Programme Specification ARO 034a

This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.

This document is published on the University website and will be a publicly available record of the named programme.

The information contained in this form should be included in the Programme Handbook, either as presented below or in a format determined by the Faculty.

Section 1 Key Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awarding Body</th>
<th>University of Stirling</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner Institution</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme Name</td>
<td>Media Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award e.g. BSc (Hons), MA etc.</td>
<td>MRes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Arts and Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Division (if applicable)</td>
<td>Communications, Media and Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>UCAS Code (UG only)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Programme Code</td>
<td>TXX47-MER</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mode of Study</td>
<td>Full Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location/Method of Study</td>
<td>On Campus – UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Points</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Programme</td>
<td>12 months</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCQF Level</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credit Value</td>
<td>180</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECTS Credit Value</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark</td>
<td>Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Body Accreditation (all relevant accreditations to be listed)</td>
<td>The MRes is recognised by the Information and Communications Studies Pathway of the ESRC Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences. It can therefore form part of a 1+3 ESRC application.</td>
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</table>
**Section 2 Overview**

**PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

A comprehensive summary of the programme.
The Media Research programme is designed to provide a basic but extensive training in media research methods. It serves two constituencies: students looking forward to employment in the media (or elsewhere) for which research training is seen to be valuable; and students intending to enter doctoral programmes and pursue academic careers. To this end the course provides:

- a combination of training in arts and social science methods, in the processes of empirical fieldwork and social science approaches to the media
- a chance for students to take part in group research projects and the production of media texts an opportunity to specialise in researching particular media (film, television, music, press, publishing, etc.)
- a focus on topical media research issues

**Key Features of the Programme**

The MRes combines applied social science methodological training and knowledge with critical approaches to the media and communications. Drawing on expertise across two Faculties, students will be able to engage with a range of contemporary issues in scoping, planning, executing and reporting on research. The MRes also provides a unique opportunity for students to focus on their personal media research interests through both tutor-supported research projects and work placements in ongoing research projects.

**PROGRAMME AIMS**

**Overarching Programme Aims**

On successful completion of this programme, you should be able to:

1. Have a sound knowledge of the theoretical foundations that underpin social scientific research and analysis of the media.
2. Be able to initiate and plan media and communications research from the proposal stage to dissemination of the findings;
3. Have a working knowledge of the key applications of information technology in social scientific research;
   - be confident in using a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, taking account of ethics, reliability and validity of data;
4. Be able to critically examine issues concerning comparative social research of the media;
5. Be able to critically examine some of the theoretical foundations that underpin social scientific research and analysis of media and communications.

**WHAT WILL I BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE?**
Detailed Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this programme, you should be able to:

1. Carry out various forms of research for essays, projects, creative productions or dissertations involving sustained independent and critical enquiry.
2. Formulate appropriate research questions and employ appropriate methods and resources for exploring those questions.
3. Locate, retrieve, evaluate and draw upon the range of data, sources and the conceptual frameworks appropriate to research in the chosen area.
4. Draw on the strengths and understand the limits of the major quantitative and/or qualitative research methods, and be able to apply this knowledge critically in their own work.
5. Draw on and evaluate and apply research enabled by established and emergent technologies.
6. Draw and reflect upon the relevance and impact of their own cultural commitments and positioning to the practice of research.
7. Locate, understand, and apply the research ethical codes produced by relevant subject associations, and understand and comply with the ethical standards appropriate to research in their field of interest.
8. Collate, critically evaluate and understand a variety of research material within and beyond academic literature.

Knowledge and Understanding:

1. Research techniques, processes and principles that are relevant to media industries, media analysts, and media scholars
2. Theoretical and methodological concepts relevant to empirical field research and the social scientific study of the media.
3. The planning, execution and presentation of research projects.
4. The use and value of archive and library material (including that available via the Web)
5. Current issues in media debates
6. The technological and institutional contexts of media production.

Subject-specific skills and other attributes:

Students on the Media Research programme are also expected to develop:

1. skills of problem recognition and problem solving and an ability to engage in abstract logical thinking and conceptualisation;
2. an ability to analyse, interpret, and show the exercise of critical judgement in the evaluation of data produced by academic and non-academic media research;
3. a capacity for reasoning and decision-making as well as for critical analysis, and an ability to think creatively and flexibly.
4. carry out various forms of quantitative and qualitative research for essays, projects and dissertations involving sustained independent enquiry;
5. formulate appropriate research questions related to media issues and to employ suitable methods and resources for exploring those questions;
6. evaluate and draw upon the range of sources and conceptual frameworks appropriate to research in any chosen area of the media.

Generic skills (e.g. information skills, communication skills, critical, analytical and problem-solving abilities) and other attributes

1. The range of transferable skills that students on the Media Research programme are expected to gain include an ability to: communicate effectively (in writing and verbally) in inter-personal settings and through the submission of written work to a given length, format, brief and deadline;
2. gather, organise and deploy ideas and information in order to formulate arguments cogently, and express them effectively in written, oral or in other forms;
3. work in flexible, creative and independent ways, showing self-discipline, self-direction and reflexivity and, also, to work as part of a team.
HOW WILL I LEARN?
Outline of the teaching methods and approach to be used on the programme.

Appropriate teaching methods and learning strategies have been developed to achieve the learning outcomes of the Media Research programme. Taught modules involve a variety of teaching approaches: lectures, designed to facilitate comprehension of the foundations of the social scientific and textual research methods; seminars and workshops designed to improve students’ understanding of each subject area and to develop more general conceptual and communicative skills; and individual tutorials designed to enable students to formulate and develop their own learning strategies.

As regards developing students’ knowledge, core modules on institutional/ social science research methods (Research Methods 1) and textual/ humanities research methods (Research Methods 2) provide instruction in a range of research techniques (from interviews and questionnaires to discourse analysis) and issues (such as the relationship between academic and market research and the ethical problems raised in the research and dissemination process).

The main aim behind these taught modules is to develop students’ understanding of specific areas of theory and knowledge which are relevant to research in and on media. Acquisition of knowledge is through a combination of lectures, seminars, workshops and tutorials. Students are required to make class presentations and deliver a formal seminar paper as well as to write essays. In this work (the basis of their assessment) students are expected to supplement and consolidate what is being taught, to broaden their individual knowledge and understanding of the subject through independent reading, and to focus on particular media and media issues. Individual written feedback is given to students on all coursework assignments and essays.

The Media Research programme is equally concerned to develop a range of practical research skills and employability. This is achieved through offering work experience in media research which is organised in consultation with the programme director.

A 12,000-word individual Masters dissertation gives students on the MRes in Media Research the opportunity to undertake independent, sustained research on a media topic of their own choice. Drawing on guidance and feedback provided by an assigned supervisor (and on learning outcomes from all the taught modules), students are expected to formulate appropriate research questions and to employ suitable methods and resources for exploring those questions. Through preparing and writing up their dissertations, students develop their methodological skills and their ability to evaluate and draw on a range of sources and conceptual frameworks appropriate to research in the media field.

Research skills are assessed through the Applied Methods assignments (including individual essays on media research and media production processes), the literature review and the dissertation. Particular attention is paid to students’ ability to utilise information resources effectively and to carry out research on an individual and group basis, and to present and discuss findings. Assessment of the Masters dissertation tests not only students’ research skills but also the conceptual and analytical skills and understanding of methodological problems that Media Research students have been developing throughout the programme.

The general transferable skills that the Media Research programme aims to impart include written and oral communication, logical reasoning, conceptual analysis, study skills and group work. Intellectual abilities such as information assimilation and critical reasoning are developed through the teaching and learning programme outlined above and through dissertation preparation. Seminars, workshops and tutorials are designed to develop students’ ability to communicate in group situations and to present clear and cogent arguments, as well as to develop inter-personal skills such as assertiveness, persuasiveness and the ability to listen to and learn from one’s peers. Feedback on essays, coursework assignments and drafts of work-in-progress on the dissertation is intended to improve written communication and reasoning skills. Analysis and problem solving skills are developed through students responding to seminar and tutorial questions, through practising examples in workshops, through preparing coursework assignments and essays, and in the process of research design and execution. More generally, the programme of assessment for the course is intended to encourage and develop time management skills,
including the ability to work to deadlines.

Intellectual, analytical and problem solving skills are assessed through coursework assignments, which include academic essays, research reports and seminar presentations, and through the dissertation. The reports and presentations are also used to assess communication skills, while students’ ability to work as part of a team is tested through the compulsory group work involved in the Applied Methods Modules. Other inter-personal skills, as required in workshops, for example, are not formally assessed.
**WHAT TYPES OF ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK CAN I EXPECT?**

*Outline of the assessment methods and approach to be used on the programme.*

**Assessment and Assessment Criteria**

- Academic essays
- Methodological critique
- Group presentations on a chosen topic
- Reflexive essays on research projects
- Applied research projects and reports
- Research placement report and reflection
- Examination
- Dissertation

**Feedback on Assessment**

You will receive feedback on coursework within 3 weeks of completion of the assessment. Feedback is usually provided electronically on formal coursework. Feedback and Guidance sessions with teaching staff are available on all modules. These provide regular opportunities to discuss feedback further. More information about feedback on assessment can be found here; [http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/assessment/](http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/assessment/)

**Assessment Regulations**

*Highlight any exceptions to the assessment regulations for this programme*

None.

If you would like to know more about the way in which assessment works at the University of Stirling, please see the full version of the assessment regulations at:

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate – Taught
- Postgraduate - Research

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**WHAT WILL I STUDY?**
Outline Programme Structure

The list below shows compulsory and option modules for this programme. Option modules are revised over time and, in some cases, will be dependent upon pre-requisite and/or co-requisites being taken. More information about these requirements can be found in the relevant Module Descriptors. The options available each year can be subject to change due to student demand and availability of teaching staff.

- Where an “Option list” is specified, you have a choice of which module to take at this point in the degree programme and these choices are listed below
- For year 1 and 2 where “Any Module” is used it means that you can choose from all modules available to the year group and you can see the full list by following these links:

Undergraduate
Postgraduate

Full-time

Total credit value = 180
Compulsory credits = 160
Option credits = 20

Autumn
ASRP002 - Research Design and Process (20)
ASRP004 - Quantitative Data Analysis (20)
MERPP08 - Media Research Methods 1 (20)

Spring  20 credits from the options
MERPP13 - Applied Methods 2 (20)
ASRP005 - Qualitative Data Analysis (20)

Summer
MERPP07 - Dissertation (60)

Option modules:
- MMAPP14 - Media Regulation and Policy  Spring
- ASRP026 - Advanced Quantitative Methods  Spring
- ASRP27 - Advanced Qualitative Methods  Spring
- MERPP14 - Media Research Placement  Spring
- ASRP001 - The Nature of Social Enquiry  Spring

READING LIST
Required and Recommended Reading for the Programme
Kong, Lily and Justin O'Connor (Eds) (2008), Creative Economies, Creative Cities: Asian-European Perspectives (Dordrecht: Springer.

Section 3 Student Support [PLEASE UPDATE AS NEEDED FOR THE STUDENT COHORT]
Induction
You will receive an induction during the first days of your programme. This includes a range of social events, information sessions and activities to help you orientate yourself at Stirling and access the services available to you. These are opportunities to meet staff and other students from across the university, in the Faculty and on the programme.

Please include any Faculty/programme specific information here.

Study Skills Support
Student Learning Services (SLS) are committed to providing comprehensive guidance on all aspects of effective and efficient learning. The ultimate aim of the service is to enable you to make the most of your academic studies at the University and for you to become an independent, successful learner during your time at the University of Stirling. This is facilitated through collaborative work with experienced tutors and by offering a variety of courses, workshops and tutorials.

All students, whatever stage of their academic studies, are welcome to use Student Learning Services. However the service may be particularly beneficial:

- In your first two years of study.
- If you are making the transition from college to Higher Education.
- If you have been out of education for some time.

What SLS are able to do:

- Advise you on academic skills relevant to your studies at University.
- Help you consolidate your previous learning and develop new learning strategies.
- Advise on action-plans to potentially improve grades.
- Suggest practical solutions if you feel overwhelmed by assignment work.
- Help you gain confidence in the transition to Higher Education.

More information can be found here: http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/student-learning-services/

STEER
STEER is a University-wide peer support scheme linking in returning student "Captains" with new undergraduate or taught post-graduate "Crew" during their first year at Stirling.

The scheme aims to help you make the most of your time at the University, help new students - the Crew - settle in and realise the opportunities available to them. You can find out more information here: https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/studentsupport/steer/

Stirling Graduate School
For Research Postgraduate Students the Stirling Graduate School as well as your own faculty will provide support. More information can be found here: http://www.stir.ac.uk/graduateschool/current-pg-students/skills-development/

Academic and Pastoral Support
Adviser of Studies: Advisers have an important role to play in enhancing your academic and personal development and are essential to ensuring you make the most of your time at university. Advisers provide a personalised point of contact for you to discuss academic concerns or queries within the academic community. The general purpose of the role is to provide more in-depth advice on the academic options available to you and on the academic policies and regulations within the University.

More information can be found here: http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/advisers/

Personal Tutor: The role of a personal tutor is to help you feel part of the University community. They are a specific and consistent source of guidance, information and support for you throughout your studies. The tutor should be the your first formal point of contact for general academic guidance and pastoral support. More information can be found here: http://www.stir.ac.uk/tse/personal-tutor/
Support and Wellbeing: At university you may face non-academic issues where you need some expert help or guidance. There are lots of ways we can help you in your day-to-day life at University. Student Support Services provide a range of high-quality services to assist you during the course of your studies, help prepare you for life after graduation. We aim to enhance the student experience and help you to get the most out of your time at University. More information can be found here: http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/support-and-wellbeing/

Student Union: you can also access support through the Students’ Union, more information can be found here: https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/studentsupport/

Accessibility and Inclusion (A&I)
A&I are committed to offering a service which is welcoming and supportive of the needs of all students. Our service takes into account the full range of needs you may have, in a wide variety of circumstances including - physical and mobility difficulties, sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia and autistic spectrum disorder as well as medical conditions and mental health difficulties. A&I can also support you if you have short-term, temporary impairments or other difficulties as a result of an accident, injury, illness or surgery. More information can be found here: http://www.stir.ac.uk/student-support/accessibility-&-inclusion-service/

Learning Resources
You can find out more about the resources available to support your learning here: http://www.stir.ac.uk/campus-life/learning-support/
Section 4 Programme Evaluation and Enhancement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>METHODS FOR EVALUATING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module Evaluation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Module evaluations are carried out each year and are an important way of getting student feedback on the modules we teach. We aim to evaluate every module we teach in every semester. You can find out more here: <a href="http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/studentinformation/moduleevaluation/">http://www.stir.ac.uk/registry/studentinformation/moduleevaluation/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programme Review</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes are reviewed annually and on a 5 yearly cycle. You can get involved in a variety of different ways; by completing module evaluations, becoming a course representative and attending Student Staff Consultative Committees, or participating in the review process itself. You can find out more here: <a href="http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/review-and-monitoring/">http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/review-and-monitoring/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Examiner(s) (To be added following Stage 2 approval)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of External Examiner: Dr Jamie Medhurst</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution: Aberystwyth University</td>
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<td>Please add as required.</td>
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Section 5 My Future

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WHAT KIND OF CAREER MIGHT I GO ON TO?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What career avenues does this qualification open up to the student?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The programme is designed for future employment in media research, research consultancy, market research, and policy research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The programme is specifically focussed on preparation for further postgraduate research leading to a PhD and careers in academia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does this programme facilitate your development of the Graduate Attributes?</td>
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<tr>
<td>The students will be confident in research methodologies and critical analytical evaluation of research.</td>
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</table>
Graduate Attributes

Through studying your degree programme you will become a subject specialist, with in-depth knowledge, understanding and skills associated with their discipline(s). Our ambition is that you will also be confident, aspirational graduates with the right skills and attitudes to **connect; innovate and transform**. On this module you will have the opportunity to become:

**Connected**
With their discipline(s) knowledge, understanding and skills with a range of complex real world issues with contributions from alumni, private, public and third sector to develop their employability skills with knowledge, experiences, and people providing different perspectives, to understand different cultures, beliefs and traditions and work with one another as an inclusive learning community and with the wider community and communicate effectively through digital and other media

**Innovative**
through active and ethical research through using the latest global research and new technologies to develop new understandings and creative solution through independent critical and reflective thinking through identifying opportunities to improve what they do and taking action

**Transformative**
through their intellectual sporting and cultural passion and excellence through sharing new perspectives and broadening horizons through being professional, adaptable and resilient and equipped to succeed in the global market place through being active global citizens who are socially, culturally, and environmentally aware.

**WHAT STUDY ABROAD OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?**

**WHAT PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE?**

The programme has an elective research placement. Students are provided the opportunity to join an ongoing research project in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, or another Faculty in the University. Opportunities may also exist to work with non-HEI organisations in consultation with the programme director.

**WHAT FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE TO ME?**
What programmes of study could the student go on to after successfully completing this one?

The programme is ideally suited to prepare students for postgraduate research towards a PhD.

WHAT OTHER INFORMATION DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Information that should be displayed at module registration and/or on the Degree Programme Table webpages to help students understand any programme specific requirements or agreed exceptions to regulations. This could also include useful information that will enable a student to decide to take this programme, prepare for the programme, or that will be useful to them on completion of the programme e.g. professional recognition/accreditations etc.

Section 6 Admissions

HOW DO I ENTER THE PROGRAMME?

Admissions Criteria

A minimum of a second class Honours degree (2.1 preferred) or equivalent in a relevant subject. Applicants without these formal qualifications but with significant appropriate/relevant work/life experience are encouraged to apply.

If English is not your first language, you must have one of the following qualifications as evidence of your English language skills:

- IELTS: 6.5 with 6.0 minimum in each skill
- Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE): Grade C
- Cambridge Certificate of Advanced English (CAE): Grade B
- Pearson Test of English (Academic): 60 with 56 in each component
- IBT TOEFL: 90 with no subtest less than 20

For more information, go to English language requirements.

If you don’t meet the required score you may be able to register for one of our pre-sessional English courses. To register you must hold a conditional offer for your course and have an IELTS score 0.5 or 1.0 below the required standard. View our range of pre-sessional courses.