



The  
University  
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Sheffield.

## 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

### Programme Details

1. Programme title	Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE)
2. Programme code	EDCU008 (BSc)
3. QAA FHEQ level	6
4. Faculty	Social Sciences
5. Department	Sheffield Methods Institute
6. Other departments providing credit bearing modules for the programme	Politics, Philosophy, and Economics
7. Accrediting Professional or Statutory Body	Not applicable
8. Date of production/revision	August 2020, January 2024, March 2026

Awards	Type of award	Duration
9. Final award	BSc	36 months (optional year in industry/study abroad @ 48 months)
10. Intermediate awards	Not applicable	

## Programme Codes

11. JACS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the <a href="#">HESA website</a>.</i>	L200 (primary)	V500	L100
12. HECoS code(s) <i>Select between one and three codes from the <a href="#">HECoS vocabulary</a>.</i>	100491	100337	100450

## Programme Delivery

13. Mode of study	Full-time
14. Mode of delivery	In person

## 15. Background to the programme and subject area

Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE) is a cross-disciplinary undergraduate degree programme drawing on the strengths of its component disciplines, brought together by a core of essential disciplinary and methodological knowledge. Core PPE modules are led by its home department, Sheffield Methods Institute, working closely with the Department of Politics and International Relations, Department of Philosophy, and Department of Economics. PPE was first offered at the University of Oxford in 1920 to train young people for 'modern' careers in government and large corporations. PPE's great strength is its unique combination of applied ethics, analytic precision, commercial awareness and understanding of political realities - which can be harnessed to solve problems in the round. PPE at the University of Sheffield ensures that each student learns Politics, Philosophy and Economics in each of their first two years, while also acquiring core methodological and epistemological training of value in each of the three disciplines. Students are offered the opportunity to specialise in a range of substantive areas in line with their interests and future career plans, in areas as diverse as climate change, political leadership, international development, security, and education.

## 16. Programme aims

BA / BSc Politics, Philosophy, and Economics aims to:	
<b>A1</b>	Introduce students to core principles in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics.
<b>A2</b>	Foster creative approaches to problem-solving by crossing traditional academic boundaries.
<b>A3</b>	Equip students with methodological tools for policy analysis and programme evaluation.
<b>A4</b>	Provide evidence-based, research-led teaching in PPE using applied problems.
<b>A5</b>	Prepare students for work in applied policy settings, across a range of agencies and providers including, for example, governments, the third sectors, public agencies and advisory groups, and government affairs departments in the private sector.

## 17. Programme learning outcomes

<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:		
		<b>Links to Aim(s)</b>
<b>K1</b>	The history and development of PPE as a programme of study.	A1, A2
<b>K2</b>	The core theories that unite Politics, Philosophy, and Economics as an interdisciplinary field of study.	A1, A2, A4
<b>K3</b>	Key concepts in PPE used to understand political and economic phenomena.	A1, A3, A4
<b>K4</b>	Applied methods in PPE to evaluate and interpret political and economic phenomena.	A2, A3, A4
<b>Skills and other attributes</b>		
On successful completion of the programme, students will be able to:		
<b>S1</b>	Conduct policy analysis to evaluate the impact of legislation and policies.	A2, A3, A4
<b>S2</b>	Evaluate programmes to assess their effectiveness and efficiency.	A2, A3, A4
<b>S3</b>	Make causal inference using experimental and observational data.	A2, A3, A4
<b>S4</b>	Design, execute, evaluate, report original research applying the appropriate quantitative and qualitative methods.	A2, A3, A4
<b>S5</b>	Communicate findings and conclusions to audiences of different kinds, including specialists and non-specialists	A3, A5

## 18. Learning and teaching methods

<p>The PPE course will be jointly taught by academic staff in Politics, Philosophy, Economics, and the SMI. The PPE Programme Director will be responsible for delivering the core PPE modules at L1 and L2, as well as coordinating the L3 dissertation module with support from the SMI academic team to provide supervision to individual students. SMI core Teaching will take place primarily in The Wave, the new Social Sciences Hub, although teaching may occur in any of the teaching spaces across the university. Learning technologies will be incorporated into the programme where appropriate. For example, module content and the UG Handbook will be available on Blackboard; lecture capture will be used to support student learning; etc. The PPE Director will work with the SMI's TEL officer to ensure that technology is being incorporated into the PPE modules and with the range of academics involved to ensure best practice in the use of learning technologies.</p> <p>While students will gain substantive expertise in PPE by selecting modules from each of the cognate departments, students will be supported within the SMI with interdisciplinary PPE modules at L1, L2, and L3. The interdisciplinary structure of the programme will necessitate that students become self-directed learners, especially with the expectation that students will complete a year in industry or study abroad between L2 and L3. However, the SMI will provide support to students to ensure a coherent learning experience and identity as a cohort.</p>
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## 19. Assessment and feedback methods

Assessment will take various forms given the programme's interdisciplinary nature. The assessment load and spread for students has been mapped out through the work of the PPE Steering Group to ensure students are not being over-assessed and that a range of different methods of assessment are adopted. In practice, of course, students will be assessed in various ways given the contributions for participating departments, but these assessments will likely complement one another and should ensure students have mastered the key theories, concepts, and methods in PPE. For example, Politics and Philosophy modules are more often assessed via written essays, while Economics modules are largely exam-based. In the PPE modules (SMI11003, 21003, 21004, and 31010), students will be assessed primarily through written reports and oral presentations, culminating with a comprehensive dissertation at L3. These assessment methods have been chosen because they mirror the types of activities that employers would expect graduates of a PPE programme to be able to do well. Students should expect to conduct policy analysis and programme evaluation on applied problems using real-world data and policy case studies. The details for the assessments will reflect external expectations in relation to professional competencies, and input from external stakeholders, such as members of the Advisory Board, will be sought.

Students will be assigned personal tutors within the SMI at all year levels in accordance with the department's current procedures. For example, SMI personal tutors hold regular group meetings (usually at least one face-to-face meeting per term) to introduce staff members, disseminate information, and answer general questions that may arise, as well as individual meetings as necessary. Within the SMI, there is a minimum expectation that tutors meet face-to-face with students at least once per term. The PPE Director will ensure the students have a Student Rep who sits on the staff student committee within the SMI. The SMI will then be responsible for coordinating feedback to participating departments.

As per the UG Handbook and University policy, students should expect to receive written feedback on submitted assessments within 3 weeks. This feedback will be based upon detailed marking criteria and provide guidance on why the submission earned a given mark. In addition, written feedback will explain what students could have done to improve their assessment. Innovative feedback approaches will be incorporated where possible to help them improve their work and future submissions.

## 20. Programme structure and student development

There are several key features that differentiate the PPE degree at TUoS:

First, there are core interdisciplinary PPE modules at L1 and L2 designed to provide students with foundations in the cognate disciplines, and more importantly, to demonstrate how they are interrelated. These modules also provide core methods training in policy analysis and programme evaluation, as well as serving to create a PPE cohort of students. Where feasible, they will include input and collaboration from key external partners, who will advise on applied content such as policy case studies.

Secondly, students will complete independent research projects across all years of the PPE degree, culminating with a dissertation using the knowledge acquired from each of the PPE disciplines. The dissertation may include input and supervision from an external partner, where appropriate. The completed dissertation will also provide students with a detailed example of the high-quality analytical work that they could produce for potential employers or PGT programmes, for those that choose to continue their education.

Thirdly, the year in industry/study abroad between L2 and L3, although not required, will be the expected default for students on the PPE degree. The route (industry/study abroad) will be determined in consultation with the UG PPE Programme Director based upon each student's goals, interests, and individual situation. No other competitor institutions have such a strong focus on employability by encouraging all students to complete a year in industry or study abroad. There will be shorter-term options for students that cannot commit to an entire year, such as summer placements.

Fourthly, working closely with key stakeholders, the PPE Director will also ensure that real-world

policy analysis and programme evaluation case studies are incorporated into the content of the PPE modules, where appropriate. Focus on addressing applied coursework will ensure that students develop valuable analytical skills and are familiar with the types of problems facing those working in the public interest, and these experiences could feed into the dissertation, either via selection of case studies or more formal supervisory relationships.

Finally, students who want a more quantitative focus within Economics would be able to pursue this option by taking the additional modules enroute to earn a BSc degree classification:

Level 1 (choose one)

- a) ECN118 Mathematical Methods for Economics 1 (non A Level Maths stream. 20 credits)
- b) ECN119 Mathematical Methods for Economics 2 (post A Level Maths stream; 20 credits)

Level 2 (complete both)

- a) ECN201 Intermediate Microeconomics (20 credits)
- b) ECN202 Intermediate Macroeconomics (20 credits)

Level 3 (SMI31010, plus at least 40 credits of which must be methods-focused modules)

SMI31010 Dissertation in PPE (40 AY; must have applied focus)

Modules offered within Economics at L3 with approval of PPE Director

More details on the structure of the PPE degree are listed below:

**Level 1 (120 credits)**

Students are required to complete 2 core 20-credit modules to provide foundations in the principles of PPE, as well as sufficient exposure to its core methodological approaches (including quantitative concepts). To ensure broad coverage of the cognate fields of PPE, students must complete at least 20 credits from each discipline. Modules at L1 have been carefully selected from each department to ensure that they fit within the scope of a PPE degree and provide foundations for substantive modules at L2 and especially at L3. Students will have 20 credits free to complete any other modules of their choice across the University.

**Core:** 40 credits

PPE11003-Principles in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (20 AY)

SMI102 Economics, Society, and Public Policy (20 AY)

**Optional:** 60 credits, at least 20 credits must be completed from each PPE field

**Guided:** 20 credits (unless the BSc route is chosen; free credits replaced by ECN118 or ECN119)

**Level 2 (120 credits)**

Students are required to complete 2 core 20-credit modules to further their training in the methods of policy analysis and programme evaluation in the principles of PPE and applications of these methods to specific case studies. To ensure broad coverage of the cognate fields of PPE, students must complete at least 20 credits from each discipline. Once again modules at L2 have been carefully selected from each department to ensure that they fit within the scope of a PPE degree and provide foundations for substantive modules at L3. Students would again have 20 credits free to complete any other modules of their choice across the University.

**Core:** 40 credits

PPE21004 Policy Analysis and Programme Evaluation (20 AU)

PPE21003 Case Studies in PPE (20 SP)

**Optional:** 60 credits, at least 20 credits must be completed from each PPE field (from an approved list)

**Guided:** 20 credits (unless the BSc route is chosen; free credits replaced by ECN201 or ECN202,

both of which are required)

### **Year in Industry / Study Abroad [Optional]**

Students will be strongly encouraged to spend a year either: 1) working in industry for government, organisations in the public interest, or departments with a policy/programme evaluation focus (or other opportunities as approved by the SMI Placements Coordinator); or 2) studying abroad at an accredited institution outside of the UK with a public policy focus (as approved by the SMI Study Abroad Tutor). This year will allow students to further develop their critical thinking, analytical, communication, and policy analysis/programme evaluation skills in an applied setting. The optional year in industry / study abroad will be pass / fail.

### **Level 3 (120 credits)**

Students are required to complete 1 core 40-credit dissertation module to apply policy analysis and programme evaluation in the principles of PPE. To ensure broad coverage of the cognate fields of PPE, students must complete 80 credits from at least two of the PPE cognate fields (i.e., Politics, Philosophy, and Economics). Modules at L3 offer much more flexibility in the substantive areas of PPE to allow students to specialise in areas of their interest (in consultation with the PPE Director).

**Core:** 40 credits

SMI31010 Dissertation in PPE (40 AY)

**Optional:** 80 credits, from at least two PPE fields (from an approved list)

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

## **21. Criteria for admission to the programme**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Grades</b>
A Levels	AAA
International Baccalaureate	36
BTEC	D*DD in a relevant subject
Scottish Highers	AAAAA
Welsh Baccalaureate + 2 A Levels	A + AA
Access to HE	<a href="#">Entry requirements for mature students</a>
Other qualifications	<a href="#">Other UK qualifications</a> <a href="#">Other EU/international qualifications</a>
<b>Other requirements</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>GCSE Maths grade 6 or B</li></ul>	

• You must demonstrate that your English is good enough for you to successfully complete your course. For this course we require: GCSE English Language at grade 4/C; IELTS grade of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component; or an alternative acceptable English language qualification

• [Equivalent English language qualifications](#)

• [Access Sheffield](#) - find out if you're eligible for additional consideration or an alternative offer

More information regarding admission to the PPE programme is available from the Sheffield Methods Institute:

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/smi/undergraduate/courses>

## 22. 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 (2014)

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks.pdf>

University Vision and Strategic Plan

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

## 23. Additional information

None

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>.