### Programme Specification: Diploma in Sociology

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| **1. Awarding Body** | LSE |
| **2. Details of accreditation by a professional/statutory body**  **e.g. ESRC; BPS etc)** | None |
| **3. Name of final award** | Diploma |
| **4. Programme Title** | Sociology |
| **5. Duration of the Course** | Full-time 9 months; part-time 18 months |
| **6. Based in the Department/Institute:** | Department of Sociology |
| **7. Relevant QAA subject benchmark statements** | N/A |
| **8. Application Code** | L3ED |
| **9. First written** | December 2003 / December 2012 |

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| **10. The programme aims to:** |
| * Act as a conversion course comprising Sociology undergraduate courses for students wishing later to pursue an MSc degree in a Department of Sociology programme, having achieved a non-social-science first degree of an acceptable standard. The course: * Provides students with a critical understanding of societies and the forms they take; * Provides students with an understanding of the major sociological perspectives and debates within the discipline; * Provides students with foundational knowledge of social research methods and their application within the discipline; * Encourages students to think critically, and to engage with theoretical and empirical research in order to develop rigorous, critical and independent thought. |

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| **11. Programme outcomes: knowledge and understanding; skills and other attributes** |
| The Diploma’s aims to provide:   * The foundations for an MSc in Sociology and thinking sociologically; * A general understanding of sociological approaches and perspectives; * An understanding of the key research methods in sociological research and the ways in which these are applied in Sociology; * Direct experience of conducting sociological research; * Enhanced critical thinking skills; * Students who pass with a satisfactory grade are deemed suitable to pursue an MSc in the Department of Sociology in the subsequent year.   For further information relating to [careers](http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/CareersAndVacancies/careersService/Home.aspx). |

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| **12. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated** |
| **Teaching and learning strategies**  Diploma teaching includes both lectures - where an overview of the week's topic and the key issues are outlined in order to provide a foundational framework and structure for student learning and exploration of the issues themselves - and small seminars in which students have the opportunity to discuss their independent reading, explore issues in more depth, exchange and discuss ideas and debate controversies with their fellow students and staff. This process helps to enable students to understand the contested nature of many of the areas they explore in the discipline and to help students understand and evaluate these disputes thereby encouraging rigorous, critical and  independent thought.  Most of our teaching is interactive involving a range of different approaches to stimulate learning and requires active student participation and engagement. Some modules have group work, projects and outside visits too to further develop active learning and to enable students to explore the differences between theory and practice.  Diploma students have approximately 9 hours of lectures and classes a week.  All the courses Diploma students take are supported by Moodle – an interactive platform - where students can readily access course materials, readings and in some cases a range of audio visual and other information/links too.  Students are also allocated an Academic Adviser with whom they meet several times a year. Advisers provide academic support and advice  **Assessment strategies**  A variety of different assessment methods are employed in the Department. All courses have formative essays or assignments/project work that students need to complete during the year. These are intended to give students the opportunity to examine particular themes or ideas within individual courses and to combine their reading, ideas and material from the taught elements of their course. All students receive detailed feedback from staff on their formative work so that they can develop and improve. Some courses are examined partially or wholly by essays and/or project work as the subject matter is most suited to this.  However, most courses that Diploma students take have mixed methods of assessment. Assessed essays enable students to select and explore a particular area in some depth and demonstrate the extent of their independent learning skills, thinking and engagement with the material, and subject matter they have covered on their course/s. Most courses also have examinations in which students’ knowledge of the course more broadly is assessed – usually in the form of three essays questions. |

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| 1. **Programme structures and requirements, levels modules and awards.** |
| For further information see the [Diploma in Sociology programme regulations](http://www.lse.ac.uk/resources/calendar/programmeRegulations/diploma/DiplomaInSociology.htm). |

**Additional Information**

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| 1. **Criteria for admission to the programme** |
| A non-social-science first degree of a reasonable standard. |

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| 1. **Indicators of quality** |
| * 20 out of 24 points in the HEFCE Teaching Quality Assessment of LSE departments – 1995. This score needs to be set in context. The scores for the HEFCE/QAA exercise have undergone considerable grade inflations since 1995/6. At the time this visit took place, the average score for all TQA reviews was 19.60; * The Department’s undergraduate and postgraduate programmes were also extensively reviewed in 2002 by the School’s Teaching and Learning Committee; * The [LSE Careers Centre website](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/graduateDestinations/) provides data on career destinations of LSE graduates. |

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| 1. **Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standard of teaching and learning** |
| **Departmental mechanisms:**   * Undergraduate staff student liaison committee- meets twice in MT and LT and once in ST to discuss undergraduate students experiences of the programme, individual courses and new course proposals. Discussions in this forum have led to changes in the content and approach to courses on the programme .The Departmental Tutor raises any issues relating to students’ experiences with the course convenors and other staff; * Department Teaching and Learning Committee discusses a variety of issues relating to both teaching and assessment, and approves amendments to existing and new course proposals before they are sent to the School’s Undergraduate Studies Sub-Committee; * TQARO material collected by the School (see below) that evaluates the teaching of all staff in the Department and Graduate Teaching Assistants is used as the basis for discussions with staff about ways to improve and develop their teaching in conjunction with the School’s Teaching and Learning Centre if required; * Departmental meetings take place approx. twice a term and deal with a variety of issues including quality of teaching and learning; * Regular meetings with Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) who do much of our undergraduate class teaching. GTAs do a departmental half day induction workshop that includes a marking exercise and a discussion of what constitutes good teaching, have regular meetings with the Departmental Tutor in which GTAs’ experiences in the classroom, sharing best practice and solving problems are regular features, and support and feedback is also provided by course convenors and the Departmental Tutor throughout the year. Most GTAs also study for the PG Cert qualification and therefore engage in on-going reflections on their teaching and how to improve students’ learning.   **School-wide mechanisms:**   * Regular staff appraisal and review; * Improvements in teaching technique by the Teaching and Learning Centre through observations, advice and further training; * Induction programme and mentoring scheme for new members of staff; * Support of Occasional Teachers by the lecturer responsible for a particular module plus the Occasional Teacher Tutor; * Centrally administered course teaching survey by the Teaching Quality Assurance and Review Office (TQARO); * An improved system for ensuring that External Examiners’ comments/recommendations are fed through the Departments and acted upon; * The School’s Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee which regulates all aspects of teaching quality; * The School’s Undergraduate Studies Sub-Committee which oversees all undergraduate programmes and ensures that significant changes to programmes and courses pass through a sequence of formal stages so that curricular changes are appropriate and compatible with other developments. Departmental Review once every five years; * that significant changes to programmes and courses pass through a sequence of formal stages so that curricular changes are appropriate and compatible with other developments. |