

## Programme Specification

GENERAL INFORMATION	
Programme title	MSc in Public Policy
Awarding Institution//Body	University of Bath
Teaching Institution	University of Bath
Programme accredited by (including date of accreditation)	
Subject Benchmark Statement*Subject Benchmark Statement:	7
Date of Specification preparation/revision	
Applicable to cohorts	
Programme Approved by	

### Synopsis and academic coherence of programme

The Masters in Public Policy offers an innovative educational experience that combines in-depth knowledge, intellectual challenge, and practical skills in public policy. The programme addresses key contemporary challenges for those working in contemporary policymaking and policy-facing environments. It is structured to enhance part-time students' learning and professional career development.

A high quality and flexible programme of mixed residential and distance-learning is delivered part-time over two years. It is specifically tailored to the needs of early to mid-career professionals employed in, or planning to move to policy-related roles, in the public, voluntary and private sectors. Designed for early-mid career professionals working in public sector organisations, think tanks, advocacy groups and NGOs, as well as those in private sector organisations with a public policy role, nationally and internationally. Integral to the programme is:

- course content that
  - enables participants to develop, deploy and test professional public policy experience where they have it, and
  - provides access to policy professionals and practical learning for those not (currently) working in policy-facing contexts;
- a structure for delivery and assessment that offers high quality and challenging teaching and learning on all main aspects of public policy in a way that responds to students needs.

The programme structure is explained below. Key features are:

- Structured blend of online delivery and short residentials in Bath and Pall Mall in London with diverse range of learning opportunities; networking with senior policymakers and guest- speakers; access to unique learning opportunities (e.g. policy scenarios, data 'sprint').
- Opportunities for in-depth focus according to students' professional interests in specific public policy fields.
- Choice of final project pathways between a research dissertation or portfolio ("capstone") project, so that students to apply programme material to professional projects in public policy review, development and advocacy.
- Unique specialisation in the new data environment for public policymaking.
- Comprehensive range of assessments in professionally relevant formats that blend rigorous intellectual challenge, independent research work, and the development of professional and transferable skills in writing and data analysis.
- Strong cohort identity, with annual programme entry, residentials, and robust student support and proactive student engagement throughout the programme.
- Regular online support for critical independent learning so that students can explore material independently and in-depth according to their professional and practice interests.
- Flexible delivery of units to assist students' ability to undertake the programme from different time zones, and while in employment, but maintaining cohort identity and coherence of learning over the programme as a whole.
- Focused assessments to enable students to plan their learning with professional commitments while also maintaining expectations of Masters-level learning outcomes with high standard requirements.

The programme is organised in three stages. All units are compulsory and run consecutively, corresponding to development of intellectual skills and increasing topic specialisation through the programme.

All units use both residential and online learning, and offer diverse learning opportunities, including the integration of content and skills development with their professional experience and knowledge; critical reflection on their professional practice and knowledge of public policy, as well as wider professional learning opportunities through the provision of guest lectures from key public policy professionals and internationally-renowned scholars, and access to events and networks with the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Bath. All teaching costs are included in the fee; students pay for accommodation and travel to residentials.

#### STAGE ONE (exit: PG Cert)

*The foundational units cover key concepts, approaches and issues in contemporary public policy, including: theories of public policy development and transformation; global political economy; public policy design and delivery as well as introducing the economic analysis of public policy*

#### STAGE TWO (exit: PG diploma)

The advanced units cover the generation, application and use of data and evidence in public policy; the digitisation of public policy knowledge and design and the application of these to a public policy case study.

**STAGE THREE (exit: Masters)**

Each research pathway is supported by separate specialist tutorials in both the Y2 residentials. Each student will be assigned an individual supervisor at the beginning of Y2 of the programme.

Dissertation (30 credits) OR Portfolio (30 credits)

**Educational aims of the programme**

This comprehensive and flexible programme provides

- In-depth knowledge, intellectual challenge, and practical skills in public policy, all structured to enhance part-time students' learning and professional career development.
- Comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of standard and innovative explanations of what public policy is for, how public policies are made and delivered, and how they shape social, political and economic life.
- Advanced critical understanding of the political, economic and social dynamics that shape public policy development and outcomes in (self-chosen) specialist field(s) of public policy.
- Enhancement and deepening of students' skills in reviewing, analysing, applying and presenting data for public policy across a range of digital and non-digital formats.
- Enhancement and deepening of students' practical knowledge of issues and challenges in professional public policy work, and the elaboration of durable professional networks for continued knowledge exchange and career development.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge &amp; Understanding:</li> </ul>	<p>Students will have:</p> <p><u>PG Cert</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- comprehensive knowledge and critical understanding of the transformations in politics, society and political economy that shape public policy in diverse settings and cases.</li> </ul> <p><u>In addition, for the PG Diploma</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- advanced knowledge of how political economy, economics, and public finances affect how public policy is organised, as well as how economic data can be critically interpreted to inform political argumentation and decision-making.</li> <li>- critical and in-depth understanding of how knowledge, data and evidence are produced and the politics of knowledge production in policymaking.</li> </ul> <p><u>In addition for the Masters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- critical and in-depth knowledge of a self-chosen area of public policy that synthesises independent research and EITHER application of public policy theory and research (<u>dissertation pathway</u>) OR practical policy analysis skills (<u>portfolio pathway</u>).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual Skills:</li> </ul>	<p>Students will develop advanced skills in:</p> <p><u>PG Cert</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the explanation and application of theoretical frameworks to public policy analysis.</li> <li>- the identification and analysis of relevant political, economic and social contextual conditions of public policymaking.</li> </ul> <p><u>In addition, for the PG Diploma</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the design, deployment and critical interpretation of data, knowledge and evidence for political and public policy, including the use of data in digital environments</li> <li>- the evaluation of alternative tools and approaches for policy analysis and review, and the application of these in specific public policy cases.</li> </ul> <p><u>In addition, for the Masters – portfolio pathway</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- policy analysis and review that includes: problem identification and interpretation with reference to appropriate conceptual framework; evidence, data and knowledge assessment; policy and political argumentation; selection, application, evaluation and refinement of appropriate policymaking/analysis tools; and operationalization/delivery planning.</li> </ul> <p><u>Alternatively, for the Masters – dissertation pathway</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- systematic review, interpretation and deployment of existing research to identify, analyse and investigate a problem in public policy analysis with reference to theories of public policy.</li> </ul>

	<p>- the rigorous, ethical and practical design and implementation of a research project to investigate a theoretical or empirical problem in public policy, including selection, integration and evaluation of appropriate theoretical framework, methods, data and analysis.</p> <p>- the explanation of relevant political, economic and social contextual conditions in a specific public policy case, and evaluation of findings with reference to theories of public policy.</p>
<p>• Professional Practical Skills:</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p><u>PG Diploma</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use, interpret and challenge evidence, knowledge and data from diverse sources, perspectives and paradigms to make a persuasive case for particular political or policy position.</li> <li>• operate in politically effective ways both in and outside hybrid public/private policy-making environments;</li> </ul> <p><u>Masters both pathways</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• design, develop and review options for policy and political action across these environments, including assessing their political, ethical, economic and social risks/opportunities.</li> <li>• assess dispersed and unpredictable political and economic forces, their implications for public policy development and outcomes, and develop strategic responses to these.</li> </ul> <p><u>In addition for the Masters- portfolio pathway</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop and apply strategies for mediating between conflicting goals to secure political agreement in a social media age.</li> </ul>
<p>• Transferable/Key Skills:</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p><u>PG Cert</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse and apply theories of public policy and policymaking to enhance understanding of specific public policy problems.</li> <li>• present coherent arguments that synthesise conceptual and empirical analysis of public policy.</li> </ul> <p><u>In addition, for the PG Diploma</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• critically interpret different sources of data and evaluate their relevance, strengths and weaknesses in the development of public policy.</li> <li>• synthesise a wide range of conceptual and empirical material in a coherent and structured way for a variety of public and policy audiences.</li> </ul> <p><u>In addition, for the Masters</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deploy enhanced skills in the integration of data and systematic argumentation to support, contest or revise policy proposals in politically effective ways.</li> <li>• plan, timetable and undertake an independent project of policy analysis and/or research.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of assessment and progression regulations</b></p>	
<p>NFA - fully compliant</p>	
<p><b>Progression Regulations and Awards</b></p>	
<p>The programmes assessment and progression regulations are covered by the university's "New Framework for Assessment: Assessment Regulations <a href="http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/nfa/nfaar-pgt.pdf">http://www.bath.ac.uk/registry/nfa/nfaar-pgt.pdf</a>.</p> <p>The programme is a 3-stage programme. Students who for academic or personal reasons are unable to complete the programme may therefore be offered an exit award. The programme is delivered by consecutive compulsory units, for part-time students with a strong emphasis on creating strong and cohesive cohort identities. Overall, the progression structure is as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit one is a designated essential unit and stage required unit for the programme. Students cannot progress if they do not pass this unit before the end of stage one. This unit must be passed in order to be awarded either the PG Cert or the PG Diploma.</li> <li>• Students must achieve overall at least 40% in stage one to be able to progress to stage two</li> <li>• Students must achieve at least 40% overall across combined stages one and two in order to progress to stage three (dissertation/portfolio).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Details of Work Placements Requirements / Work Based Learning / Industrial Training Requirements</b></p>	
<p><b>Details of Study Abroad Requirements</b></p>	

## Details of Professional Accreditation

### Admissions Criteria including APL/APEL arrangements

Typically a 1st or 2:1 Honours degree (or its international equivalent) in an allied subject such as politics, political economy, human or political geography, sociology, economics, international relations, security studies, area studies. Applications are also encouraged from students with degree qualifications at a similar level but in other subjects, with sufficient relevant professional experience in any area of public policy.

English Language requirements (certificates must be dated to within two years of the start of the programme of study):

- IELTS 6.5 (with no less than 6.0 in each of the four components)
- PTE Academic of 62 with no less than 59 in any component

Applications from current undergraduate students should provide a transcript of the subjects they are taking in their final year, even if they do not have all their results at the time of application. Two references, either academic or from a recent employer, are required.

Credit may be awarded in the form of an exemption from an individual unit where the Accreditation of Prior Learning or Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning procedure has produced evidence that the student has successfully achieved the learning outcomes of that unit. In all cases the university's QA procedures will be followed, namely 'QA45 Accreditation of Prior Learning'.

### Details of Support Available to Students

Support and guidance for students on the MSc in Public Policy is provided within the framework of the Department's overall strategy for student-centred support and is underpinned by the University's Quality Assurance Guidelines. SPS provides support and guidance to students from first enquiries to graduation and is the first point of contact for students requiring support. Staff also guide students to the appropriate part of the University's central support network when necessary. Students are also made aware of this central support network through the [Programme Handbook](#).

As a blended learning programme, it is especially important that the structure of student support is clear and that students receive the highest quality intellectual and academic support as well as pastoral guidance. The following learning support structure is adopted.

**The Director of Studies (DoS).** An academic member of staff who leads the programme admissions, content, delivery and review. The DoS is responsible for quality assurance in all aspects of the programme, including students' learning and academic standards. The DoS leads and co-ordinates structure and content of residentials.

**Academic Tutor(s) (AT).** An academic member of staff who is the main academic and learning contact for students. The AT monitors, moderates and engages in web-forum and study-group discussions. The AT maintains general and proactive contact with students to monitor and encourage participation (e.g. through regular webinar/web-forum discussions), normally on a weekly basis and where relevant more frequently. The AT also collates more specific queries for unit convenors to answer (and check this is done).

**Unit convenors** Academic members of staff who design, organize and prepare all teaching materials, activities and assessment. They provide additional scheduled structured points of contact for students every 4-6 weeks (via interventions in web-forums, formative feedback, webinars, skype meetings, or the residentials) for informal formative assessment and additional learning contact point for students.

**Personal tutor (PT)** An academic member of staff assigned to each student to provide pastoral support. They are responsible for monitoring and supporting the individual academic progress and general welfare of their students.

**Study group** (peer-to-peer). Students are assigned to a study group in the pre-induction period, and this is the main peer-to-peer forum for students' online learning and discussion. Through the study group, students experience a high quality and challenging learning experience, and also develop a supportive and motivating learning community over the progression of the programme.

**Programme Administrator** is an administrative member of staff and provides first point of contact for students. They 'triage' queries as academic, pastoral or technical, and are the administrative contact point for students in relation to assessment, and residentials.

#### Academic Guidance and Tutorial Support

The Programme Handbook provides an essential detailed reference source for students. It covers assessment criteria, procedures for submitting work and obtaining feedback, contacting relevant lecturers, and accessing SPS and University facilities. It also provides useful practical information about the programme, residentials and additional online learning resources.

During each unit students receive feedback on their progress via individual tutorials and group work. The Academic Tutor provides informal feedback on students' understanding and learning by maintaining proactive contact on web-forums, study group discussions, both answering and asking questions. Detailed feedback is provided on submitted work. Later in the programme, detailed is provided on dissertation/portfolio outline and when draft dissertation chapters/portfolio sections are submitted.

Continuous improvement in the provision of academic support and guidance is secured through formal discussions at the postgraduate Staff/Student Liaison Committee. This committee has student representatives as part of the formal membership. In addition, any suggestions from the appointed external examiner(s) are considered and responded to.

#### Pastoral and Welfare Support

The Academic Tutor acts as the main source of guidance and support for the student in relation to the programme content and student learning, but students are also assigned a personal tutor specifically to provide pastoral support and to deal with non-academic issues that may affect a student's participation and progress in the programme.

Requests from students for extensions to deadlines for the completion of work are considered by the DoS, and each case is decided in a consistent manner on its own merits. University-wide regulations regarding the consideration of exceptional circumstances – known as Individual Mitigating Circumstances – can be applied where a student's performance may have been temporarily affected by external factors (such as illness and certain personal issues).

There is also a range of specialist student support services that will take referrals to work more directly with the students. Students can also self-refer to these services.

These services can provide information, advice and support in relation to accommodation, emotional difficulties, assessment of needs and provision of support relating to disability, student funding, general welfare, academic problems, student discipline and complaints, careers, international students, spiritual matters, part time work, security and personal safety. The Students' Union can also provide advocacy for students. [Further information](#) about these services is available on-line.

During the residentials, there are also Medical and Dental Centres, and a Chaplaincy on campus that are very experienced in meeting the needs of a student population, as well as a University nursery and vacation sports and/or arts activity schemes are sometimes available for older children during the school holidays.

### **Careers Information and Guidance**

The University's Careers Service provides central student support. Outcomes for students are professional development in public policy fields in a range of national and international-level roles; career advancement, and a further academic qualification.

As an advanced-level programme aimed at professionals, the programme includes significant and structured opportunities for students to network with senior public policy professionals, and peer-to-peer networks. The Pall Mall residentials each cohort-year will include one or two sessions on practice- and/or career-related issues.

### **University Equality and Diversity Policies and Practices**

The University operates Equality and Diversity Policies and Practices. More information can be found here: <http://www.bath.ac.uk/equalities/policiesandpractices/>

### **Receiving Examination Results**

Students can access their assessment results on-line following approval by Boards of Study. A formal written transcript can be provided on request. Students receive written feedback on marked coursework.

## **Department and Programme Specific Support Information**

### **Admissions and pre-induction arrangements**

The Director of Studies and designated Support Staff are available to provide information and advice to potential students whether local or overseas. Advice will be provided for students whose first language is not English on the most appropriate and convenient way in which they can test for the required IELTS score and on the language support available within the University.

Pre-arrival support is provided by introductory emails, including an information sheet and FAQs about the start of the programme.

- In early summer, the Programme Handbook is circulated, which students are expected to read.
- A scheduled personal contact with the Academic Tutor and/or Director of Studies takes place by mid-July. This contact will also be used to identify students without under-graduate level or professional experience of using quantitative data, or statistical data analysis software, who will need to participate in the supplementary quantitative data analysis skills sessions during residential one.
- Following this contact, students are assigned to a study group, provided with introductory reading and set questions to be discussed with their study group members before the first residential.

The programme support officer provides practical information for the residential. International students also receive a centrally produced Pre-Arrival Handbook. For all students who have not had recent experience of a UK-type HE system, pre-sessional writing skills session is provided.

### **Induction**

The induction process follows University guidelines, tailored to the needs of blended-learning students. Induction forms part of the first residential, which takes place around mid-September. It includes introductions to:

- Format and content of the programme, structure, and assessment
- Online learning environment, and how to make effective use of programme tools
- Expectations of online engagement and behaviour
- Hints, tips and additional tools for collaborative online learning and work
- Physical layout of the Departments and the campus and academic and social contact with programme staff.
- Library/Learning Centre resources introduced by the Faculty librarian;
- Wider University support relating to finances and welfare.
- Supplementary quantitative data analysis skills sessions for students without under-graduate level or professional experience of using quantitative data.
- Student cohort and study group through learning and social activities.