

Programme Specification: Foundation Year

For Academic Year 2026/27

1. Course Summary

Names of programme and award title(s)	Social Science Foundation Year
Award type	Foundation Year
Mode of study	Full-time
Framework of Higher Education Qualification (FHEQ) level of final award	Foundation Year
Normal length of the programme	1 year with progression onto a further three years at Keele
Maximum period of registration	The normal length as specified above plus 3 years
Location of study	Keele Campus
Accreditation (if applicable)	n/a
Regulator	Office for Students (OfS)
Tuition Fees	UK students: Fee for 2026/27 is £5,760* (September intake)

How this information might change: Please read the important information at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>. This explains how and why we may need to make changes to the information provided in this document and to help you understand how we will communicate with you if this happens.

* These fees are regulated by Government. We reserve the right to increase fees in subsequent years of study in response to changes in government policy and/or changes to the law. If permitted by such change in policy or law, we may increase your fees by an inflationary amount or such other measure as required by government policy or the law. Please refer to the accompanying Student Terms & Conditions. Further information on fees can be found at <http://www.keele.ac.uk/studentfunding/tuitionfees/>

2. What is a Foundation Year programme?

Keele has a long-standing Foundation Year programme that bridges the gap between further education and higher education, providing an alternative route into studying for a full degree. It involves an initial year of study that, following successful completion, will enable people to progress onto the first year of one of our eligible undergraduate degrees.

A foundation year might appeal to those who:

- May lack the confidence to enrol on a university degree and would like to acquire study skills and some entry-level knowledge on a subject area.
- Didn't manage to meet the entry requirements for their chosen degree course, but are still committed to pursuing that path and enrolling on that degree.
- May have been out of education for a while and feel they might need a refresher before taking on a full university degree.

- Are unsure whether university is for them, so would like a taster of university life before committing to a full degree.

3. Overview of the Programme

The Social Science programme prepares students who are going on to complete their undergraduate degree in subjects such as Sociology, Law, Criminology, Politics, International Relations, and Education, within the Faculty of Business, Law, Humanities and Social Sciences. A full list of Honours degree programmes provided by each School in the Faculty of Business, Law, Humanities and Social Sciences can be found using the links below:

School of Law: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/subjectareas/law/>

School of Social Sciences: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/socialsciences/>

The Social Science Foundation Year provides:

- a chance to sample social science subjects at university level before making a final choice of degree course,
- an interdisciplinary approach to modules which prepare students with the knowledge, and academic study skills required for their undergraduate degrees,
- a broad grounding in academic principles, theory, research, and methods of investigating society.

4. Aims of the programme

The aim of the social science programme is to empower and encourage students to become more confident, independent learners, who can take agency over their education and learning.

The broad aims of the programme will enable you to:

- achieve a broad knowledge and understanding of a range of social science related subjects at level 3;
- acquire a range of academic skills required for undergraduate study, and transferable skills required for the working world;
- develop your critical analysis skills;
- explore a variety of learning methods and modes of assessment to fully prepare you for undergraduate study,

5. What you will learn

The intended learning outcomes of the programme (what students should know, understand and be able to do at the end of the programme), can be described under the following headings:

- Subject knowledge and understanding
- Academic skills
- Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Subject knowledge and understanding

Successful students will be able to:

- understand broad social science related principles;
- study in a manner appropriate to social science degree students;
- gain knowledge and understanding of social, political, economic, and cultural contexts that impact our social world;
- learn a broad range of theories and concepts that will prepare you for undergraduate study;
- apply theoretical and conceptual knowledge to real world social issues and case studies;
- understand how and why social scientists research the social world and social phenomena.

General academic skills

Successful students will be able to:

- show awareness of the components and structure of an academic assignment;
- access, use and reference appropriate resources;
- show awareness of plagiarism and improved ability to paraphrase and incorporate direct quotations;
- set, research, support and defend an academic argument;
- think and write analytically and critically;
- synthesise and comment on a body of academic writing;

- prepare to participate meaningfully in a group seminar discussion;
- select appropriate materials for, and co-lead a seminar discussion;
- plan, research and deliver an effective academic oral presentation;
- work as a member of a team to plan and execute class tasks;
- provide constructive and practical feedback to peers;
- consolidate writing and research skills;
- reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, capitalise on their learning style, and target areas for improvement.
- communicate well in both verbal and written modes;

Key or transferable skills (including employability skills)

Successful students will be able to:

- demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills;
- prepare and deliver presentations;
- work cooperatively and collaboratively in groups;
- communicate and negotiate effectively when working as part of team;
- reflect on their own skills and progress;
- participate in an investigative project;
- utilise effective independent study skills;
- manage and organise time effectively.

Keele Graduate Attributes

The Keele Graduate Attributes are the qualities (skills, values and mindsets) which you will have the opportunity to develop during your time at Keele through both the formal curriculum and also through co- and extra-curricular activities (e.g., work experience, and engagement with the wider University community such as acting as ambassadors, volunteering, peer mentoring, student representation, membership and leadership of clubs and societies). Our Graduate Attributes consist of four themes: **academic expertise, professional skills, personal effectiveness, and social, environmental and ethical responsibility**. You will have opportunities to engage actively with the range of attributes throughout your time at Keele: through your academic studies, through self-assessing your own strengths, weaknesses, and development needs, and by setting personal development goals. You will have opportunities to discuss your progress in developing graduate attributes with, for example, Academic Mentors, to prepare for your future career and lives beyond Keele.

6. How is the programme taught?

Learning and teaching methods used on the programme vary according to the subject matter and level of the module. They include the following:

Digital Learning give students access to a variety of high quality, on-demand digital resources that students have access to including Microsoft Sway, OneNote and PowerPoint.

Lectures are normally 50 minutes long and consist of a member of staff talking to the whole class with the aid of PowerPoint presentations, whiteboards, and other visual aids. Many lectures involve only teaching by the lecturer, although there is usually opportunity to ask questions. However, some lectures are more interactive and may involve activities for the students to undertake.

Tutorials and **seminars** are small group sessions with a member of staff. Usually there is much more participation by students in these than in lectures. There is often opportunity for students to suggest the topics to be discussed, to ask questions and even to lead part of the session. Tutorials and seminars usually support the material delivered in the lectures; seminars often allow students and/or staff to introduce supplementary material.

Workshops are small group sessions based around an activity. These may be individual or group activities. A member of staff facilitates the session but the learning comes largely through the undertaking of the activity. Some workshops will complement the material delivered in the lectures rather than build on it directly.

In **computer classes** students complete tasks using a wide variety of computer applications. Members of staff are available to provide guidance.

Independent study includes revision, wider reading around the subject, preparation and writing of assignments, preparatory reading, preparation for seminars and tutorials, and developing skills to complement the material delivered in class. Reading lists are provided to help students direct their reading.

Visits/Fieldtrips - here students will be able to visit areas of significance and understand their sociological, political and cultural importance.

Apart from these formal activities, students are also provided with regular opportunities to talk through particular areas of difficulty, and any special learning needs they may have, with their Academic Mentors or module lecturers on a one-to-one basis.

7. Teaching Staff

All Foundation Year Centre staff already have or are completing formal teaching qualifications and collectively have many years' experience of teaching on foundation year programmes. Many are engaged in scholarship relating to teaching and learning. In some cases teaching may be delivered by staff from other Schools in the University, or external experts in their field contracted to deliver specific teaching.

The University will attempt to minimise changes to our core teaching teams, however, delivery of the programme depends on having a sufficient number of staff with the relevant expertise to ensure that the programme is taught to the appropriate academic standard.

Staff turnover, for example where key members of staff leave, fall ill or go on research leave, may result in changes to the programme's content. The University will endeavour to ensure that any impact on students is limited if such changes occur.

8. What is the structure of the programme?

The Social Sciences Foundation Year offers a September and January start. Both provide 120 credits worth of study during the academic year. For more information on the January start Social Science Foundation Year please see the *Blended Delivery Foundation Year*.

The following sections focus on the Social Science Foundation Year that starts in September.

The academic year runs from September to June and is divided into two semesters. The number of weeks of teaching may vary from programme to programme but you can normally expect up to 12 weeks of teaching for each semester.

You can generally expect to attend scheduled teaching sessions between the end of September and mid-December (semester 1), and from mid-January to the end of April (semester 2).

There are usually two reassessment periods. Semester 1 reassessment period usually takes place between April and June. Semester 2 reassessment period usually takes place in August.

Each module is a self-contained unit of study and assessed separately. Students take a combination of modules to a total of 120 credits. Modules are worth 15 or 30 credits.

A 15 credit module has an expectation of 150 hours of student effort and a 30 credit module has an expectation of 300 hours of student effort. When you combine all modules taken within the foundation year, this translates to the equivalent of a full time job - where students are expected to contribute 35-40hrs per week on their studies. This 35-40hrs per week includes: Attending face to face classes; class preparation; completing reading, writing and proof reading of assignments; independent study.

An outline of the structure of the programme is provided below.

Year	Compulsory	Optional	
		Min	Max
Foundation Year	0	120	120

Module Lists

Foundation Year

Optional modules	Module Code	Credits	Period
Foundations of Humanities - 1	FYO-00257	15	Semester 1
Foundations of Humanities - 2	FYO-00259	15	Semester 1
Foundations of Social Sciences - 1	FYO-00263	15	Semester 1
Foundations of Social Science - 2	FYO-00265	15	Semester 1
Writing about Representation in Media and Film	FYO-00412	30	Semester 1
Foundations in Law and Academic Writing	FYO-00416	30	Semester 1
Advancing Humanities	FYO-00261	30	Semester 2
Advancing Social Sciences	FYO-00269	30	Semester 2
University Research Portfolio	FYO-00271	30	Semester 2
Law Research Portfolio	FYO-00360	30	Semester 2

The University Research Portfolio will enable students to specialise in their selected area of study if they wish.

Learning Outcomes

The table below sets out what students learn in the programme and the modules in which that learning takes place. Details of how learning outcomes are assessed through these modules can be found in module specifications.

Foundation Year

Subject Knowledge and Understanding		
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Level Outcome) used
<i>Successful students will be able to:</i>		
Achieve a broad knowledge and understanding of a range of social science related subjects;	Foundations in Social Science 2	Case Study + Investigative Report
Acquire a range of academic skills required for undergraduate study, and transferable skills required for the working world	Writing about representation in film	Textual analysis Critical Review
Develop critical analysis skills	Foundations of Social Science 3	Textual analysis and critical review.
Explore a variety of learning methods and modes of assessment to fully prepare you for undergraduate study.	University research portfolio	Presentation, Essay and Research Task
Critically develop and apply a civic ethos.	Advancing Social Science Module	Project-based Poster

Generic Academic Skills		
<i>Successful students will be able to:</i>	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Level Outcome) used
<p>show awareness of the components and structure of an academic assignment;</p> <p>access, use and reference appropriate resources;</p> <p>show awareness of plagiarism and improved ability to paraphrase and incorporate direct quotations;</p>	Writing about representation in film	Critical Review
<p>set, research, support and defend an academic argument;</p> <p>think and write analytically and critically;</p> <p> synthesise and comment on a body of academic writing;</p>	Foundations in Social Science 1 and 2	Portfolio and Investigative report
<p>prepare to participate meaningfully in a group seminar discussion;</p> <p>select appropriate materials for, and co-lead a seminar discussion;</p> <p>plan, research and deliver an effective academic oral presentation;</p>	University Research Portfolio	Presentation + Research Task + Essay
<p>reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses, capitalise on their learning style, and target areas for improvement.</p> <p>communicate well in both verbal and written modes;</p>	Foundations in Social Science 1	Portfolio
<p>work as a member of a team to plan and execute class tasks;</p> <p>provide constructive and practical feedback to peers;</p> <p>consolidate writing and research skills;</p>	All modules	

Key or Transferable Skills (graduate attributes)		
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered	Principal forms of assessment (of the Level Outcome) used
<p><i>Successful students will have the opportunity to develop the ability to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - demonstrate motivation, time-management and organisation through the meeting of strict deadlines and reading schedules; - demonstrate effective written and oral communication and rhetorical skills; - communicate and negotiate effectively when working as part of a research and presentation team; - reflect upon, and discuss critically and constructively the work and contributions of others; - demonstrate an ability to consider social and political issues critically as an actively engaged global citizen; - work together with peers to produce and appraise an academic presentation. 	<p>Advancing Social Science Module</p> <p>University Research Portfolio</p>	<p>Project-based poster presentation</p> <p>Essay</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>Research task</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - communicate ideas and arguments persuasively and effectively through the use of rhetoric and historical evidence, both orally and through written work; - organize and present written work to a professional standard; - interpret and appreciate unfamiliar or alien ideas or perspectives; - critically interpret the credibility and reliability of a range of data; - organize and manage their time and resources in order to meet strict deadlines and maintain substantial reading schedules. 	<p>Writing about representation in film</p> <p>Foundations of Social Science 1 & 2 Modules</p>	<p>Essay</p> <p>Case Study</p> <p>Report</p> <p>Textual Analysis</p> <p>Critical Review</p>

Subject Knowledge and Understanding	
Learning Outcome	Module in which this is delivered
See table above	See above

9. Final and intermediate awards

Students successfully completing the programme with 120 credits will be eligible for the Certificate in Foundation Year Studies.

The certificate will only be awarded to students who successfully complete the Keele Foundation Year and then choose not to continue their studies at Keele.

10. How is the Programme Assessed?

The wide variety of assessment methods used on this programme at Keele reflects the broad range of knowledge and skills that are developed as you progress through the programme. Teaching staff pay particular attention to specifying clear assessment criteria and providing timely, regular and constructive feedback that helps to clarify things you did not understand and helps you to improve your performance. The following list is representative of the variety of assessment methods used on your programme:

- **Essays and reports** allow students to demonstrate their ability to articulate ideas clearly using argument and reasoning skills and with close reference to the contexts and critical concepts covered in the modules. Essays also develop and demonstrate research and presentation skills (including appropriate scholarly referencing).
- **Research projects** test students' knowledge of different research methodologies and the limits and provisional nature of knowledge. They also enable students to demonstrate their ability to formulate research questions and to address them using appropriate methods.
- **Oral and poster presentations and reports** assess individual students' subject knowledge and understanding. They may also test their ability to work effectively as members of a team, to communicate what they know orally and visually, and to reflect on these processes as part of their own personal development.
- **Portfolios** may consist of a range of different pieces of work but routinely include a requirement that students provide some evidence of critical reflection on the development of their own learning.
- **Peer assessment** - in some cases students will be involved in peer evaluation of other students' work, particularly in group work. This helps students to take responsibility, improve their performance, and reflect on both their own work and that of others.
- **Course work assignments** consist of short written pieces completed in students' own time and provide the opportunity to test a range of deeper learning concepts; they are expected to make use of a variety of source material, as well as their lecture notes and text books etc., to complete these assignments.

Marks are awarded for summative assessments designed to assess your achievement of learning outcomes. You will also be assessed formatively to enable you to monitor your own progress and to assist staff in identifying and addressing any specific learning needs. Feedback, including guidance on how you can improve the quality of your work, is also provided on all summative assessments within three working weeks of submission, unless there are compelling circumstances that make this impossible, and more informally in the course of tutorial and seminar discussions.

11. Contact Time and Expected Workload

This contact time measure is intended to provide you with an indication of the type of activity you are likely to undertake during this programme. The data is compiled based on module choices and learning patterns of students on similar programmes in previous years. Every effort is made to ensure this data is a realistic representation of what you are likely to experience, but changes to programmes, teaching methods and assessment methods mean this data is representative and not specific.

The figures below are an example of activities that a student may expect on your chosen course by year/stage of study. Contact time includes scheduled activities such as: lecture, seminar, tutorial, project supervision, workshops, fieldwork and external visits. The figures are based on 1,200 hours of student effort each year for full-time students.

Activity

	Scheduled learning and teaching activities	Guided independent Study	Placements
Foundation Year	20%	80%	0%

12. Accreditation

This programme does not have accreditation from an external body.

13. University Regulations

The University Regulations form the framework for learning, teaching and assessment and other aspects of the student experience. Further information about the University Regulations can be found at: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/student-agreement/>

Regulation C2 contain important information and covers all of the University's Foundation Year programmes at Level 3 and sets out;

- the fundamental structure of these programmes,
- the requirements to obtain an award,
- the requirements to progress to the next level of study at Keele,
- and academic failure.

Regulation C2 - Foundation Programmes can be found on Keele University's website - [Regulation C2 - Keele University](#)

If this programme has any exemptions, variations or additions to the University Regulations these will be detailed in an Annex at the end of this document titled 'Programme-specific regulations'.

14. What are the typical admission requirements for the Programme?

See the relevant course page on the website for the admission requirements relevant to this programme: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/>

Please note: All non-native English speaking students are required to undertake a diagnostic English language assessment on arrival at Keele, to determine whether English language support may help them succeed with their studies. An English language module may be compulsory for some students during their first year at Keele.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is considered on a case-by-case basis and those interested should contact the Programme Director. The University's guidelines on this can be found here: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/programmesandmodules/recognitionofpriorlearning/>

15. How are students supported on the programme?

All students have an Academic Mentor. They see their tutor on a regular basis (usually at least twice per semester), and also have access to him or her as necessary. The tutor will book individual progress meetings with each student at least twice during the Foundation Year. There is also a dedicated Social Science Foundation Year Programme Director. The course will be taught by staff in the Foundation Year Centre and from elsewhere in the University. There is also support from a team of administrators led by the Foundation Year Centre Manager. All students have access to the University's Student Services Centre and the Students' Union as necessary.

16. Learning Resources

All modules will be delivered through face-to-face contact and online where necessary. Most of the taught sessions will be in small classrooms. Some study will be undertaken in computer laboratories or practical laboratories under supervision from staff and postgraduate demonstrators. Support materials, course regulations and student handbooks will be available electronically on the Keele Learning Environment (Blackboard). All students will be registered with the library and have access to reading lists, course books and journals, and computing and printing facilities. All students have access to additional study skills support through the Student Learning section of Keele's Student Services Centre.

17. Other Learning Opportunities

Students are encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities offered by the University and the Students' Union, including societies, sports and volunteering. Involvement can be recognized in a number of ways including the Higher Education Achievement Record and Keele SU awards.

18. Additional Costs

We do not anticipate any further additional costs for this Foundation Year programme leading to a degree in Social Sciences.

These costs have been forecast by the University as accurately as possible but may be subject to change as a result of factors outside of our control (for example, increase in costs for external services). Forecast costs are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain representative. Where additional costs are in direct control of the University we will ensure increases do not exceed 5%.

As to be expected there will be additional costs for inter-library loans and potential overdue library fines, print and graduation. We do not anticipate any further costs for this programme.

19. Quality management and enhancement

The quality and standards of learning in this programme are subject to a continuous process of monitoring, review and enhancement.

- The Education Committee of the Foundation Year Centre is responsible for reviewing and monitoring quality management and enhancement procedures and activities across the Centre.
- Individual modules and the programme as a whole are reviewed and enhanced every year in the annual programme review which takes place at the end of the academic year.
- The programmes are run in accordance with the University's Quality Assurance procedures and are subject to periodic reviews under the Revalidation process.

Student evaluation of, and feedback on, the quality of learning on every module takes place every year using a variety of different methods:

- The results of student evaluations of all modules are reported to module leaders and reviewed by the Programme Committee as part of annual programme review.
- Feedback received from representatives of students in all three years of the programme is considered and acted on at regular meetings of the Student Staff Voice Committee.

The University appoints senior members of academic staff from other universities to act as external examiners on all programmes. They are responsible for:

- Approving examination questions
- Confirming all marks which contribute to a student's degree
- Reviewing and giving advice on the structure and content of the programme and assessment procedures

Information about current external examiner(s) can be found here:

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/qa/externalexaminers/currentexternalexaminers/>

20. The principles of programme design

The programme described in this document has been drawn up with reference to, and in accordance with the guidance set out in, the following documents:

a. UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education:

<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>

b. Keele University Regulations and Guidance for Students and Staff: <http://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations>

Version History

This document

Date Approved: 06 May 2026

Previous documents

Version No	Year	Owner	Date Approved	Summary of and rationale for changes
1	2025/26	NATALIE SOLEIMAN	23 June 2025	
1	2024/25	NATALIE SOLEIMAN	19 June 2024	
1	2023/24	NATALIE SOLEIMAN	21 April 2023	
1	2022/23	SIMON RIMMINGTON	21 April 2022	Amendment to one optional module
1	2021/22	SIMON RIMMINGTON	09 June 2021	
1.1	2020/21	SIMON RIMMINGTON	28 October 2020	Additional information added to Section 8 to incorporate a January enrolment point.
1	2020/21	IAN CRAWFORD	14 May 2020	
1	2019/20	IAN CRAWFORD	14 May 2020	