political Science and other relevant Graduate Schools, selected around their existing knowledge and research interests.

Throughout the year students also work with their supervisors in a programme of systematic review of the secondary literature in their proposed area of research. Supervisors also encourage students to reflect on, monitor and review their progress, and   advise students of the most appropriate further training in their area of research interest.

Students are further encouraged to plan personal and career development through participation in the University Programme in Transferable, Employment-Related and Generic Research Skills. More information on the Programme can be found in the Graduate School Research Training Courses website at http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development.

Structure

The programme is specifically tailored for each student around their existing knowledge and research interests. However, a typical programme could look like the following:

Semester 1				Semester 2				Summer			
Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug
Programme required courses: Advanced Issues in Socio-Cultural Research (PGSP11101) Seminar				Seminar				Presentation			
Work with supervisors						dissertation					
Graduate School's Research Skills: Data Collection Explanation & Understanding in Social & Political Research				Research Design Analysing Qualitative Data							
Other MSc options											
Personal Development Planning and Transferable Skills Training											

Programme Specific Training

Training provided within the Sociology and Socio-Cultural Studies group is intended to foster the development of a broad shared perspective and a community of practice involving all our research students and staff. The first semester activities will be shared between Sociology and Socio-Cultural Studies. During the second semester, some workshops will be shared, while others will be tailored for each of the two degree streams.

External Examiner

The External Examiner for MSc by Research in Sociology and MSc by Research in Socio-Cultural Studies for session 2016/17 is yet to be confirmed, this information will be made available as soon as it is known.

REQUIRED COURSES

[Advanced Issues in Sociological Research and Sociology Writing Workshop](#) [SCIL11007]

Course description
The course focuses on the articulation of the sociological perspective into the design of research projects, data collection and analysis. It draws on current research projects in the Sociology group, which are at the leading edge of the discipline, and entail the creation of new quantitative and qualitative data sets, as well as the analysis of secondary and archival data. Examples of current substantive research themes are national identity; society, governance and politics in a devolved Britain; family and intimate relationships; demographic change in Europe; organisational case studies; South Asian societies; sociology of financial markets; narrative and auto/biography; contemporary culture and scientific and technological knowledge.

Topics covered
During the Autumn Semester advanced techniques of research design, data collection and analysis are examined, using ongoing research projects to contextualise and demonstrate, for example, the use of statistical analysis techniques, case study, documentary and archival analysis and ethnography. Ethical and political considerations, and questions of epistemology and ontology, are set in the context of specific projects.

What happens in each workshop
The emphasis in the workshops is on **doing** sociological and socio-cultural research, with the aim of demystifying the thinking, problem-solving and nitty-gritty work which connects theoretical conjectures to a particular research design, methodological approach and processes of data collection and analysis.

- Prior to the workshop, presenters will provide a brief overview of their project, which students will read in advance.

- In each meeting, presenters will focus on one specific aspect of how the research was, or is being, done.

- Presenters will use a practical demonstration of the research process, based on a sample of the materials used in their project. This could be a plan of a research design, a module from a questionnaire, an interview schedule or **aide-memoire**; item(s) from a qualitative or quantitative data set; archival, textual or documentary sources; a sample statistical analysis and so on.

In the Spring Semester, the emphasis is on conceptual, logistical, ethical and practical issues in research in relation to the students' own work. The focus is the transition from theoretical and empirical literature to the formulation of original research. Each class member will discuss a preliminary draft of their research proposal, focusing on issues of design, methodology and ethics with the group, prior to an end of year Edinburgh Conference on 'New Directions in Sociological and Socio-Cultural Postgraduate Research'.

Mode of delivery
The course runs for two hours each week. The second semester is largely focused on preparation for an oral presentation of the research proposal to the New Directions Conference at the end of the year. This Conference is widely publicised,

and generates an audience from Humanities and Social Sciences staff and postgraduates. The presentation is part of the formal assessment for the MSc.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Critically engage in debate with researchers who are generating and analysing quantitative and qualitative data, and solving the epistemological, political, ethical and practical problems entailed

- Evaluate and design the sociological formulation of research questions, design, methods and data analysis

- Use at a high level of sophistication a range of data sources and techniques for their analysis

- Effectively present their research plans orally to their peers and colleagues

Assessment criteria

At an end of year Edinburgh Conference on New Directions in Sociological and Socio-Cultural Studies Postgraduate Research, students make an oral presentation to academic staff and postgraduates, focusing specifically on the articulation of the sociological perspective into a research question and associated research design and programme of work.

Indicative reading

Norman Blaikie (2003) *Analyzing Quantitative Data*, London: Sage.
Martin Bulmer (ed) (2005) *Sociological Research Methods* Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Bent Flyvbjerg (2001) *Making Social Science Matter* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Jennifer Mason (2002) *Qualitative Researching*, London: Sage.
Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology* London: Routledge.
Sociological Research Online http://www.socresonline.org.uk/

Sociology Writing Workshop / Socio-Cultural Studies Writing Workshop

The course also has some more practical elements designed to develop students' ability to write analytically, to reflect on their own progress and plan future work, and to present their work to an audience. All MSc by Research students are expected to participate in the Workshop, as a means of gaining insight into the processes by which writing and publishing skills are gained. This is not a gift – it is a craft skill.

Indicative reading

Howard Becker (1986) *Writing for Social Scientists* Chicago: University Press.
C. Wright Mills (1959) *The Sociological Imagination* New York: Oxford University Press, Appendix 'On Intellectual Craftsmanship'.
Anne Thompson (1996) *Critical Reasoning: A Practical Introduction* London: Routledge.

Other MSc by Research Options

A detailed list of options is available on the Graduate School Research Training Courses website at
http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/current_students/for_phd_students/research_training/research_training_courses

Socio-Cultural Studies students may also need to consult the Postgraduate webpages of other Graduate Schools for options provided elsewhere.

Exemption from Training

Students who can display expected levels of research skills in particular areas can, with the agreement of their supervisors and the Degree convenor, claim exemption from particular parts of the training programme. For example, students who have completed data collection and analysis courses and/or a substantial fieldwork project as part of an earlier degree may be exempted from part of the Graduate School courses in Data Collection and Analysis. Exemption from a specific training module normally requires an alternative course option to be substituted. Decisions about exemptions are made by the Graduate School course team.

THE DISSERTATION AND ITS SUPERVISION

The dissertation constitutes the main work in which students demonstrate the achievement of the crucial learning outcomes from research training.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this, students will be able to:

- Carry out a sustained piece of independent scholarship, involving project and time management

- Frame and design a coherent and answerable set of research questions, to justify these in relation to existing knowledge and theories, and to demonstrate that answering them would constitute an advance on existing knowledge

- Achieve a command of existing knowledge in their field of research, through a critical review of relevant literature engaging with salient debates. Students will demonstrate an understanding of research methods, appropriate to the research topic and questions, taking due account of any practical, political and ethical issues affecting the conduct of their research

- Where relevant, demonstrate the ability to implement the chosen research design and methods of data collection and analysis

- Where relevant, produce scholarship that demonstrates the ability to integrate theoretical and empirical elements

For students taking either of the two programmes, the dissertation is a discrete piece of research. It is expected to include:

- an introduction setting the project in context and describing the research question.

- a review of related literature.

- a discussion of the research design, and methods of data collection and analysis.

- evaluation of practical, political and ethical issues affecting the conduct of the research.

- a report of findings.

- discussion and conclusions.

For students who are thinking of applying to do a PhD, the dissertation usually takes the form of a full research proposal. If appropriate, a pilot study may also be conducted, and in which case the outline of the dissertation above is relevant. As a full research proposal, the dissertation is expected to include:

- an introduction setting the project in context.

- a review of related theoretical and empirical literature.

- an outline and justification of the specific research questions to be addressed, plus a statement of the expected contribution of the study to the field.

- an elaboration and justification of the research design and methods to be employed.

- a discussion of any practical, political and ethical issues affecting the conduct of the research.

- a programme of work and timetable for the research.

Length

The normal 60 credit dissertation has a strict word-limit of 15,000 words, including the table of contents, tables and footnotes or endnotes but excluding the abstract, bibliography and appendices.

In exceptional cases, students taking the MSc by Research may take a longer dissertation (19,000 words) with a higher credit weighting (80 credits). If you wish to do the 80 credit dissertation you should seek advice from your supervisor and the postgraduate adviser.

Supervision

Students registered for the MSc by Research choose their dissertation topic, with the help of the On Course Postgraduate Advisor and Supervisor(s), by the end of the first semester. The Supervisor guides their reading and planning for the dissertation, and may advise on assessed work for Research Design and for Advanced Issues in Sociological Research & Sociology Writing Workshop.

Students meet with their Supervisors throughout the coursework period, developing their research proposal and undertaking a systematic programme of relevant reading. Supervisors are expected to discuss and agree the choice of courses.

Supervision Timing

Both the MSc and the PhD require significant self-directed learning. It is the point at which you start to develop your own ideas and ways of expressing them, and also figure out the working patterns that enable you to perform to the best of your ability. MSc supervision reflects this move towards self-directed learning by front-loading the supervision: you will be teamed up with a supervisor early in the year and work with them to think through readings, research design and preliminary analysis. Supervision will run from September/October through to the end of June allowing you to finish writing up and submit in August. You will not normally see supervisors during July and August when they will be on leave or engaged in research. It is important, therefore, to discuss drafts, outlines and plans before the end of June.

Assessment

The MSc by Research degrees are not taught degrees, and are not assessed as if they were taught degrees. In assessing the degree, examiners are looking at a student's overall performance. The crucial decision will be made after submission of the dissertation in August. At this point the external examiner will see as complete a portfolio of the student's work as can be assembled (i.e. assessed coursework and dissertation). The Board of Examiners (which includes the External Examiner, the student's supervisors, and the programme convenor) will make a decision on each case based on the complete portfolio.

The five options for the Board of Examiners are: Pass with Distinction; Pass with Merit; Pass; Pass for Diploma (but not MSc); Fail.

Where students have low marks on particular pieces of coursework, these will be interpreted in the context of the overall portfolio of work, and Boards of Examiners can invite supervisors to speak to individual cases of inconsistent performance. If there is one aberrant mark in the context of an otherwise very strong performance, it is up to the particular Board to decide on the appropriate outcome. Where weak marks occur across the coursework, and are matched by a weak Dissertation, the

Board may want to recommend a pass at Diploma level, or even a Fail in particularly serious cases.

MSc by Research dissertations for both degree programmes will be examined in their entirety and as an entity, irrespective of whether elements of them have been presented for assessment earlier. It is likely that elements of prior coursework will be integrated into the dissertation but these will have been reworked or further developed in the course of the dissertation, on the strength of earlier feedback and the student's own development.

Submission
The deadline for the electronic submission of the MSc by Research dissertation is **Thursday 10 August 2017**.

More details on the dissertation may be found on the student intranet here:
www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/current_students/msc_by_research_students/dissertations/formal_requirements

Extensions Procedure
Extension requests must be made by completing the electronic form which can be found at: www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/current_students/msc_by_research_students/extensions

Extension requests should normally be made no more than two weeks prior to the deadline and should indicate the duration sought and require a separate application for each course. **Extensions cannot be retrospectively granted after a deadline has passed and instead special circumstances need to be submitted.**

All extension requests must use this process. You are welcome to discuss any issues affecting your studies with your Programme Director/Personal Tutor prior to submission. However, all extension request decisions for Graduate School programmes are made by the Graduate School Office, and any informal advice from any other member of staff does not equate to a final decision.

If you have a Learning Profile from the Student Disability Service allowing you the potential for flexibility over deadlines you must still make a formal extension request for such flexibility to be taken into account.

In cases where medical evidence is required please note that your work will be considered as late until evidence is submitted and confirmed. Evidence is to be submitted if requested by the GSO via your University email account or in person to GSO reception.

Further guidance on extension requests can be found at:
www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/current_students/msc_by_research_students/extensions

The following are circumstances which would **USUALLY** be considered:

- Serious or significant medical conditions or illness (including both physical and mental health problems).

- Exceptional personal circumstances (e.g. serious illness or death of an immediate family member or close friend, including participation in funeral and associated rites; being a victim of significant crime).

- Exceptional travel circumstances beyond your control.

- Ailments such as very severe colds, migraines, stomach upsets, etc., **ONLY** where the ailment was so severe it was impossible for you to submit your work.

This list is not exhaustive.

The following are examples of circumstances **NOT** normally considered for coursework extensions:

- Minor ailments such as colds, headaches, hangovers, etc.

- Inability to prioritise and schedule the completion of several pieces of work over a period of time.

- Problems caused by English not being your principal language.

- Poor time management or personal organisation (e.g. failure to plan for foreseeable last-minute emergencies such as computer crashes, printing problems or travel problems resulting in late submission of coursework).

- Circumstances within your control (e.g. a holiday; paid employment if you are a full time student; something considered more important).

- Requests without independent supporting evidence.

- Requests which do not state clearly how your inability to hand in your assessment on time was caused.

- Learning Profiles will be treated sympathetically as part of the case for an extension but do not by themselves guarantee this case.

PHD IN SOCIOLOGY/SOCIO-CULTURAL STUDIES RESEARCH

Standard arrangements for supervision of all graduate students are described in more detail in the Graduate School [PhD Students' Handbook](). The following is more specific to Sociology and Socio-Cultural Studies.

Postgraduates are critical to the quality of the University of Edinburgh Sociology and Socio-Cultural Studies research community, and we encourage students to participate in all formal and informal sociology activities, including seminars, work in progress workshops, research meetings, staff meetings and undergraduate tutoring. Postgraduate social events are also held at least twice a year.

Advanced Training

In addition to personal supervision, which provides the main forum for reflection and review, research training is provided flexibly throughout the degree:

On-going training needs are identified through the supervision process, and particularly at the Annual Progress Review; specific research training is provided flexibly throughout the degree:

- all students are required to attend the workshops on Advanced Issues in Sociological and Socio-Cultural Studies Research.

- in second and subsequent years, advanced training, geared to student needs, may include, for example, the use of software packages for data analysis, advanced quantitative data analysis, writing for publication and so on (see Graduate School [PhD Students' Handbook]()).

- all students are encouraged to take on limited amounts of teaching in the subject group, for which they must attend the relevant training sessions.

The Supervisory Relationship

We recognise that supervision needs to be tailored to the **specific** requirements of each student **at the time**. What works well for one student may not work for another, and most students need different input from supervisors at different stages in the degree. Supervisors also differ in their styles of supervision. Some may prefer very frequent meetings and structured tasks, others may prefer more informal ways of working; some are more directive, others see their role more as encouraging and enabling. Whatever the preferences and needs, we encourage students to talk about what they want from the supervision process and we expect supervisors to be flexible and open enough to respond appropriately, and to negotiate how best to make the supervision work.

The Roles of First and Second Supervisors

All PhD students are expected to have two supervisors. It is normally expected that first and second supervisors will share responsibilities equally, but supervisors and students can agree a different division of labour, if this is more suitable and mutually acceptable. Second supervisors may become more important than the first supervisor; supervisors may meet the student together or separately; the second supervisor's role may be more passive, perhaps mainly providing continuity in the first supervisor's absence, the second supervisor may provide an alternative point of view and different kinds of support and so on.

What You Can Do if Supervision Problems Arise

Postgraduate research can be lonely and stressful at times and this places an additional burden on the supervisory relationship. Occasional disagreements, stresses and strains are part of normal supervision, and it is important for all parties to be able to talk about any tensions, initially by the student and the supervisor discussing it. Other students (and other academic staff) can also provide a great deal of informal support and guidance.

If a student feels they are having a serious problem with a supervisor and cannot talk to them about it, they are asked to act as quickly as possible. There are a number of ways to find help with this: students should meet with one of the Postgraduate Advisers and Convenor of the MSc by Research, or they can approach the Head of Sociology (Professor Jonathan Hearn), or contact their student representatives (research students elect two representatives at the beginning of semester 1).

All research students and supervisors should also make themselves familiar with the sections on supervisors and students in the University A Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students.

Postgraduate Advisers

The Postgraduate Advisers coordinate the Sociology PhD programme and convene the MSc by Research degrees. With the Director of the Graduate School, and supervisors, the Advisers take responsibility for recruitment, admissions, assessment, monitoring progress, programme evaluation and curriculum development.

The Advisers are available to all research students as their first line of pastoral support and advice for scholarly or personal issues that arise whilst studying. These may include routine advice about course choices, or advice on individual problems.

Students are responsible for informing the Postgraduate Advisers promptly of any problems which interfere with their coursework or progress.

There are two Postgraduate Advisers for Sociology:

Dr Radhika Govinda (for all on-course enquiries)
Room 6.21, Chrystal MacMillan Building
(Guidance and Feedback hours: Monday 10am-12pm, during term time)
650 3906
Radhika.Govinda@ed.ac.uk

Dr Julie Brownlie (for all admissions enquiries)
Room 1.04, 22 George Square
(Guidance and Feedback hours: Wednesday 2-4pm, during term time)
651 3917

Julie.Brownlie@ed.ac.uk

Guidance and Feedback hours are times when you may drop in without an appointment. Longer meetings or meetings at alternative times can be arranged by email.

FACILTIES, COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

Facilities
All research students in the School of Social and Political Science have access to the facilities detailed in the Graduate School MSc by Research and PhD Handbooks.

Study and Social space
For details on study and social space please refer to the MSc by research and PhD Students' Handbook and the Graduate School website.

Communication
Information about research activities, workshops, seminars, socials and other postgraduate matters is circulated by email to your University email account. It is vital that you check your email regularly. If you use another email account you should arrange for an autoforward to be set up from your University email account. Please note that email is the University's formal means of communication with students.

Much information is also to be found on the Graduate School website and the student intranet.

Contacts
The Sociology Secretary, Karen Dargo maintains the Sociology Postgraduate email list.

All members of Sociology welcome contact from Postgraduate students, and are happy to discuss research and help resolve problems. We have regular Office Hours, or can be contacted by email for an appointment. See here for details: http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/people/staff

The Head of Sociology is:
Dr Jonathan Hearn
Room 6.07, Chrystal Macmillan Building
Tel: 650 4242; E-mail: J.Hearn@ed.ac.uk

Representation and Feedback
Student feedback and evaluation is a valued input to the review of training and supervision and curriculum development. Formally, students are invited to select one

or more representatives to attend staff meetings. The Postgraduate Advisers organise at least one annual feedback meeting between staff and students, and informal feedback to the Advisers is welcome at any time.

Research Costs
Students funded by Research Councils get research costs as part of their grant. Other students can apply for travel grants and other bits of funding: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/on_course/for_phd_students/funding

Funding for Doctoral Research
MSc students and first year PhD students may apply for University PhD funding. This funding is allocated early in the year and the deadline for applications is 1 February. Students who discuss their application with Postgraduate Advisers and supervisors tend to have better proposals. For more on funding see: http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool/applicants/funding/list_of_awards

Library Books
PG students are encouraged to recommend important books to the library. You can help to maintain our active research holdings in this way. See http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/secure/librecstudent.cgi (on campus access only) for details.

Sociology Staff Research Interests
Profiles of all staff within the School of Social and Political Science, and their research interests, can be found at http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/staff

PART-TIME TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

Research students make an invaluable contribution to the Sociology teaching team for undergraduates, running tutorial groups, and reading and commenting on students' work.

The School of Social and Political Science provides training and some teaching materials for Postgraduate Tutors. Tutoring is paid by the hour at the University's agreed rate for casual teaching. It provides a small amount of income, but not enough to meet living expenses and is primarily an excellent source of teaching experience.

Those interested in participating should apply through the PG Tutoring Call usually sent by email to current research postgraduates.

In allocating teaching, Sociology gives priority to the needs of the undergraduates, but aims to balance these with the abilities of those postgraduates available to teach, and with the possible competing demands of their research.