

Postgraduate Admissions Statement for PhD Social Policy



This Admissions Statement applies to applications submitted for entry to the programme between 13 September 2025 and 11 September 2026.

It should be read in association with the [University Admissions Principles and Procedures](#) for Postgraduate programmes, the relevant [prospectus entry](#) and general [application guidance](#).

Admissions criteria

Academic and English language requirements

The academic and English language requirements for this programme are displayed on the [Postgraduate Prospectus](#).

For information on international equivalent qualifications, please refer to our [International Office website](#).

Non-standard applications

We welcome applications from those with non-standard qualifications who can demonstrate significant equivalent knowledge, research experience and skills developed in the workplace, or elsewhere, relevant to the programme of study. Please use your **personal statement** to provide further details.

Non-standard applications will be considered by the Admissions Tutor(s) for the programme on a case by case basis.

Application process

Online application form

Applicants should complete the online application form, uploading all required documents directly. Further information is available on our [guidance for online applications page](#).

Applications will not be considered until **all** required documents have been uploaded.

Required and optional documents

References: Required

We require two references including at least one academic reference. References should comply with our standard requirements outlined on [our guidance pages](#).

Degree certificate(s) and academic transcripts: Required

From first and subsequent degrees. Degree certificates and transcripts should comply with our standard requirements outlined on [our guidance pages](#).

Personal statement: Required (Maximum 500 words)

Personal statements should highlight the motivation for applying for the course, and any relevant experience and/or skills.

Further guidance can be found at www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/study/postgraduate/applying-for-a-phd/.

English language certificates/other evidence: Required

Evidence of meeting the English language profile as stated on the [Postgraduate Prospectus](#) and specified by the [University English Language Requirements Policy](#).

Curriculum Vitae (CV): Required

CVs might include details of other relevant work experience and qualifications to support an application.

Research Statement: Required (maximum 1200 words)

Applicants should use the research statement to define and situate their research within an academic/disciplinary context. With due regard for the fact that the academic community is the primary audience/readership for postgraduate research, applicants will need to identify the following:

1. The research questions or problems that you intend to address;
2. The research context for your project/programme of work;
3. The methods you think you will use to pursue the key questions.

Further guidance can be found at <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/study/postgraduate/applying-for-a-phd/>.

Research Training Statement

This section is optional. Applicants are welcome to provide details of any relevant qualifications or training required to assist with their application.

Selection process

Assessment of applications

All applicants are considered in line with the University's [Admissions Principles and Procedures Policy](#). Once a complete application has been submitted with all required supporting documents, it is considered by at least two members of staff using the following criteria:

- Strength of academic background
- Relevance of employment/work experience (if applicable)
- Strength of references
- Fit between research background, skills, interest and the programme
- Quality of research statement/proposal
- Proficiency in English language

Interviews

Interviews form part of the selection process.

The purpose of the interview is to assess whether the applicant has the necessary skills and capabilities to pursue the chosen postgraduate programme, whether the programme is appropriate to the applicant's interests and aspirations, and to discuss the research proposal.

Interviews are normally held online.

Decisions

Applicants will be notified by email when a decision has been made and decision letters will be available to view and print by logging into the applicant portal. If there is a deadline by which applicants must accept an offer of admission, this will be stated in the offer letter.

Offers

Offers will typically be made in line with the academic requirements set out above.

Offers made may be conditional or unconditional. An unconditional offer will be made to applicants who have already met the conditions and provided evidence that conditions have been met. Where academic or language requirements have not yet been fulfilled, applicants will receive a conditional offer outlining the requirements that must be met.

Deferrals

Deferred entry is available for this programme subject to agreement by the relevant Admissions Team and supervisors. Please contact sps-pgadmissions@bristol.ac.uk to make a formal request.

We are open for applications and welcome new PhD students all year round. However, the largest intake is in September each year with a secondary intake in January. We strongly recommend applicants to consider a September start.

Results deadline

Applicants who receive a conditional offer will be required to submit all final results to meet their offer conditions. The deadline will be included in the offer letter. Offer holders who will be unable to provide their final results by this date should email sps-pgadmissions@bristol.ac.uk to notify the admissions team as soon as possible.

Additional information

Extenuating circumstances

If your education has been significantly disrupted through health or personal problems, disability or specific difficulties within your studies, you can submit an [extenuating circumstances](#) form as part of your application.

The information provided will be treated confidentially and will help us to assess your academic performance fairly considering your circumstances.

Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS)

An ATAS certificate is not required for this programme.

Visa

International students coming to the UK to study full-time may need to apply for a student visa. Guidance is available on the [University website](#).

Fees and Deposits

Fees

Annual tuition fee is available on the relevant [prospectus entry](#) for this programme.

Deposits

A deposit is not required for this PhD programme.

Sponsored Students

Sponsored students are not required to pay a deposit but will need to upload a copy of their sponsorship letter to the online application.