Undergraduate Social Policy

Faculty of Social Sciences and Law
Social policy is the interdisciplinary study of how societies conceptualise and respond to ‘need’, and promote the welfare and wellbeing of their members. Historically this meant the study of the welfare state, but it has come to mean much more than this. Bristol’s social policy degrees are particularly strong for the breadth and choice of policy areas covered, and for emphasising the international context of the subject.

As a social policy student, you will learn to think critically about issues such as risk, need, citizenship, inequality and globalisation. We look at these not just in relation to the UK but also globally, drawing on areas like East Asia and Scandinavia for examples, right from the first year. We also look at the role and scope of global institutions like the United Nations and the European Union.

Why study social policy at Bristol?

91% of students are satisfied overall with the quality of their course (National Student Survey 2013)

You can choose to study social policy as a single subject, or in combination with politics, sociology, management or quantitative research methods. We offer high-quality teaching related to the research strengths of the School for Policy Studies: your lecturers will be among some of the leading researchers in their field. The school was ranked fourth in the UK for social policy and social work research in the last Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).
What will I study?

**Single Honours courses**
- BSc Social Policy, three years L400
- BSc Social Policy with Management, three years LN42
- BSc Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods, three years L402
- MSci Social Policy with Quantitative Research Methods, four years L403

**Joint Honours courses**
- BSc Social Policy and Politics, three years LL42
- BSc Social Policy and Sociology, three years LL43

These courses are designed to introduce you to the interdisciplinary study of social policy, and to develop your skills and knowledge through the three years. As you move through the degree you are given the chance to make more choices each year, and can construct your choice of specialisms within the range offered.

The first year includes units covering historical and theoretical perspectives, and introducing comparative and international themes and concepts. Year two develops those conceptual frameworks and allows you to follow up your own interests in your choice of units. Year three includes the opportunity for you to design and carry out your own investigation for your dissertation, and to explore more optional areas; for example, you might choose one or more of the following optional units in social policy:

**Understanding Urban Society**
This unit focuses primarily on how cities develop and change, how scholars have theorised and explained these changes, and how urban studies is, in many ways, the study of the obvious but looking deep below the surface. What does it mean when you walk past an abandoned house, a gentrified terrace, a drop-in centre for the homeless, a waterfront loft apartment, a red-light district, a group of people sipping latte outside yet another Starbucks? While urbanisation is of course a global phenomenon, this unit zooms in on Western cities, with particular reference to Europe, North America and East Asia.

**Drugs and Society**
This unit examines the ways in which societies respond to psychoactive substance use, distinguishing between categories of substance and creating systems of drug control. We look at the development of British drugs policy over the last century, locate this within the context of international drug control policies and examine selected other countries’ drug policies. This unit uses concepts of harm, needs, risk and pleasure to explore drugs policy and its social consequences.

**Social Policy and the European Union**
This unit looks at the institutions and policy processes within the European Union. It will explore a range of theoretical perspectives on the development of the ‘European Social Model’ and consider the role of the EU itself in social policy.

**Study Abroad**
We have an exchange scheme with City University Hong Kong which allows students to go to Hong Kong for part of their second year. We also encourage students who wish to spend part of the second year abroad to do so, on an individual basis through the University’s Study and Work Abroad Office.

**Teaching Methods**
Teaching methods include traditional lectures, interactive lectures, classes/seminars, tutorials and clinics. Transferable skills are encouraged through working with others in small groups and giving presentations.

**Assessment**
We place a strong emphasis on the role of assessment and feedback in helping you develop through your study. Every unit includes both formative and summative assessment. Methods of assessment include unseen examinations, extended essays and other structured written assignments. The 10,000 word dissertation is a piece of research carried out independently with the support of an academic supervisor. This is mandatory for Single Honours students, and ‘with Management’ and ‘with Quantitative Research Methods’ students. It is optional for Joint Honours students.

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96% of students agree staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching (National Student Survey 2013)
What are my career prospects?

When it comes to choosing a career, social policy graduates often have the best of both worlds. The degree can be ‘vocational’ across a range of public, private and voluntary sector services, and many enter the national management training schemes for the NHS, local government and the Civil Service.

Recent trends show increasing numbers are looking to pursue professional vocations – law (via the Graduate Diploma in Law), teaching (both “Teach First” and PGCE) and social work. However, it is also a non-vocational degree and our graduates compete successfully for the wide range of graduate opportunities that do not require specific subject knowledge, but rather a set of skills such as communication skills, teamwork and problem solving.

£22k
average salary six months after graduation*

*Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey 2011/12

Making your application

We are looking for enthusiastic and committed students who have a genuine interest in the sort of subjects we cover. We do not normally interview, so please use your personal statement to demonstrate your commitment and suitability for the degree. You could show this by the way you talk about your own studies, work experience and other interests – what has interested you and why.

You do not need any specific prior knowledge such as particular subjects studied at A-level; our first year is intended to provide you with the basis of what you need for successful movement through the degree.

Further information
Find out more about social policy at Bristol: bristol.ac.uk/sps/studying/undergraduate/socialpolicy.

Entrance requirements

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<th>Typical offer for BSc Social Policy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Please visit bristol.ac.uk/ug15-socpol for Joint Honours and other qualifications</td>
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A-levels ABB (contextual offer BBB†)

IB Diploma 33 points overall (contextual offer 32†) with 6, 6, 5 at Higher level

Access Pass Access to HE Diploma with at least 39 credits at Merit and/or Distinction

English Language Profile B*

GCSEs Grade C or above in English Language and Mathematics

Selection UCAS or Common Application

Part-time study Six years with daytime, weekday teaching

Deferred entry Considered

*For details of English language profiles please visit bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/language-requirements

†For information on contextual offers please visit bristol.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/apply/#typical-contextual-offers
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The information contained in this leaflet is correct at the time of printing (June 2014). Courses and facilities are liable to alter or be withdrawn at the University’s discretion.

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University guide to the city of Bristol
bristol.ac.uk/citybristol

Undergraduate study website
bristol.ac.uk/ug-study

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