

Cardiff University

Education (MSc)

I. Where you'll study

School of Social Sciences

Our degrees are delivered by internationally recognised experts with a track record of influencing policy and practice around the world.

Research

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II. Why study this course

- **Explore key challenges and developments in education in today's global context**

The MSc Education is designed for students who have an interest in education practice, organisation, or research. Through modules that include comparative and international perspectives, you will study experiences from the UK and across the world and explore the complex issues facing teachers and education leaders and decision-makers in an increasingly globalised context. These challenges include aspects such as the design of curricula, the delivery of teaching in a rapidly changing world or the effects of internationalisation and globalisation on educational ideas and practices.

The programme provides an in-depth understanding of education as a field of study, but also of the connections between education and other social institutions that play a role in tackling complex education problems. Working closely with classmates and academic staff, you will have the opportunity to explore these questions and to benefit from interdisciplinary perspectives, including education, sociology and psychology. You will be challenged to evaluate and formulate recommendations for educational practices and organisation, and to design innovative interventions that will empower learners by improving the quality and relevance of their education.

The programme gives particular attention to the largest education sectors: primary and secondary education, but also gives you the opportunity to discuss developments in education from a broader, lifelong learning perspective – from pre-primary education and higher education to adult learning and non-formal

education – that recognises the interconnections between the different parts of education systems. For your dissertation project, you can choose to focus on any level of formal education or on non-formal education.

Please note that whilst this programme is suitable for educational professionals seeking to develop their career, it is not a teaching qualification and does not provide Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). If you are interested in beginning a teaching career, please check teaching qualification requirements for the country and sector where you intend to work.

- **Distinctive features**

1. The involvement of leading scholars in the teaching of the programme provides you with the opportunity to learn about current research and theory.
2. The opportunity to study education in ways that include but go beyond a focus on classroom practice to address the wider debates around education and lay the foundation for a wider variety of careers than a dedicated teaching qualification permits.
3. Dedicated module on critical thinking and other subject-specific skills needed to benefit from your experiences as a postgraduate student.
4. Close links with schools, colleges and other education/training organisations that provide opportunities for active engagement with education practitioners and decision-makers.
5. The opportunity to learn in a School known for its cutting-edge research in education and in social sciences more generally: we were ranked 5th for education and 3rd for sociology in the UK for research quality in the latest Research Excellent Framework (REF).

III. Admissions criteria

Applicants should normally hold a minimum 2:2 degree in a relevant subject area or have appropriate professional experience.

The course is directed to recent graduates, from those who have no or little professional experience of education-related work, and to mid-career professionals engaged in teaching, the delivery of other education-related activities, the administration of educational institutions or the analysis of education practices. It will enable you to develop your knowledge of teaching and learning and your capacity to understand and conduct research in education contexts.

This programme is suitable for graduates with a background in social sciences or humanities. Those with a background in other areas and more than 3 years of teaching, educational administration/planning, educational research or related experience may be considered for admission into the programme.

- **Information for international students:**

Additional information regarding admission requirements into this programme for international students can be obtained from the programme admissions team.

English Language Requirements for non-UK applicants

Typical IELTS offer: 6.5 (with a minimum of 6.5 in writing and no less than 5.5 in all other categories)

Find out more about [English language requirements](#).

Applicants who require a Tier 4 visa to study in the UK must present an [acceptable English language qualification](#) in order to meet UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) requirements

- **Criminal convictions**

You are not required to complete a DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) check or provide a Certificate of Good Conduct to study this course.

If you are currently subject to any licence condition or monitoring restriction that could affect your ability to successfully complete your studies, you will be required to disclose your criminal record. Conditions include, but are not limited to:

1. access to computers or devices that can store images
2. use of internet and communication tools/devices
3. curfews
4. freedom of movement, including the ability to travel to outside of the UK or to undertake a placement/studies outside of Cardiff University
5. contact with people related to Cardiff University.

IV. Course structure

For a full-time student you would be expected to take a combination of Core and Optional modules in Year One (120 credits).

In Year Two you would undertake a Dissertation module (60 credits).

The modules shown are an example of the typical curriculum and will be reviewed prior to the 2020/21 academic year. The final modules will be published by September 2020.

You will take five compulsory 20-credit modules – one 20 credit optional module and a 60 credit dissertation on a topic agreed with your supervisor – to make up the full 180 credits you need to complete the programme.

- **Taught modules**

The five compulsory modules include core social skills and substantive topics in education. The optional module allows you to tailor your degree to suit your own interests. Each taught module is worth 20 credits, which means it should take approximately 200 hours to complete including formal teaching, independent student and time spend on assessment tasks.

- **Dissertation**

Following successful completion of the taught modules, you will be asked to produce a 60 credit dissertation on an education-related topic of your choice.

This dissertation involves a small-scale independent piece of research that and enables you to develop your interests in a substantive area related to the programme and to put into practice the knowledge and skills developed through participation in the taught modules.

You will be allocated a dissertation supervisor to assist in planning, conducting and writing up the research project.

- **Core modules**

- **Dissertation SIT004 60 credits**

1. Introduction

This Guide is intended to help you complete your dissertation successfully. Please note that you are only able to progress to dissertation stage when you have completed the entire taught element of your course (120 module credits). It gives you information about how to turn your dissertation proposal into a research project, how to carry out that project and how to write up your dissertation so that it can be presented to internal and external examiners and information about the roles and responsibilities of both students and supervisors.

2. Overview

The aim of the dissertation is to explore a particular topic in detail by conducting a substantial piece of independent academic research, which is then written up and presented in a scholarly manner. Undertaking a dissertation will do more than give you a deeper understanding of your particular topic and an appreciation of the nature of academic work. It is a key part of your degree demonstrating your ability to produce high quality research.

On completion of the module a student should be able to

Upon successful completion of the dissertation, students will be able to undertake a combination of the following:

1. Draw together skills and knowledge.
2. Develop analytical and communication skills.
3. Address theoretical ideas and provide an analysis of their intellectual context and adequacy.
4. Collect, present and interpret social science data.
5. State the research strategy used in their chosen project (to include research design and the formulation of research questions, data collection and data analysis).

6. Identify and summarise literature and comparative studies relevant to their research project.
7. Show awareness of the ways in which their own research ideas fit into an appropriate disciplinary and methodological context.
8. Demonstrate awareness of some of the theoretical and methodological principles that guide the application of a particular research method (or set of methods) in a specific research context.
9. Give oral presentations of dissertation ideas, methods, results and work in progress.
10. Use word-processing and other software to write up research for an academic audience.
11. Show awareness of the ethical guidelines appropriate to their discipline and research setting.
12. Demonstrate awareness of the conventions governing the presentation of research data in a social science context.
13. Demonstrate skills of listening, participating, chairing and learning in research forums.

Please note that these are the minimum threshold standards. It is expected that many students will be able to perform these tasks with a degree of critical awareness that recognises the relationships between the dissertation and the wider social science literature.

- **Research Design For Masters Students SIT001**

Credits 20

Semester Autumn Semester

This 20 credit postgraduate module will provide students across several substantive social science disciplines with an introduction to the principles and practice of research design and methods. It introduces students to the main elements of research methodology, including: epistemology, research design, sampling, research ethics and different data collection methods used in the social sciences. The module provides students with a common grounding in how to critically evaluate the research of others and make appropriate choices in their own research projects, enabling them to specify, design and conduct a research project.

On completion of the module a student should be able to:

1. Show a comprehensive understanding of key methodological concepts. (LO1)
2. Demonstrate a broad knowledge of the main quantitative and qualitative methods used in social research, and their strengths and limitations. (LO2)
3. Clearly formulate and communicate research aims to specialist and non-specialist audiences. (LO3)
4. Develop and critically justify an appropriate methodological approach to address a given research question. (LO4)

● **Scholarship in the Social Sciences SIT100**

Credits 20

Semester Autumn Semester

The purpose of this module is to develop students appreciation of the scholarship in the social sciences and what this means for postgraduate study. The module enables students to recognise the different purposes of research and develop a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between theory and data in the social science. This module contributes to the development of students as rigorous researchers and users of research. The module focuses, particularly, not on how to implement specific research methodologies in a given project, but on understanding the role of theory in social science research and the relationship between theory and data in social research. The module gives ample opportunities for students to develop their ability to think critically and communicate ideas clearly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.

On completion of the module a student should be able to

1. Evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the social sciences -with a particular focus on education literature (LO1)
2. Demonstrate a systematic understanding of the different purposes of social science research and to develop critiques of the literature that take this variety of purposes into account (LO2)
3. Show originality in linking theory and data in specific domains of social science research –including the application of knowledge to real-life problems and unfamiliar contexts- in order, to generate transformative insights or solutions (LO3)
4. Communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences (LO4)

● **Comparative approaches to understanding curriculum SIT101**

Credits 20

Semester Spring Semester

What should we teach at school and who should decide? What is the overall aim of education – to teach young people basic skills or to develop critical thinking? Should schools focus on developing good citizens, independent thinkers, national values, community and belonging, or academic achievement? These are some of the questions that organise research and theoretical activity in the fields of curriculum studies and theory. Although what we learn at school can seem “pre-determined” and uncontested, in reality, curriculum is a complex and politically charged field of study.

Curricula are representations of social, political and cultural interests. They are expressions of power, symbols of national and cultural identity, ideological positioning, and even strategies for legitimising certain knowledge and social practices and the de-legitimising others. The fields of curriculum studies and theory

challenge students to philosophically consider the aims and goals of education, and how schools are organised in undertaking this enterprise. Equally important, through attempting to understand the “complicated conversations” of curriculum studies, educators and policy-makers are better prepared to develop, analyse, evaluate and improve both school curricula and curriculum policy.

The purpose of this module is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the major themes and developments in curriculum studies, from Tylers’ “Basic principles of curriculum and instruction” to the “Reconceptualist movement,” and how these shifts in understanding curriculum continue to influence schooling across the globe. This goal is accomplished through an international approach to understanding curriculum. In this module, we investigate the field of curriculum theory and studies in a variety of social, cultural and political contexts, including the United States, United Kingdom, Latin America, Asia and developing nations.

On completion of the module a student should be able to

1. Show a systematic understanding of key concepts in curriculum theorising (LO1)
2. Evaluate various approaches, current research and advance scholarship with regards to curriculum theorising, design and implementation (LO2)
3. Create original, well-reasoned and evidenced based arguments related to topics in curriculum studies (LO3)
4. Apply, independently, curricular theoretical frameworks to make sound judgements with regards to curriculum design and evaluation (LO4)

● **Psychology and Planning for Teaching and Learning SIT102 20 credits**

Semester Spring Semester

Learning is a lifelong process and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the foundational theories that drive teaching and learning helps to not only understand how students learn or what they should learn but how educators can enable learning. This module provides an insight into teaching and learning and examines a range of strategies and approaches that could be used. Psychological theory will explore the principles of learning within a Sociocultural framework and how motivation drives learning. Teaching and learning will also be viewed within a Sociological context with a specific emphasis on teacher and student interactions. The module will highlight how learners’ needs can be addressed in a variety of settings, which will include multicultural perspectives. By the end of this module, students will gain a good understanding of how and when to use appropriate learning methodologies, approaches and techniques.

On completion of the module a student should be able to

1. Evidence a systematic understanding of Psychological and Sociological developments in the context of contemporary educational practice. (LO1)
2. Use sociological and psychological theories of learning to critically evaluate

- teaching and learning strategies, methods and approaches. (LO2)
3. Apply theoretical knowledge to make sound judgements in the construction of a learning event. (LO3)
 4. Demonstrate critical awareness of the importance of learner preferences and apply knowledge to facilitate learning in a variety of educational contexts. (LO4)

● **Global Futures in Education SIT913 20 credits**

Semester Autumn Semester

The Global Futures in Education module's core concern is developing students' knowledge and understanding of current trends in education discourses, policies and practices, and to provide students with the conceptual tools of critical evaluation. The module is designed to introduce students to major education stakeholders, challenges and policy debates (in areas such as the different purposes of education; access and social mobility; the recognition of various forms of non-formal learning; the use of technologies for 'open education'; the use of evidence in education policy-making). The module will look at these issues from a comparative perspective (covering a range of social contexts and education sectors), using insights from education, sociological, political science and economics research. The focus of the module is global, but there will be a particular emphasis on developed countries.

On completion of the module a student should be able to

1. Articulate a systematic understanding of a range of disciplinary perspectives to the study of education and its relationship with its economic, cultural and institutional context. (LO1)
2. Critically examine and evaluate, in a context sensitive and theoretically informed way, alternative policy initiatives and practices (LO2)
3. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the possibilities for and challenges to evidence-based decision-making in education policy and practice (LO3)
4. Formulate original and practical proposals for educational reform, demonstrating advanced knowledge of research and scholarship on the topics covered by the module. (LO4)

● **Optional modules**

● **Research, Policy and Practice in Childhood and Youth Studies SIT500
20 credits, Spring Semester**

This module is intended to introduce students to and develop their knowledge and understanding of research, policy and practice in childhood and youth studies. It will cover developments in theoretical and legal approaches to childhood and youth that have affected children and young people in recent decades, particularly the concepts of rights, voice, agency, citizenship and participation. The module will cover a range of methodological approaches and techniques to researching with

children and young people of all ages across a variety of social and cultural contexts, with opportunities to engage with debates in this area. It will also enable students to learn about and critically evaluate selected social and public policies and professional practices affecting children and young people in Wales, the UK and internationally. Using key examples in fields such as education, health, politics/civil engagement and social work and care, the module will include consideration of how policies and practices are formulated, implemented and evaluated.

On completion of the module a student should be able to

1. Demonstrate systematic knowledge and understanding of key legal and theoretical approaches to childhood and youth that have impacted upon research, policy and practice – such as rights, voice, agency, citizenship and participation. (LO1)
2. Understand and clearly explain a range of ethical considerations, methodological approaches and techniques drawn upon when generating, analysing and representing research with children and young people. (LO2)
3. Explain how selected child and youth policies and/or practices are developed, implemented and evaluated, including with reference to wider social and political contexts. (LO3)
4. Critically evaluate existing knowledge and scholarship on research, policy and practice in childhood and youth studies, including competing empirical claims and theoretical perspectives. (LO4)

- **International and Comparative Skills Systems SIT728, 20 credits, Spring Semester**

The international and comparative skills systems module develops knowledge and understanding of skills and skills systems in a global world, and offers the opportunity to explore international and comparative aspects of skills development and vocational education and training in a number of different ways. Aspects that are covered include the comparative political economy of skills and the way state and non-state policy actors (e.g. state, trade unions, employers – in coordinated, liberal and developing market economies) are engaged in the way vocational education and training is delivered and experienced in a number of learning environments (e.g. compulsory and post-compulsory phases and the workplace). Further attention will be given to debates on the knowledge economy and the demand and supply of skills in emerging economies and the ‘post-industrial’ world. Critical debates on the linkages between educators and policy makers in the structuring of vocational education and training curricula and skills development will also be explored through an international and comparative lens.

On completion of the module a student should be able to

1. Explain in a comparative and theoretically informed manner the roles of key actors in the formation of skills and vocational education and training policy. (LO1)
2. Critically reflect upon and analyse in internationally comparative ways

- developments in skills and vocational education and training policy and practice and their implications for future developments in the sector (LO2)
3. Compare and contrast the organisation of skills development in the vocational and education and training sector in Europe and the rest of the world. (LO3)
 4. Critically analyse and discuss competing theories of the knowledge economy and the implications for the demand and supply of skills in work and employment. (LO4)

The University is committed to providing a wide range of module options where possible, but please be aware that whilst every effort is made to offer choice this may be limited in certain circumstances. This is due to the fact that some modules have limited numbers of places available, which are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, while others have minimum student numbers required before they will run, to ensure that an appropriate quality of education can be delivered; some modules require students to have already taken particular subjects, and others are core or required on the programme you are taking. Modules may also be limited due to timetable clashes, and although the University works to minimise disruption to choice, we advise you to seek advice from the relevant School on the module choices available.

V. Learning and assessment

How will I be taught?

You will learn from scholars who are contributing to the future of their fields. Our courses reflect both the core ideas of their disciplines and contemporary debates, theories and research.

Teaching methods include a mixture of lectures, seminars, independent study and self-directed learning that use online resources, individual work and group tasks. Lectures generally provide an overview of the relevant topic, introducing key concepts or research, and highlighting contemporary issues or debates. In contrast to lectures, seminars give you the opportunity to discuss particular readings, research or topics in detail. This allows you to consolidate your understanding and get feedback on your individual learning. Seminars also enable you to hone your communication, presentation and collaborative skills as you take part in group discussions and other tasks.

As social science develops in response to the social world, so our curriculum also changes. Our students play an important role in these developments, with the Student-Staff Panel being consulted about major changes and all students completing module evaluations and an annual student survey.

How will I be assessed?

Typical assessment formats include individual assignments, coursework, projects, presentations or class tests. The most common form of assessment is the production of coursework. Deadlines are spread throughout the academic year.

An important part of assessment is feedback. Feedback exists in any process, activity or information that enhances learning by providing students with the opportunity to

reflect on their current or recent level of attainment or their understanding of a topic. It can be provided individually or to groups and can take many forms. It is responsive to the developmental expectations of our programmes and disciplines.

The range of feedback includes: one-to-one individual feedback; generic feedback; peer feedback; informal feedback; self-evaluation to submit along with the assessment.

Academic staff and peers can use a variety of methods to deliver these types of feedback: written feedback; annotation of a text; oral feedback; seminar discussion.

How will I be supported?

A personal tutor will guide you for the duration of your studies and will be available to discuss progress and provide advice and guidance on your academic studies. The Student Hub, and the Taught Programmes Office, both located in the Glamorgan Building, can also provide advice on how to access university services.

All modules within the course make use of Cardiff University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Learning Central – on which you will find course materials, links to related materials and information relating to assessment tasks including, for example, assessment criteria, links to past papers (when applicable), and guidelines for submitting assessments.

Additional module-specific support is provided by seminar tutors, lecturers and/or module convenors. Support for the dissertation is provided by a supervisor who will meet with you regularly.

• Formative Feedback

Formative feedback is feedback that does not contribute to progression or degree classification decisions. The goal of formative feedback is to improve your understanding and learning before you complete your summative assessment. More specifically, formative feedback helps you to:

1. identify your strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work;
2. help staff to support you and address the problems identified with targeted strategies for improvement.
3. Formative feedback is routinely provided in seminars. In addition, modules may include specific formative assessment designed to help you prepare for the subsequent summative assessment.

• Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is feedback that contributes to progression or degree classification decisions. The goal of summative assessment is to indicate how well you have succeeded in meeting the intended learning outcomes of a Module and will enable you to identify action required (feed forward) in order to improve in future assessments.

All feedback on coursework is provided electronically to ensure it is readily accessible and easy to read. Verbal feedback is provided for presentations but written feedback will also be provided if/where the presentation makes a significant contribution to the module mark.

Feedback on class tests is usually provided as written feedback for the whole class but

you are also able to discuss your individual test paper and the mark it was awarded with the module convenor.

All marks and feedback are made with reference to the relevant marking criteria.

What skills will I practise and develop?

- **Knowledge & Understanding:**

On completion of the programme you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a deep and systematic understanding of core theories and concepts related to education policy, organisation and practice
2. Analyse and situate local and national education practices and policies within their broader global and historical contexts
3. Demonstrate a high level of knowledge of methodological and ethical considerations relevant to undertaking research on education issues

- **Intellectual Skills:**

On completion of the programme you will be able to:

1. Systematically identify complex connections between aspects of education theory and policy and practice (in education and related areas)
2. Critically evaluate existing research and scholarship on education issues, and make informed judgements between competing claims and theoretical perspectives
3. Describe and critically reflect upon policy and practice relating to complex educational issues, and upon the connection between education and other social institutions
4. Effectively collect, evaluate, synthesise and interpret various forms of complex data –including in the form of a project dissertation

- **Professional Practical Skills:**

On completion of the programme you will be able to:

1. Articulate original solutions to tackle both familiar and unfamiliar problems, to enhance education policy and practice
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of evidence-based approaches to the design, implementation and evaluation of education interventions

- **Transferable/Key Skills:**

On completion of the programme you will be able to:

1. Communicate (in writing and orally) research findings clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences, work in an international context, problem solving, time management, ICT and individual and teamwork skills
2. Evaluate your own work and be self-critical

VI. Tuition fees

Students from outside the EU (2020/21)

Tuition fee Deposit

£17,450 £1,000

More information about tuition fees and deposits, including for part-time and

continuing students.

Financial support may be available to individuals who meet certain criteria. For more information visit our funding section. Please note that these sources of financial support are limited and therefore not everyone who meets the criteria are guaranteed to receive the support.

Additional costs

You should be prepared to invest in some key textbooks and to cover the costs of basic printing and photocopying. You may also want to buy copies of other books, either because they are particularly important for your course or because you find them particularly interesting.

If you have a laptop computer you will have the option of purchasing software at discounted prices.

Will I need any specific equipment to study this course/programme?

What the student should provide:

You do not need any specific equipment to study on this programme. Access to a laptop computer would be advantageous as many readings are available electronically and most assessments are prepared using standard word processing software.

What the University will provide:

Networked computers with appropriate file space and all necessary software. Access to essential and background reading for each module plus a wide range of journals and other online resources. Course documents will be available online (via the VLE) and hard copies of essential documents will be provided if requested.

VII. Career prospects

We encourage our students to think about life beyond University from day one, offering modules and support to give you a competitive advantage on graduating. Turning theory into practical application and providing experience of the working world are important aspects of all our degree schemes and help prepare our graduates for life after higher education.

Graduates of this programme may work in education-related areas within formal or non-formal education organisations, in government departments and regulators, in non-governmental organisations including foundations and think-tanks working, in charities, the media or as social entrepreneurs in the area of education.