

Nottingham Trent University Course Specification

Basic Course Information

1.	Awarding Institution:	Nottingham Trent University
2.	School/Campus:	School of Social Sciences/City
3.	Final Award, Course Title and Modes of Study:	MSc, MSc Public Policy, FT/PT
4.	Normal Duration:	1 year FT/2 years PT
5.	UCAS Code:	

6. Overview and general educational aims of the course

The MSc Public Policy offers a hands-on, locally embedded and multidisciplinary course in the study of Public Policy at an advanced and specialized level. You will deliver a capstone Policy Lab project, with the opportunity to tackle salient policy issues in the East Midlands region or at national and international levels. You will furthermore take part in exciting contemporary discussions of Public Policy that explore core concepts, key trends and developments within the field, critical reflections on policy in practice and the current state of research and analysis of policy issues. The MSc Public Policy will be awarded on the successful completion of 180 credits of study.

The course is built around NTU's learning and teaching philosophy, putting strong emphasis on: 1) a personalised learning experience via both personal tutorial stream and research project supervision structure; 2) an international curriculum that nurtures global citizenship and engages with internationalised research community; and, 3) experiential learning via learning facilities and partnerships with both private and public sector.

The aims of the course are to:

- To provide an advanced and coherent analysis of the public policy process;
- To enable understanding of the links between theoretical conceptualisations and policy in practice;
- To offer a program that will equip students with the necessary skills and attributes relevant for a successful graduate career and/or advanced doctoral study.

The course is offered by the Department of Politics and International Relations and complemented by optional modules from across the School of Social Sciences. This allows for greater appreciation of policymaking in distinct and specialised areas as well as offers familiarity with negotiating in international contexts. Finally, it prepares students to work creatively on a policy lab research project either with an external partner or based on a combined staff and student-led initiative.

This MSc Public Policy is designed as a standalone programme, but draws on the success of the existing Politics and International Relations postgraduate provisions offered by the department. It is open to anyone who has already gained experience in the field of Public Policy or holds a background in a related

<p>discipline and field in Social Sciences and/or Humanities. It aims to be a foundation for anyone who wants to continue advanced study. MSc Public Policy builds on both the existing expertise in the department - ranging from local/national government and institutions to supranational institutions and policymaking – and collaborative partnerships with units across the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences. As the course is situated in the School of Social Sciences, it exposes students to research hubs, and greater opportunities to interact with an existing vibrant Social Science postgraduate student community.</p>
<p>7. Course outcomes Course outcomes describe what you should know and be able to do by the end of your course if you take advantage of the opportunities for learning that we provide.</p>
<p>Knowledge and understanding By the end of the course you should be able to:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critically evaluate the theories and concepts that underpin the discipline of Public Policy; 2. Exhibit specialist and critical knowledge of debates, key policy issues/topics and trends in public policy; 3. Critically evaluate ways in which theoretical insights might be applied to particular policy cases at various levels and within different contexts of governance; 4. Display knowledge and critical understanding of existing and proposed public policies; 5. Critically analyse the relationship between scholarly debates and the practice of public policy; 6. Critically assess the utility of a variety of research methods in understanding issues in public policy.
<p>Skills, qualities and attributes By the end of the course you should be able to:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Synthesise and critically analyse a wide range of qualitative and/or quantitative information from varied sources; 8. Master research methods and tools appropriate for conducting research related to public policy; 9. Plan and generate rigorous research as an independent and collaborative learner; 10. Demonstrate the skills of critical analysis and problem-solving both orally and in written form; 11. Demonstrate personal responsibility and ethical discernment in decision-making and problem solving; 12. Manage time and develop efficient interpersonal communication skills in the execution of collaborative work; 13. Communicate complex ideas effectively and demonstrate academic rigor in the production of written and oral work.
<p>8. Learning and teaching methods</p>
<p>A wide-range of traditional and experiential teaching methods are employed on the course. These may include discussion-based seminars, online teaching and learning sessions, interactive workshops, traditional lectures, and presentations and collaborative project-based work on specific policy issues (including with external and internal partners). These sessions are designed</p>

to engage students through problem-solving, sharing ideas, giving and receiving feedback and teaching each other.

The course also benefits from activities and research seminars taking place within the Department of Politics and International Relations and across the School of Social Sciences. You will have the option to partake in various events focusing on the practical side of policymaking. Activities range from negotiation simulations, guest lectures by politicians and practitioners, to problem-solving activities.

9. **Assessment methods**

MSc Public Policy is assessed via the University's Grade-Based Marking scheme through a variety of means, including essays, presentations and individual/group projects, and the written delivery and oral presentation of policy-oriented research outputs (e.g., case studies and policy briefs). The course is also underpinned by an overall course-based assessment strategy ensuring a consistent approach to evaluating student knowledge across modules. Moreover, the assessment methods enable students to develop and strengthen transferable skills, thus supporting their employability profile. The Politics and International Relations Employability Coordinator, together with NTU's Employability Team, will assist in developing a professional portfolio that can be used when applying for internships, professional employment or further study.

Core and option modules will comprise assessed essays, policy briefs and/or case studies of various lengths. These concentrate on the knowledge of the subject, giving you an opportunity to demonstrate that you have critically read and engaged with the required and recommended literature and are able to apply them to selected case studies.

The core modules will include individual and collaborative activities during seminar, workshop and select lecture sessions. These will enable you to develop and demonstrate your communication skills, as well as to conduct research on a given topic, analysing key policy issues and proposing measures for dealing with them. Furthermore, these assessments and activities will help you to develop the abovementioned skills in preparation for the Policy Lab Research Project.

Core modules and the optional module, *Negotiating in International Contexts*, will comprise simulations and role play exercises, where you will be expected to take on the role of a given policy actor. Your individual participation and performance are assessed either independently or in conjunction with written research materials that you may be required to develop prior to a simulation session. This will enable you to apply academic literature and the current state of research to a real-life situation and to explore and articulate the perspective of a particular actor or institution.

The course culminates in a Policy Lab Research Project comprising small groups of students working in close collaboration, drawing on quantitative and/or qualitative methods, and making their recommendations after close consultation with partners and stakeholders. This module represents one third of the course (60 credits). Content comprises stakeholder consultation, the production and delivery of a full policy research report, a reflective diary and presentation(s) of findings.

The reflective synoptic assessment, a part of the Researching Political Issues module, invites you to reflect on the content of the module, referring to the readings, and on what has been learnt/what remains unclear and may need further clarification, investigation or reading. This assignment has three main objectives: (1) to provide a means to reflect on and self-assess the learning experience and personal developmental needs as the module progresses; (2) to encourage dialogue between you and the module leader; and (3) to help you make sense of the different topics and identify, for yourself, the overall structure and rationale of a specific module and the skillset gained.

10. Course structure and curriculum

The MSc Public Policy has been designed to provide a practice-oriented and challenging contemporary curriculum which allows students to develop subject specific knowledge and develop broader professional skills that will be necessary for a career in any field related to public policy. It also enables students to obtain an advanced understanding and practice of a range of methods and methodologies available to support research and policy analysis.

The course comprises the following modules:

- Four core modules (150 credits total):
 - Theory and Trends in Public Policy (30 credits)
 - Policy in Focus (30 credits)
 - Researching Political Issues (30 credits)
 - Policy Lab Research Project (60 credits)

- One of following optional modules (30 credits each):
 - Law and Policy for Social Work (Department of Social Work)
 - Education Policy and Practice (Institute of Education)
 - Service Learning (Department of Sociology)
 - International Politics of Health
 - Sustainability, Citizenship and Identity
 - Negotiating in International Contexts
 - Gender and Security
 - Global Governance and International Institutions

Interim awards include a PG Certificate in Public Policy (60 credits) and PG Diploma in Public Policy (120 credits). The MSc is achieved on the fulfilment of the criteria for the Diploma plus the completion of the Policy Lab Research Project (180 credits in total).

The course is designed to place emphasis on advanced understanding and learning in the field of Public Policy and research practice through four core taught modules (see above), reflecting debates and current trends in the study of Public Policy. The first two modules (*Theories and Trends in Public Policy* and *Policy in Focus*) allow students to explore the major theories of, approaches to and trends in Public Policy. They also help to equip students with the interpersonal communication, analytical tools, problem-solving and research skills necessary for undertaking the Policy Lab Research Project. The module *Policy in Focus* will furthermore provide advanced, in-depth and critical knowledge of select fields in public policy. The third module (*Researching Political Issues*) allows students to develop a sustained grounding in and working knowledge of a variety of approaches to social science research, thus supporting their intellectual inquiries in the other modules.

The fourth module (*Policy Lab Research Project*) places an emphasis on gaining practical research experience and meaningful engagement with external or internal partners on a real policy issue. This module will enable you to build your research, communication and interpersonal communication skills whilst working in a team. Members of the Politics and International Relations team are available to supervise Policy Lab teams. Where necessary, it would be permissible for a Policy Lab to be supervised by another colleague from another academic unit within the university (together with a co-supervisor from the Politics and International Relations team to ensure that the requirements of the course are met).

The optional modules enable you to tailor the course to your individual preferences and professional objectives. As such, the optional modules are offered from a pool of modules from across the School of Social Sciences and from the Department of Politics and International Relations, thus complementing the core Public Policy offering. Students may only take one optional module during the duration of the course. While some optional modules may start in term one, others start in term two. Moreover, some optional modules run across different terms.

In order to accommodate different professional journeys and needs, you will also have the option to study part-time. The part-time route comprises two years of study (rather than one under the full-time route). Should you elect to take the part-time route, you will be expected to take at least one module per term, with the exception of term three in year one. As some optional modules run across different terms, the departmental team will work with you to design your individual study plan accordingly.

11. Admission to the course

Entry requirements

For current information regarding all entry requirements for this course, please see the 'Applying' tab on the NTU course information web page.

12. Support for learning

A number of supporting systems are put in place to enhance your experience during academic studies at NTU.

At the start of the first term, an induction period will help to assess your needs and provide guidance for your preparations for successful completion of the course. This induction is tailored to all students, including domestic, international, full-time and part-time students. The induction aims to present and harmonize learning expectations. It will include introductions to all relevant modules, programs, assessment schedules, employability support and research activities of the Department of Politics and International Relations. This will include the opportunity to discuss your preferences and decide on an optional module in consultation with the relevant departmental team member(s). Staff will offer support throughout the year where you might wish to engage with research being conducted in the department or within the context of the Policy Lab.

Non-English native speakers will benefit from in-session English support to help them develop and maintain their writing skills. All students have a personal tutor and support from an experienced course team. Students have the opportunity to work with individual members of staff and to develop learning and writing skills via the diagnostic elements of the non-assessed coursework in the first term. Through the personal tutorial system, students will be invited to hold a one-on-one meeting each month during term time (starting in the induction period) in order to identify specific educational and employability needs. In these meetings, the tutor will help you to develop a personalised strategy in order to maintain a high level of engagement with the course and to respond to challenges if they emerge.

The Politics and International Relations team also utilises online learning methods. As such, lecture slides and supportive documents are available for you to access on the Nottingham Trent University Online Workspace (NOW) Learning Rooms for each module. NOW is a space for programme and module information, resources for study and news and email. It is utilised by members of the course team to support and enhance module delivery and to assist with the dissemination of course information. This allows students to grasp the fundamentals of the course at their own pace. Students can replay lectures (recorded and placed on NOW by Lecture Capture) as many times as they need, while having access to all supporting materials such as required and recommended readings, videos, examples of best practice, etc. Moreover, select lectures and workshop sessions may be conducted online in order to better accommodate different learning styles and activities.

All written work is submitted online through NOW and discussion threads within modules will enhance standards. The departmental team and, more broadly colleagues from across the School, offer a series of research seminars throughout the year which postgraduate students are encouraged to participate in. These include student-run sessions for graduate students, which cut across the PhD/Master's divide, as well as a regular course of visiting speakers.

Specific support is available for you as you come to write your Policy Lab Research Project, including an academic staff supervisor who will be available for advice and guidance until the submission of the Policy Research Report.

You will be able to meet with course team members on a regular basis, including during the summer months.

If you elect to take the part-time route or are thinking about doing so, the departmental team (including personal tutors) will advise you accordingly.

13. Graduate destinations/employability

Graduate employability is fundamental to NTU's strategic aims. This is reflected in NTU's placement close to the top of the league table of all UK Universities for graduate employment.

As MSc Public Policy graduates, you will have the opportunity to reflect on the subject and transferable skills learnt while preparing coursework. These include expertise in writing complex, yet concise, analytical pieces, developing and implementing projects, interpersonal communication, diplomatic and negotiation skills, problem-solving, and the ability to present in-depth ideas with confidence. You will be offered encouragement and assistance in articulating those skills in relation to occupations that may be of interest to you.

Course learning outcomes and assessment strategies are designed, in part, to help students develop transferable skills and attributes as outlined in section 7 above. While the primary aims of a university course has traditionally been intellectual in nature and specific to the subject(s) under study, NTU realises the importance of the role of higher education in training graduates to move into the labour market. This course, therefore, focuses on developing skills crucial to the modern workplace, including analysis, communication, time-management, teamwork and problem solving. Each module on this course is designed to engage students in the development of these skills, which often form part of assessed assignments.

In addition to the expertise available within the School of Social Sciences, the University has a comprehensive employability infrastructure open to all students. You can access the Employability pages of the NTU website here: https://www4.ntu.ac.uk/current_students/your_future/employability/index.html. Support is especially provided by the Employability Team, including through more tailored assistance from our careers consultants, experts for international students and various other initiatives, such as the 'Succeed in Social Science', which includes an annual event on 'Early careers with Politics and International Relations degrees'. Moreover, the Department of Politics and International Relations has a dedicated employability coordinator to help embed transferrable skills training throughout our modules and connect our students to employment/placement opportunities. The NTU portal also provides various online tools available to students in order to help with career planning.

Students who complete postgraduate education in Public Policy typically end up being employed in the following fields (according to unistats.ac.uk): public service, administration, business, research and welfare and housing. The nature, breadth and depth of knowledge gained is also applicable to the non-governmental/non-profit sector.

14. Course standards and quality	
<p>Course standards are monitored in a variety of ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A course committee of staff and students monitors student feedback on module delivery and the learning experience. 2) An external examiner supports the course team and ensures quality in the delivery and assessment of the course. 3) Students are given detailed feedback on each piece of assessed work, and on non-assessed diagnostic work. 4) Students have a personal tutor with whom they can discuss their progress and gain additional feedback or advice on learning. 5) Student feedback is captured via module and course student evaluation surveys (EvaSys, PTES). 6) Finally, the course is lodged within the School of Social Sciences and is managed within the guidelines and standards set and assured by the School. 	
15. Assessment regulations	
<p>This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in Section 16 of the Quality Handbook). Any course specific assessment features are described below:</p>	
<p>This course is subject to the University's Common Assessment Regulations (located in its Academic Standards and Quality Handbook).</p> <p>Student work will be assessed via the University's Grade-Based assessment scheme, and in-line with university policy all assessed work will be graded and returned within 15 working days. Feedback is provided either electronically or in person, depending on the nature of the assessment. Some modules will also encourage students to engage in self and peer feedback.</p>	
16. Additional information	
Collaborative partner(s):	N/A
Course referenced to national (QAA) Benchmark Statements:	Politics and International Relations
Course recognised by:	
Date this course specification approved:	
Any additional information:	
N/A	

