

Programme Specification

Award and title: Master of Research Social Sciences

<i>School:</i>	Humanities
<i>Subject area:</i>	Social Sciences
<i>Entry from academic year:</i>	2025-2026
<i>in the month(s) of</i>	September
<i>Awarding institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Teaching institution:</i>	York St John University
<i>Delivery location:</i>	York
<i>Programme/s accredited by:</i>	Not applicable
<i>Exit awards:</i>	Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods in Social Sciences
<i>Mode/s of study:</i>	Full time (1 year) Part time (2 years)
<i>Language of study:</i>	English

Introduction and special features

The MRes in Social Sciences enables you to follow your own research journey, proposing a thesis on a topic of your choice either in a distinct subject or an interdisciplinary one across our subject areas, working with active research specialists to complete your project. Our approach to the study of Social Sciences is built on past experience of running successful MRes programmes, mixing dynamic, innovative, contemporary research by experts in the field, with practical research skills. The aim is to provide you with resources and environments that enable you to become an active, reflexive and ethnical social researcher. We consider our postgraduate students as vitally important contributors to the vibrant research culture within Social Sciences, and to the wider, interdisciplinary research culture within the University.

The course will equip you with methodological, theoretical and interpersonal competencies needed to undertake research that tackles key challenges facing societies today. We will ensure that you develop your practical skills in qualitative and quantitative research methods across the social sciences. The MRes in Social Science fosters your capacity to develop and undertake advanced social scientific research through the use of high-quality analytical work. The course will also strengthen your skills in collaborating with other researchers, stakeholders, organisations and the wider public. As well as enabling you to conduct high-quality analytical work related to your areas of interest, the MRes will enhance your organisational and team working skills, your ability to resource and evaluate information, and to critically analyse data.

Social Sciences at YSJ focused on Sociology and Criminology, with the department situated in the York Business School alongside Law, Policing, Business Management and HR/Marketing. Students will be embedded within the broader School to foster understanding of, and possibilities for, interdisciplinary collaboration. Our design recognises the benefits of study cohorts for your learning and development. Our

emphasis is on facilitating collaboration within the taught elements of the course, but also on ensuring our students are embedded within the research culture and networks in the School and the subject area, which includes scholars working in sociology, criminology, and policing.

As a disciplinary area, we work with a range of partners who may help to inform your research area of choice. These include employers from local and national government (City of York Council), the civil service (DEFRA, the Cabinet Office) and third sector organizations both locally and regionally (Environment Agency, IDAS, Changing Lives, RSPCA) alongside arts organizations (Aesthetica, Door 84) and businesses in and around York.

We have a vibrant PGR community in the department, and we also run a variety of research events with PG and PGR students in the School more widely: as an MRes student you would be encouraged to attend and contribute (where relevant), allowing you to discuss your projects with other scholars working at the cutting edge of their disciplines.

Key aspects of the MRes in Social Sciences are:

- A dedicated teaching team of social sciences experts.
- A thesis designed by you, support by active social science researchers.
- The opportunity to study a variety of research methodologies.
- Developing skills in independent research through research skills modules in Term 1.
- Developing skills in collaborative working practice with your supervisory team.
- Engagement and collaboration with a wider research community.
- Collaborative potential with external stakeholders.

Admissions criteria

You must meet the University's general entry criteria for [postgraduate study](#). In addition, you must have:

A 2:1 in Social Sciences or a closely-related discipline. Applicants whose first degree is not in Social Sciences will be accepted on a case-by-case basis to ensure that they have covered sufficient levels of Social Sciences and research methods during their first degree.

Applicants whose first language is not English should have IELTS at grade 6.5 or above (including a minimum of 6.5 in the writing component) or another acceptable English Language qualification.

Candidates are required to submit an outline research proposal in line with a research theme that they are interested in pursuing as part of the course (maximum length 1500 words).

Programme aim(s)

1. The programme will provide you with an understanding of contemporary research in Social Sciences and how this relates to the social world, in both academic and non-academic contexts.

2. The programme will equip you with an understanding of the research philosophies, methodologies and skills that will support you to become a reflexive and ethical social researcher.
3. The programme prepares you to undertake an extended research project, and would be applicable to those wishing to continue to a PhD in Social Sciences or cognate fields, alongside providing valuable skills that can be applied in a variety of workplace contexts.

Programme learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of the programme students will be able to:

Level 7

- 7.1 Critically explore and evaluate both published and emergent literature with regards its value to a Social Science research area and your chosen research.
- 7.2 Critically examine how your research contributes to Social Sciences as a disciplinary area, and how knowledge and skills related to your research can contribute both inside and outside the academy.
- 7.3 Identify, interpret and apply different research methodologies as they relate to your project and the Social Sciences more broadly.
- 7.4 Produce an extended written thesis which demonstrates independent, novel research based on your critical engagement with discipline-specific research methodologies.
- 7.5 Demonstrate level-appropriate academic skills: this will include utilisation of different methodological tools, argumentation (both oral and written), presentation and engagement with the wider academic community.

Programme structure

Full time

Code	Level	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
					Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
YBR7001M	7	1	Advanced Methods in Social Research	30	C	NC
YBR7002M	7	1	Contemporary Research in Social Sciences	30	C	NC
YBR7003R	7	2&3	Thesis in Social Sciences	120	C	NC

Part time

Code	Level	Year	Semester	Title	Credits	Module status	
						Compulsory (C) or optional (O)	non-compensatable (NC) or compensatable (X)
YBR7001M	7	1	1	Advanced Methods in Social Research	30	C	NC
YBR7002M	7	1	1	Contemporary Research in Social Sciences	30	C	NC
YBR7003R	7	2	2&3	Thesis in Social Sciences	120	C	NC

Please note that both 30-credit modules must be passed at the relevant level in order to progress to the Thesis module.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Our learning, teaching and assessment ethos is founded on active research development enabling you to develop as a social sciences practitioner well versed in specific approaches to research methods and contemporary pedagogic design. Using inclusive teaching, through a mixture of workshops and one-to-one supervision, the course will help you explore critical thinking through application, working with active researchers in the field on subjects that may include social inequalities, deviant leisure, gender and the body, interactive entertainment, health and wellbeing, criminal justice, political sociology, technology and work.

The first taught module on research methods is Advanced Methods in Social Research. We use in-depth workshops and hands-on exercises conducting social research and analysing statistical data (using software packages such as SPSS and Nvivo) to develop your skills, providing the practical experience needed to successfully undertake the dissertation, as well as apply your quantitative research experience outside of academia. The module is assessed through two research reports using bivariate and multivariate analysis (totalling 5000 words).

The second taught module is Contemporary Research in Social Sciences. This module engages with current topics across the discipline and is driven by the research expertise within the department. The module

enables you to understand contemporaneous research in practice and provides background for students' dissertation projects. The module will introduce students to a range of contemporary issues and debates, which will be taught alongside a deep engagement with qualitative research practice. Additionally, Contemporary Research in Social Sciences seeks to strengthen students' organisational and team working skills, their ability to resource and evaluate information, and to critically analyse data and construct clear arguments. Teaching will be workshop-based, with an assessment focusing on the production of a portfolio exploring different approaches to contemporary research with a qualitative focus (totalling 5000 words)

The Social Sciences thesis forms the core of the MRes Social Science programme and offers you the chance to develop and undertake original empirical research, mastering relevant methods in social research so as to deepen your understanding of a social scientific area of interest. The thesis is a 20000-word piece of writing drawing on either qualitative or quantitative research, or on both, through the development of a central argument on a topic designed by you (negotiated and agreed with your supervisor). Theses may be empirical, theoretical, hypothetical or a combination of these. Formative feedback is facilitated through constructive guidance from your supervisor on planning and undertaking the project, research design, ethics, stakeholder involvement, data analysis, writing, and outputs, the feedback from which you can then use to strengthen your thesis. Supervision will include regular negotiated review points and will follow formal agreement of the proposed project through the confirmation of University ethical approval process. You will also be offered a formative opportunity to present your proposed research with other PGRs in YBS as part of the annual PGR Research event. You will also have access to a wide variety of University support structures to help you throughout your studies.

All modules are designed and delivered utilising a range of teaching, learning and assessment techniques, and may include in-person, online and/or video lectures, workshops, seminars, debates, discussion forums and tutorials.

Progression and graduation requirements

The University's [regulations](#) for taught postgraduate and research degree awards apply to this programme.

Any modules that must be passed for progression or award are indicated in the Programme Structure section as non-compensatable.

Internal and external reference points

This programme specification was formulated with reference to:

- [University Mission, Culture and Values](#)
- [University 2026 Strategy](#)
- [QAA subject benchmark statements](#)
- [QAA Master's Degree Characteristics Statement](#)
- [Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications](#)

Date written / revised: October 2024

Programme originally approved: 12/12/2024