

Social Sciences Research for Healthcare (Master's Degree) Programme Specification

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/social-sciences-research-for-healthcare/>

Academic Year:	2026/27
Degree Awarding Body:	The University of Bradford
Main Location:	Blend of online learning, Bradford City Campus and WRDTP training partners
Delivery Support Partners:	White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership (WRDTP); Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC); NIHR INSIGHT Programme for Yorkshire and Humber (National Institute of Health and Care Research)
Qualifications Framework:	Framework for HE Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies (FHEQ: QAA 2014)
Target Degree Award:	Master of Science (MSc) Social Sciences Research for Healthcare [FHEQ Level 7]
Intermediate/exit awards:	Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) [FHEQ Level 7] Postgraduate Certificate (PGC) [FHEQ Level 7]
Programme Admissions:	UK and international students (full-time); UK and home students (part-time)
Programme Start Dates:	September
Programme Modes of Study:	12 months full-time (September start) 24 months part-time (September start)

Please note: Information about this programme and its modules has been published in advance of the academic year to which it applies. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate at the time of publication, but changes may occur given the interval between publishing and commencement of teaching. Any change which impacts the terms and conditions of an applicant's offer will be communicated to them.

Minor Modification Schedule

1. June 2025: Update to optional modules and change to academic regulations.
 2. September 2025: Specification reformatted for improved accessibility.
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Programme overview

Research in healthcare is increasingly focused on the 'whys' and 'hows' of people's behaviour. For example, why do people continue to smoke when they know it causes lung cancer? How do people decide whether to take the medicine their doctor has prescribed?

Social sciences research is needed in healthcare to develop an understanding of these complex behaviours, and to improve the health of individuals and the population. This is very different to the quantitative research most healthcare professionals learn about in their professional education. This programme will provide students with a clear understanding of the underlying principles of social sciences research design and ethics for healthcare and enable them to independently design

and undertake robust projects that begin to answer these complex questions. In addition, students will also learn how to disseminate these findings to gain their maximum impact.

The programme will also prepare students personally for a career in research. Students will learn how to critique and build on the work of others, as well as identify their own research-related learning needs and become part of a thriving research community. The research community at the University of Bradford has expertise in applied health research and will support them to develop their independent research skills and networks. This will help graduates to apply for prestigious funding opportunities and potentially go on to undertake doctoral research.

The programme incorporates a selection of optional modules for students, allowing them to choose modules which reflect their professional and research learning needs and learning styles. Several options have specific entry requirements which should be checked before choosing those options. There will be many opportunities within these options for students to participate in interprofessional learning with a variety of healthcare professionals.

The University of Bradford embeds an inclusive approach in all of our programmes, and we recognise that there is a need for flexibility in modern programmes of study, particularly where students may also be working as healthcare professionals. Therefore, the programme has been designed to be equally accessible as a full-time or part-time programme, with the option for a significant amount of blended learning. We also build as much flexibility as possible into our approach to learning, teaching and assessment. It is possible for students who are on the part time route to withdraw from the MSc after two modules (M1 and an optional module that could include M2) and exit with a Post graduate Certificate.

The White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership pathways

Participating in this programme will give students an opportunity to appraise multi-disciplinarity of research, by participating in activities of their choice within the **White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership** (WRDTP) ESRC funded students, will be expected to undertake all components of this qualification as part of their studentship, with the MSc described in this document forming the first year of their training. Years 2-4 will constitute doctoral research:

<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/>

ESRC funded students who have a previous Masters Degree, will be expected to complete two modules (M1 and M2) in the first year of their PhD and exit with a PG Certificate.

NIHR INSIGHT funded students will be expected to complete the MSc described in this document over 1 year (full time) or 2 years (part time) depending on their funding conditions.

Programme Aims

The programme is intended to equip students with:

- A1 The knowledge, interdisciplinary research skills and behaviours required by the modern healthcare environment, to pursue independent social sciences research projects.

- A2 A supportive educational and research environment which meets their individual needs, in order to develop their professional abilities as a research professional in healthcare.

Students will demonstrate:

- A3 A critical understanding of research design and methodology and the ability to autonomously select and justify appropriate methodological approaches
- A4 Interdisciplinary research skills relating to project design, communication, personal development planning, networking, information management, gaining ethical approval
- A5 The ability to critically appraise their own data, results and findings, and those of others.
- A6 The confidence and ability to continue to doctoral level training either through ESRC funding or by applying for an alternative prestigious research degree programme schemes.
- A7 The ability to reflect on their personal development and use the Researcher Development Framework to inform and plan their professional development.

Programme Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the principles of research design and strategy, including a critical understanding of methods used to formulate appropriate research questions.
2. Understand, critically evaluate and apply the significance of alternative epistemological positions that provide the context for theory construction, research design and appropriate analytical techniques.
3. Demonstrate a comprehensive and critical understanding of probability, the scientific method and the nature of reflexivity in research design.
4. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to research across disciplines.
5. Critically reflect on interdisciplinary working in order to inform the development of your own research project ideas.
6. Demonstrate conceptual understanding and development of new skills in an area of advanced scholarship.
7. Understand, critically evaluate and apply a broad range of research methods, including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods.
8. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of techniques used to analyse data generated in research and apply these using appropriate software.

9. Deal with complex research issues systematically, autonomously and creatively and communicate the conclusions to specialist and practitioner audiences.
10. Demonstrate conceptual understanding and development of new skills in a second area of advanced scholarship.
11. Demonstrate a comprehensive and critical understanding of the professional and ethical aspects of autonomously managing, conducting and disseminating research.
12. Demonstrate a critical understanding of advanced research skills and techniques by autonomously undertaking an independent research project in an area relevant to your practice.

Programme Structure

The programme is designed to be equally accessible to study part time or full time and includes multidisciplinary optional modules to enable students to benefit from interprofessional learning.

All incoming students, on an individual basis, will have a discussion with programme team to choose options from the approved list (in [Table 3](#)) for 'subject specific' content that supports the programme aims.

Table 1: Full-time Programme Structure (12 months)

Full Time Semester 1	Full Time Semester 2	Full Time Semester 3
M1 Research Design, Philosophy & Working Beyond Disciplines (30 credits)	M2 Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Research Methods (30 credits)	M3 Professional Skills for Researchers (20 credits)
Optional module (30 credits)	Optional module (30 credits)	M4 Independent Research Project (40 credits)

Table 2: Part-time Programme Structure (24 months)

Year	Part Time Semester 1	Part Time Semester 2	Part Time Semester 3
1	M1 Research Design, Philosophy & Working Beyond Disciplines (30 credits)	M2 Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Research Methods (30 credits)	M3 Professional Skills for Researchers (20 credits)
2	Optional module (30 credits)	Optional module (30 credits)	M4 Independent Research Project (40 credits)

Curriculum

The University of Bradford Semester 1 runs from September to January. Semester 2 runs from January to April. A third trimester study period (Semester 3) runs from May to August. Independent Prescribing modules involve study, learning and assessment across two semesters.

Optional Modules

Not all optional modules will be available to all students, and some require attendance at study days. Some modules require specific entrance requirements and are noted below to identify additional requirements. In advance of selecting optional modules students will discuss these requirements with the Programme Leader. Please also note that the options available to the student will depend on timetabling, availability and the student's prior experience, so the list that follows below is generally indicative.

Special Requirements

Check the first three letters of the Module Code column (in [Table 3](#)) to see which requirements affect the availability of a University of Bradford module option.

- **Dementia Modules (DEM):** Students accessing DEM modules will require access to people living with dementia, either as a regular part of their job, or on a voluntary basis. All dementia modules are available in distance learning mode.
- **Nursing Modules (NUR):** Students applying for NUR modules may be required to be working in clinical practice with a suitable mentor to sign off the required clinical competencies. This applies where a clinical competency document and/or portfolio of evidence are elements of the assessment process.
- **Leadership and Management Modules (LEM):** Students accessing LEM modules will be required to have some experience of health and social care; this could be through current or previous employment, voluntary work or a former student placement.
- **Midwifery Modules (MID):** For registered healthcare professional who works with pregnant or newly postnatal women.
- **Prescribing Modules (PHA) for Pharmacists:** Attendance at study days is compulsory. Eligible students must have been registered with the UK General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) for at least 2 years and have an associated area of practice:
www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/cpd/prescribing-for-pharmacists/
- **Pharmaceutical supply Module (PHA7071-C):** Only available for pharmacists.
- **Prescribing Module (PRE) for Healthcare Professionals:** Attendance at study days is compulsory. Eligible students must be registered as a nurse, midwife, podiatrist, physiotherapist, diagnostic/therapeutic radiographer, dietician or paramedic and meet additional entrance requirements:
www.bradford.ac.uk/courses/cpd/prescribing-for-healthcare-professionals/
- **Psychology Modules (PSY):** Delivery is hybrid, combining face to face teaching and online learning.

Table 3: Social Sciences for Healthcare Module Options (2025/6)

Module Title	Credit	Level	Period	Module code
Understanding the me in dementia	30	FHEQ 7	1	DEM7022-C

Module Title	Credit	Level	Period	Module code
Evidence based dementia practice	30	FHEQ 7	1	DEM7023-C
Health and Social Care Leadership	30	FHEQ 7	1	LEM7031-C
Understanding health and social care through policy and strategy	30	FHEQ 7	1	LEM7033-C
Introduction to public health and health promotion	30	FHEQ 7	1	NUR7066-C
Social policy, public health and leadership	30	FHEQ 7	1	NUR7067-C
Social psychology and lifespan development	30	FHEQ 7	1	PSY7029-C
Independent study	30	FHEQ 7	1	RAD7022-C
Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists	30	FHEQ 7	1+2 ACYR	PHA7097-C
Prescribing for healthcare professionals	30	FHEQ 7	1+2 ACYR	PRE7004-C
Diagnostic support and living well with dementia	30	FHEQ 7	2	DEM7025-C
Evaluating dementia practice	30	FHEQ 7	2	DEM7026-C
Managing people in health and social care	30	FHEQ 7	2	LEM7032-C
Leading change and service improvement in health and social care	30	FHEQ 7	2	LEM7034-C
Trauma informed maternity care	30	FHEQ 7	2	MID7014-C
Epidemiology, biostatistics and communicable diseases	30	FHEQ 7	2	NUR7069-C
Working with communities to improve health	30	FHEQ 7	2	NUR7072-C
Management of global pharmaceutical supply	30	FHEQ 7	2	PHA7071-C
Prescribing for Pharmacists [intensive]	30	FHEQ 7	2	PHA7096-C
Cognitive Psychology, Psychobiology and Neuroscience	30	FHEQ 7	2	PSY7031-C
Independent study	30	FHEQ 7	2	RAD7022-C
M2 Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods research	30	FHEQ 7	2	HWS7001-C
Independent Prescribing for Pharmacists	30	FHEQ 7	2+3 NSYR	PHA7097-C
Prescribing for healthcare professionals	30	FHEQ 7	2+3 NSYR	PRE7004-C

Programme Stage 1 (Postgraduate Certificate)

Students will study 60 credits at this stage, comprising RES7022-C and 30 credits from the Optional Modules list above.

Table 4: Postgraduate Certificate curriculum structure

Module Title	Selection	Module Credit	Module Level	Study Period	Module code
M1 Research Design, Philosophy & Working Beyond Disciplines	Core	30	FHEQ 7	Semester 1	HWS7000-C
30 credit option module	Option	30	FHEQ 7	Any	

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Certificate if they have successfully completed 60 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Students would usually complete HWS7001-C: M2 Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Research Methods as the optional module if they were planning to exit the programme with a Postgraduate

Certificate, however students are able to choose any of the optional modules listed to obtain the Postgraduate Certificate programme learning outcomes.

Programme Stage 2 (Postgraduate Diploma)

Students will study 60 credits at this stage, comprising HWS7001-C and 30 credits from the Optional Modules list (in [Table 3](#)).

Table 5: Postgraduate Diploma curriculum structure

Module Title	Selection	Module Credit	Module Level	Study Period	Module code
M2 Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Research Methods	Core	30	FHEQ 7	Semester 2	HWS7001-C
30 credit option module	Option	30	FHEQ 7	Any	

Students will be eligible to exit with the award of Postgraduate Diploma if they have successfully completed at least 120 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Stage 3 (Degree of Master)

Students will study 60 credits at this stage, comprising the core modules HWS7002-B and HWS7003-D .

Table 6: Degree of Master curriculum structure

Module Title	Selection	Module Credit	Module Level	Study Period	Module code
M3 Professional Skills for Researchers	Core	20	FHEQ 7	Semester 3	HWS7002-B
M4 Independent Research Project	Core	40	FHEQ 7	Semester 3	HWS7003-D

Students will be eligible for the award of Degree of Master if they have successfully completed at least 180 credits and achieved the award learning outcomes.

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The programme uses an evidence-based blended approach to learning. The learning and teaching strategy includes taught study days, online 'lecture-casts', workshops, debates, case-based interdisciplinary problems and collaborative learning. To support this learning there will also be webinars and online learning packages. The programme aims to make use of students' own experiences, allow choice in learning (optional modules) and assessment (M4 Independent Research Project), provide continual formative feedback and encourage students to move to increasingly advanced stages of personal development.

Much of the learning time will be dedicated to directed study, related to their own area of research. This will give students the opportunity to practice and develop the knowledge, skills and practices necessary to become an independent researcher. The learning process will be supported by formative and summative feedback, reflection on learning experiences and tutorials. Students will

receive regular support from their personal academic tutor to track their progress against the relevant frameworks, identify their learning needs and set their personal learning objectives.

We utilise our virtual learning environment to ensure materials are accessible and our e-portfolio system enables students to demonstrate their development over time.

Students are also able to attend training at our White Rose Doctoral Programme training partner institutions to develop further their networks and interdisciplinary research skills.

Assessment Strategy

We aim to develop the students research skills and ability to identify and meet their own learning needs. A range of formative and summative assessments are used.

Development of research skills are structured to enable students to independently design and undertake their own research by the end of the programme. These include a combination of formative and summative assessments which provide an opportunity to receive feedback which they will be able to apply directly to their next assignment. Different types of assessment are used as preparation for presenting in their research findings in different environments, for example at a conference or as a written piece of work.

A range of scholarly and professional skills for the social and health researcher are also developed and assessed throughout the programme. Students will be introduced to the Researcher Development Framework which will enable them to identify skill they already have and those which could be improved. An e-portfolio will be used to showcase the steps they have taken to address their own learning needs – for example, managing a research project, or developing networks. This will help to ensure they are prepared for further doctoral research and/or ready to join their specialised field's 'scholarly conversation' within academia or in practice.

The range of optional modules provide an opportunity to develop advanced knowledge in areas that are relevant to their own personal practice. These modules are usually multi-disciplinary and will help to develop professional networks as well as broaden understanding of the health care system.

A unique aspect of the programme is Module 4 in which students can choose to work on an independent research project with a choice of methods for presenting their findings (ESRC students will complete this assessment under their studentship supervision).

Assessment, Continuation and Award Regulations

This programme follows the Assessment, Continuation and Award regulations published on the University's website ((<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/about/legal-and-governance/governance/regulations/>) for postgraduate courses (Regulation 9).

Admission Requirements

We take into consideration a number of factors when assessing an application. It's not just about grades; we take the time to understand the applicants personal circumstances and make decisions based on their potential to thrive at university and beyond.

The standard entry requirement for the programme is an undergraduate Honours degree in a social-science or health-scientific discipline related to the course subject, or equivalent, at 2:1 classification or above.

ESRC (WRDTP) and NIHR (INSIGHT) funded students will need to be in receipt of a successful studentship confirmation.

Applicants whose first language is not English will need to demonstrate proficiency in English by achieving IELTS 6.0 (or recognised equivalent test) and with no sub-test (speaking, listening, reading and writing) score less than 5.0. Non-UK applicants requiring a student visa need to achieve IELTS with an overall score of 6.0 with at least 5.5 in the four sub-tests. See the University of Bradford website for more details of equivalent scores we can accept in other English language tests (search for **English Language**).

Recognition of Prior Learning

Applications are welcome from students with non-standard qualifications or with significant relevant experience. Such students will be interviewed for admission to the programme.

If applicants have prior certificated learning or professional experience which may be equivalent to parts of this programme, the University has procedures to evaluate and recognise this learning in order to provide applicants with exemptions from specified modules or parts of the programme.

In the case of ESRC funded studentships, any RPL will be carried out in conjunction with the White Rose Doctoral Training Partnership, as core training may form part of studentship-stipulated conditions.

Information in this document is for the contemporary recruitment cycle and was accurate at time of publication. The current tariff and accepted qualifications for entry onto the programme is published at the online course page: bradford.ac.uk/courses/pg/social-sciences-research-for-healthcare/

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<https://www.bradford.ac.uk/student-contract/>