**Programme Specification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme award and title:</th>
<th>Masters (MSc) in Applied Social Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCQF Level:</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCQF Credit Value:</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Educational aims of the programme:**
Concise (e.g. a few sentences), general statement of aims and broad purposes of the programme

- The aim of the Diploma/MSc in Applied Social Research is to provide students with training in the methods and approaches used in applied social research. The MSc programme meets fully the ESRC Research Training Guidelines and is recognised for 1+3 awards (www.esrc.ac.uk).
- The specific objectives of the programme are:
  - to introduce students to the theoretical foundations that underpin social scientific research and analysis
  - to develop students' understanding of research from the proposal stage to dissemination of the findings;
  - to introduce students to the key applications of information technology in social scientific research;
  - to provide students with the skills and knowledge base required; to collect, analyse and report qualitative and quantitative data, taking account of ethics, reliability and validity;
  - to enable students to critically examine issues concerning comparative social research;
  - to develop students' understanding of the relationship between research and policy and the meanings of evaluation, its terminology, practice and use;
  - to enable students to critically examine some of the theoretical foundations that underpin social scientific research and analysis;
  - enhance student learning during the programme by conducting and writing up a group research project;
  - to design and complete a research project in the form of a dissertation on a topic chosen by the student in consultation with their supervisor and with the approval of the Department of Applied Social Science Research and Ethics Committee.

**Intended programme learning outcomes:**
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) of what the student will know, understand and be able to do as a result of their learning, expressed in the categories below. Please consider the contribution made to the student's personal development planning (PDP) and future employability.

**Knowledge and understanding**
- students will have an understanding of the nature of social enquiry and a critical awareness of the relationship between social theory and social science research
- students will understand the scope and scale of a range of research techniques and data collection instruments

**Subject-specific skills and other attributes**
- students will have developed key skills necessary to effectively use the key applications of information technology in social research
- students will have developed a broad knowledge base and key skills required to collect, analyse and report qualitative and quantitative data
- students will be able to explore issues concerning comparative and cross-national research, policy analysis and evaluation
- students will be sensitised to the requirements of the research process and issues associated with implementing research
- students will have developed both individual and group skills in the area of communication
- students will be able to work independently to design and complete social research projects
Generic skills (e.g. information skills, communication skills, critical, analytical and problem solving abilities) and other attributes

- The core skills which students are expected to develop and demonstrate can be outlined as follows:
- Academic Skills: advanced literacy and advanced numeracy; critical and analytical skills; library and database skills; problem solving; creativity; advanced research skills; information technology (IT) skills including specialist software (e.g. SPSS and NVivo)
- Communication Skills: communication in group work; individual presentations; group presentations; conference posters; essay writing; research report and dissertation writing
- Self-Management Skills: planning; applying study skills; organising academic work; working under pressure; time management; meeting deadlines
- Interpersonal Skills: interaction in group work; leadership; listening; sensitivity

Learning, teaching and assessment strategies:
Outline (e.g. one or two paragraphs) on overall approach taken to develop and assess learning outcomes, including any distinctive features

- To achieve the learning outcomes of the Diploma / MSc programme, appropriate teaching and learning strategies have been developed. Programmes draw on a variety of methods of assessment to enable students to demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes.
- Varied teaching methods appropriate to the curriculum, including lectures, seminars, computer based workshops and group work, are used to deliver a coherent programme of study. Teaching methods are adapted to suit the aims of each module, and to provide students with the range and depth of learning required by the degree as a whole. They are designed to facilitate students’ progressive development and acquisition of skills through the degree.
- Students experience a range of different forms of assessment – these include standard essays, critical review essays, book reviews, research proposals, conference posters, group project reports and the research dissertation.

Professional/statutory body accreditation or recognition: ESRC

Further details:
Entry requirements: [http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/index.php](http://www.external.stir.ac.uk/postgrad/index.php)
Programme structure: [http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/](http://www.calendar.stir.ac.uk/)
Relevant Subject Benchmark statement (if applicable): [http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/default.asp)
Introduction/revision date: September 2010