



## Programme Specification

A statement of the knowledge, understanding and skills that underpin a taught programme of study leading to an award from The University of Sheffield

1	<b>Programme Title</b>	Digital Media and Society
2	<b>Programme Code</b>	SPRU010 / SCSU10
3	<b>HECoS Code</b>	100444, 100361
4	<b>Level of Study</b>	Undergraduate
5a	<b>Final Qualification</b>	Bachelors (BA Hons)
5b	<b>QAA FHEQ Level</b>	6
6a	<b>Intermediate Qualification(s)</b>	Not applicable
6b	<b>QAA FHEQ Level</b>	Bachelors (BA Hons)
7	<b>Teaching Institution (if not Sheffield)</b>	Not applicable
8	<b>Faculty</b>	Social Sciences
9	<b>School</b>	Sociological Studies, Politics and International Relations
10	<b>Other Schools providing credit bearing modules for the programme</b>	Education, Information, Journalism and Communication
11	<b>Mode(s) of Attendance</b>	Full-time
12	<b>Duration of the Programme</b>	3 years
13	<b>Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body</b>	Not applicable
14	<b>Date of production/revision</b>	March 2016, revised November 2019, October 2024

### 15. Background to the programme and subject area

There's no denying that digital media technologies (smartphones, social media platforms, personalised advertisements) are core to our everyday lives. But what are the implications for society of our increasingly digitised world? The BA Hons in Digital Media and Society at the University of Sheffield is unique in offering students an opportunity to develop a broad understanding of the relationship between digital media and society from a social science perspective. The BA Hons Digital Media and Society will develop students' ability to understand digital media in society, use innovative digital methods to research digital media in society, and to make and shape digital media products. It makes use of digital teaching and learning tools and so gives students' experience of working and collaborating in online environments.

Housed in the Department of Sociological Studies, the programme brings modules specific to this programme together with other modules on digital media from across the Faculty of Social Science, offering them the opportunity to think about digital media developments in relation to a range of social issues, like marketing, journalism, or education. It combines lectures with student-led seminars, hands-on workshops and independent research to develop an understanding of the relationship between digital media and society, practical digital media skills and knowledge about how to research digital media and society. The BA focuses on the human, social consequences of digital media developments, the ways in which human, social factors shape these developments and the various social domains in which digital media are used, developed and have an impact.

Students graduate with a wide range of transferable skills and are well-placed to pursue a career in various fields, including social, public and third sector organisations like charities as well as digital media companies. Depending on the choices that students make as they progress through the programme, it may also prepare them to work in fields such as marketing and communications, information governance and policy, public policy, management consultancy, education, and non-academic research. The programme will also provide students with an excellent grounding for future postgraduate study.

## 16. Programme aims

The BA Hons Digital Media and Society aims to:

1. Enable students to analyse and critically evaluate key issues and debates relating to digital media in society.
2. Enable students to analyse and critically evaluate how and why digital media occupy the roles and spaces that they do in society.
3. Enable students to analyse and critically evaluate the social and technical aspects influencing digital media usage, users, and use contexts.
4. Enable students to apply a range of general social research skills and specific digital research skills in order to address emerging questions about the relationship between digital media and society.
5. Enable students to apply technical skills and related understanding of usage, users and use contexts to create digital media and related content (for example, web, mobile and social media content for marketing, research, social and other purposes).
6. Enable students to evaluate the benefits and limitations of learning and working in online collaborative environments.
7. Enable students to understand the relationships between digital media and society from a range of disciplinary perspectives.
8. Foster students' transferable skills and knowledge that will be of benefit in the digital workplace or in future study.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

### Knowledge and understanding:

Students will be able to demonstrate systematic understanding / detailed knowledge of and the ability to critically evaluate:

<b>K1</b>	key issues and concepts relating to digital media in society.
<b>K2</b>	the complex relationship between digital media and society.
<b>K3</b>	issues relating to digital media usage, users, and use contexts.
<b>K4</b>	the main theoretical frameworks and current research at the forefront of analysis of digital society.
<b>K5</b>	contemporary digital research methods and issues in researching in a digital age.
<b>K6</b>	arguments, assumptions and data about digital societies.
In addition, students will be able to demonstrate:	
<b>K7</b>	an ability to formulate and sustain arguments which capture complexities and problems relating to digital societies.
<b>K8</b>	an ability to evaluate problems relating to digital societies, and to frame questions or ideas for their potential solution.
<b>K9</b>	an appreciation of the uncertainty and limits of current knowledge about digital societies.

### Skills and other attributes:

Students will be able to:

<b>S1</b>	communicate clearly through written and oral means to a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences.
<b>S2</b>	work independently, managing their own learning, and with others.
<b>S3</b>	produce digital media artefacts appropriate to specific social/use contexts.
<b>S4</b>	use digital methods and related specialist techniques to answer specific research questions, expand their knowledge and understanding and carry out research projects.
<b>S5</b>	undertake bibliographic and social data searches, manage and maintain records of searches and other research-related data.

<b>S6</b>	demonstrate autonomy, initiative and responsibility in applying a range of data collection and analysis methods, in sometimes complex and unpredictable contexts, with an emphasis on those appropriate for digital society research.
<b>S7</b>	design a research study and provide a rationale for that design informed by theoretical and methodological concerns.

### 18. Teaching, learning and assessment

#### Development of the learning outcomes is promoted through the following teaching and learning methods:

1. **Lectures** are used to disseminate information to students on substantive issues and concerns (K1-K6, K9).
2. **Seminars / Workshops** are used throughout the programme. These are important learning environments for allowing students to explore and discuss their ideas, and so develop understanding and skills (K1-K9 & S1-S6).
3. **Computer lab sessions** enable students to learn and put into practice a wide range of research techniques (for example of data collection and analysis) as well as develop bibliographic skills (K5-K6 & S3-S7).
4. **Set tasks, including enquiry-based learning tasks** (for example presentations to peers techniques and other audiences, exercises implementing a range of techniques) enable students to work through complex areas in a structured way (K1-K9 & S1-S7).
5. **Independent study** is essential to the successful completion of the programme, both in taught modules and in dissertation (K1-K5, K6, K9 & S1-S7).
6. **Optional internship** opportunity will allow students undertake knowledge and skills exchange and to reflect on that process (K3, K8, S1, S3, S4).
7. **One-to-one supervision** is provided for students when undertaking their dissertations and on other modules. (K1-K6 & S1-S7).

#### Opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes are provided through the following assessment methods:

Students are assessed in a variety of ways in order to test a range of knowledge, skills and capabilities through modes of assessment appropriate to the specific subject. The modes of assessment include:

- **Essays** – designed to test subject knowledge (K1-K7, K9) and skills (S1, S2, S4, S6).
- **Critical review of digital media products and platforms** – designed to test subject knowledge (K1, K2, K6, K7) and skills (S1-S3).
- **Reports on set tasks** - designed to test subject knowledge (K1, K2, K6) and skills (S1-S3).
- **Presentations** – designed to test subject knowledge (K1-K8), as well as organisational, communicative and interpersonal skills (S1, S2).
- **Independent research projects** - designed to test subject knowledge and methods knowledge and skills (K1-K9 & S1-S7).
- **Exams** - designed to test subject knowledge (K1-K6) and skills (S1, S2, S4, S6).
- **Digital media products** – designed to test knowledge of digital developments and ability to produce digital media products appropriate to specific social contexts (K3, K8 and S1-S3).
- **Dissertation** – testing student subject knowledge (K1-K9) and skills (S1-S7).

## 19. Reference points

The learning outcomes have been developed to reflect the following points of reference:

Subject Benchmark Statements

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (2024)

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/qualifications-frameworks#>

University Vision and Strategic Plan

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/vision>

## 20. Programme structure and regulations

The programme has three elements:

- (1) It has a set of core modules which cover the foundational theoretical concepts and methodological and practical approaches to digital media and society research and practice.
- (2) It has a set of optional modules on topics related to digital media and society. Students can choose to take a 'themed route' through options, or they can choose a mixed approach to their options. An unrestricted choice is also available at Levels 1 and 2.
- (3) The programme culminates in the dissertation module which provides the opportunity, under one-to-one supervision, to focus in depth on a topic of individual choice, which can include an element of digital media practice.

Students are required to undertake modules to a value of 120 credits per year. In Years 1 and 2, 80 credits are core and 40 are optional. In Year 3, 40 credits are core and 80 are optional.

The optional modules are taken from a list of units relevant to the core concerns of the programme offered by the department of Sociological Studies, School of Education, School of Journalism, Media and Communication Studies, the Information School and the Sheffield Methods Institute. The list of available options may vary from year to year. These 'themed routes' through options are available: Marketing and Consumer Society (two modules in Years 1 and 2); Education (three modules, in Years 1, 2 and 3); Journalism Studies (eight modules: two in Year 1, four in Year 2, and two in Year 3). Overseas students need to provide evidence that they have achieved IELTS 7.5 or equivalent in order to undertake the Journalism Studies themed route.

To further develop employability skills, students have the option to sit an additional year, between year two and year three, of either a work placement or study abroad.

Detailed information about the structure of programmes, regulations concerning assessment and progression and descriptions of individual modules are published in the University Calendar available on-line at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/calendar/>.

## 21. Student development over the course of study

A pass mark of 40 or greater must be achieved in order to gain credits for each module.

A student who has been awarded 360 credits shall be eligible for the award of BA Hons Digital Media and Society.

## 22. Criteria for admission to the programme

ABB at A Level, or equivalent.

IELTS 6.5 (with no less than 6.0 in each component) or equivalent.

### 23. Additional information

Full information about the programme is available on the department's website:

<http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/socstudies>

This specification represents a concise statement about the main features of the programme and should be considered alongside other sources of information provided by the teaching department(s) and the University. In addition to programme specific information, further information about studying at The University of Sheffield can be accessed via our Student Services web site at <http://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid>.