



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of Social and
Political Science

Programme Handbook 2020-21

PhD in Social Policy PhD in Global Health Policy



If you require this document or any of the internal University of Edinburgh online resources mentioned in the document in an alternative format please contact Graduate School (gradschool.sps@ed.ac.uk)

Note: The handbook does not supersede the University *Regulations*, nor the formal requirements for each degree as set out in the University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study, nor the Terms and Conditions of Admission set out in the Postgraduate Prospectus. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this Handbook was correct at the time of going to press, but the Handbook does not form part of any contract between University and student.

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1. Key Contacts

1.1 Postgraduate Advisors:

Daniel Clegg

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3.23 Chrystal Macmillan Building
Edinburgh EH8 9LD

tel: +44(0)131 650 3998

email: daniel.clegg@ed.ac.uk

Guidance and Feedback: by email appointment only (at present)

1.2 Administrative Support:

The Postgraduate Research Support Team is your first point of contact within the Graduate School of Social and Political Science. Contact details are below:

Graduate School Office

<http://www.sps.ed.ac.uk/gradschool>

Please contact via email in the first instance as staff may be working away from their campus office: pgresearch.sps@ed.ac.uk

2. What's in this handbook?

This Handbook contains information specific to Social Policy for students studying for *PhD degrees in Social Policy and Global Health Policy*. It explains research training provision and describes the arrangements for the supervision of students and for reviewing their progress. It also has information on cohort-specific activities for research students in Social Policy. In this last area especially this handbook is also relevant for students studying for the *MSc by Research in Social and Political Science who are allocated a supervisor in the Social Policy subject area*. For these students it should be read in conjunction with their dedicated [MScR programme handbook](#).

You must read this handbook in conjunction with the following publications:

- [PhD Handbook](#) and [MSc by Research Handbook](#):

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. It also describes the School's procedure for the [ethical review](#) of postgraduate research projects.

The handbooks include (but are not limited to) information and links relating to: Assessment Regulations; Degree classification and requirements for the award; Submission and return of coursework; Deadline, extensions and penalties; Academic misconduct (including plagiarism); Academic Appeals; Student Complaints procedure; Special Circumstances; Dignity and Respect; Safety and Security; and Facilities in the School.

- The University's [Postgraduate Research Students and their Supervision: A Code of Practice for Supervisors and Students](#)

- [Postgraduate Research Training web page](#):

This sets out the Graduate School's programme of research training courses and workshops. It also provides information on the wide range of training in generic and transferable skills available across the University.

3. The Graduate School Of Social And Political Science

This handbook is published by the [Graduate School](#) of Social and Political Science, the postgraduate division of the School of Social and Political Science. The Graduate School provides research training in the social sciences for students from across the University, and is the administrative home for all postgraduate students from the School's constituent Subject Groups and Centres (African Studies, Canadian Studies, Politics and International Relations, Science and Technology Studies, Social Anthropology, Social Policy, Social Work, Sociology, South Asian Studies). The Graduate School of Social and Political Science is located in the Chrystal Macmillan Building in George Square.

3.1 Social Policy

Social Policy is one of the six [Subject Areas](#) in the School of Social and Political Science – the others are Politics and International Relations, Science, Technology & Innovation Studies, Social Anthropology, Social Work and Sociology.

Social Policy as a subject has been taught at the University of Edinburgh since 1918. Together with other staff in the School, Social Policy staff are very committed to and very heavily involved in postgraduate research training and supervision. In addition to the Research Degrees described here, a range of other programmes are offered, including taught Masters degrees in Comparative Public Policy, Global Health Policy and Public Policy. The University of Edinburgh is the leading research centre in social policy in Scotland and one of the major centres for postgraduate training in Social Policy in the UK.

With cross-cutting strengths in comparative public policy (including international comparisons and cross-national comparisons within the United Kingdom) and knowledge and expertise in the policy process, particular substantive areas of expertise in the Social Policy Subject Group are: families, children and relationships; education policy; work and welfare; and governance of welfare democracies. The Global Health Policy Unit (GHPU) which sits within Social Policy also offers an interdisciplinary and policy-focused approach to understanding population health and the factors that influence it at the national, regional and global levels.

A listing of staff in the Subject Area and their research interests can be found on the [Social Policy website](#).

The Social Policy Subject Area typically runs a series of public seminars throughout the year at which speakers from within and outwith the University present papers on subjects of general interest to those in the field. Due to the covid-19 pandemic the organisation and timing of these seminars is being re-thought for the current academic year, but details will be circulated as soon as possible to the social policy postgraduate research student mailing list. These seminars are a key part of the life of the subject area, and **postgraduate research students in Social Policy are strongly encouraged to attend.**

4. The PhD Programme

4.1 Aims and Structure of the PhD Degree

The degree of PhD is awarded for theses which must draw on the student's own research. PhD students are registered for 3 years full time or 6 years part time with 1 additional year available for writing up the thesis if that time is required. The Social Policy subject area has two named PhD programmes, in Social Policy and Global Public Health. The aims and structure of these two programmes are identical.

The University of Edinburgh [Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study](#) states that by the end of the degree, the candidate will have demonstrated by the presentation of a thesis and by performance at an oral examination that they are “capable of pursuing original research making a significant contribution to knowledge or understanding in the field of study, relating particular research projects to the general body of knowledge in the field, and presenting the results of the research in a critical and scholarly way”.

PhD students are allocated two supervisors, chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the applicant's field of study. Exceptionally, where appropriate for the needs of the student, supervision teams may be complemented by additional members. Supervisors offer regular guidance, consultation and support at all stages of the research. Where a student's interests change or the relationship between the student and the supervisor does not work well, a change of supervisor can be arranged. Students who encounter difficulties and wish, for whatever reason, to change their supervisor are encouraged to discuss this (in confidence) with the Postgraduate Advisor.

4.2 Research Training

Completion of the PhD involves pursuing an original programme of research, but also undertaking training in skills that will enable you to be a more effective scholar, now and in the future.

Our admissions approach assumes that those entering a 3-year PhD programme will already have an appropriate background in **core** research methods. All new full-time students should already meet the generic learning outcomes set out in the [Economic and Social Research Council's Postgraduate Training Guidelines](#). These cover qualitative and quantitative research methods as well as principles of research design.

Following consultation with their supervisors, full-time students may in their first year take one or more of the Graduate School's [core research training courses](#). For part-time students a programme of core research training appropriate to their prior experience will also be designed through discussion with the supervisory team. In these consultations, a balance will always be sought between consolidating core research skills and ensuring students have time sufficient to progress with their original research.

PhD students are encouraged to participate in other **advanced** research training courses and workshops that are appropriate for their needs. Many students will take their main programme of advanced research training in their first year, but courses and workshops remain available throughout the programme of study and in some cases it may make more sense to take them in the second or third year.

Students are also encouraged to look at the so-called [micro-methods workshops](#) that are offered by the School's Research Training Centre. These are 2-3 hours workshops covering a range of qualitative and quantitative methods, from introductory to advanced level. Students who take 4 micro-methods workshops and submit a short assessment can receive the Edinburgh Social Science Methods Certificate.

4.3 Substantive training

During their first year, students are also expected to consolidate their knowledge of the substantive areas in which they intend to base their research. This can be achieved by taking courses that are relevant to these areas. The Social Policy subject area offers postgraduate courses in social and public policy and global health policy, but other subject areas in the School also offer courses that may be of relevance depending on a student's area of research. All these courses are provided for students taking taught MSc degrees, but are also open to students taking research degrees. With permission of the course organiser, taking a course without assessment and not for credit (so-called 'auditing') is often possible.

Active participation in Social Policy seminars (cf. supra) and the Social Policy Doctoral Seminar (cf. infra) is another integral part of subject-specific training, and is encouraged at all years of study.

4.4 Skill Development

Research students can access a wide range of skills and personal development support from within the School and in the wider University. The SPS [Student Development Office \(SDO\)](#) and University [Institute for Academic Development \(IAD\)](#) offer courses and workshops that support effective implementation of the PhD but also help in the development of competences that can be carried forward into future careers, both academic and non-academic.

Different development activities will likely be appropriate at different phases of the PhD, and this will be discussed in the Graduate Seminar.

The SDO and IAD programmes are constantly developing, so their websites below should be consulted frequently. Their courses, and especially the IAD ones, are also popular, so early booking is advised.

4.5 [Annual Progression Reviews](#)

The normal progression for a PhD is that the first year is partly spent on preparing to undertake a PhD thesis by taking courses, reading and reflecting on relevant literature. This should be done with the support and following the advice of the student's supervisor. A fully elaborated research proposal should be developed by the end of the year and will be assessed towards the end of the academic year by a panel comprising the student's first-year supervisor, a second supervisor, and two other staff members with an interest in the subject. If the panel think the student is ready to proceed, the student will then be registered as a PhD student. Work on the thesis continues throughout the second, third and possibly a fourth 'writing-up' year: the second year is usually spent on fieldwork and data collection, while the third and fourth years are usually devoted to data analysis and to writing up the thesis.

All full-time students are required to submit their thesis within four years of registration as a PhD student. University regulations specify a maximum period of registration for the PhD of four years for full-time students and seven years for part-time students. (For information on interruptions and extensions of study see sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5 of the University's [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#).)

It is both feasible and desirable for students to complete and [submit their thesis](#) within the maximum period. The Graduate School takes timely completion of theses very seriously. Careful planning of the research and frequent communication with supervisors is required at every stage. The progress of work is reviewed every year, as described in the Graduate School PhD Students' Handbook. **Please also consult the [PhD Students' Handbook](#) for further information on milestones in doing a PhD; the end of first stage review; subsequent annual reviews; part-time teaching; supervision; and ethics.**

5. Postgraduate Advisor, Supervisors and Pastoral Support

Daniel Clegg is [Postgraduate Advisor](#) for Social Policy. He can best be reached by email at daniel.clegg@ed.ac.uk.

The Postgraduate Advisor is responsible for assessment, monitoring progress, programme evaluation and curriculum development. In Social Policy, the Postgraduate Advisor also has overall responsibility for the programme of activities delivered in the Doctoral Seminar. If you are starting your PhD, you will be asked to see your Postgraduate Advisor at the beginning of the first semester and you should feel free to contact him at other times. Students registered for the [MSc by Research Social and Political Science](#) who intend to pursue a social policy research project will also be asked to see the Postgraduate Advisor early in first semester; students on this programme should feel free to contact him at other times too for subject-specific guidance.

You will be expected to meet your supervisors at the start of the year to discuss your plans and your choice of courses. Supervisors provide the first line of pastoral support and advice for any academic or personal issues that may arise whilst you are studying. This may include routine advice about the courses you are taking or advice on problems that have an impact on your studies. The Postgraduate Advisor, who is responsible for the overall postgraduate programme, continues to play a role and is available for consultation on these matters, too.

Should you wish to speak to someone else, you can contact the Director of Postgraduate Research of the Graduate School of Social and Political Science, Dr Steve Kirkwood sps.dpgr@ed.ac.uk, the Head of the Social Policy Subject Group, Professor Richard Freeman, Richard.Freeman@ed.ac.uk, or the Head of the Global Health Policy Unit, Dr Sarah Hill Sarah.Hill@ed.ac.uk.

All research students and supervisors should make themselves familiar with the University's [Code of Practice for Supervisors and Research Students](#).

6. The Doctoral Seminar in Social Policy, the 1st Year Showcase, Research Groups and other Cohort Activities

6.1 The Doctoral Seminar

The Doctoral Seminar in Social Policy is conceived as an informal space where students can come together as a group for mutual support and socialisation into the research student cohort, the subject area and the discipline of social policy. The Doctoral Seminar is not a course, and there is no assessment or credit. However, **participation in the Doctoral Seminar is required for probationary research students (1st year PhD students and MSc by Research Social and Political Science students whose supervisor is in Social Policy) and strongly encouraged for other members of the research student cohort** if they are in Edinburgh. The Postgraduate Advisor coordinates a programme of activities for the semester and facilitates the seminars. The Doctoral Seminar is also open to members of staff to attend. Details of the seminars is available on your [Learn](#) page.

The Doctoral Seminar in Social Policy meets regularly during semester time. In 2019-20 the meetings were scheduled on Wednesdays between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm (though the Doctoral Seminar did not always meet for 2 hours). In view of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020/21 many of the activities of the doctoral seminar will be delivered online and asynchronously via the Social Policy/GHPU PGR VLE. Occasional synchronous online discussions and safe face-to-face activities will also be organised in the Wednesday 11am-1pm slot, though participation in these is voluntary and will not be possible for some students who are not in Edinburgh (and in some cases will be in different time zones).

A detailed programme of activity for semesters 1 and 2 will be circulated early in the semester.

6.2 The 1st Year Showcase

The 1st Year Showcase is an annual event where probationary research students (1st year PhD students and MSc by Research Social and Political Science students whose supervisor is in Social Policy) make a presentation of their research proposal and respond to questions and feedback about it from other research students and staff in Social Policy. **Doing such a presentation is a requirement for successful progression to full PhD study in the subject area, and this will be validated by each student's progression panel.** The Showcase takes place in the late spring each academic year, and in 2019-20 happened online. The format of the 2020-21 showcase will be dictated by the evolving public health situation, and its date announced in due course.

6.3 Research Groups

All research students are strongly encouraged to join and attend the meetings of one or more research groups or centres that are relevant to their work. There are many research groups and centres in SPS, of varying levels of formality. Some are specific to the Social Policy subject area, others are School-wide or even cross-School within University of Edinburgh; they meet with varying degrees of frequency, but typically have events at least once a month. Below are listed some groups that may be relevant to research students in

Social Policy, however this list is not exhaustive and you should speak to your supervisor about relevant groups that exist in your area of interest.

- British Politics Research Group – contact the convenor, [Marc Geddes](#).
- Centre for Research on Families and Relationships – more information [here](#)
- Citizens Nations and Migration Network (CNaM) – more information [here](#)
- Education and Society – more information [here](#)
- Europa Research Group – more information [here](#)
- Gender and Politics Research Group – more information [here](#)
- Researching COVID-19, Policy and Governance – contact the co-convenors, [Markus Ketola](#) and [Kaveri Quereshi](#)
- SKAPE (Centre for Science Knowledge and Policy) – more information [here](#)
- Work, Economy and Welfare – contact the co-convenors, [Philip Rathgeb](#) (s1), [Jay Wiggan](#) (s2) or [Clara Mascaró](#)

6.4 Other Cohort Activities

Other cohort activities for research students are generally organised by the students themselves, particularly at the initiative of the subject area PGR student representatives. In the past these have included 'brown bag' lunch seminars, writing retreats as well as social activities. Depending on the type of activity, financial and logistical support is often available from the [Graduate School](#).