

Programme Specification

BSc Sociology and Criminology

For students entering Part 1 in September 2027

UCAS Code: LM39

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This document sets out key information about your Programme and forms part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

Awarding Institution	University of Reading
Teaching Institution	University of Reading
Length of Programme	3 years
Length of Programme with placement/year abroad	BSc Sociology and Criminology with Year Abroad - 4 years (internal transfer only) BSc Sociology and Criminology with Placement Year - 4 years (UCAS Code: LM40)
Accreditation	N/A
QAA Subject Benchmarking Group	Sociology; Criminology

Programme information and content

This programme will equip you with the knowledge and skills to make sense of contemporary societies and how they are changing, while also allowing you to develop a more specialist understanding of crime and criminal justice. In Sociology, you will study the social processes which shape individuals, social groups, and social institutions and which underpin social order and social change. You will learn to connect key theoretical and conceptual ideas to core dimensions of social differentiation such as gender, class, and race, as well as age, sexuality, education, and more. In Criminology, you will develop knowledge of a range of criminological concepts, approaches, and methodologies, supporting you to develop a critical understanding of processes of criminalisation and victimisation, the causes and organisation of crime, crime management and prevention, the interrelationship between crime, social inequalities, and rights, punishment, and media representations of crime.

Interactive small group teaching is central to the programme. Through discussion and debate, you will deepen your understanding of how we, as individuals and groups, are shaped by the societies we live in, and how they, in turn, shape us. You will also gain an appreciation of the complex and contested nature of social problems and proposed policy solutions.

Studying Sociology and Criminology will equip you with a wide range of social scientific skills, including analysing data and evidence from diverse sources, developing persuasive arguments, and communicating these effectively. This will prepare you for a wide range of potential careers in local and central government and in the charitable and commercial sectors as well as more specialised careers drawing on your criminological expertise.

Part 1:	Part 1 provides an introduction to the core concepts, theories, and approaches employed in Sociology and Criminology. You will have the opportunity to study major dimensions of social differentiation such as gender, class, and race and to develop your understanding of criminological theories and the workings and limitations of the criminal justice system.
Part 2:	In Part 2 you will build on the foundations established in Part 1 by deepening your engagement with sociological and criminological theories, research methods, and criminal justice. You will also have the opportunity to specialise by selecting optional modules in particular areas of interest in both Sociology and Criminology.
Placement/Study abroad year:	Students on a four-year programme will undertake a professional placement or study abroad year between Parts 2 and 3. Placement students will undertake an approved role related to their programme of study. A placement will provide you with the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in your first two years of study, as well as to develop your skills in a professional context. Study abroad students will follow several courses at one of our partner institutions. You may take courses that deepen your understanding of subjects you have already studied, or extend your knowledge into new areas that are relevant to your personal or career goals.
Part 3:	In Part 3, you will tailor your degree to reflect your own interests by choosing from a range of research-led modules in Sociology and Criminology by conducting an independent research project under the guidance of a dedicated individual supervisor.

Programme Learning Outcomes - BSc Sociology and Criminology

During the course of the Programme, you will have the opportunity to develop a range of skills, knowledge and attributes (known as learning outcomes) For this programme, these are:

	Learning outcomes
1	Lay out and critically interrogate key concepts and theories in Sociology and Criminology and key approaches to the study of crime, deviance and society
2	Describe and analyse the social processes which shape individuals, social groups, and social institutions and which underpin social order and social change
3	Evaluate the criminal justice system and allied agencies, and consider the impacts on particular groups in society
4	Analyse qualitative and quantitative evidence pertaining to topics such as identity, diversity, inequality, stratification, power, crime, the criminal justice system, and deviance
5	Identify contemporary social problems and assess potential solutions to them, making reference to relevant sociological and criminological theories and research evidence

6	Summarize and critically evaluate current research in Sociology and Criminology, drawing on understanding of a range of relevant approaches and methods
7	Independently formulate research questions in Sociology and Criminology and design and conduct research to answer them, drawing on appropriate methods
8	Gather and synthesize complex information from both primary and secondary data sources and interpret and analyse it using appropriate tools
9	Effectively communicate knowledge and understanding to a range of audiences and in a variety of formats, including orally and in writing
10	Articulate reasoned and persuasive arguments, supported by relevant evidence
11	Effectively plan and manage time to prioritise and complete a range of tasks
12	Productively collaborate with others to achieve defined goals

You will be expected to engage in learning activities to achieve these Programme learning outcomes. Assessment of your modules will reflect these learning outcomes and test how far you have met the requirements for your degree.

To pass the Programme, you will be required to meet the progression or accreditation and award criteria set out below.

In addition to the learning outcomes stated above if you are on a placement or study abroad programme you will have the opportunity to develop the following learning outcome:

Additional Learning outcomes
Study Abroad By the end of the Study Abroad Programme, students will have adapted to international study contexts in order to achieve the required academic outcomes determined by the host institution. Placement Non-subject specific placement. By the end of the Placement Year Programme, students will have explored and developed their professional experience, skills and knowledge, contributing significantly towards their continuous learning and career prospects as graduates.

Module information			
Each part comprises 120 credits, allocated across a range of compulsory and optional modules as shown below. Compulsory modules are listed.			
Part 1 Modules:			
Module	Name	Credits	Level
LW1ICJ	Introduction to Criminal Justice	20	4
LW1ICR	Introduction to Criminology	20	4
PO1BRI	British Society	20	4

PO1GRC	Gender, Race, and Class: Social Differentiation and Stratification	20	4
PO1TSO	Thinking Sociologically	20	4

Remaining credits will be made up of optional modules available in the Department of Politics and International Relations and School of Law or modules from an approved list.

All students will take a preparatory module in core skills required for effective transition to university study. In addition, students on the 4-year with placement year programme will take a preparatory module providing appropriate training.

Part 2 Modules:

Module	Name	Credits	Level
LW2ACT	Advanced Criminological Theory	20	5
LW2CCJ	Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice	20	5
PO2REM	Research Methods	20	5
PO2SOT	Sociological Theory	20	5

Remaining credits will be made up of one 20-credit optional module available in the Department of Politics and International Relations or from an approved list and one 20-credit optional module in the School of Law or from an approved list.

All students will take a further skills module designed to support more advanced study in Part 2 and beyond. In addition, students on the 4-year with placement year programme will take a preparatory module providing appropriate training.

Modules during a placement year or study year (if applicable):

Module	Name	Credits	Level
PO2PPY	Professional Placement Year	120	5
PO2SAY	Study Abroad Year	120	5

Students who enrol on or transfer to a 4-year programme will take one 120 credit module: Professional Placement Year (PO2PPY) OR Study Abroad Year (PO2SAY). The placement or study abroad year should not normally be shorter than nine months full-time.

If you take a year-long placement or study abroad, Part 3 as described below may be subject to variation.

Part 3 Modules:

Students must complete a 40-credit dissertation module either in Sociology (PO3DSO: Dissertation in Sociology) or in Criminology (LW3CDS: Criminology Dissertation).

Students must select a further 40 credits of optional modules available in the Department of Politics and International Relations or from an approved list and 40 credits of optional modules available in the School of Law or from an approved list.

Placement opportunities

Placements:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a credit-bearing placement as part of your Programme. This will form all or part of an optional module. You will be required to find and secure a placement opportunity, with the support of the University

Study Abroad:

You may be provided with the opportunity to undertake a Study Abroad placement during your Programme. This is subject to you meeting academic conditions detailed in the Programme Handbook, including obtaining the relevant permissions from your School, and the availability of a suitable Study Abroad placement. If you undertake a Study Abroad placement, further arrangements will be discussed and agreed with you.

Optional modules:

The optional modules available can vary from year to year. An indicative list of the range of optional modules for your programme can be found online in the Course Catalogue. Details of optional modules for each part, including any additional costs associated with the optional modules, will be made available to you prior to the beginning of the Part in which they are to be taken and you will be given an opportunity to express interest in the optional modules that you would like to take. Entry to optional modules will be at the discretion of the University and subject to availability and may be subject to pre-requisites, such as completion of another module. Although the University tries to ensure you are able to take the optional modules in which you have expressed interest this cannot be guaranteed.

Teaching and learning delivery:

You will be taught primarily through seminars and lectures. Knowledge and understanding are gained through formal teaching (including lectures, seminar discussions, and individual and group feedback) and guided independent study (including prescribed and recommended reading, engagement with online resources, and assignment preparation).

Small-group teaching is central to each stage of the programme, and all modules will include some seminar sessions in which you develop your knowledge through discussion and group exercises. In Part 1, this small-group teaching is supported by larger lectures. Lectures will introduce you to a topic and provide a framework to enable you to engage successfully with seminar activities. At Parts 2 and 3, there is less reliance on large lectures, with modules typically including more and longer seminars. Students are also introduced to other forms of teaching such as workshops and individualised research supervision.

Elements of your programme will be delivered via digital technology.

The scheduled teaching and learning activity hours and amount of technology enhanced learning activity for your programme will depend upon your module combination. In addition, you will undertake some self-scheduled teaching and learning activities, designed by and/or involving staff, which give some flexibility for you to choose when to complete

them. You will also be expected to undertake guided independent study. Information about module study hours including contact hours and the amount of independent study which a student is normally expected to undertake for a module is indicated in the relevant module description.

Accreditation details

N/A

Assessment

You will be assessed through a combination of different types of assessments including written examinations, written coursework (including essays, research projects, and policy briefs), and oral presentations.

Assessments are designed to develop your transferable skills, as well as to test subject knowledge. Further information is contained in the individual module descriptions.

Progression

Part 1

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 1, a student will normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain an overall weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (ii) Obtain a mark of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to not less than 80 credits taken in Part 1; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in modules amounting to 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 1 qualifies a student for a Certificate of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Students considering transferring to another programme should seek guidance from their designated Support Centre in the first instance.

Part 2

To achieve a threshold performance at Part 2, a student shall normally be required to:

- (i) Obtain a weighted average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (ii) Obtain marks of at least 40% in individual modules amounting to at least 80 credits taken in Part 2; and
- (iii) Obtain marks of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to at least 120 credits. (A Fail in a Pass/Fail module will be treated as not meeting the minimum threshold requirement for progression or classification. Pass/fail modules are excluded from weighted average calculations but must be passed to avoid failure of the Part or degree.)

In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student must achieve a threshold performance.

The achievement of a threshold performance at Part 2 qualifies a student for a Diploma of Higher Education if they leave the University before completing the subsequent Part.

Professional placement/study abroad year

Students are required to pass the professional placement/study abroad year in order to progress on the programme which incorporates the professional placement/study abroad year. Students who fail the professional placement/study abroad year transfer to the 3-year version of the programme.

Classification

Bachelors' degrees

The University's honours classification scheme is based on the following:

Mark Interpretation

70% - 100% First class

60% - 69% Upper Second class

50% - 59% Lower Second class

40% - 49% Third class

35% - 39% Below Honours Standard

0% - 34% Fail

The weighting of the Parts/Years in the calculation of the degree classification is:

Three year programmes:

Part 2: one-third

Part 3: two-thirds

Four year programmes, including study abroad / Placement year

Part 2: one-third

Study abroad/Placement Year: not included in the classification

Part 3: two-thirds

Details of the classification method is given in detail in the [Assessment Handbook](#) under:

- Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's), or
- Section 18: Awards (Integrated Master's programmes). Students who do not progress to Part 4 of the Integrated Master's will normally be subject to the method detailed under Section 17: Awards (Bachelor's)

Please note that there may be a specific version of the above for your year of entry.

Additional costs of the programme

You will incur some additional costs during your programme of study. A wide range of resources to support your learning, including textbooks and electronic resources, are available through the library. For some modules, we will recommend that you purchase a copy of the textbook, and there may be other books/resources which it would be convenient for you to buy. We recommend that you budget up to £200 per year for purchasing books.

Some optional modules may involve additional costs for fieldtrips or travel to work placements. You will be advised of these costs before you enrol on the module.

Costs are indicative and may vary according to optional modules chosen and are subject to inflation and other price fluctuations. Estimates were calculated in 2026.

Students may consider purchasing a laptop to help support their learning. Information on recommended device specifications can be found on the [DTS Student Hub](#).

For further information about your Programme please refer to the Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions, which are available at <http://www.reading.ac.uk/module/>. The Programme Handbook and the relevant module descriptions do not form part of your Terms and Conditions with the University of Reading.

BSc Sociology and Criminology for students entering Part 1 in session 2027/28

2 July 2026

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