

SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Faculty of Social Sciences is a large interdisciplinary unit, combining teaching and research in a number of disciplines, including: Applied Social Research, Dementia, Ageing and Gerontology Education, Housing Studies and Social Work.

We offer an established, research-led suite of taught postgraduate courses, including our ESRC-recognised courses in Social and Educational Research as well as our externally accredited professional courses in Housing Studies and Social Work Studies.

Our students benefit from partnerships with a number of research centres and networks, including the Centre for Child Wellbeing and Protection (CCWP), the Dementia Services Development Centre (DSDC), the Salvation Army Centre for Addiction Services and Research, and the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research.

We're proud to hold a 90% overall student satisfaction rating for Social Sciences (PTES 2022).

Ranked 3rd in Scotland and top 25 in the UK for Social Work and Social Policy research. 100% of our research environment and 88% of our research is deemed world leading or internationally excellent (REF 2021).

RESEARCH COURSES

Research excellence underpins all we do. As part of our research community, you will contribute innovative, practical and applied solutions to the challenges facing society today.

We offer the following research postgraduate degrees:

- PhD – independent study and thesis of 80,000 words leading to a doctorate
- Doctor of Applied Social Research
- PhD TESOL Research
- Doctorate of Education
- MRes Educational Research

Research areas:

- Social Work
- Child Wellbeing and Protection
- Crime and Criminal Justice
- Social Statistics
- Public Service Governance, Leadership and Reform
- Citizenship, Social Participation
- Gender and Social Policy
- Equality and Diversity
- Dementia, Ageing and Gerontology
- Addiction and Recovery
- Housing, Home and Community
- Sociology and Social Policy
- Educational Linguistics
- Curriculum Making

Many of our courses offer multiple start dates, please check course webpages for details.



Full-time course



Part-time course



To find out more about identifying a supervisor and submitting a research proposal, visit: stir.ac.uk/research

APPLIED PROFESSIONAL STUDIES



Blended
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

Designed for those who are already qualified in social work or an allied profession, our Applied Professional Studies course enables you to undertake additional, part-time professional study.

At Stirling, we are at the forefront of contemporary practice and thinking. Our qualifications are designed to reflect the learning needs of a diverse workforce.

Approaches to teaching vary between pathways. Some are fully online and others blend teaching days on campus with online learning. Whatever the delivery style, teaching is accessible and engaging.

We hold a 91% overall student satisfaction rating for Applied Professional Studies in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.

CORE MODULES

Each pathway has designated core modules. All pathways include a dissertation.

[Check course web page for modules](#)

PATHWAYS

You can work towards our core Masters degree, the MSc Applied Professional Studies, or choose to specialise in one of the following blended learning pathways of study:

- Adult Services, Support and Protection
- Child Welfare and Protection
- Management and Leadership in Social Services
- Social Work Practice Education

CAREER PROSPECTS

Our courses are recognised nationally and internationally as benchmarks of professional learning and development. We build on your existing skills and experience and you will graduate with enhanced competence and confidence in practice.

We have developed close links with agency representatives and employers, which ensures we can always anticipate learning needs in the workforce, and makes our courses – and graduates – highly effective in contributing to longer-term practice development.

Course Starts: September and January



APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

This Masters course provides you with the skills and knowledge you need to carry out robust social research and evaluation.

You will learn how to collect, analyse and report qualitative and quantitative data, taking account of ethics, reliability and validity. You will critically examine the theoretical foundations that underpin social scientific research. Finally, you will develop an understanding of the relationship between research and policymaking.

The course meets the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) requirements for postgraduate research training.

We are proud to hold a 86% overall student satisfaction rating for Applied Social Research in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.

CORE MODULES

- Nature of Social Enquiry
- Research Design and Process
- Quantitative Data Analysis
- Qualitative Data Analysis
- Dissertation

[Check course web page for optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

You will graduate with the skills you need for a career in research, research management or research commissioning in the public, voluntary or private sectors.

Employability is an important focus of the course. During your studies you will have the opportunity to carry out a research placement to gain practical experience and establish relevant professional contacts.



Our Applied Social Research course offers a number of modules to allow students to specialise in areas relevant to their career goals and aspirations.

Course Starts: September and January



SOCIAL STATISTICS AND SOCIAL RESEARCH



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

In a rapidly changing world, social statistics and social research provide policymakers, academics and others with valuable insights into the behaviour of people.

Our Masters course will provide you with an understanding of social research, with a particular focus on quantitative methods and social statistics.

You will learn about social research methods and the theories behind them, while undertaking detailed training on a wide range of statistical methods. You will gain a thorough knowledge of how to use statistical software to work with data and learn a range of highly sought-after technical skills, including accessing, preparing, analysing and summarising complex quantitative data sets.

To meet the demands of our dynamic technological environment, you can also choose advanced modules in data management and emerging areas such as big data and social network analysis. We are proud to hold a 86% overall student satisfaction rating in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.

CORE MODULES

- Research Design and Process
- Introduction to IT and Library Services
- Quantitative Data Analysis
- Advanced Quantitative Methods
- Advanced Data Management
- Using Big Data in Social Research
- Social Network Analysis
- Dissertation

[Check course web page for optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

Social statistics is an important area within applied social research, offering you employment opportunities in the private, public and voluntary sectors. The course is also designed to provide you with the technical skillset you need to undertake a PhD.

Our Social Work and Social Policy Research ranked 3rd in Scotland and top 25 in the UK, with 100% of our research environment and 88% of our research deemed world leading or internationally excellent (REF 2021).

Course Starts: September and January



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

Our Masters in Criminology establishes clear connections between conceptual theories of crime and justice, and applied examples of how they affect contemporary societies.

The course has an international focus that goes beyond UK or Scottish borders, making it appealing for a diverse student cohort.

The course content encourages the pursuit of innovative and socially just responses to the problem of crime, including; crimes in the street or at home, crimes of the powerful, crimes across borders, online crime, and drug related issues.

With optional modules in specialist subjects such as Rehabilitation and Criminal Justice Work, Drug Policy and Interventions, and Criminalisation, Social Control and Human Rights, you can acquire and develop a range of skills which will significantly enhance your confidence in criminology and your employability.

Criminology at Stirling is ranked 1st in Scotland and top 5 in the UK (Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023).

The course is also affiliated with the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR) and we are members of the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (SCCJR), an internationally leading research centre which will help you to gain a critical understanding of how research is framed, used and developed, and by whom in criminology.

CORE MODULES

- Criminological Perspectives
- Research Methods in Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies
- Dissertation or Final Year Project

[Check course web page for optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

As a Masters graduate in criminology, you will have the opportunity to pursue a number of career routes in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Graduates in criminology can go onto the following roles:

- Police
- Prison service
- Probation and community justice
- Courts
- Human rights advocacy
- Youth work
- Women's justice and recovery services drug related issues
- Victim support
- Surveillance
- Intelligence services
- Services for individuals or families affected by drug use
- Drug policy and information organisations
- Various charities and social enterprises

Course Starts: September



CRIMINOLOGICAL RESEARCH



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

With Stirling ranked first in Scotland for the study of criminology (Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023), this course provides you with expert training in the latest methods and approaches used in criminological research.

You will learn how to collect, analyse and report qualitative and quantitative data, taking account of ethics, reliability and validity. You will critically examine the theoretical foundations that underpin criminology and socio-legal research and explore issues with comparative research. Finally, you will develop an understanding of the relationship between criminology research and policymaking.

The course aligns with approved Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) training requirements for UK PhD research and is supported by staff from both the Scottish Centre for Crime and Criminal Justice Research and the Division of Law.

During your studies you will have the opportunity to network, attend events and benefit from the wealth of knowledge the Scottish Centre for Crime and Criminal Justice Research is able to share.

You will also benefit from our strong links to the applied crime and criminal justice sector, including Police Scotland and the Scottish Prison Service.

CORE MODULES

- Research Design and Process
- Introduction to IT and Library Services
- Quantitative Data Analysis
- Qualitative Data Analysis
- Research Methods in Criminology and Socio-legal Studies
- Criminological Perspectives
- Criminalisation, Social Control and Human Rights
- Dissertation

[Check course web page for core and optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

Our Masters is the perfect foundation for a career in research, research management and commissioning or using research. In addition, you have a choice of careers available to you across the criminal justice system, including working for the civil service, the Crown Prosecution Service, Police Scotland and other services across the UK and overseas.

Course Starts: September



DEMENTIA STUDIES (ONLINE)



Online
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

With the number of people living with dementia across the world expected to double in the next 20 years, this innovative online course has been developed to provide you with an in-depth, research based knowledge of dementia and approaches to dementia care.

Run by a team of academic experts who are active researchers in this field, we offer Dementia Studies as a distance-learning postgraduate course. It includes the latest theories, innovations and best practice in dementia care, an overview of policy drivers and initiatives, co-produced and participatory approaches to dementia care practice, and a grounding in academic and research skills.

You will become part of an online international community of fellow students and academics committed to improving dementia practice and the experience of people living with the condition. The course encourages collaborative, interdisciplinary, critical learning, and is dedicated to creating leaders of change in dementia care.

We hold a 97% overall student satisfaction rating for Dementia Studies in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.

CORE MODULES

- Critical and Creative Approaches to Dementia
- Dementia, Space and Place
- Critical and Reflective Thinking in Dementia Studies
- Enhancing Dementia Practice
- Living with Dementia
- Understanding and Evaluating Participatory Approaches in Dementia Policy and Practice
- Researching Dementia
- Ethics and Inclusion in Dementia Research
- Developing a Dementia Research Proposal

[Check course web page for optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

After graduation, some students have secured a promotion, undertaken further research or become involved in dementia education and training.

DID YOU KNOW?

The University of Stirling is home to the internationally renowned Dementia Services Development Centre whose research helps inform our teaching and maximise the knowledge and skills you will acquire throughout your studies.

Course Starts: September and January



DISASTER INTERVENTIONS AND HUMANITARIAN AID



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

This course teaches social work practitioners and humanitarian aid workers how to work effectively with victim-survivors of man-made and natural disasters.

You will acquire the skills to engage with the problems facing those working in disaster interventions, including family reunification, safeguarding children, adults and other vulnerable groups and rebuilding sustainable, resilient communities post disaster.

This will include exploring disaster mitigation, preparation, adaptation and prevention strategies within an environmental justice-based, community engagement and co-production framework to create new, long-term responses owned and endorsed by communities.

This course includes a field-based learning opportunity, which involves a period of shadowing practitioners within humanitarian agencies, emergency responders and government departments responsible for deploying emergency personnel.

You will learn about agency policy, procedures and practices during deployment and you will also benefit from guest lectures throughout your studies from leading disaster researchers from all over the world.

Course Starts: September



CORE MODULES

- Humanitarian Aid: History, Policies, Legislation and Contemporary Structures
- Social and Environmental Justice: Ethics, Values and Human Rights
- Theories and Concepts in Humanitarian Aid: Risk, Vulnerability, Resilience and Sustainability
- 'Natural' and (Hu)man-made Disasters: Definitions, Stages and Strategies of Intervention (Prevention, Mitigation, and Adaptation)
- Field-Based Learning Opportunity (FBLO) on Community Engagement: Co-producing Solutions
- Communication Skills and Interacting with the Media
- Research Methods: Comparative and Participatory Action Research
- Dissertation

[Check course web page for CPD modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

As disasters are increasing in intensity and frequency globally, employment prospects are also on the rise, both nationally and internationally. Graduates are likely to be employed in practice settings by local authorities, emergency responders, resilience units, NGOs in the voluntary and for-profit sectors at local, national and international levels, the United Nations and its associated bodies such as UNOCHA, UNDRR, UNICEF and UNDP.

GERONTOLOGY AND GLOBAL AGEING (ONLINE)



Online
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

Globally, the number of older people is growing faster than the number of people in any other age group, presenting challenges and opportunities for all sectors of society.

This online course will provide you with an advanced understanding about the ageing of individuals and populations, the implications this has for policy, practice and the development of products and services, as well as the demands and challenges this raises. It covers content and skills development in social gerontology, ageing and population studies, dementia studies, and health and care practice.

You will be taught by internationally renowned leaders in ageing and will be given a global perspective as you study alongside an international and interdisciplinary cohort.

We are proud to hold a 100% overall satisfaction rating for Global Ageing in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2021.

CORE MODULES

- Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Ageing
- An Integrated Approach to Frailty
- Multimorbidity in the Older Person
- Living with Dementia
- Healthy Housing
- A Lifecourse Approach to Healthy Ageing
- Research Methods in the Social Sciences
- Dissertation

CAREER PROSPECTS

This course equips you with knowledge and skills that can be utilised for careers in policy, research, business development and in the health and care associated with older people and ageing populations.

Course Starts: September



HOUSING STUDIES (PART TIME)



Blended
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

Aimed at those already working in the housing sector, our flexible part-time Housing Studies course will help you develop your career further.

Accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing, the syllabus covers all aspects of housing services, including sustaining communities, governance and law, housing organisations, finance and strategy, leadership and management, and health and wellbeing. With a focus on achieving better housing for all, through practice-based learning, you will acquire the cutting-edge knowledge and competencies needed to tackle issues in housing, communities and homelessness in Scotland and throughout the UK.

The Diploma covers all of the academic and practice components of the professional qualification of the Chartered Institute of Housing. Upon successful completion of the Diploma, you will be eligible to progress to Masters-level study, completing either a research dissertation or reflective portfolio.

Teaching is undertaken through a blend of teaching sessions on campus with a significant element of online study giving you the ideal learning experience in a format which is accessible and engaging.

We hold a 93% overall student satisfaction rating for Housing Studies in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.

During your studies you will be taught by a team of academics who comprehensively cover the multi-disciplinary nature of housing, research, policy and practice. Our research-led teaching draws on our specialist expertise in policy analysis, homelessness and housing rights, social theory, housing, ageing, inequality and governance.

CORE MODULES

- Providing Housing Services
- Sustainable Communities
- Organisational Behaviour
- Housing Finance and Strategy
- Housing Governance
- Healthy Housing
- Housing Research Project

CAREER PROSPECTS

Stirling graduates have a strong track record of making rapid career progress on completion of the Masters or Diploma. Potential career opportunities include management in housing organisations, specialist research, policy and strategy work. Increasingly, there are opportunities linked to government initiatives and policy areas.



Course Starts: September



HOUSING STUDIES (WITH INTERNSHIP)



Blended
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

The Masters and Diploma in Housing Studies (with internship) offers a unique combination of academic study and professional work experience for those seeking to enter a career in housing.

You will be introduced to the most up-to-date ideas and debates in housing and offered the opportunity to learn about the cutting edge of housing practice.

Accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing, the practice-based course covers all aspects of housing services, sustainable communities, governance and law, housing organisations, and health and wellbeing. It will also provide you with a comprehensive academic and professional qualification with structured work experience and, upon completion, the skills, experience and qualification you need to take forward your career in housing. The Diploma internship can also support the output necessary to achieve a Masters qualification.

You will have the opportunity to undertake a housing placement during your studies, linked to the practical requirements of the Chartered Institute of Housing. During your placement, you will gain practical work experience and develop vital skills required for a career in the sector.

Teaching is undertaken through a blend of teaching sessions on campus with a significant element of online study giving you the ideal learning experience in a format which is accessible and engaging.

We hold a 93% overall student satisfaction rating for Housing Studies in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.

CORE MODULES

- Providing Housing Services
- Sustainable Communities
- Housing Governance
- Housing Finance and Strategy
- Healthy Housing
- Organisational Behaviour
- Contemporary Housing Practice (including 50-day internship placement)

CAREER PROSPECTS

Graduates from our course are highly sought-after in the housing sector and can expect to find relevant employment in the social, voluntary or private sectors. Our recent graduates have gone on to work in housing associations, local authorities, trade organisations, government agencies and in research and consultancy.



Course Starts: September



SOCIAL WORK STUDIES



Campus based
MSc, PG Dip

If you want a career that is rewarding and makes a positive contribution to society, then social work could be for you.

Our course is taught by qualified social workers including world leaders in their research field, and academics who maintain close connections with practice. You will be taught by people who have used social work services as well as from practicing social workers. At the end of your studies, you will qualify as a social worker who is knowledgeable, skilled, analytical and ethical in your approach to working with individuals, families, groups and communities.

The postgraduate qualification in Social Work Studies is accredited by the Scottish Social Services Council and is recognised throughout the UK.

We are ranked 3rd in the UK and 2nd in Scotland for Social Work (Complete University Guide 2022), and hold a 100% overall student satisfaction rating for Social Work Studies in the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) 2022.

Our Social Work and Social Policy Research ranked 3rd in Scotland and top 25 in the UK, with 100% of our research environment and 88% of our research deemed world leading or internationally excellent (REF 2021).

Our course includes placements offering practical experience of working in a range of social work and care settings. We have strong connections with our partner agencies who contribute to the teaching on the course and provide a range of placements across both statutory and voluntary social work services.

Examples of these are the local authorities and voluntary agencies such as Barnardo's and Multi-Cultural Family Base.

CORE MODULES

- Human Development and Family Contexts
- Theory and Practice of Social Work
- Law and Policy for Social Work Practice
- Practice Learning 1 and 2
- Theory and Practice: Children, Families and Society
- Theory and Practice: Crime, Welfare and Justice
- Theory and Practice: Health, Illness and Disability
- Dissertation

[Check course web page for optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

This Postgraduate Diploma and Masters is recognised throughout the UK and allows our graduates to register as qualified social workers. The qualification will equip you to work in a variety of settings including local authority social work teams, prisons, hospitals, residential services and voluntary sector settings. The nature of the work is varied and there are opportunities to move between work settings throughout your career.



Course Starts: January



SUBSTANCE USE (ONLINE)



Online
MSc, PG Dip, PG Cert

This course is for professionals looking to develop a career in the field of substance use.

You will explore the effect of substance use on people who use them, their family members, communities and contemporary societies, as well as international and UK policy and practice responses.

With optional modules in specialist subjects including housing, public health and rehabilitation, you will develop a range of skills which will significantly enhance your confidence and employability in the field of substance use.

The course is taught by research active staff who are members of national and international organisations such as the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research and the International Society for the Study of Drug Policy.

CORE MODULES

- Drug Use: Theories and Comparative Policies
- Drug Use: Policies and Interventions
- Alcohol Use: Policies and Interventions
- Research Methods For Substance Use Studies
- Dissertation or Final year project

[Check course web page for optional modules](#)

CAREER PROSPECTS

Different career paths for graduates of this course include third sector organisations, policy advocacy organisations, government and NGOs or public services as well as research. This Masters offers a pathway of career development whether in practice or further study to either Professional Doctorate or PhD study.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Drug Research Network Scotland (DRNS) is hosted at the University, as is the Salvation Army Centre for Addiction Services and Research, allowing our students access to top research facilities, networking opportunities and the chance to collaborate with leading researchers.

Course Starts: September

