

# MSc in Policy Analysis and Evaluation

## Prospectus 2011-12



Training in social science research methods  
to analyse policy issues in the public,  
private and third sectors

# MSc in Policy Analysis and Evaluation

This is a unique course offering robust quantitative and qualitative training in social science research methods. It focuses on real life policy analysis and evaluation, rooted in examples from across government and elsewhere in the public and private sectors. The course is taught by leading researchers with experience of conducting large and small scale research for a wide range of stakeholders, including most of the major government departments.

This course blends high quality training in the full range of research methods from an interdisciplinary perspective. It provides essential tools either for students hoping for careers in government social research or those who may be commissioning or undertaking evaluation as part of their job.

The course also provides an excellent foundation for further academic study at PhD level at the Institute of Education or elsewhere. It forms the first year of a '1+3' training pathway in the Quantitative Methods cluster of the new ESRC Doctoral Training Centre led by the Institute of Education and comprising IOE, Birkbeck, SOAS and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (see <http://www.bloomsburydtc.ac.uk/>).

## The MSc aims to:

- provide a broadly based training in social science research methods
- develop students' knowledge and understanding of research design, research management, evidence-based policy, economic analysis, longitudinal analysis and a range of quantitative, evaluative and qualitative research methods
- provide students with transferable skills which can be used effectively in different work environments.

## Study

The MSc is a modular degree, completed part-time over two years or full-time in one year. Modules may also be taken on a stand-alone basis as part of continuing development.

All modules are delivered in blocks of two or three whole days.

## Thinking of applying

This prospectus aims to provide all the information you need in order to decide if this qualification is right for you. It also includes the application details if you wish to proceed.

**Comments from the external examiner in 2010:**

*I am a very strong supporter of this course.*

*It is a strategically important course for anyone interested in policy.*

*It is a very well designed course and is very well taught.*

*The levels of formative feedback students receive is high and the students' work is of a very high standard.*

**What past students have said about the course:**

*I have gained considerably from the MSc and it has enabled me to improve and develop skills in my everyday work areas. I have gained new skills and knowledge that I can use in tackling new projects.*

*The exercises have provided an opportunity for me to understand how the course applies to real-life research circumstances.*

*This Master's has met my expectations well in terms of coverage. I now have extensive knowledge and awareness of different social research methods.*

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# 1. Introduction

The MSc in Policy Analysis and Evaluation is a modular degree. It has been designed to be completed part-time over two years, but may also be taken full-time over one year. It covers research methods used in drawing up an evidence base for designing, critiquing and evaluating policies in government, in the rest of the public sector, and in the private and third sectors, as well as critiquing, evaluating and analysing the effects of policies. The overall emphasis of this degree is on quantitative research methods for policy within a social science setting.

This prospectus is intended to provide you with detailed information about the aims, structure, content and entry requirements for the MSc. All the information you require should be contained within the prospectus. However, if you have any further queries you would like to discuss before making an application, please feel free to contact the course leader Dr Kirstine Hansen ([k.hansen@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:k.hansen@ioe.ac.uk)) telephone 020 7612 6997 or the course administrator, Magdalen Meade ([m.meade@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:m.meade@ioe.ac.uk)) telephone 020 7612 6660.

Once you have made a decision to apply, please read the information on how to apply in section 18.

# 2. The Institute of Education

**Institute of Education (IOE), University of London [www.ioe.ac.uk](http://www.ioe.ac.uk)**

The Institute of Education is the largest graduate school of education in Britain and is ranked among the leading education schools in the world.

Located in the heart of London, the IOE is a fantastic place to study. Its courses are thoroughly up-to-date and are enriched by world-class research that has made the Institute a centre of excellence for education and social research inquiry. Members of the course team are leaders in their field both nationally and internationally and research activities have resulted in many publications, which feed directly into the Master's programme. The staff teaching on this degree also have longstanding track records in carrying out research for government departments and other public and private organisations, and are keenly aware of the need for evidence-based policy and its foundation in high quality research.

# 3. Structure of the Degree

The course has been designed to provide students with an understanding of the major quantitative research skills relevant to designing, analysing and evaluating government policy inside and outside government, as well as some of the most relevant qualitative skills.

Participants will gain a high level of critical insight into a range of research methods. They will be expected to apply their understanding to policy and research questions and

communicate their understanding clearly to academic specialists and non-specialists, and in so doing develop their existing skills in critiquing and applying research methods. Participants will be expected to work at a level of critical engagement, conceptual understanding and application commensurate with the grade-related criteria at Masters level.

In order to receive the MSc degree you will need to earn 180 credit points. The course consists of four compulsory modules with a total of 105 credit points. Participants must also select further modules to produce a total of 75 credit points. Details of the modules are presented below.

	<b>Credit points</b>
<b>Compulsory modules (105 credits)</b>	
Statistical analysis	30
Experimental and quasi-experimental design	15
Research synthesis for policy and practice	30
Report (10,000 words)	30
<b>Optional modules (to add up to 75 credits)</b>	
Data reduction and latent variable models	15
Evaluation methods and economic appraisal	30
Longitudinal research and analysis	30
Policy analysis and evaluation from a qualitative perspective	30
Research for policy	15
Sampling design	15
Survey data collection	15

## 4. Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- formulate researchable problems
- critically evaluate published research
- articulate links between policy questions, research design and research methods
- critically and selectively apply knowledge of research design and methods to their research questions
- understand and apply a range of research methods and tools
- systematically review and evaluate published research and understand whether it contributes to evidence-based policy making

## 5. Entry requirements

### Qualifications

In terms of academic qualifications, the normal minimum requirement for entry to this programme is a second class honours degree, preferably in a social science subject,

from a UK university or an overseas degree from outside the UK that the IOE judges to be of an equivalent standard.

The IOE may also consider applicants with a professional or other qualification gained by written examination and judged by the Institute to be the equivalent of a second class honours degree.

Candidates may also be eligible for entry if they have alternative qualifications gained by written evidence; in such cases, the IOE may ask them to take a qualifying examination or prepare qualifying essays.

If you need advice about whether you meet these requirements please contact the Institute of Education (Magdalen Meade, email: [m.meade@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:m.meade@ioe.ac.uk)).

### Current employment

If you thinking of doing this course alongside your current employment, you will need to make sure that you have your employer's support to take the necessary days off work to attend courses in London. It is also advisable that you discuss this with your line manager to see if they will offer to support you with time to do the assignments.

## 6. Course Team

<i>Member of staff</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Course taught</i>
Dr Erzebet Bukodi	Centre for Longitudinal Studies	Statistical analysis II
Professor Lorraine Dearden	Department of Quantitative Social Science	Evaluation methods and economic appraisal
Dr Kirstine Hansen	Centre for Longitudinal Studies	MSc course leader Introductory statistics Statistical analysis I Survey data collection
Lisa Calderwood	Centre for Longitudinal Studies	Sampling design
Professor John Micklewright	Department of Quantitative Social Science	Experimental and quasi-experimental design Evaluation methods and economic appraisal
Professor Gemma Moss	Centre for Critical Education Policy Studies	Research for policy Policy analysis and evaluation from a qualitative perspective
Ms Rebecca Rees	Social Science Research Unit	Research synthesis for policy and practice
Professor Ingrid Schoon	Department of Quantitative Social Science	Longitudinal research and analysis
Professor Anna Vignoles	Department of Quantitative Social Science	Longitudinal research and analysis
Professor Dick Wiggins	Department of Quantitative Social Science	Data reduction and latent variable models

## 7. Course dates

The MSc will begin in September/October and courses will be run to early July of the following year with the submission date for the last assignments running to the end of August. The table below sets out the *provisional* timetable for 2011-12.

<b>Introductory statistics course*</b>	Review of statistical concepts and methods	27-28 September
<b>Statistical analysis</b>	Statistics I: Methods of data analysis	12-13 October
	Statistics II: Multivariate analyses	8-9 November
<b>Experimental &amp; quasi-experimental design</b>		22-23 November
<b>Data reduction and latent variable models</b>		13-14 December
<b>Policy analysis and evaluation from a qualitative perspective</b>	Qualitative research and analysis	10-12 January
<b>Longitudinal research and analysis</b>	Longitudinal analysis	8-9 February
	Longitudinal modelling	29 February-1 March
<b>Research synthesis for policy and practice</b>		20-21 March and 11-12 April
<b>Research for policy</b>		24-25 April
<b>Evaluation methods and economic appraisal</b>		2-3 and 16-17 May
<b>Sampling design</b>	Alternates annually with Survey data collection	20-21 June
<b>Survey data collection</b>	Not running in 2011-12	

\* The introductory statistics course is not compulsory for all students and is not covered in the core course fees for the MSc. However, many students will need to attend this course in order to be able to successfully complete the other statistical courses. It has been designed to prepare students for the Statistical Analysis and Sampling Design modules by allowing them to familiarise themselves with the principles underlying statistical thinking and practice and the practical considerations behind different statistical concepts. Students will be advised after application whether they need to take this course.

## 8. Taught Modules

- Introductory statistics course<sup>1</sup>

### Compulsory modules

- Statistical analysis
- Experimental and quasi-experimental design
- Research synthesis for policy and practice

### Optional modules

- Data reduction and latent variable models
- Evaluation methods and economic appraisal
- Longitudinal research and analysis
- Policy analysis and evaluation from a qualitative perspective
- Research for policy
- Sampling design
- Survey data collection

### Introductory statistics course

This course is not compulsory for all students and is not covered in the course fees for the MSc. However, many students will need to attend this course in order to be able to successfully complete other modules. It has been designed to prepare students for the Statistical Analysis, Sampling Design and Survey Data Collection modules by allowing them to familiarise themselves with the principles underlying statistical thinking and practice and the practical considerations behind different statistical concepts. Students will be advised after application whether they need to take this course.

#### This course will cover:

- The most commonly-used descriptive statistics for summarising survey data: arithmetic mean, proportion/percentage, median, mode, percentile, range, variance, standard deviation
- The normal distribution and its importance in survey data analysis
- Simple tables
- Sampling distribution, sampling error, standard error, margin of error, variance, bias, levels of measurement
- Random and non-random methods of selecting a sample
- Confidence intervals when generalising data from the sample to the population
- Review of basic algebra
- PASW/SPSS basics

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<sup>1</sup> This is not compulsory. Please read the summary attached to this course.

## **Expected learning outcomes**

After successful completion of this module students will be comfortable with the following concepts:

- survey process and levels of measurement
- basic descriptive statistics
- normal distribution
- estimation based on random (probability) samples
- sampling distribution, sampling error and bias
- margin of error and standard error
- confidence intervals for means/proportions and differences
- basic algebra
- use of PASW/SPSS statistical analysis package.

## **What previous students have said about this course:**

'Good refresher course for stats.'

'Good stuff.'

'Overall the course was very good.'

'Pace of the course was excellent. Exercises were interesting and relevant to my work.'

## **Statistical Analysis (30 credits)**

### **Statistical Analysis I: Methods of data analysis**

This two day course is for people who want to develop their skills in data analysis. The course aims to familiarise students with: basic descriptive statistics; hypothesis testing and statistical significance; correlation and regression analyses. In the workshops the objective will be to put the analytical techniques introduced in the lectures to use. Students will learn how to analyse a large dataset using a statistical computer package (PASW/SPSS) and will be encouraged to develop good practice in presenting and interpreting the statistics they produce. By the end of the course, students should be able to analyse critically the use of statistics in social policy research and to feel comfortable with handling a large scale dataset and with producing and interpreting some basic statistics of their own.

The course is a follow-on from the introductory statistics course so a basic level of statistical awareness is expected.

**The course will cover:**

- Descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency and dispersion)
- Sampling and sampling distributions
- The normal distribution
- Standard errors and confidence intervals
- Hypothesis testing, statistical significance and p-values
- T-test
- ANOVA F-test, and chi-square test
- Analysing bivariate relationships. Scatterplots, correlation and regression.

**Expected learning outcomes**

The aim of this course is to promote basic quantitative literacy, so that you will be able to carry out analyses for yourselves and are better able to read, understand and think critically about the research literature.

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- understand the role of simple quantitative techniques in policy
- produce descriptive statistics and perform statistical tests
- interpret tables, graphs and test statistics

**What previous students said about this course:**

'Very coherent and well-explained course. Catered for different abilities well.'

'A difficult topic but very well explained.'

'Really enjoyed the course.'

'This is a really good and useful course... SPSS guide is really useful.'

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**Statistical Analysis II: Multivariate analyses**

This two day course aims to familiarise students with regression methods for survey data. The course will first focus on simple and multiple regression – where the dependent variable is a continuous one, and will then focus on binomial and multinomial logistic regression – where the dependent variable is binary or categorical. The course is aimed at people who wish to develop their skills in analysing survey data. The course has a strong practical emphasis, with sessions on computers to enable participants to work through examples that are based on real social survey data.

The course will cover:

- linear regression function,
- multiple regression function,
- testing collective influence of explanatory variables,

- inference for regression coefficients,
- dealing with categorical variables in regression equation,
- regression with continuous and categorical variables,
- interactions between explanatory variables,
- model selection,
- limitation of automatic selection procedures,
- nested models,
- odds, odds ratios,
- logistic regression models for binary responses,
- inference for logistic regression models,
- logistic regression for nominal responses,
- significance testing in multinomial regression.

### **Expected learning outcomes**

The aim of this course is to promote quantitative literacy, so participants will be able to analyse survey or administrative data using multivariate statistical methods, and will be able to read, understand and think critically about quantitative social research.

By the end of the course participants are expected:

- to understand methods of modelling associations between variables with focus on linear and logistic regression,
- to employ appropriate methods in analysing their own data,
- to carry out linear and logistic regression using PASW/SPSS,
- to interpret findings of multivariate statistical analysis correctly and to be able to defend the interpretation.

### **Prerequisites**

This course is designed to follow on from the Statistical Analysis I course, so participants are expected to be familiar with basic descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing and standard errors and statistical significance.

### **What previous students said about the course:**

'A fantastic introduction to multivariate analyses pitched at a good level.'

'Excellent explanation and documents - made something complex very clear.'

'Very useful course, and very thorough... Have learned a lot though, which I hope to incorporate into some analysis I am doing.'

'Important to attend the Methods of Data Analysis course as does assume prior knowledge and understanding.'

## **Experimental and quasi-experimental design (15 credits)**

This two day course is for researchers and analysts who want to know the basics of experimental and quasi-experimental methods of evaluation of economic and social policies, how to use these methods effectively, and how to understand and appraise other researchers' uses of them. It complements the course on Evaluation Methods and Economic Appraisal, which is at a more advanced level.

The course will cover:

- the evaluation problem: the counterfactual, confounding, and validity
- randomised control trials ('field experiments')
- 'before and after' designs, matching methods, difference-in-differences
- case studies of experimental and quasi-experimental policy evaluation
- practical issues surrounding choice of method

### **Expected learning outcomes**

By the end of the course you should understand both the principles and practical issues guiding the choice between alternative methods of experimental and quasi-experimental design. You should be able to interpret the results of research using either type of method, be able to judge its quality, and be able to design a broad strategy for the evaluation of a specific programme or policy. You will also have a firm foundation that can be built on in the Evaluation Methods and Economic Appraisal course.

### **What previous students said about this course:**

'Very engaging and informative tutor. Made the learning fun and thought provoking.'

'At just the right level.'

'A very good course. One of the best I have done.'

## **Research synthesis for policy and practice (30 credits)**

This course teaches students to evaluate the role played by systematic reviews of research literature within evidence-informed decision-making in policy and practice. Students will examine a wide-range of different review approaches in terms of both theory and practice, including meta-analysis, meta-ethnography and other kinds of 'qualitative' synthesis, and systematic mapping. They will also evaluate the role of stakeholders in enabling evidence to be relevant for policy and practice and appraise actual examples of reviews from a variety of policy areas. The course provides hands-on experience of applying recognised methods at key review stages.

This course will cover:

- What are systematic approaches to reviewing and why do we need them?
- Common stages of a systematic review

- Perspectives and participation in systematic reviews: making reviews relevant and useful
- Setting the scope: review questions, conceptual frameworks and inclusion criteria
- Different types of systematic review
- Searching for studies
- Systems for planning and managing reviews
- Screening studies: identifying relevant research
- Describing and appraising the quality and relevance of studies
- Synthesis of study findings
- Designing a review
- Using reviews: communication, interpretation, application
- Critically appraising systematic reviews
- Systematic reviews: challenges and critiques

### **Expected learning outcomes**

After successful completion of this course students will:

- have a critical understanding of the purpose of systematic research synthesis and its relevance to evidence informed policy and practice;
- be able to identify a diversity of approaches to synthesis along with principles and decision points central to all;
- be able to develop a protocol for a systematic review to include a review question, conceptual framework, methods for searching, screening, describing, appraising and synthesizing studies, and a strategy for communication and implementation;
- be able to draft a plan for accessing tools and other resources for managing a systematic review;
- have explored the potential for systematic approaches for their work.

### **Prerequisites**

Second-class degree in health, education or another area of social science or social policy, or other professional qualification e.g. for teaching, police force, health care, social work.

### **What previous students said about this course:**

'Very helpful course - I feel I can apply what I learnt.'

'I feel like I would be much more confident in commissioning a review.'

'If you want to carry out a successful systematic review, this is the course for you.'

'Excellent training. It could be a prototype of a part of obligatory training of civil servants at the ministry level who have policy forming tasks.'

'Overall for me, I not only learned more about the technical process of systematic reviews but felt I also benefited from the discussions regarding both general systematic review issues.'

## **Data reduction and latent variable models (15 credits)**

This two day course combines an introduction to data reduction using principal components analysis and factor analysis to explore the measurement properties of multi-item scales typically used to assess social attitudes and metrics e.g., quality of life, well-being and life satisfaction. The second day introduces students to the principles underlying structural equation modelling starting with measurement models and latent predictors using AMOS software.

This course covers

- The use of data reduction techniques and non-regression based analysis methods such as Principal Component Analysis and Factor Analysis
- Methods of modelling relationships between latent variables and introduce the basics of structural equation modelling using AMOS.

### **Expected learning outcomes**

On completion of the module participants will be able to:

- select methods of data analysis appropriate to their data and research questions
- carry out a range of data reduction analyses using PASW/SPSS
- carry out a range of latent variable analyses using the PASW/SPSS AMOS module
- diagnose whether the assumptions have been adhered to in the analyses covered, and discuss the potential impact on the results and propose solutions to any problems that may have arisen
- critically evaluate the data analysis methods proposed or undertaken in a given study
- ensure interpretation of data analysis findings is done correctly and be able to defend the interpretation.

### **Prerequisites**

Students need to be familiar with the content of the courses Methods of data analysis and Multivariate analyses.

### **What previous students said about this course:**

'I really enjoyed the course. The pace was just right and the combination of lecture and workshop allowed for a change of focus. It was great to have so much support during the workshops.'

'Teaching was excellent, lots of materials and examples provided.'

'The exercises really helped reinforce the content of the presentations and the right level of guidance was provided while still leaving room to think through them independently.'

## Evaluation methods and economic appraisal (30 credits)

This four day course (taught in separate two-day blocks) is for researchers and analysts who want to know how to carry out non-experimental policy evaluation of economic and social policies, how to choose the most appropriate method for a particular problem, and how to understand and appraise other researchers' evaluations of economic and social policies including the cost and benefits of those policies. It builds on the material covered in Experimental and Quasi-experimental design, but at a more advanced level. It will also include optional hands-on computer sessions (non-assessable) which show people how to actually estimate the effects of policies using all the methods discussed in class.

This course will cover:

- Overview of the evaluation problem: the counterfactual, confounding, and validity including randomised control trials ('field experiments')
- Assumptions, strengths and weaknesses of using different evaluation methods
- Regression methods, difference-in-difference methods, propensity score matching, instrumental variable methods and regression discontinuity design
- Case studies of different uses of these methods
- Cost benefit analysis

### Expected learning outcomes

By the end of the course you should be able to critically appraise research and papers that use different non experimental evaluation techniques and recognise the strengths and limitations of different studies and approaches. You should be able to have a clear understanding of how to assess the costs and benefits of a policy initiative and assess the strength and weaknesses of published Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) studies. You should be able to robustly design an evaluation strategy for a specific programme or policy. You will also be able to undertake analysis that estimates the impact of a policy programme or initiative.

### Prerequisites

Students need to be familiar with the content of Statistical Analysis I and II (Methods of Data Analysis and Multivariate Analyses).

### What previous students said about this course:

'The lecturer was very clear, concise and open, welcoming discussion and questions.'

'The group discussions where we planned how to evaluate a policy were good.'

'Really useful in pulling together the other elements I have studied on the MSc programme.'

'Particularly liked the examples from real research papers and the way all content was linked to further evidence for this, which helps in breaking down the reading list.'

## **Longitudinal research and analysis (30 credits)**

### **Longitudinal analysis**

This two day introductory course is for students who want to know more about longitudinal data and research design, and how longitudinal data and research can be used to answer key policy questions. It forms the first two days of the full four day module on 'Longitudinal Research and Analysis', but can be taken as a stand-alone course.

A basic level of statistical awareness is expected for this course.

The course will cover:

- Longitudinal data
- Cohort data
- Panel data
- Attrition and recall bias
- First difference models

### **Expected outcomes of this course**

By the end of the course students will have:

- developed a better understanding of how longitudinal research can answer key policy questions;
- understood the strengths and limitations of longitudinal data;
- understood the strengths and weaknesses of longitudinal research designs;

### **What previous students said about this course:**

'Very well organised.'

'This is exactly what I needed. The content was perfect.'

'I liked the interactive points and discussions.'

'A big topic but a good intro.'

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### **Longitudinal modelling**

This two day advanced course aims to provide the methodological and technical skills required to understand the role that longitudinal data can play in the analysis and evaluation of policy interventions. It is intended as a follow on from the 'Longitudinal analysis' course.

The course will cover:

- Longitudinal research design
- Panel data methods
- First difference models

- Fixed effect models
- Causality

### **Expected outcomes of this course**

By the end of the course students will:

- gain experience of undertaking statistical analyses of longitudinal models using specified data and software packages (e.g. PASW/SPSS/STATA);
- be able to critically evaluate others' use of these methods;
- understand the different ways of designing a longitudinal survey and which are appropriate to particular data collection needs;
- critically analyse research studies and policy evaluations that have used longitudinal data;
- be able to design an evaluation using longitudinal data.

### **What previous students said about this course:**

'I really enjoyed the course and it worked really well as a follow up to the first two days.'

'Very interesting and well focused presentations.'

'Excellent to have all content given in slides collated into bound guide.'

'All questions answered - lecturers open to give help at every opportunity.'

## **Policy analysis and evaluation from a qualitative perspective (30 credits)**

This three day course is for researchers who want to develop their understanding of qualitative methods of social research and how they can be used effectively for policy-related research and evaluation. Qualitative research methods and designs provide an important means of understanding the social world and of evaluating the consequences of policies that have been designed to impact upon social life. This course aims to familiarise students with the principles and practices of a range of approaches to qualitative research and evaluation; their strengths and limitations; and their application to government and policy-related research questions.

The course will help students develop the skills and understandings required to conduct, design and evaluate research involving qualitative data; appreciate key ethical and political issues in the conduct and dissemination of qualitative research; and understand the value of qualitative evaluation.

The course is suitable for students with differing levels of experience in using qualitative approaches, including those with primarily quantitative backgrounds. It would benefit anyone who wants to strengthen their understanding of the application of qualitative methods to policy-based research.

This course will cover:

- The theory and practice of conducting qualitative research in policy settings;
- Knowledge, values and methods in qualitative research;

- Qualitative research methods for policy evaluation;
- Issues in qualitative research design;
- Qualitative data analysis and generalisability in qualitative research.

### **Expected learning outcomes**

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- understand and know how to formulate and apply a range of qualitative research designs and methods to policy research questions;
- understand the contribution qualitative approaches can make to research and evaluation for policy
- assess when to use qualitative as opposed to quantitative methods, and when to combine approaches
- critically evaluate qualitative research

### **What previous students have said about this course:**

'Should be compulsory. My all-round research skills are richer for having attended this course.'

'Excellent that there were exercises for each element and could relate them to actual practices back at work.'

'Good range of topics, all linked, good pace.'

## **Research for policy (15 credits)**

This two day course is for those wanting to explore the role of research evidence in public policy. The course will familiarise students with key concepts in the research and policy literature on evidence-based and evidence-informed policy. Students will explore the main characteristics of the contemporary policy environment and critically reflect on its use of research to shape and inform policy and government decision-making. Approaches to research utilisation which can improve uptake of high quality research in policy settings will be considered. The course will be useful to those who already operate in a wide range of policy contexts including working inside government or its agencies, those outside government who undertake government-funded research, or have a general interest in this topic.

The course will cover

- Evidence based and evidence informed policy
- Characteristics of the policy environment that shape decision-making
- Models of policy making and research utilisation
- Influencing policy: the quality of the evidence
- Influencing the research agenda: mobilisation, adaptation and impact of research on policy

## **Expected learning outcomes**

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- understand the range of roles and responsibilities that shape policy formation and delivery in government
- appreciate the difference between evidence-based and evidence-informed policy making
- identify strategies that encourage usage of high quality research.
- apply a critical understanding of the theory and practice of using research evidence in policy to your own working context;

## **What previous students have said about this course:**

'Built my knowledge of the political/policy link to research and gave me a good opportunity to appreciate different perspectives.'

'Good to have recent examples.'

## **Sampling design (15 credits)**

This two day course is for social researchers and analysts who want to learn the principles of survey sampling and acquire an in-depth understanding of the practical considerations regarding different sampling and weighting methods.

This course covers

- The importance of probability sample designs in terms of both practical and statistical considerations
- Stratification, oversampling, clustering and multistage sampling
- Survey design affects on accuracy of estimation
- Basic calculations for sample size determination
- Weighting for differential selection probabilities as well as non-response

## **Expected learning outcomes**

After successful completion of this module students will be able to:

- critically evaluate the sampling methods proposed or undertaken for a given survey
- comment on the appropriate sample size needed for a particular survey
- understand weighting, its rationale, application and implications in survey analysis and reporting
- design probability samples including stratified, boost, clustered and multi-stage samples
- choose appropriate software to estimate standard errors for complex survey designs including the analysis of weighted survey data.

## Prerequisites

Participants are expected to have a basic knowledge of simple statistical concepts covered during the Introductory statistics course.

### What previous students said about this course:

'Really good balance between talking and exercises.'

'This is a very useful course for me at work. Managed and conducted very professionally.'

'Interesting and good course but hard work at times!'

## Survey data collection (15 credits)

This course provides an overview to survey data collection – for those interested in commissioning a survey, conducting one, using data from a survey or even reading a journal article which uses survey data – this course will improve your ability to do all of these things better. It provides participants with an understanding of the different types and modes of survey data collection that can be used to answer key policy questions and gives them an understanding of devising high quality survey instruments.

The course will cover:

- Introduction to survey data collection - different information requires different approaches.
- Different types of surveys (incl. Cross sectional, repeated cross section and longitudinal data).
- Different modes of data collection (incl. CASI, CAPI, PAPI, CATI, postal, online).
- Question design.
- Evaluating survey questions.
- Maximising response rates and responsive design.
- Minimising measurement error.
- Recall bias.
- Additional survey instruments ( diaries, observations, measurements, assessments).
- The linking of data (e.g. survey data with management data).

### Expected outcomes of this course

After successful completion of this module participants will:

- understand the type of survey data appropriate for different research questions.
- be aware of different types of surveys and the strengths and weaknesses.
- develop a better understanding of the differences between qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods data, and their relative advantages and disadvantages.

- know the different costs and benefits of using different survey modes. To introduce computer-assisted methods of data collection (including CASI, CAPI, CATI, online data collection), as well as more traditional postal-data collection, telephone and paper and pencil techniques;
- develop an understanding of survey questionnaire design;
- understand how to obtain high quality data, high response rates, low measurement errors.
- understand the issues around data linking, whereby data from a number of different sources are linked to provide a more comprehensive picture.

**What previous students said about this course:**

'Covered a great deal.'

'All useful content.'

'The content was well balanced and not *too* much information was provided. I felt informed without being overloaded.'

## 9. Report Module

The report module of the degree is based upon independent study.

The total assessment for the award of the Master's degree must include a report. In addition, you should note that although this is not a taught element of the course you are entitled to individual support for this element of your programme of study. You will be allocated a supervisor from the Institute of Education.

The report is up to 10,000 words and is worth 30 credits. Your course leader will be able to advise you of the assessment criteria for a report; the general criteria can be found in the Student Handbook, which will be given to you following your registration.

The report should ideally be related to your area of work. It would therefore be desirable if your line manager acted as a mentor to the project.

## 10. Location

The courses for the MSc will all be held at the [Institute of Education](#), 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL. The Institute of Education can also direct you to its student accommodation which takes bookings for bed and breakfast at very reasonable rates.

## 11. Time commitment

The MSc should normally be completed within one year (full-time) or two years (part-time).

Most modules comprise courses lasting two days. You will therefore be required to undertake a total of 20 days formal training (not including Introductory statistics for those

who need it, or the Report). This should be spread over the two years if taking the course part-time. All courses will take place during normal working hours.

In addition you will be required to study in your own time. For most people this equates to 5 to 10 hours per week. **Please be aware of this time commitment before you commence the course. It is a large commitment and should not be taken lightly.**

## 12. Fees

If you are a UK or EU citizen, and do not hold a higher or equivalent degree already, the course fee for 2011/2012 will be £4,900 full-time and £2,450 part-time. The international fee is £11,300 full-time and £5,650 part-time.

The course fee covers beverages during the day courses, but not lunch.

If you need to re-sit the assessment of any module you will be required to pay an additional fee of £120 per module.

If you do not complete the degree within the two years, there may be additional charges for tuition.

## 13. Assessment

All taught modules will be assessed by coursework assignment. Students will receive formative feedback on drafts of their assignments before submitting the final draft for assessment. Some of these assignments will be computer exercises using a statistical software package. Provision is made for students to obtain this software package to carry out the assignment on their home computer. There are no examinations.

The degree will be awarded following successful completion of the approved set of modules amounting to a total of 180 credits.

The Institute of Education's regulations allow students who gain 120 credits to leave the degree course with a Postgraduate Diploma, and for 90 credits, a Postgraduate Certificate qualification. However, the expectation and associated costs are that students will complete the 180 credits and leave with an MSc degree.

It is also possible to ask to register for one or two modules only and gain transferable CATS point credits which can be used towards a Master's degree in another University which participates in the CATS scheme. To take award-bearing modules only you will need to register under the Special Research Programme, but we suggest you contact the course administrator as the first step ([m.meade@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:m.meade@ioe.ac.uk)). Modules may also be taken on a stand-alone basis as part of continuing professional development without registering under this programme; in this case there is no assessment or earning of CATS point credits.

The Institute of Education is responsible for the assessment of the degree programme, including drawing up and marking the assessments and establishing the Board of Examiners and appointing an external examiner.

The rules and regulations concerning course work assignments and their assessment are detailed in the student handbook which you will receive at the beginning of the academic year.

## 14. Studying at the Institute of Education

You will be a member of the Institute of Education's Faculty of Policy and Society.

The Faculty of Policy and Society is one of the Institute of Education's two faculties. Staff from the Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS) and from the Department of Quantitative Social Science (DoQSS) provide most of the teaching on the degree. Over recent years they have also provided the teaching for the Institute's Doctoral School courses in statistics, multivariate analyses and survey methods, which contribute to an MSc in Research Methods and a Doctoral programme in research methods training. DoQSS is also responsible for course leadership for an MA and MSc in the Economics of Education.

CLS and DoQSS lead the Quantitative Methods cluster of research training pathways in the ESRC Doctoral Training Centre led by IOE and comprising IOE, Birkbeck, SOAS and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (see <http://www.bloomsburydtc.ac.uk/>).

Research activities in CLS and DoQSS are multidisciplinary (drawing on economics, psychology, sociology and statistics) and focus principally on the use of longitudinal studies, especially the British Birth Cohort Studies, managed by CLS, and large scale administrative data sets. The British Birth Cohort Studies track individuals over time to support study of progress in education, health, employment, skills, relationships, family formation, attitudes etc. CLS is concerned with statistical methods and with the application of the evidence to a number of policy issues. Analyses of these longitudinal data have made substantial contributions to policy debates in the past and will continue to do so.

## 15. Student Information

Once you have successfully registered with the Institute of Education for the MSc degree you will have access to the same resources as other registered MSc students at the IOE. This will be indicated in the student handbook for the degree, which will be issued to you following registration.

For this course, students will need a copy of PASW/SPSS software in order to complete some assignments. Copies of this software are available for students to purchase from IOE and install on their own PCs for a small charge.

Information Services (IS) at the Institute of Education offers extensive support to Institute staff and students. The IOE librarians and computing staff provide a wide range of services, and advice and training are available on the use of all IOE facilities and resources through face-to-face induction sessions, online self-study materials, a library enquiry desk and a computing help desk.

Find out about current services and resources on the IOE website at [www.ioe.ac.uk](http://www.ioe.ac.uk)

The Institute library has the largest collection in Europe of books and periodicals on educational studies. It contains over 300,000 volumes and has files of nearly 2,000 periodicals from all over the world. Supplementing these collections are electronic journals, full text electronic books and other documents, and research databases, most of which are available on the internet. Other services include standard borrowing, short loan, reference, enquiry, Interlibrary Loan, postal loan, postal photocopy delivery and self-service photocopying. IOE expert staff provide a range of courses to support the development of your IT and information skills.

You are able to use many other university libraries through IOE's participation in various co-operative access and borrowing schemes: full details are on the IOE website. Applications to use the University of London Library should be made at the library enquiry desk.

Information Services has up-to-date audiovisual and reprographic facilities, as well as a dedicated working space in which you can prepare learning and teaching resources in a variety of media formats.

You will have access to PC and Mac computers for personal study both in Information Services and throughout the Institute. Some computers are situated in rooms that are also used for teaching; in these cases, timetables indicating when rooms are booked for teaching are displayed outside the rooms and near the computing help desk. At very busy times a booking system for individual machines may be introduced, but outside these times you are welcome to use the computers as you need. You will have access to word-processing and other software that can incorporate multilingual character sets, data management and analysis tools and presentation software. Fast internet access is freely available to all registered students via the Institute of Education network.

In the case of all government students, online access to key social research databases is available, as listed below:

**ASSIA:** references for books and journal articles on health, social services, psychology, sociology, economics, politics, race relations and education.

**Econlit:** references for books and journal articles on economic issues.

**ERIC:** national information system funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences.

**NCJRS:** abstracts 170,000 criminal justice publications

**PAIS:** references to international public policy materials

**Sociological Abstracts:** abstracts and indexes the international literature in sociology and related disciplines.

**Social Services Abstracts:** covers social work, human services, and related areas, including social welfare, social policy, and community development. This will be an invaluable resource when researching for assignments.

GSRU's Magenta Book: Guidance notes for Policy Evaluation and Analysis (available from [www.gsr.gov.uk](http://www.gsr.gov.uk)) will also assist you in your studies.

## 16. Quality assurance

The course of study for the degree and the modules comprising the degree programme are approved by the Research Degrees Programme Board and Senate of the Institute of Education.

The degree programme is subject to the Institute of Education's quality assurance procedures, including regular evaluation of the modules by the students, an annual course review and a termly course committee meeting including student representation. Quality assurance arrangements are overseen by the Faculty of Policy and Society on behalf of the Institute, and reported on to the relevant Programme Area Board.

## 17. Progression

Any student who successfully completes the MSc in Policy Analysis and Evaluation shall be eligible to be considered for admission to a doctoral programme at the Institute of Education, subject to the normal entrance procedures.

## 18. Application for the MSc in Policy Analysis and Evaluation

Admissions procedures adhere to the policies and procedures of the Institute of Education and the University of London.

All potential students are required to apply via UKPASS. Go to

[http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/RMS9\\_PAE999.html](http://www.ioe.ac.uk/study/RMS9_PAE999.html) (and click on 'apply')

Follow the on-line instructions and answer all the relevant questions. You can save your unfinished application and finish it another time if you do not have all the information to hand. When your application is complete, remember to 'submit' it.

When considering applications, provided that you meet the entry requirements, the Institute of Education will favour early applications.

In the event that your application is unsuccessful you will receive feedback and advice.

### **How to apply**

More information on eligibility criteria and the process for applying can be found in the rest of this Prospectus, which you will want to read before completing the application form.

If you would like to discuss your eligibility for admission, you are welcome to contact the Course Leader, Dr Kirstine Hansen ([k.hansen@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:k.hansen@ioe.ac.uk)).

### **Completion and submission of applications**

Early applications will be favoured, so please apply early if possible.

If you have any problems with the application procedure please get in touch with:

Magdalen Meade ([m.meade@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:m.meade@ioe.ac.uk))  
Faculty of Policy and Society  
Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way  
London WC1H 0AL  
Tel: 020 7612 6660

### **To note**

1. If you are applying from government, you are advised to consult your line manager and Head of Department asking them to lend full support to your application.
2. The funding of your studies needs to be agreed before application: you will need to supply the name, address and telephone number of a person to whom invoices for course fees should be sent (either you personally or, if sponsored, someone in the Finance Unit of your sponsor).
3. You need to complete all sections of the application form.

### **Disabled students**

Disabled students are welcomed and will be admitted on the same academic criteria and under the same procedures as other students. However, students are asked to bring their disability to the attention of the Institute of Education when making their application. This will assist us in making appropriate provision where necessary.

Should you require assistance in completing the application forms please contact the IOE's Disability Co-ordinator who can arrange for this. A copy of the document 'A Guide to Policy and Provision for Disabled Students' can be obtained from the IOE's Disability Support Office. Telephone 020 7612 6641 or email [disabilityadmin@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:disabilityadmin@ioe.ac.uk)

### **Timing and progress of application**

Once an application is received, notification of receipt will be sent out immediately. The application is then referred to admission tutors for consideration, who will contact you if further information is required. We aim to make all decisions as quickly as possible, and reply to your application within one calendar month of receipt of the application.

Please note, we are unable to process applications unless all the information on the application form is complete, including confirmation that funding has been agreed for all of the course fees.

### **Statistical information**

The IOE is committed to implementing an equal opportunities policy on admissions. In order to do this, the ethnic origin and disabilities of all applicants for higher degree courses are monitored. To assist us in this task, it would be very helpful if you would complete the equal opportunities form with your application.