



Trinity College Dublin

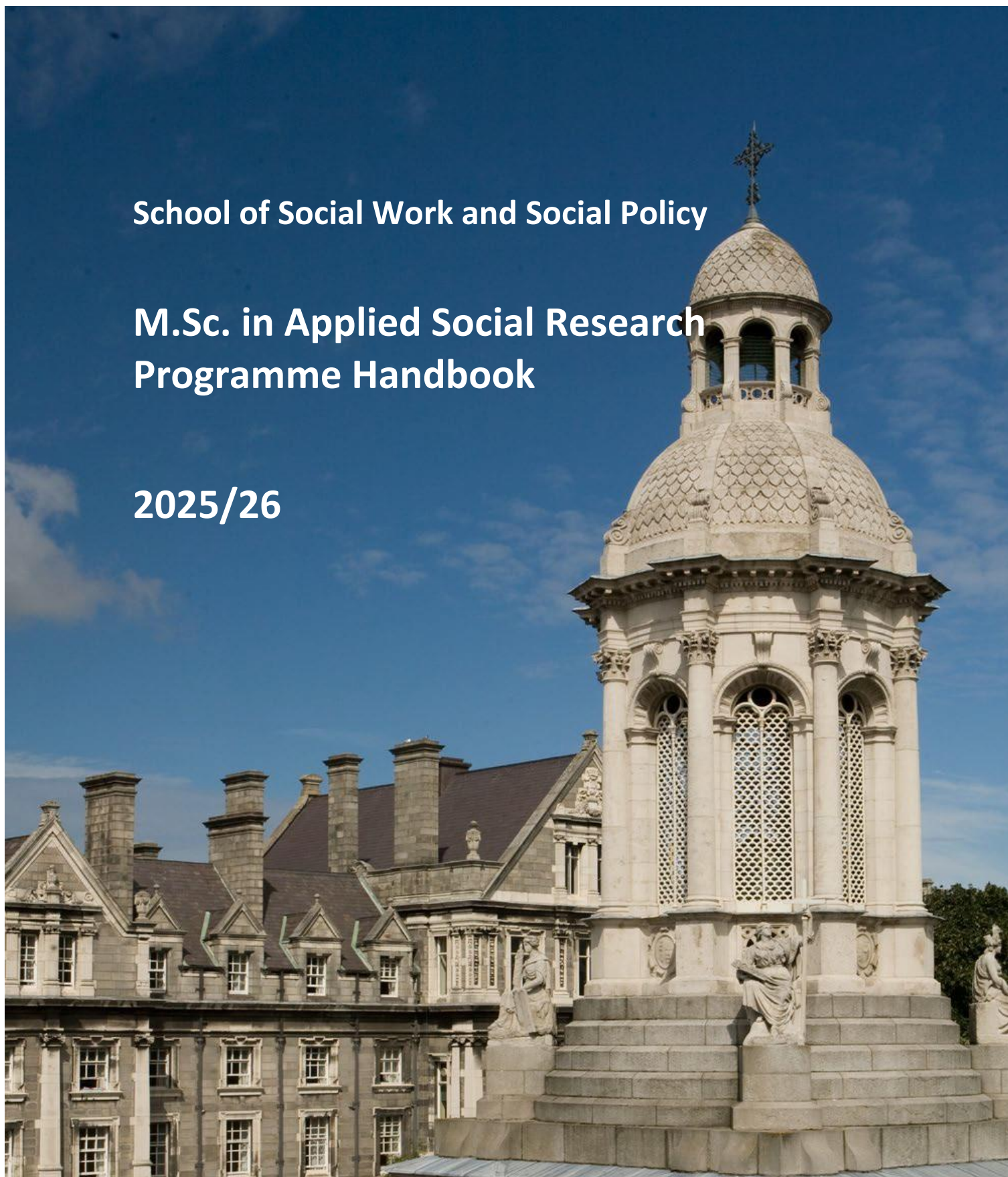
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

School of Social Work and Social Policy

**M.Sc. in Applied Social Research
Programme Handbook**

2025/26



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Alternative formats of the handbook can be made available on request

1. GENERAL REGULATIONS

In the event of any conflict or inconsistency between the General Regulations published in the University Calendar and information contained in programme or local handbooks, the provisions of the General Regulations in the Calendar will prevail.

[Calendar Part III, Section 1: General Academic Regulations](#)

2. STUDENT SERVICES

[Student Services](#) has developed the handbook (embedded below) outlining the support services provided to undergraduate and postgraduate students. The handbook and further information is available from their website and in the [Student Services Handbook](#).

2.1 Academic Support

Student Learning Development	http://student-learning.tcd.ie/
The Library	http://www.tcd.ie/library/
Maths Help Room	http://maths.tcd.ie/outreach/helproom/
Language Learning Centre	http://www.tcd.ie/slscs/clcs/llc/
English for Academic Purposes	https://www.tcd.ie/slscs/english/
Disability Service	http://www.tcd.ie/disability/
Careers Service	http://www.tcd.ie/Careers/

2.2 Health and Wellbeing Support

[The Student Counselling Service](#) aims to provide a free, compassionate, inclusive and student-centred mental health service, delivering high quality counselling, preventative supports, and online services in line with the University strategy.

The SCS offers workshops on coping with the challenges of university, online SilverCloud self-help programmes, solutions-focused one-to-one counselling, and a range of regular group supports. Student counselling services are available to all registered Trinity students. These services are free, professional, and confidential.

To book an appointment, students can email the service and request a SNAP (Support & Needs Assessment Planning) session, or an urgent appointment if required. Note: the SCS front office is operational during work hours (Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm); emails sent outside of this timeframe will be received the next working day.

Contact Details Email: student-counselling@tcd.ie Phone: (01) 896 1407 Website: www.tcd.ie/student-counselling Location: 3rd floor of 7-9 South Leinster Street

Other Health and Well-being services include:

Health Centre	http://www.tcd.ie/collegehealth/
Sport	http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/
Healthy Trinity	http://www.tcd.ie/healthytrinity/
Chaplaincy	http://www.tcd.ie/Chaplaincy/

2.3 Getting Involved

Students' Union	http://www.tcdsu.org/
Clubs	http://www.tcd.ie/Sport/student-sport/
Societies	http://trinitysocieties.ie/
Volunteering	http://www.tcd.ie/civicengagement/
Entrepreneurship/Tangent	http://www.tcd.ie/tangent/
Global Room	http://www.tcd.ie/study/international/trinity-life/global-room/

2.4 Financial Support

Senior Tutor Services	https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/financial-assistance/
Postgraduate Student Assistance Fund	https://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate/financial-assistance/
Students' Union Welfare Loans	https://www.tcdsu.org/welfare-equality/financial-assistance
Bursaries/Prizes (Postgraduate)	https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/graduate-studies-higher-degrees/ (Section XI: Postgraduate Awards and Travel Funds)
Scholarships	https://www.tcd.ie/study/postgraduate/scholarships-funding/

2.5 Administrative Support

Your Tutor	http://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/
Postgraduate Advisory Service	http://www.tcd.ie/seniortutor/students/postgraduate
Academic Registry	http://www.tcd.ie/academicregistry/

2.6 Postgraduate Advisory Service

What?

The Postgraduate Advisory Service (PAS) is a free and confidential service available to all registered postgraduate students in Trinity College. PAS offers a comprehensive range of academic, pastoral and professional supports including one-to-one appointments, workshops and trainings, and emergency financial assistance.

Why?

PAS exists to ensure that all postgraduates students have a dedicated, specialist service independent of the School-system to whom they can turn for support and advice during their time at Trinity. Common concerns students present to PAS include stress; financial worries; queries about regulations or services available at Trinity; supervisor-relationship concerns; academic progression issues; academic appeals.

Who?

The Postgraduate Advisory Service is led by the Postgraduate Student Support Officers who provide frontline support for all Postgraduate students in Trinity. These Support Officers will act as your first point of contact and a source of support and guidance; they can also put you in touch with or recommend other services, depending on your needs.

How?

For an appointment, please e-mail postgrad.support@tcd.ie

Website: https://www.tcd.ie/Senior_Tutor/postgraduateadvisory/

To keep up to date with the supports and events for postgraduate please check out the regular PAS newsletter sent to all postgraduates via email or follow PAS on Instagram @TCDPGAdvisory

2.7 The Academic Registry

The [Academic Registry](#) is Trinity's central hub for student administrative services and is there to provide support at every stage of the student lifecycle – from application to graduation. It can be found in the Watts Building, at the East End of the campus. [Contact and location details](#)

2.8 Information on key campus locations

The Programme Office is located at Room 3063 in the Arts Building, Trinity College Dublin. The opening hours are Monday to Friday 09:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:00.

The [Trinity Orientation Map](#) and the [Searchable Interactive College Map](#) will help you locate

lecture rooms, libraries and all the college key services including Academic Registry, College Health, Student Counselling, Trinity Sport, IT Services etc.

[IT Services computer rooms](#) are located across campus, with both Windows and Mac computers available. Some rooms are open 24-hours and can be accessed using your Trinity ID card. The 1937 Reading Room contains dedicated facilities for postgraduates. Microsoft 365 applications are installed on all computers and a wider portfolio of specialized software is available in specific rooms. For a complete list of the software available in each room review the [software catalogue](#). It is possible to print from any computer in the computer rooms using the [TCD Print Anywhere service](#).

2.9 Lecky, Ussher and former Berkeley Libraries

As part of orientation, students will be offered a tour of your relevant library reading room (though you are welcome to use any of the reading rooms throughout your studies) where you will be shown how to find and borrow books.

The School [Subject Librarian](#) Caroline Montgomery is a good person to turn to if you get stuck or feel like you could be making more of the Library resources available to you. run classes, take individual clinics, and can provide hands-on support in finding your reading list and developing your essay structure. Caroline can be contacted via cmontgom@tcd.ie or you can visit her on the 4th floor of the Ussher Library.

[Group study rooms](#) are available during Library opening hours to registered students in groups of two or more who wish to work together on projects and assignments.

2.10 TCD IT Services

[IT Services](#) provides students with support for everything IT relates in Trinity. On the IT Services website you will find help on getting started, setting up your student email and connecting to Student Wi-Fi. You will also find useful links to other [services provided](#). Students can contact the

IT Service Desk via <https://www.tcd.ie/itservices/contact/>

2.11 TCD VLE – Blackboard

Students can use [Blackboard](#) to access lecture notes, online assignments and other activities. Blackboard can be accessed via mymodule.tcd.ie using your Trinity username and password.

2.12 Disability Service

The Disability Service provides confidential, professional supports for postgraduate students with disabilities in Trinity and the university is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in education and to ensuring that students with a disability have as complete and equitable access to all facets of College life as can reasonably be provided.

Disabilities can be visible or invisible, but regardless of the nature of yours, the Disability Service is here to help you identify and support your needs during your postgraduate study. These supports are tailored and may differ in form or scope from what was needed at undergraduate level.

Working within the service are a team of professionals with expertise in the field of disability, including disability officers, occupational therapists and an assistive technology officer. As a student registered with the service, a number resources and supports are available to you that will assist you throughout your research and study.

Students requiring disability supports at postgraduate level are required to apply for reasonable accommodations with the Disability Service; to learn more please visit: [Reasonable Accommodations Application Process - Trinity disAbility Service | Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#)

After applying for disability support, students will be invited to meet with a Disability Officer on a one-to-one basis to discuss additional disability supports. Including supports needed during placement. More information on supports is available via [Supports & Resources - Trinity disAbility Service | Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#)

Additionally, postgraduates can avail of individual sessions with an occupational therapist who will assist you to develop practical skills and strategies to help you manage your university student life (including balancing wellbeing, research load, and the supervisor-relationship). If you have a disability and need additional support in Trinity, please contact the Disability Service by: Contact info: Email: askds@tcd.ie Phone: 01-896 3111 Website: www.tcd.ie/disability

2.13 Student Representation and Governance

Trinity College Dublin Students Union (TCDSU) represents every student's interest within in Trinity College Dublin. Every Trinity student is automatically a member.

The TCDSU Postgrad Common Room is located on the first floor of House 6, Front Square.

Learn more about the services offered via [TCDSU](#)

2.14 Careers Information

The [Career Advisory Service](#) is one of the most comprehensive and beneficial resources available to Trinity students. They offer weekly, year-round workshops, events, seminars, talks, career fairs, and employer events and presentations. Events are updated regularly on their website and are free to all Trinity students. Examples of some popular on-going workshops include preparing a CV, practice interviews on video with feedback, finding postgraduate funding, and working in Ireland for non-EU students. In addition, they offer one-on-one career advice and counselling. Their website also features a comprehensive list of resources including job openings, funding opportunities, voluntary work, networking events, and podcasts.

3. GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Emergency Procedure

In the event of an emergency, dial Security Services on Extension 1999

Security Services provide a 24-hour service to the College community, 365 days a year. They are the liaison to the Fire, Garda and Ambulance services and all staff and students are advised to always telephone Extension 1999 (+353 1 896 1999) in case of an emergency.

Should you require any emergency or rescue services on campus, you must contact Security Services. This includes chemical spills, personal injury or first aid assistance.

It is recommended that students save at least one emergency contact in their phone under ICE (In Case of Emergency).

It is also recommended that students download the SafeZone app to access alerts for closures in inclement weather, etc.

3.2 Data Protection

Information on Data Protection regarding your student data is available from: [Data Protection for Student Data](#)

3.3 Explanation of ECTS Weighting

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is an academic credit system based on the estimated student workload required to achieve the objectives of a module or programme of study. It is designed to enable academic recognition for periods of study, to facilitate student mobility and credit accumulation and transfer. The ECTS is the recommended credit system for higher education in Ireland and across the European Higher Education Area.

The ECTS weighting for a module is a measure of the student input or workload required for that

module, based on factors such as the number of contact hours, the number and length of written or verbally presented assessment exercises, class preparation and private study time, laboratory classes, examinations, clinical attendance, professional training placements, and so on as appropriate. There is no intrinsic relationship between the credit volume of a module and its level of difficulty.

The European norm for full-time study over one academic year is 60 credits. 1 credit represents 20-25 hours estimated student input, so a 10-credit module will be designed to require 200-250 hours of student input including class contact time, assessments and examinations. ECTS credits are awarded to a student only upon successful completion of the programme year. Progression from one year to the next is determined by the programme regulations. Students who fail a year of their programme will not obtain credit for that year even if they have passed certain component. Exceptions to this rule are one-year and part-year visiting students, who are awarded credit for individual modules successfully completed.

3.4 Dignity and Respect Policy

Trinity is committed to supporting a collegiate environment in which staff, students and other community members are treated with dignity and respect. Bullying and harassment (including sexual and racial harassment) are not tolerated in Trinity. Information about the Dignity and Respect Policy can be found at: [TCD Dignity and Respect Policy](#)

3.5 Anti-Racist and Anti Discriminatory Statement

The School of Social Work and Social Policy, as part of Trinity College, the University of Dublin, is committed to fostering an educative environment wherein diversity is welcomed and celebrated, and everyone is treated fairly. This fair treatment must occur regardless of gender, age, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, civil status, family status, membership of the Travelling Community, socio-economic status or other attributes and circumstances that must not reduce equality of education provision. In fulfilling this commitment, we aim to not be

complacent and to therefore start by acknowledging that racism, systemic inequality, and discrimination exists in our society and that intersecting identities also play a part in this. We fundamentally reject discrimination in all its forms as harmful and wrong and as inconsistent with the mission and values of the University, our School within the University and with the profession of social work which values diversity and inclusion as cornerstones of the profession at all levels.

If during your time as a student you encounter serious and potentially injurious racist or other discriminatory behaviour or language, whether in the classroom or on placement in a way that you feel warrants further scrutiny, please report this to a member of the academic staff who will be able to guide you or otherwise direct you to someone who can. It is School policy to take any act of discrimination or prejudice toward a student during the course of their studies seriously and to be proactive about supporting the student in an appropriate manner.

3.6 Student Complaints Procedure

Trinity College Dublin the University of Dublin, is committed to excellence in teaching, research and service provision. The University aims for the highest standards of quality in all its activities. It takes legitimate student complaints seriously and aims to resolve them in a clear, fair and timely manner.

If you have an academic-related problem or complaint you should discuss it first with the lecturer concerned. If you have a complaint that cannot be resolved through discussion with a course lecturer, you should approach the Course Director. If the problem remains, you should consult the Head of School or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

General issues to do with the structure or content of the course should be channeled through your student representatives to the Course Director and the M.Sc. Course Committee.

Information about the Trinity College Student Complaints Procedure can be found at: TCD [Student Complaints Procedure](#)

3.7 Links to further University Policies and Procedures

The following are links of where to find further information on University regulations, policies, and procedures that you may find useful as a student: [All Academic Policies](#)

4. GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

4.1 Introduction

The M.Sc. in Applied Social Research is a taught Masters course that can be completed on a one-year, full-time or two-year, part-time basis. The course is designed for graduates of social sciences who wish to develop their research skills and gain employment in the rapidly expanding area of research. It is equally suited to those who want to build a suite of research skills for application in their current work environments. The course provides a solid foundation for further postgraduate study, particularly for those interested in pursuing a PhD.

Using a combination of lectures, workshops and practical assignments, this M.Sc. course trains graduates to do the following:

- ✦ Design and conduct primary research using both quantitative and qualitative research methods;
- ✦ Analyse research data using a variety of computer packages; ✦ Write and present research findings to a range of audiences.

Graduates of the M.Sc. in Applied Social Research typically gain employment in a variety of organisations, including public or private research institutes or consultancies, government departments, the NGO sector, and in a range of policy environments.

4.2 Contact Details

Name	Position	Telephone (+353 1 896)	E-mail
Dr Louise Caffrey	Course Director / Lecturer	3708	Caffrelo@tcd.ie
Dr Catherine Conlon	Head of School of Social Work and Social Policy / Lecturer	1312	conlonce@tcd.ie
Dr Eavan Brady	Director of Teaching and Learning Postgraduate	2009	Bradye3@tcd.ie
Ms Mairead Pascoe	Course Administrator	2347	pascoem@tcd.ie
Ms Michaela Nudo	TA for Qualitative Research Methods and Research Ethics		NUDOM@tcd.ie
Dr Philip Curry	Course Lecturers	3238	pcurry@tcd.ie
Dr Paula Mayock		2636	pmayock@tcd.ie
Dr Lynne Cahill			lycahill@tcd.ie
Prof. Nicola Carr			ncarr@tcd.ie
Mr Sergio Perez			perezsr@tcd.ie

The Programme Office is located at Room 3063 in the Arts Building, Trinity College Dublin. The opening hours are Monday to Friday 09:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:00.

4.3 Student Queries and Office Hours

Course lecturers encourage student participation during lectures and workshops and students are expected to avail of class time to ask questions and/or seek clarification on any aspect of course work/content, course assignment and so on.

General requests, questions and queries – articulated in the part of a majority if the entire class- should be directed to the Class Representative, who can present these to the teaching team during Team Meetings or, alternatively, communicate such requests or questions via email to the Course Director and/or individual lecturers at any time during the academic year.

Course lecturers are available to meet individually with students during term time on the days listed below should an issue arise that requires specific discussion. **Please note that students must make an appointment via email with individual lecturers at least one day prior to day listed.**

Lecturer	Office Hours
Dr. Paula Mayock Room 3034 Arts	Mondays, 17:30-18:30
Dr. Philip Curry Room 3028 Arts	Tuesdays, 12:00-13:00
Prof. Nicola Carr Room 3055 Arts	Mondays, 13:00-14:00
Dr Louise Caffrey Room 3065	Tuesdays, 11:00 -12:00

4.4 Key Dates

FULL-TIME AND YEAR 2 PART-TIME STUDENTS

Academic Calendar Week		Outline Structure of Academic Year	Notes
1	25-Aug-25	PG Registration	
2	01-Sep-25	PG Registration	
3	08-Sep-25	Postgraduate orientation week 2025/26 will be from the 8th to 12th September 2025	
4	15-Sep-25	Teaching & Learning	ASR semester 1 teaching begins
5	22-Sep-25	Teaching & Learning	
6	29-Sep-25	Teaching & Learning	
7	06-Oct-25	Teaching & Learning	
8	13-Oct-25	Teaching & Learning	
9	20-Oct-25	Teaching & Learning	
10	27-Oct-25	Reading Week	
11	03-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
12	10-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
13	17-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
14	24-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
15	01-Dec-25	Teaching & Learning	
16	08-Dec-25	Christmas Period (College closed 24 December 2025 to 1 January 2026)	
17	15-Dec-25		
18	22-Dec-25		
19	29-Dec-25		
20	05-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	ASR semester 2 teaching begins
21	12-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	
22	19-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	
23	26-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	
24	02-Feb-26	Teaching & Learning	Monday Public Holiday
25	09-Feb-26	Teaching & Learning	
26	16-Feb-26	Reading Week	
27	23-Feb-26	Teaching & Learning	
28	02-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	
29	09-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	
30	16-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	Tuesday, Public Holiday
31	23-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	
32-39	30-Mar to 22 May 26	Work Placement – 8 Weeks	
40-52	25-May to 21 Aug-26	Dissertation period – 12 weeks	

YEAR 1 PART-TIME STUDENTS

Academic Calendar Week		Outline Structure of Academic Year	Notes
1	25-Aug-25	PG Registration	
2	01-Sep-25	PG Registration	
3	08-Sep-25	Postgraduate orientation week 2025/26 will be from the 8th to 12th September 2025	
4	15-Sep-25	Teaching & Learning	ASR semester 1 teaching begins
5	22-Sep-25	Teaching & Learning	
6	29-Sep-25	Teaching & Learning	
7	06-Oct-25	Teaching & Learning	
8	13-Oct-25	Teaching & Learning	
9	20-Oct-25	Teaching & Learning	
10	27-Oct-25	Reading Week	
11	03-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
12	10-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
13	17-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
14	24-Nov-25	Teaching & Learning	
15	01-Dec-25	Teaching & Learning	
16	08-Dec-25	Christmas Period (College closed 24 December 2025 to 1 January 2026)	
17	15-Dec-25		
18	22-Dec-25		
19	29-Dec-25		
20	05-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	ASR semester 2 teaching begins
21	12-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	
22	19-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	
23	26-Jan-26	Teaching & Learning	
24	02-Feb-26	Teaching & Learning	Monday Public Holiday
25	09-Feb-26	Teaching & Learning	
26	16-Feb-26	Reading Week	
27	23-Feb-26	Teaching & Learning	
28	02-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	
29	09-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	
30	16-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	Tuesday, Public Holiday
31	23-Mar-26	Teaching & Learning	

4.5 Timetable

Lecture Timetables are published to student portals my.tcd.ie by the Academic Registry at least two weeks before the beginning of the academic year. Once a student is registered, they can view their timetable on their student portal. The onus is on students to check their timetable at regular intervals to identify any changes to venues or lecture times. It is not envisaged that there will be any clashing of modules once the on-line enrolment process is in place.

Timetables are also available at: <http://www.tcd.ie/swsp/timetables/>

4.6 Garda Vetting

Students enrolled in Applied Social Research course must undergo Garda (Police) vetting as this is normally required by placement. Students are responsible for securing international police clearance with respects to periods of residence outside of Ireland.

Queries can be emailed to ARgardavetting@tcd.ie

5. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

We are delighted to welcome International Students to the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin. As Ireland's leading university, we pride ourselves on being a global research-led university with a diverse and vibrant university community. The [TCD Welcome Guide](#) provides useful information on how we will support you and guidance on visas, immigration, finance and accommodation which we hope you find useful. The Trinity Global Experience team invite you to email any questions you have to the Global Room team at TCDGlobalRoom@tcd.ie or visit the Global Room's [Instagram pages](#).

Within the School, Dr Simone McCaughren smccaugh@tcd.ie is the Director for Global Engagement and Erin Paulin is Global Officer erin.paullin@tcd.ie. We are here for any queries you have and to help you settle in and navigate your way through your time in the School. Key resources for international students at Trinity we encourage you to connect with are:

- [The Global Room](#), a welcoming student support hub and event space on campus for all Trinity students, managed by the International Student Liaison Officer. We encourage you to visit the space and engage with the lively community there.
- The Global Room service is supported by a team of [Global Ambassadors](#), students trained to help students with a wide range of queries ranging from immigration and accommodation practicalities to the basics of settling into life in Dublin and at Trinity.
- If you are interested in connecting with other TCD offer holders prior to your arrival, download the [Goin' to Trinity](#) where you can connect, ask questions, share information, and much more, including setting up your own interest groups

Our Vice President for Global Engagement invites you to view her welcome message to all international students at the link below:

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5r6kVr2Diw&t=1s>

We wish you an enriching experience as an international student here in the School and look forward to engaging with you during your time with us.

6. INTERNATIONAL POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT COURSE SCHOLARSHIP

The School of Social Work and Social Policy is proud to provide a scholarship for international (non-EU) applicants to our postgraduate taught programmes for 2025/26.

The scholarship is open to any non-EU offer holders to a taught programme in the School of Social Work and Social Policy for Michaelmas term 2025. There is one scholarship per taught programme valued at €3,000, applied to the reduction of non-EU tuition fees applicable to the first year for one-year programmes or split into two €1500 awards for each year of the two-year programme.

Who can apply?

Applicants who have non-EU (international) status and will pay tuition fees at the non-EU rate and who have submitted an application and have received an offer to any of the following taught postgraduate programmes in the School of Social Work and Social Policy (SWSP): Masters of Social Work, Masters of Science in Applied Social Research, Postgraduate Diploma/ Masters of Science in Applied Social Studies. Eligible applicants must have an offer to join one of these taught programmes by 15 April 2025 to be considered for the award.

Selection criteria

Applicants for the scholarship will be assessed based on academic achievement, and evaluation of the applicants' potential to contribute to the overall TCD and SWSP community.

Application process

Submit a complete application to one of the postgraduate taught programmes in the School of Social Work and Social Policy prior to the scholarship deadline of 15 April 2025. Only applicants who meet the programme entry requirements will be considered for the scholarship.

Email erin.paullin@tcd.ie , Global Officer, with any questions.

7. ACADEMIC WRITING

7.1 School Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Policy

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) refers to artificial intelligence systems capable of generating new content, ideas, or data that mimic human-like creativity. It uses deep learning algorithms to produce outputs ranging from text and images to music and code, based on patterns it learns from vast datasets. GenAI uses large language models to analyse and understand the structure of the data it's trained on, enabling the generation of novel content. Examples include ChatGPT, Google Bard, CoPilot, Grammarly and Notion.

The University recognises that GenAI offers new opportunities for teaching, learning, assessment and research. It also recognise that these technologies present challenges and risks, including to academic integrity, ethics, student learning, privacy, impartiality, intellectual property and sustainability.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the core principles of the School of Social Work and Social Policy's approach to student use of GenAI. This policy compliments the College level policy on GenAI while taking into account the unique needs and demands of our School.

Encouraging the development of GenAI literacy

In line with College policy, the School is committed to supporting the opportunity for students and staff to become GenAI literate and fluent, thereby helping them to navigate and respond to the challenges and risks of GenAI in order to harness the potential of GenAI to enhance teaching, learning, assessment and research – and to be prepared for future challenges as these technologies evolve.

Appreciating what GenAI is and is not good for

Within a research context there are some tasks which GenAI is particularly useful for. For example, generating statistical code or as an aid when brainstorming questions to ask participants in a survey or interview.

GenAI may be useful when undertaking discursive writing such as an essay but only when used with discretion and understood as an assistive tool.

For a research literature review for a Capstone, Masters or PhD dissertation it is advisable to use GenAI sparingly, if at all. It may be useful as a way to check grammar and spelling and may sometimes be used to generate ideas but the deep knowledge of the literature that comes from systematic searching, independent reading and the exertion involved in shaping it into your final review are important parts of the research process and will play an important role in deciding the aims and value of your research.

Using GenAI is not recommended for reflective writing, which is often deeply personal and requires use of self, or for applied case study analysis (both very relevant for our School).

Understanding the limitations of GenAI

A crucial part of GenAI literacy is understanding the risks and limitations of these technologies, particularly when used for academic purposes.

While GenAI tools can generate very eloquent, convincing text, they do not store facts and knowledge, rather they generate outputs based on probabilities. Thus, GenAI is prone to making factual errors (called 'hallucinations') which are nonetheless very convincingly presented. This is where academic/professional judgement and domain expertise are very important. If you are using GenAI, you need to double check the information it is giving you as it will present

information which is simply not true. Therefore, it is crucial for any user to fact-check any output from a GenAI tool. Bear in mind that your module coordinator will be a domain expert and hence very likely to spot non-existent or miscited sources.

As well as factual errors users should be aware that GenAI tools can exhibit bias as a result of bias embedded in its training data. GenAI does not engage in systematic and rigorous evaluation of research evidence and should not be used as a substitute.

GenAI has proven to be a very effective tool for exploring information, suggesting activities or plans appropriate to a problem or task, or generating ideas or materials through interactive dialogue.

Ensuring that GenAI use does not impede student learning

Inappropriate use of GenAI can impede student progress in terms of acquiring the Trinity education graduate attributes (independent thinking, effective communication, responsible action, and continuous development) and achieving the learning outcomes of any given module. For their own benefit, it is strongly recommended that students follow the advice of module leads about when to use and not use GenAI tools.

Ensuring that GenAI use complies with academic integrity

Aligned with the [College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research \(2024\)](#), the use of GenAI is permitted unless otherwise stated. Where the output of GenAI is used to inform a student's document or work output, this usage should be acknowledged and appropriately cited, as per [Library guidelines on acknowledging and referencing GenAI](#). From an academic integrity perspective, if a student generates content from a GenAI tool and submits it as his/her/their own work (i.e. fails to acknowledge and appropriately

cite the use of GenAI), it is considered plagiarism, which is defined as academic misconduct in accordance with College [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Note any long verbatim quotation (e.g. more than one paragraph), even with citation, may be considered inappropriate or poor practice in student assessment documents and publications.

Awareness of ethical issues in the use of GenAI

The use of GenAI tools can have important ethical implications which users should be aware of.

The training and use of GenAI systems consume significant amounts of energy and resources, leading to sustainability concerns.

Many GenAI tools are trained on vast amounts of data gleaned from a wide variety of sources. However, the training of such tools is not transparent and the exact extent of their training data and sources remains unknown. Some major GenAI providers have been sued for copyright infringement.

Some GenAI tools that have been trained on material on the open web are likely to have ingested protected personal data, copyright-protected content, copyright-infringing content, misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, defamation, and all manner of other unlawful content. Additionally, some GenAI tools harvest information from user prompts including contextual information from users' interaction with GenAI tools, leading to privacy and intellectual property concerns. GenAI tools vary in regard to the extent of these concerns.

Avoiding unlawful ways of using GenAI

Given the nature of the work of the School of Social Work and Social Policy it is very important that all staff and students understand the ways in which GenAI can be used unlawfully. For

students this is important both for their time in College and in employment afterwards.

Most GenAI tools harvest inputs and use interactions with users for their systems development. Therefore personal, private or sensitive information about colleagues, students or clients / service users should never be used as part of inputs, prompts, queries, instructions and other interactions when using GenAI tools. Even where sharing such private information is not necessarily unlawful, it is against College regulations.

Student work (submitted assessments and contributions) are considered private information, and are not allowed to be uploaded into a third-party GenAI tool for any reason. Similarly, content which is confidential in Trinity or confidential to your user's studies or work (research, teaching or administrative) or for which you do not own the copyright, or which is not publicly available, should not be used in creating inputs, prompts, queries, instructions, contextual information, and other interactions for GenAI.

Using GenAI appropriately on work placement

Students on placement outside of the university should familiarise themselves with and adhere at all times to policies on the use of GenAI in their host organisations.

When preparing placement related coursework, students should never, for any reason, input confidential service user information including, names, locations, case notes or any identifying information into any GenAI tool.

RESOURCES:

Trinity's Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Hub	https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/resources/generative_ai/
College Statement on Artificial Intelligence and	https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/assets/pdf/college-statement-on-genai.pdf

Generative AI in Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Research	
TCD library guide on using GenAI	https://libguides.tcd.ie/gen-ai
College statement on academic integrity	https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/academic-policies/academic-integrity/
UNESCO (2023) Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research.	https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/guidance-generative-ai-education-and-research

7.2 Academic Integrity and Referencing Guide

Plagiarism of any kind is unacceptable in academic work and is penalised. To ensure that you have a clear understanding of what plagiarism is, how Trinity deals with cases of plagiarism, and how to avoid it, you will find a repository of information in [this library guide](#)

We ask you to take the following steps:

- I. Visit the online resources to inform yourself about how Trinity deals with plagiarism and how you can avoid it in [this library guide](#)
- II. You should also familiarize yourself with the Calendar entry on plagiarism and the sanctions which are applied which is located at: [Graduate Studies and Higher Degrees - Calendar - Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#) (also set out below).
- III. Complete the [‘Ready, Steady, Write’](#) online tutorial on plagiarism. Completing the tutorial is compulsory for all students.

- IV. Familiarise yourself with the School's PG Plagiarism Declaration Form that you are required to submit at the start of the year (see Appendix)
- V. Contact your College Tutor, your Course Director, or your Lecturer if you are unsure about any aspect of plagiarism.

Calendar Part III, Section 1: General Regulations & Information, Academic Registry

It is clearly understood that all members of the academic community use and build on the work and ideas of others. However, it is essential that we do so with integrity, in an open and explicit manner, and with due acknowledgement. Any action or attempted action that undermines academic integrity and may result in an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any member of the academic community or wider society may be considered as academic misconduct.

Examples of academic misconduct can be found in the [Curriculum Glossary](#).

51 Academic misconduct in the context of group work

Students should normally submit assessments and/or examinations done in co-operation with other students only when the cooperation is done with the full knowledge and permission of the lecturer concerned. Without this permission, submitting assessments and/or examinations which are the product of collaboration with other students may be considered to be academic misconduct. When work is submitted as the result of a group project, it is the responsibility of all students in the group to ensure, so far as is possible, that no work submitted by the group is plagiarised, or that any other academic misconduct has taken place. In order to avoid academic misconduct in the context of collaboration and group work, it is particularly important to ensure that each student appropriately attributes work that is not their own. Should a module coordinator suspect academic misconduct in a group assignment, the procedure in cases of suspected academic misconduct must be followed for each student.

52 Avoiding Academic Misconduct

Students should ensure the integrity of their work by seeking advice from their module coordinator or supervisor on avoiding academic misconduct. All schools and departments must include, in their handbooks or other literature given to students, guidelines on the appropriate methodology for the kind of work that students will be expected to undertake. In addition, a general set of guidelines for students on avoiding academic misconduct is available at <https://libguides.tcd.ie/academic-integrity>.

53 Procedure in cases of suspected academic misconduct (taught)

If academic misconduct as referred to in §50 above is suspected, the procedure in cases of suspected academic misconduct, available at www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-policies/academic-integrity/ must be followed.

54 Procedures in cases of suspected academic misconduct (research)

In cases of suspected misconduct by postgraduate research students within elements related to their dissertation or thesis, the case should be referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies in the first instance, who may refer the case to the Dean of Research, the Junior Dean, or the School according to the specifics of the case. Where a concern of misconduct arises in the context of taught elements of the research programme, the procedure for managing cases of suspected academic misconduct available at www.tcd.ie/teaching-learning/academic-policies/academic-integrity/ must be followed.

55 If the facts of the case are in dispute, or if the Director of Teaching and Learning (Postgraduate), or designate, feels that the consequences provided for under the academic

misconduct procedure are inappropriate given the circumstances of the case, they may refer the case directly to the Junior Dean, who will interview the student and may implement the procedures as referred to under conduct and college regulations §2. Nothing provided for under the summary procedure diminishes or prejudices the disciplinary powers of the Junior Dean under the 2010 Consolidated Statutes.

A link to the College Statement on Principles on Integrity can be found here [Statement of Principles on Integrity](#)

7.3 Research Ethics

On Ethical approval must be sought and attained by students from the Research Ethics Committee (REC), School of Social Work and Social Policy, for their proposed dissertation research projects. Students are not permitted to commence data collection until ethical approval has been granted.

Further information can be found on the Schools website via [Research Ethics: School of Social Work and Social Policy](#)

Other useful information can be found at: [Trinity Research Policies](#)

8. TEACHING AND LEARNING

8.1 Programme Structure & ECTS Breakdown

The M.Sc. carries 90 ECTS credits and the Postgraduate Diploma carries 60 ECTS credits.

Both the M.Sc. and the P.Grad.Dip include an eight-week work placement module.

The **M.Sc.** is worth 90 ECTS and the associated credits are as follows:

Qualitative Research Methods and Research Ethics	20 ECTS
Quantitative Research Methods	20 ECTS
Research Design, Evaluation Research and Literature Searches and Reviews	10 ECTS
Work Placement	10 ECTS
Research Dissertation	30 ECTS

The **Postgraduate Diploma** is worth 60 ECTS and the associated credits are as follows:

Qualitative Research Methods and Research Ethics	20 ECTS
Quantitative Research Methods	20 ECTS
Research Design, Evaluation Research and Literature Searches and Reviews	10 ECTS
Work Placement	10 ECTS

8.2 Programme Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this M.Sc. programme, students should be able to:

1. Understand the significance of quantitative and qualitative epistemological positions and how they relate to quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research design;
2. Conceptualise a research problem and develop a number of appropriate and/or complementary research designs to bring evidence to bear on the problem;
3. Identify the scope and limitations of both quantitative and qualitative research;
4. Apply the requisite knowledge and skills involved in the collection, management, statistical analysis (using SPSS), interpretation and presentation of results of quantitative research that is appropriate to both data and research questions;
5. Apply the principles of qualitative research to the process of generating data, the selection of data collection methods appropriate to the achievement of specific research aims, and the management and analysis of qualitative data;
6. Identify and respond appropriately to the ethical issues that require consideration in the conduct of research involving human subjects;
7. Apply their knowledge and comprehension, their critical awareness and problem solving abilities, within the context of research or in the development of professional skills, in broader or multidisciplinary areas related to their fields of study;
8. Complete a thesis of 20,000 words that critically applies research methods and theoretical perspectives on a substantive topic related to the course.

8.3 Programme Module Descriptors & Reading Lists

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this module, students will be able to:

1. Comprehend, appraise and evaluate reports of survey research;
2. Design a cross-sectional survey project of moderate complexity;
3. Understand how cross-sectional surveys relate to other common quantitative research designs;
4. Select appropriate statistics to analyse cross-sectional survey data;
5. Comprehend the use of weights with cross-sectional survey data;
6. Apply appropriate statistics to describe sample characteristics and relationships between variables in a survey dataset;
7. Calculate estimates of population parameters on the basis of cross-sectional survey sample data;
8. Develop statistical models of social phenomenon using simple applications of the General Linear Model.
9. Linear Model.

Module Code:	SS8000 (Full-time)/SS7500 (Part-time)
Module Title:	Quantitative Research Methods
ECTS Value:	20
Lecturer(s):	Dr. Philip Curry / Mr. Sergio Perez
Module Overview:	This module incorporates lecture courses in Quantitative Data Analysis with a corresponding practical course in SPSS and Survey Design.

Module Content:	<u>Quantitative Data Analysis</u> This consists of two lectures courses: † <i>Samples and Populations</i> covers a range of statistical procedures for describing samples and making inferences to larger populations. † The <i>General Linear Model</i> introduces the most widely used family of statistical techniques for modelling complex social phenomenon. <u>Data Analysis with SPSS</u> This is a practical course which demonstrates all of the statistical procedures covered through the use of the statistical package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The course is taught through a combination of pre-recorded lectures and SPSS workshops. Students will gain practical knowledge on data manipulation, descriptive statistics, simple bivariate analysis, non-parametric tests, and more advanced statistical techniques including scaling and multivariate statistical analysis. <u>Survey Design</u> This section focuses on the use of surveys for the collection of quantitative data and includes an introduction to such issues as the formulation of testable hypotheses, questionnaire design, sampling, administrative procedures and the reporting of results.
Assessment:	<u>Quantitative Data Analysis</u> Direct assessment for this course is based on three multiple choice exams, contributing 5% of the overall grade awarded for the M.Sc. <u>Data Analysis with SPSS</u> Direct assessment for this course is based on two individual secondary analysis assignments, contributing 10% of the overall grade awarded for the M.Sc. <u>Survey Design</u> Each student will be required to complete a survey design project, which involves developing a proposal for a survey and then designing a suitable self-completion survey instrument, administration procedure and sampling strategy to complete it. This project will contribute 10% of the overall grade awarded for the M.Sc.

Bibliography	Lecture notes and other materials for this course are provided but further reading is essential. Core text books that you should consider purchasing are indicated with a double asterisk (**). ** Field, A. (2024). <i>Discovering Statistics using SPSS</i> (6th Ed.). Sage: London Tabachnick, B.G. & Fidell, L.S. (2018) <i>Using Multivariate Statistics</i> (7th edition). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. **DeVaus, D. (2013) <i>Surveys in Social Research</i> (6th). Routledge. Atkenson, L. R. and Alvarez, R. (Eds) (2018) <i>The Oxford Handbook of Polling and Survey Methods</i>. Oxford University Press.
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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS AND RESEARCH ETHICS

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the epistemological foundations of qualitative research;
2. Identify principal differences between traditional scientific (quantitative) approaches and qualitative approaches (e.g. assumptions of the world, how the process is conducted, what can be studied);
3. Recognise and identify the types of information or data accessible through different qualitative methods of data collection (e.g. individual interviews, focus groups, participant observation etc.);
4. Select appropriate qualitative techniques for particular research questions.
5. Identify and deploy the sampling techniques appropriate to qualitative research (e.g., purposive sampling, snowball sampling);
6. Design and conduct a small-scale qualitative (interview-based) research project;
7. Analyse qualitative data and present qualitative research findings in a research report;
8. Identify ethical research issues that arise in the conduct of research generally and when researching specific groups and topics;
9. Complete a research ethics application form, including a research proposal, for submission to the School's Research Ethics Committee.

Module Code:	SS8001 (Full-time)/SS7501 (Part-time)
Module Title:	Qualitative Research Methods and Research Ethics
ECTS Value:	20
Lecturer:	Associate Professor Paula Mayock
TA	Ms Michaela Nudo
Module	This module will introduce students to the epistemological

Overview:	underpinnings of qualitative research, develop their knowledge of a variety of methods of qualitative data collection and analysis, give practical guidance on the conduct of research, and enable students to design and undertake their own independent qualitative research projects. The module will also examine contemporary ethical issues in research and develop students' skills in applying ethical theories and principles to practical settings. This component of the module is designed to support students to understand research activity as more than the generation of research questions, collection and analysis of data, and dissemination of results. The design and conduct of research also involve researchers in a complex set of relationships that require decisions that involve ethical questions and considerations of values. Module delivery will involve a blend of lectures and workshops. Students will be asked to complete one or a number of tasks (e.g. reading an article/book chapter or watching a YouTube video) in advance of some lectures or workshops and will be strongly encouraged to contribute to class discussions on various methodological issues, procedures and challenges. While the lectures aim to cover a wide range of theoretical and methodological issues, the module is designed to equip students with the skills to carry out a qualitative research project and will cover the design, planning, data collection, and analysis phases of the research process. Students will receive practical guidance on how to set up and manage a qualitative research project, collect data via the conduct of individual in-depth interviews and other qualitative data collection methods, turn their data into meaningful findings, and write them up in a research report. Issues such as project planning and administration, sampling, access negotiation, analysis of interview data, and the writing up and presentation of qualitative data will be covered.
Module Content:	<u>Qualitative Research Methods</u> Early lectures introduce the key concepts of qualitative research, beginning with the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative research, i.e. its roots in the interactionist and phenomenological paradigms of social sciences. A central aim is to introduce the major research paradigms and techniques that are at the core of contemporary approaches used to study social phenomena. Philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology) and about knowledge and how it can be attained (epistemology) will be explored. At the practical level of planning a

	research project, lectures will cover: access to research settings, sampling techniques, researcher roles, researching sensitive topics, and dealing with unanticipated challenges. A series of lectures throughout the first and second semesters will critically examine several data collection methods, including the qualitative interview, focus groups, biographical interviewing, fieldwork and observation, ethnography, and mixed methods research. These lectures will also cover the design of qualitative research instruments (i.e. interview schedules, focus group discussion guides). The course places a strong emphasis on the individual interview, which is the most commonly used data collection method within qualitative research. Several workshop sessions will be dedicated to the planning and design of the interview-based qualitative group project, which comprises 15% of the overall grade awarded for the M.Sc. (see below). During these workshops students will also have opportunities to practice their interviewing skills. During the second semester considerable time is devoted to the analysis of qualitative data, with a strong focus on the Grounded Theory approach and thematic analysis. Alternative approaches to qualitative data analysis are discussed, as are techniques and procedures for data entry, storage and management, coding and the development of category systems, analytic memo writing, and the identification of relationships between categories. Lectures during this semester also examine the criteria used in establishing and assessing the quality of research for the qualitative researcher, with specific attention to the issues of validity, reliability and reflexivity. <u>Research Ethics</u> Ethical considerations are an integral part of all research projects. Recent years have seen a growth in awareness of the need for ethical protocols and procedures that not only protect the interests and well-being of research participants, but also of the researcher, their host institution and funding body. In this part of the module, we explore the need for rigorous ethical protocols throughout all stages of the research process. This includes the research design phase, the recruitment of participants, the implementation of the research instrument, and the research interactions, the analysis of data, reporting and dissemination. Teaching on research ethics is both analytical and applied and provides guidance on preparing an ethics application for submission to the Research Ethics Committee (REC), School of Social Work and Social Policy.
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Assessment:	<u>Qualitative Research Methods</u> Assessment is in two parts which, together, comprise 25% of the overall grade awarded for the degree: <i>Qualitative Group Project</i> Students form groups (usually three or four people per group) and work together to produce an interview-based qualitative group project. Each group identifies a topic that they wish to research, develops research questions, and designs an interview schedule, participant information leaflet and consent form. All group participants then conduct three individual interviews (a total of 9-12 interviews per group project), which form the basis of the qualitative group project and will be submitted as a qualitative research report. All students are required to submit the transcript of their <u>first</u> interview to via Blackboard for comment. At this stage, advice is provided to students on how to improve their interviewing skills etc. The group project is submitted in late March and constitutes 20% of the overall grade awarded for the degree. It is the completed group research project rather than each individual's contribution that is assessed. The maximum word count for this assignment is 10,000 words. <i>Submission of Individual Interview</i> Each student selects and submits the transcript of what they judge to be their best individual interview for assessment. The individual interview carries 5% of the overall grade awarded for the degree. <u>Research Ethics and the Dissertation</u> Please note that students whose dissertation is based on primary research are required to make a formal application to the School's Research Ethics Committee (REC) prior to undertaking data collection related to their dissertation work.
Recommended Reading:	<u>Qualitative Research Methods</u> • Charmaz, K. (2024) <i>Constructing Grounded Theory</i>. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. • Creswell, J.W. (2023) <i>Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches</i>. 5rd Ed. London: Sage. • Denscombe, M. (2021) <i>The Good Research Guide: Research Methods for Small-scale Social Research Projects</i>. 7th Ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press. • Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) (2011) <i>The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Kvale, S. (2014) *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. 3rd Ed. London: Sage.
- Mason, J. (2017) *Qualitative Researching*. 3rd Ed. London: Sage.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. & Saldaña, J. (2014) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. 3rd Ed. London: Sage.
- Ritchie, J. & Lewis J. (2014) *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. 2nd Ed. London: Sage.
- Robson, C. (2024) *Real World Research*. 5th Ed. John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Rubin, H. & Rubin, I.S. (2012) *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Research Ethics

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- Mertens, D.M. & Ginsberg, P.E. (2009) *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics*. London: Sage.
- Oliver, P. (2003) *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
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** Please note that you will receive additional recommended reading for specific qualitative research methods (interviewing, focus groups and so on) throughout the year. Relevant readings will also be uploaded to Blackboard at regular intervals. Students will be required to read assigned articles or book chapters ahead of some lectures. These will be made available via Blackboard.

RESEARCH DESIGN, EVALUATION RESEARCH AND LITERATURE SEARCHES AND REVIEWS

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Conduct a computerised search for relevant research and literature on a topic under investigation;
2. Write a review of that literature/research that is focused on the research question posed;
3. Devise a research design to investigate the research problem or research questions posed;
4. Assess the feasibility of the project in terms of access negotiation to research participants required for the specified research design;
5. Recall definitions of evaluation research designs and explain the designs' rationale and basic functioning in respect of Experimental Designs, Process evaluation and Theory Based Evaluation.
6. Evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and appropriate use of each of these evaluation designs and come to conclusions about the quality of individual evaluation studies.
7. Formulate and construct balanced and persuasive arguments to justify evaluation research designs.
8. Design a Theory of Change for an intervention.
9. Recall practical strategies for managing the evaluation role and apply these to augment evaluation research designs.

Module Code:	SS8002 (Full-time)/SS7502 (Part-time)
Module Title:	Research Design, Evaluation Research, and Literature Searches and Reviews
ECTS Value:	10
Lecturer(s):	Prof. Nicola Carr, Dr. Louise Caffrey & Dr. Lynne Cahill

Module Overview:	<u>Research Design</u> This component of the module focuses on the process of designing research at both a conceptual and practical level. It equips students to identify from among the broad range of research strategies encountered across the course what is the 'best fit' for a research question. Students are encouraged to: a) critically evaluate the implications of selecting different methods; b) reflect upon the merits of alternative approaches; c) consider ethical issues raised by each approach considered. A core focus is on coherence in research design by aligning ontology and method. Students are brought through stages of developing a research design from an initial research question, planning for the implementation of their research design and strategies for disseminating research outputs. We cover how to write and present a research proposal in a professional research context. The course uses real world applied research examples to demonstrate research design, planning and implementation processes. Learning Outcomes: Students completing the Research Design component of the module will: - Understand the ontological, epistemological and methodological components of designing a research project - Acquire practical techniques to employ in the process of moving from research topic to research design - Appreciate key steps involved in writing and presenting a research proposal <u>Evaluation Research</u> The evaluation component of the module aims to equip students with the methodological knowledge to design and critically appraise evaluation research designs. The course covers the rationale and basic functioning of key evaluation designs, including experimental designs, process evaluation and theory-based evaluation. Students will be supported to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses and appropriate use of each of these designs and to come to conclusions about the quality of individual evaluation studies. As well as covering the major design issues, the module will provide students with practical knowledge for managing the evaluation-researcher role. Learning will be supported
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	through interactive lectures. Learning outcomes: 1. Explain the rationale, structure, and use of key evaluation designs (experimental, process and theory-based) 2. Critically appraise the strengths, weaknesses, and applicability of various evaluation designs 3. Evaluate the quality of individual evaluation studies 4. Demonstrate practical understanding of the evaluation-researcher role in real-world settings. <u>Literature Searches and Reviews</u> The course aims to develop academic search capabilities and competencies, enhance students' abilities to conduct effective and efficient academic searches, and develop evidence informed decision making and writing which are vital to a successful academic and professional career. Literature search and review are crucial skills in the conduct of research, and the module commences the student's development on the research skills pathway developed for the Applied Social Research Masters. Students will learn about the variety of data sources available, search strategies, the use of search terms and best practice in documenting search protocols and results. Students will conduct database searches in class related to their research interests. This course also covers the process of writing literature review, issues in evaluating and organising evidence, and academic writing style. Module Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this module, students should be able to: 1. Conduct computerised searches for relevant research and literature on a given topic 2. Evaluate evidence from different research sources 3. Write a focused review of that literature/research 4. Adhere to the principles of academic integrity and complete a review free of plagiarism Teaching and Learning Methods: Lectures, demonstrations, and practical classes involving the
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	application of literature search.
Assessment:	The Research Design, Evaluation Research and Literature Searches and Reviews module is worth 10% of the final grade for the degree. <u>Research Design</u> This course is assessed by means of one individual project assignment, a research proposal which students develop and present. Submission involves both presentation and a written-up format. This assignment is worth 5% of the overall grade awarded for the degree. <u>Evaluation Research</u> This module is assessed via a written assignment in which students apply their learning on evaluation methods. The Evaluation Research assignment is worth 5% of the overall grade awarded for the degree. <u>Literature Searches and Reviews</u> Students are expected to demonstrate the skills learnt on this course in the assignments submitted to other modules and in their dissertation. In addition, the literature searching and review writing skills taught on this course are explicitly assessed as part of the Survey Design assignment.
Recommended Reading:	<u>Research Design</u> Core Texts Flick, U. (2020) <i>Introducing Research Methodology: Thinking your way through your research project</i> London: Sage Gilbert, N. and Stoneman, P. (2016) (Eds) <i>Researching Social Life</i>. 4th Edition. London: Sage Recommended Texts Bryman, A. (2016) <i>Social Research Methods (5th Edition)</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **<u>de Vaus</u>, D. (2001). <i>Research Design in Social Research</i>. London: Sage. Creswell, J. (2014) <i>Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches</i>. London: Sage. Denscombe, M. (2002) <i>Ground Rules for Good Research</i>. Buckingham: Open University Press. Ritchie J and Lewis J.(2005) <i>Qualitative Research Practice</i> (chapter 3) London: Sage Robson, C. (2011) <i>Real world research: a resource for users of social research methods in applied settings</i>. Wiley-Blackwell.

	Tartling, R. (2006) <i>Managing Social Research : A Practical Guide</i>. London: Routledge. Yin R. (2014) <i>Case Study Research: Design and Methods</i>, London: Sage . Bell, J. (2005). <i>Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science</i>. Maidenhead: Open University. Blaxter, L. Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (1996) <i>How to Research</i>. Buckingham: Open University Press. Hart, C. (1998). <i>Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination</i>. London: Sage Publications. Thomas, Gary. (2013) <i>How to do your research project: a guide for students in education and applied social sciences</i>. Sage. White, P. (2009). <i>Developing research questions: a guide for social scientists</i>. Palgrave Macmillan. <u>Evaluation Research</u> Cartwright, N., & Hardie, J. (2012). <i>Evidence-based policy: a practical guide to doing it better</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press Fox, C., Grimm, R., & Caldeira, R. (2017). <i>An Introduction to Evaluation</i>. London: SAGE Kellogg Foundation, 2017, <i>The Step-By-Step Guide to Evaluation</i>. Available here: http://ww2.wkkf.org/digital/evaluationguide/view.html#p=6 Moore, G. F., Audrey, S., Barker, M., Bond, L., Bonell, C., Hardeman, W., . . . Wight, D. (2015). <i>Process evaluation of complex interventions: Medical Research Council guidance</i>. <i>BMJ</i>, 350, h1258. Rossi, P.H., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). <i>Evaluation: A systematic approach</i>. London: Sage publications. Weiss, C. H. (1998). <i>Evaluation</i>. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River. <u>Literature Searches and Reviews</u> Bettany-Saltikov, J and McSherry, R. (2016) <i>How to do a Systematic Literature Review in Nursing: A step by step guide</i>. (2nd.ed.). Open University Press. Fink, Arlene. (2010). <i>Conducting Research Literature Reviews: From the</i>
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	internet to paper. (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks, California, Sage. Jesson, Jill, K., Matheson, Lydia, and Lacey, Fiona M. (2011). Doing Your Literature Review: traditional and systematic techniques. London: Sage. Kugley S, Wade A, Thomas J, Mahood Q, Jørgensen AMK, Hammerstrøm K, Sathe N. (2017) Searching for studies: a guide to information retrieval for Campbell systematic reviews. Oslo: The Campbell Collaboration. Ridley, Diana. (2012) The Literature Review. A step by step guide for students. (2nd ed.) London: Sage Publications Ltd.
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8.4 Work Placement

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of the work placement, students will be able to:

1. Apply their knowledge of social research theory and practice to a 'real world' research environment;
2. Apply their research skills (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods research skills) within a work environment where social research activity is a major focus of that employment setting;
3. Demonstrate that they have gained experience in one or a number of the following research tasks: reviewing literature, data collection, data analysis, writing research findings, assisting with the dissemination of research findings, project administration;
4. Demonstrate experience and learning that enhances their career opportunities.

The Work placement module carries 10 ECTS. Full-time students spend eight weeks on a work placement during the third semester (Trinity Term). Part-time students complete the work placement during the third semester of Year 2. Students already in relevant employment can complete their work placement in that setting. Exemptions from the work placement may be granted at the discretion of the Course Director in exceptional cases.

During the work placement students get the opportunity to work on research projects alongside experienced researchers/research teams within their host organisations. Each year students are offered placement opportunities with a range of the most reputable Irish research institutes and consultancies, Government Departments and semi-state agencies, as well as various professional organisations. Normally students are on work placement from April to May.

As far as possible, work placements for students are organised during Semester 2, using the following procedure:

- A list of available workplaces is distributed to students early in the second Semester.
- Students then submit, via email, a list of their three preferred placement choices to the Course Director, Dr. Louise Caffrey (louise.caffrey@tcd.ie) and Course Administrator, Mairead Pascoe (pascoem@tcd.ie) along with a copy of their Curriculum Vitae (CV).
- CVs are then circulated by the Course Administrator to each of the work placements selected by students.
- Following this, students are usually invited to attend for interview at all or a number of their selected work placements.

While the M.Sc. Course Director and teaching team make every effort to assist students in finding a work placement, it is ultimately each student's responsibility to secure a work placement. If a student is experiencing difficulty in this regard s/he is advised to contact the Course Director. **Please note the following:**

1. Prior to taking up this work placement students must have satisfactorily completed and submitted all course assignments with the exception of the research proposal for their dissertation.
2. During the work placement period, students are required to attend College on a designated number of afternoons to present their proposed dissertation topic and research design (part-time student make these presentations in Year 2). Please see section on Research Dissertation, for further detail.

The Work Placement & Attendance at College

During the work placement period, students will be required to attend one call-in day. This will happen during the latter half of the work placement period (the date will be provided before students commence the work placement). On the call-in day, students will present their proposed dissertation ideas.

It is the responsibility of all students to inform their employers of this requirement. Normally, students arrange with their employers to 'pay back' this time. Please note that attendance at these presentations is compulsory.

Work Placements and Payment

Students do not normally receive payment for the research tasks they undertake while on placement. In other words, there is no financial remuneration offered by most host organisations to students. There are exceptions. In general, however, **students should not expect to receive payment during the placement period.** Some work placements offer a small stipend to cover travel costs etc. **Please note that the Course Director does not discuss payment with host organisations and has no role in the decisions made by host organisations in this regard.**

Assessment of Work Placement

Since the primary aim of the Work Placement module is to enable students to gain 'real world' research experience, this module's ECTS are accrued by students via **self-assessment**. On completion of the work placement, students are required to complete and submit a self-assessment form to the Course Administrator and Course Director. This form requires students to provide and account of the following: a) the kinds of research tasks (including administrative tasks) they undertook during the work placement and; b) the work placement experience in

general and their learning. Students are also encouraged to provide other comments and reflections on the work placement experience.

The self-assessment form will be posted on Blackboard in due course.

8.5 Research Dissertation

Learning Outcomes: On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and formulate a set of appropriate researchable questions and present them in a research proposal;
2. Construct a plan for the conduct of a research project;
3. Devise a methodological approach appropriate to the research design and the research questions;
4. Recognise the continuity between the research proposal, the research process and the research report;
5. Select and review literature relevant to the research problem;
6. Show evidence of using ethical principles in conducting research;
7. Apply the requisite knowledge and skills involved in analysis and interpretation that is appropriate to both the data and research questions;
8. Write a dissertation containing the following: a complete review of relevant literature; a description of the research design and research methods used; presentation of research findings; and a discussion of the research findings with conclusions drawn.

The research dissertation is a major component of the degree of M.Sc. in Applied Social Research, comprising 40% of the overall grade with 30 ECTS. The dissertation should demonstrate that students have the ability to complete an applied research assignment from the initial stages of collecting primary data/accessing secondary data to the presentation of a final report. It should include: a complete review of relevant research literature; a description of the research design and research methods used; presentation of research findings; and a discussion of the research findings with conclusions drawn. Quantitative data collected for the research should be analysed using appropriate statistical techniques. In the case of qualitative research, data should be

analysed using the recommended coding and data management procedures.

The writing up stage of the dissertation is crucially important in the case of all research projects and is time consuming. The data analysis must be clearly written using appropriate heading, the findings clearly presented, and appropriate conclusions drawn. The report must be word processed and professionally presented. It will be a maximum length of 20,000 words and follow the academic citation conventions of the Harvard system. Further information on dissertation requirements is provided in the Dissertation Handbook which will be made available to students during the second semester.

The 40% of marks awarded for the Research Dissertation are broken down into the following subsections:

	Out of 100
Title, abstract & references	10
Coverage of background to research	20
Research design	20
Evidence of applied research skills	20
Evaluation of findings	20
Structure and presentation	10

Please note that these headings represent dimensions for evaluation and need not correspond to actual section headings in your dissertation.

Suggested Readings

Bell, J. and Waters, S. (2018). Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science (7th ed). Maidenhead: Open University.

Denscombe, M. (2017) The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research projects (6th Ed). OUP: Oxford.

Research Proposal

Students themselves select the topic for the dissertation, usually during their work placement.

All students must submit an application to the Research Ethics Committee (REC), School of Social Work and Social Policy (see below for further detail and instructions) prior to embarking on their dissertation research. This application must outline the research aims, proposed research methods, approach to sampling and recruitment, and so on; importantly, students must also respond to any ethical issues that may arise during the course of the conduct of their proposed research. Students must adhere to the template (and word count limit) provided by REC.

Dissertation Presentations

All students must present their proposed dissertation research topic (including research aims, methodological approach, sampling and recruitment procedures, ethical considerations) to the class and course lecturers on a call-in day that takes place during the work placement period (the date will be provided before the commencement of the work placement). This provides opportunities for students to get feedback from both their course lecturers and peers. Issues including access negotiation, sampling, and ethical issues arising from the proposed research must be considered at this stage and resolved satisfactorily before the research proposal is finalised. Each student's dissertation proposal must be approved by their dissertation supervisor (see below for information on the allocation of supervisors), as well as the School's Research Ethics Committee, before the research can proceed.

Attendance at Dissertation Presentations is compulsory and, as with other classes and guest lectures, attendance is taken.

Dissertation Library

Students may view past dissertations online via the Local Access tab on the School of Social Work and Social Policy webpage: <https://www.tcd.ie/swsp/local/>. You will be prompted to enter your college user ID and password.

8.6 Dissertation Supervision

Each student is assigned an academic supervisor. Students are often supervised by one of the M.Sc. course lecturers and, in other cases, by a member of the academic staff of the School of Social Work and Social Policy. In fewer cases, students are supervised by a member of academic staff from another School within TCD. Supervisors are allocated by the Course Director with due consideration of both the substantive topic of the proposed research and the proposed methodology. Efforts are made to match students' research interests with those of their supervisors.

Students and their supervisors generally agree to meet at suitable times (between June and August) to discuss all aspects of their research and to review progress. The supervisor will read one complete draft of the dissertation provided it is submitted by the student well ahead of the final submission deadline. The role of the supervisor is to advise and offer suggestions; however, the student is ultimately responsible for the conduct of his/her own research, as well as for writing it up properly and ensuring that it is submitted in a timely fashion. It is also the responsibility of the student to make contact with and arrange meetings with their supervisor.

A Dissertation Handbook will be posted on Blackboard during the second semester. It is strongly recommended that you read this document carefully.

Submitting the Dissertation

You will need to submit the following:

- ✚ One electronic copy submitted to BLACKBOARD
- ✚ In the case of projects based on qualitative interviews, students must submit the interviews to Mairead Pascoe (pascoem@tcd.ie) by email (as one bound document, NOT as separate interviews).

Please ensure that electronic copies are SINGLE DOCUMENTS submitted in PDF FORMAT.

8.7 Guest Lecture Seminar Series

A list of guest lectures will be provided at the beginning of each semester and communicated to students via email and Blackboard. These guest lectures are included on the timetable to ensure that students:

- ✚ are aware of a range of research projects currently ongoing in Ireland;
- ✚ learn about the diverse range of research designs, approaches and methodologies currently in use;
- ✚ gain exposure to the working intricacies (including methodological challenges) associated with the conduct of social science research;
- ✚ become acquainted with the wider research community.

Guest lectures are delivered by subject specialists from the public and private sectors who have effectively conducted applied research in one or a number of areas. These lectures vary from year to year and may include the following types of topics: health related topics, ageing, ethnic minorities, poverty/socio-economic disadvantage, equality policies and legislation, population

health, sexuality/sexual health, mental health, educational disadvantage, and research involving children and young people.

Although a guest lecture will not be given on all weeks of each semester, students can expect to attend at least seven such lectures during each semester.

Attendance at these lectures is compulsory.

Part-time students will attend Guest Lectures in Year 2 but may also attend Guest Lectures during their first year if they wish.

8.8 Marking Criteria for Assignments

The pass mark for all written assignments and the dissertation is 50%.

Marking Criteria for Assignments

Qualitative Research Methods and Research Ethics Assignments

Qualitative Interviews are marked out of 100 according to the following criteria:

Structure of the Interview	20
Listening Skills	20
Use of Probing/Follow-up Questions	20
Overall Content of the Interview	20
Overall 'Flow'/Rapport of the Interview	20
TOTAL	100

Qualitative Group Projects are marked out of 100 according to the following criteria:

Title, Abstract and Referencing	10
Background & Literature Review	20
Research Methodology	20
Quality and Extent of the Data Analysis & Findings	20
Discussion / Conclusions	20
Structure, Writing and Presentation	10
TOTAL	100

Quantitative Research Methods

The *Survey Design* assignment is marked out of 100 according to the following criteria:

Title, Abstract and Referencing	10
Background & Literature Review	20
Use of existing published measures (scales)	10
Creation of original scales	10
Sampling strategy	20

Administration procedure	20
Structure, Writing and Presentation	10
TOTAL	100

The SPSS assignments are each marked out of 100 according to the following criteria:

Accuracy of statistical analysis	35
Commentary and interpretation	35
Formatting and presentation of statistical results	10
Use of tables and graphs	10
Writing and presentation	10
TOTAL	100

Research Design

Research Design Assignment is marked out of 100 according to the following criteria:

Marks awarded for (emphasis on...)	
Title <i>Ability to encapsulate inquiry in 15 word title</i>	10
Abstract and proposal <i>Succinct and clear distillation of idea and method within 150 word count set out in assignment</i>	20
Rationale and background of proposed study <i>Compelling and succinct argument persuading reader of why this inquiry and method will add to existing knowledge within 120 word count as set out in assignment. Literature review section will also be referred to here.</i>	20
Research question, aims and objectives <i>Ability to distill down focus of inquiry into coherent and researchable questions, further articulated out as aims and objectives within 200 word count as set out in assignment</i>	20
Outline of the research design <i>Formulation of a robust and realisable research method that flows from research questions, aims and objectives; shows ontological and epistemological coherence and is realistic having regard to the time-frame and resources available to the student within 1000 word count as set out in assignment</i>	30
TOTAL	100

Evaluation Research

Evaluation Research Assignment is marked out of 100 according to the following criteria:

Name and briefly describe the intervention • Clear explanation of aims (short, medium and long term outcomes) of the intervention and its activities (inputs, outputs, including activities and participants)	20
Describe what the design of an RCT of your intervention would look like • Good use of methodological literature throughout • Specific application of RCT design to this intervention • Appropriateness of: - Research questions for RCT design - Recruitment strategy - Sampling method - Basic analysis • Consideration of any ethical constraints -	40
Consider the strengths and weaknesses of an RCT design to evaluate this intervention • Logical, succinct & balanced argument • Strongly supported by referenced methodological literature throughout • Demonstrates strong understanding of rationale for RCT, its strengths and weaknesses and alternative design(s)	40

8.9 Marking Criteria for Dissertation

1st Grade 80+	
Introduction and Rationale	Optimally formulated research question(s)/ problem with a clear subject-based focus and excellent, convincing rationale.
Literature Review	Evidence of extensive reading that has been thoroughly and critically evaluated; optimal understanding of the literature with excellent identification of gaps/ issues that are explicitly related to the research question; very good evidence of independent research for relevant sources. Excellent organisation of the literature reviewed.
Data Analysis	Results/ findings are optimally structured and articulated and consistently related to the research question(s)/ problem; data are very clearly and critically analysed and evaluated; data are clearly and unambiguously presented and wellorganised; strengths and limitations are discussed in a convincing manner.
Conclusions	Conclusion is excellent, providing a clear synthesis of the work and convincing discussion of the contribution of the findings; a clear understanding of the strengths and limitations of research is conveyed; strong and appropriate connections made between findings and the literature reviewed; future work and recommendations are convincing, reasonable and well-structured and defined.
Structure/ Organisation/ Presentation	Text and argument systematically and explicitly organised; without any significant lacunae or repetition; identifies and discussed pertinent issues indepth; within maximum word count limit; excellent presentation and use of referencing conventions; accurate grammar, spelling and used of language.
Overall	Work of excellent or outstanding quality, showing independent thought and critical insight.

1st Grade 70-79%	
Introduction and Rationale	Clearly formulated research question(s)/problem with a clear subject-based focus and a strong and convincing rationale.
Literature Review	Evidence of extensive reading that has been thoroughly and critically evaluated; showing a clear understanding of the literature alongside the identification of gaps/issues that are clearly related to the research question(s); evidence of independent research for relevant sources.
Data Analysis	Results/findings are well structured and articulated and consistently related to the research question(s)/problem; data are clearly and unambiguously presented and well-organised; strengths and limitations are discussed in a convincing manner.

Conclusions	Conclusion is comprehensive; providing a convincing discussion of the contribution of the findings; conveying a clear understanding of the strengths and limitations of the research; appropriate connections made between the findings and the literature review; future work and recommendations are clearly outlined and well structured.
Structure/ Organisation/ Presentation	Text and argument systematically organised; without any significant lacunae or repetition; identifies and discusses pertinent issues; within maximum word count limit; strong presentation and consistent use of referencing conventions; accurate grammar, spelling and use of language.
Overall	Work of a very high standard, showing independent thought and critical insight.

2.1 Grade 60-69%	
Introduction and Rationale	Competently formulated research question(s)/problem with evidence of subjectbased focus and well-constructed thorough rationale.
Literature Review	Appropriate reading with some limited evaluation; review not always consistently or clearly connected to the research question/problem; only partial evidence of independent research for relevant sources; good organisation of the literature reviewed.
Data Analysis	Results/findings are clearly presented and well-structured; data are critically analysed/evaluated to a reasonable extent; data are well presented and reasonably well organised; some acknowledgment of the strengths and limitations of the data.
Conclusions	Conclusion is very good, with a good synthesis of the work and strong discussion of the contribution of the findings; understanding of the strengths and limitations of the research is articulated; good connections made between the findings and the literature reviewed; future work and recommendations are identified and are reasonable.
Structure/ Organisation/ Presentation	Text and argument structured in a sustained way; all major structural and organisational elements present; identifies and discusses pertinent issues in reasonable depth; observes word count requirements; appropriate presentation and use of referencing conventions; spelling and grammar accurate in the main; satisfactory use of language.
Overall	Good or very good quality, showing knowledge and understanding.

2.2 Grade 50-59%	
Introduction and Rationale	Sufficiently formulated research question(s)/problem with some evidence of subject focus; adequate but under-developed rationale provided.

Literature Review	Evidence of some appropriate reading but over-reliance on limited resources; a descriptive review of the literature with little critical evaluation; review not strongly connected to the research question/problem; limited evidence of independent research for relevant sources; poor organisation of the literature reviewed.
Data Analysis	Results/findings are provided but poorly structured and articulated; data are not critically analysed/evaluated; poor presentation and organisation of data; little or no articulation on the strengths and limitations of the findings.
Conclusions	Conclusion provides a sufficient summary of the dissertation; very limited connection made between the findings and the literature review; limited awareness of the strengths and limitations of the findings; good connections made between the findings and the literature reviewed; future work poorly defined with little or no recommendations.
Structure/ Organisation/ Presentation	Text and argument reasonably well structured and in a reasonably sustained way; some structural and organisational elements absent; some gaps and evidence of misunderstanding of the key concepts; reasonable command of presentation conventions and referencing; adequately organised and expressed but with grammatical errors in the text and/or significant typos.
Overall	Reasonable quality, showing deficits in knowledge and understanding.

Fail Grade 49-35%	
Introduction and Rationale	Poorly formulated research question(s)/problem. Lacks subject focus. Inadequate or poorly articulated rationale with no clear focus.
Literature Review	Over-reliance on highly restricted sources of literature; significant gaps in literature review; literature review merely descriptive with no critical evaluation of relevant research literature; review not clearly connected to the research question/problem; poor organisation of the literature.
Data Analysis	Results/findings are very limited with no discussion or evidence of critical analysis/evaluation; presentation and organisation of data is confusing, repetitive or conflicting; no understanding or articulation on the strengths and limitations of the findings.
Conclusions	Conclusion is merely a summary of the dissertation; little or no connection made between the findings and the literature reviewed; the impact and/or the limitations of the findings are not addressed; future work and recommendations are absent.
Structure/ Organisation/ Presentation	Poor or weak organisation/structure; significant gaps and/or misunderstanding of the key concepts; repetition in the argument/text; basic command of presentation conventions and referencing; presentation marred by language/spelling errors such that comprehensibility is affected and/or compromised.
Overall	The work does not achieve the standards required at Masters level.

Fail Below 35%	
Introduction and Rationale	Very poorly formulated research question(s)/problem. Absence of clear focus and rationale.
Literature Review	Use of extremely restricted range of sources; consistent use of non-research sources such as newspapers; very large gaps in the literature review; no critical evaluation of research reviewed; review not connected to a research question; highly disorganised write-up.
Data Analysis	Extremely limited findings with no critical evaluation; highly disorganised presentation of findings; no articulation of the strengths and limitations of the findings.
Conclusions	Very poorly organised; at best limited to description; no connection made between the findings and the literature reviewed; no discussion of limitations of the research, future research or recommendations.
Structure/ Organisation/ Presentation	Very poor structure; key concepts misunderstood or missed entirely; very large gaps in the literature; weak and unconsidered argument; high levels of repetition; failure to adhere to basic presentation and referencing conventions; language and spelling errors; incomprehensible sentences or passages.
Overall	The work falls far below the standards required at Masters level.

9 COURSE REGULATIONS

9.1 Attendance Requirements

The M.Sc. in Applied Social Research is an intensive degree course which can be completed either on a full- or part-time basis. Full-time students should note that the time commitment to be allocated to reading, computing and coursework will average 40 hours per week. **Students are expected to attend all lectures, guest lectures and workshops and to complete all course work assignments on time.** Attendances will be taken at all classes and those who attend less than 80% of classes, will not be permitted to proceed to work placement. Attendance at one module will not cross compensate for non-attendance at another module. Students should email the relevant course lecturer(s) if, for any reason, they are unable to attend class(es).

9.2 Penalty for Late Submission of Work

In order to ensure fairness and comparability between students, to spread the workload and ensure consistent feedback, considerable importance is attached to the timely submission of course work. An extension to the stated deadlines will normally be considered only in the case of illness, or severe domestic upheaval. Students must request an extension in writing from the Course Director well in advance of the deadline (at least 2 Weeks). An extension will only be given in consultation with the lecturer concerned. Otherwise, in the interest of fairness, **work handed in late will be penalised by an automatic deduction of 10% for each week or part thereof exceeding the stated deadline.**

The course work of all students must be returned to the course lecturer and kept on file, to be read by the External Examiner.

9.3 M.Sc. Course Committee

The academic quality and content of the course for the M.Sc. in Applied Social Research is the responsibility of the Course Director. The M.Sc. Course Committee, which is composed of the Course Director, lecturers, and teaching assistants, governs the M.Sc. course. The class representative (see below) is invited to attend Course Committee to give feedback and/or communicate any issues or problems, based on the views of a majority of fellow students. Ten minutes is allocated to this at the beginning of Course Committee meetings, after which the class representative leaves the meeting.

9.4 Class Representatives

Each year the class elects a class representative during the first term. The main responsibility of the class representative is to bring any relevant issues to the attention of the Course Director. Such communication typically takes place when the Class Representative joins Course Committee Meetings or via email correspondence with the Course Director. Year 2, Part-time students normally nominate one individual to communicate with the Course Director on behalf of the class.

9.5 External Examiner

The external examiner for 2025/26 will be Dr Katy Pilcher, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Aston University (UK).

9.6 Court of Examiners

The Court of Examiners is composed of Course Director, the Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy and the teaching staff on the M.Sc. in Applied Social Research and the external

examiner. It meets in November / December every year. Dissertations will **only be examined at this time of the academic year** and those who fail to meet this deadline will have to seek permission from Graduate Studies to submit the following year. If permission is granted they will have to pay a continuation fee in order to submit their thesis the following year.

It is important to note that marks given throughout the course are only intended as an approximate guide to progress. At the end of each academic year, the files of students' work are shown to the external examiner and s/he has an opportunity to read their dissertations. Under the regulations of the University the external examiner can raise or lower the marks of students, although it is unusual for an external examiner to alter marks by more than a few points.

Students must pass the course work on *all three modules* (qualitative research methods and research ethics, quantitative research methods, and research design, evaluation research, and Literature Searches and Reviews) in order to proceed to the dissertation. There is no compensation between these modules. Students who do not pass will be permitted one opportunity to re-submit written work and such re-submitted work will be marked out of a range of 0-50%.

To be eligible for the award of the Masters degree in Applied Social Research, each course module and the dissertation must be passed satisfactorily.

10 COURSE PROGRESSION REGULATIONS

The pass mark for all written assignments and the dissertation is 50%.

Students **must pass all course modules and the dissertation** to be awarded the degree of Masters in Applied Social Research. In other words, no cross-module compensation is possible. Additionally, in order to pass Module 1, Quantitative Methods, students **must pass both SPSS/ Data Analysis and Survey Design**. The degree of M.Sc. is undifferentiated, so that marks awarded are given as evidence of personal skill and of individual achievement and progress, rather than leading to a differentiated degree award. Because the course is seen as a professional qualification, all students who hope to graduate must satisfy the examiners that they are competent in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Both course work and the final dissertation form the basis of this adjudication

Students who do not pass will be permitted one opportunity to re-submit written work and the maximum mark that can be awarded for such re-submitted work is 50%.

In the calculation of the overall mark for the programme, each module is weighted according to its credit weighting. In order to qualify for the award of the M.Sc. in Applied Social Research, students must pass all modules and achieve a mark of at least 50% in the dissertation.

A Distinction may be awarded to students who, in addition, achieve a mark of 70% or above in the dissertation and have an overall average mark for the programme of at least 70%.

Students who have passed all modules, but do not proceed to, or fail, the dissertation may be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Social Research. The Postgraduate Diploma with Distinction may be awarded to candidates who, in addition, achieve an overall average mark of 70% or above.

11 ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS

Course work assignments constitute 60% of the final grade for the M.Sc. in Applied Social Research. The remaining 40% is awarded for the research dissertation. The course carries a total of 90 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System).

Breakdown of Final Grade

Module	Component	%
SS8000: Quantitative Methods	SPSS Data Analysis	15
	Survey Design	10
SS8001: Qualitative Methods	Qualitative Group Project	20
	Qualitative Interview	5
SS8002: Research Design, Evaluation Research & Literature Searchers and Reviews	Research Proposal	5
	Evaluation Research	5
SS8004: Research Dissertation		40

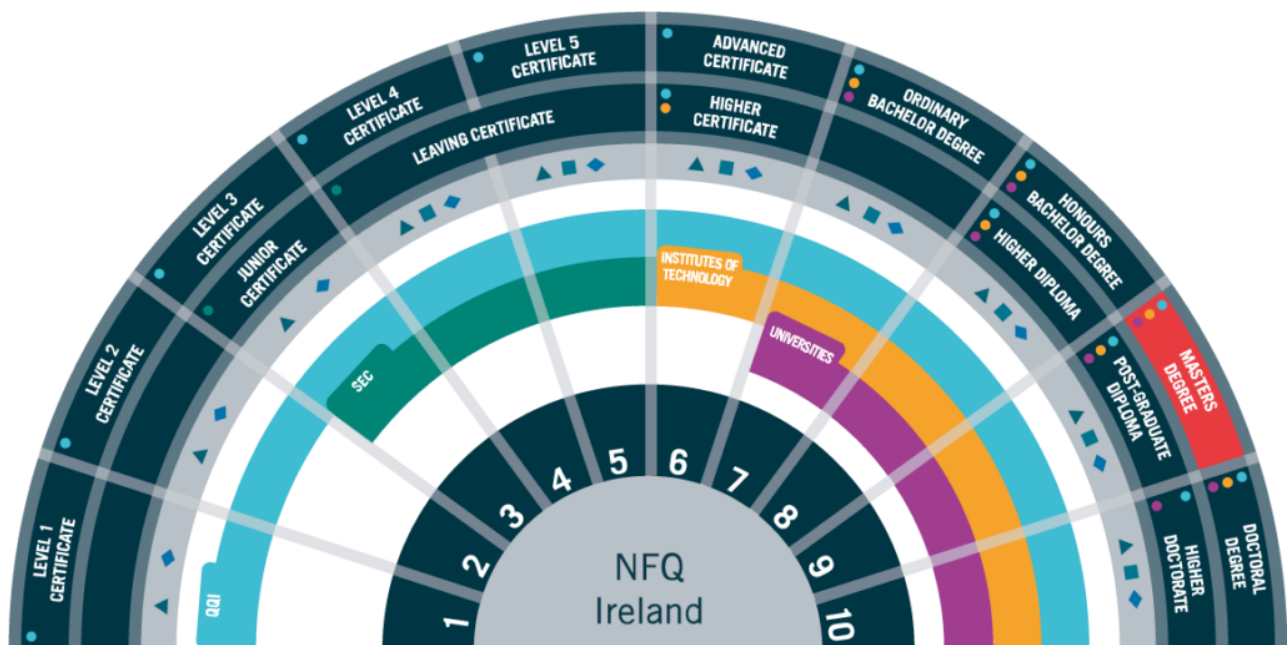
12 REFERRAL OF DISSERTATION

If a dissertation is referred at the Board of Examiners, the student may seek approval to re-submit the work the following year. If permission is granted they will have to pay a continuation fee. The resubmitted work will be considered at the examination board in the following year.

13 AWARDS

Upon successful completion of the course students may be awarded the degree of Master in Science (Studies) – Applied Social Research - NFQ Level 9

Students who have passed all modules with a mark of 40 – 49%, but do not proceed to, or fail, the dissertation may be awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Social Research – NFQ Level 9.



[National Framework for Qualifications](#)

14 COURSE TRANSCRIPTS

Students who have passed the course after the Examination Board can request a transcript from Course Administrator Mairead Pascoe via email pascoem@tcd.ie. These are normally sent electronically to a TCD email address unless a hard copy is specifically requested.

The transcript includes the marks awarded for each module of the course. The student must retain a copy of this transcript for future reference as it is important for subsequent job or research applications. There is an administrative charge for any additional or later copies of the transcript.

15 STUDENT FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Student feedback forms an important part of the evaluation and review process. All modules will be evaluated at the end of the year using an online survey. The survey is anonymous and the results are used in reviewing and improving aspects of each module and its delivery. We particularly want to hear what students think was good about a module and what needs to be improved.

16 APPENDIX

PGT ASSESSMENT COVER SHEET 2025/26

Name of Student: _____

Student Number: _____

Module Name for which you are submitting this Assessment:

Date of Submission: _____

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I CONFIRM I HAVE READ, AND UNDERSTAND, THE COLLEGE RULES AND REGULATIONS AROUND PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, AS OUTLINED IN [Calendar Part III, Section 1: General Regulations & Information, Academic Registry](#)

☐

I HAVE COMPLETED THE ONLINE TUTORIAL ON AVOIDING PLAGIARISM 'READY STEADY WRITE', LOCATED AT [About this Guide - Academic Integrity - Library Guides at Trinity College Dublin \(tcd.ie\)](#)

☐

I CONFIRM I HAVE READ, AND UNDERSTAND, THE COLLEGE STATEMENT ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND GENERATIVE AI IN TEACHING AND LEARNING ASSESSMENT AND RESEARCH. <https://www.tcd.ie/academicpractice/assets/pdf/college-statement-on-genai.pdf>

☐

I CONFIRM I HAVE READ, AND UNDERSTAND, THE SCHOOL POLICY ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND GENERATIVE AI CONTAINED WITHIN MY COURSE HANDBOOK

Note to Students:

- *Contact your College Tutor, your Course Director, or your Lecturer if you are unsure about any aspect of Plagiarism or the College Statement on Gen AI usage in assessment and research.*
- *Returning a copy of this form, is the students declaration that they have adhered to the College regulations on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity and the College Statement on Gen AI usage.*
- *The use of GenAI must be acknowledged in an 'Appendix' or 'Methods' section of any piece of academic work where it has been used as a functional tool to assist in the process of creating academic work.*

Signed:
