

Summary of Degree Programme 'Comparative Social Research'

Field of Studies

39.04.01 Sociology

Approved by

Protocol №51 dated 20.12.2013

HSE University Educational Standard

[HSE University Educational Standard: Master's Degree \(from 2022\)\(signature\)](#) (PDF, 1.05 Mb)

Last Update

Protocol №2.6-06.24/140823-3 dated 14.08.2023

Network Programme

No

Length of Studies, Mode of Studies, Credit Load

2 years [□]

Full-time, 120

Language of instruction

ENG

Instruction in English

Qualification upon graduation

Master

Double-degree Programme

Yes

Use of online learning

With online tools

Tracks

2023/2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

Comparative Social Research

Type: General

Track Supervisor: [Mitrofanova, Ekaterina](#)

Language of instruction: English

Use of online learning: With online tools

Qualification upon graduation: Магистр

Key learning outcomes:

KER-1 Explains social phenomena and processes based on concepts and explanatory models of sociology and related sciences, identifies socially significant problems and develops ways to solve them; predicts the development of social phenomena and processes

KER-2 Capable of analyzing the current state of civil society, carrying out theoretical analysis of social problems and explanatory prediction of the consequences of social transformations

KER-3 Based on the theories and concepts of sociology, is capable of representing tasks and hypotheses for performing research tasks in the applied and fundamental research; develops a strategy for the implementation and conducting of research; presents the results of the stages of the conducted research for discussion in the professional environment.

KER-4 Capable of carrying out a reasonable choice of methods and, if necessary, software tools for collecting and processing professional information, testing research hypotheses and reliability of the data obtained.

KER-5 Applies modern communication technologies in English for academic and professional interaction, takes into account the diversity of cultures in the process of intercultural interaction

Description of the professional field:

The program examines cross-national social problems and phenomena from a perspective of Sociology. We compare social processes, institutions and social groups studying the interplay between the actions of individuals in society at various mezzo- and macro levels of collectivity, such as society or culture.

We employ both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse values and human behavior, as well as individual's perceptions of the world and normative beliefs as something embedded in differing social contexts. We aim to understand how individuals' values and behavior do influence society and how society influences their worldview, motivating them to social actions.

Our graduates are well-equipped for international careers in academia or research. Many of students went on to doctoral programmes; others began their careers as research associates at multinational and international organisations such as the World Bank, the International Labour Organisation, OECD, UNESCO, and UNICEF.

Graduates of the program have competitive advantages from the acquired competences on the academic market and the practical skills to work within the non-academic sphere.

PC -1 Capable of developing proposals for improving the methods of conducting sociological research

PC-2 Capable of developing methodological tools, theoretical models and information materials for conducting research, analytical and consulting project activities in sociological research

PC-3 Capable of collecting, processing and interpreting data necessary for forming propositions on social,

scientific and ethical issues, including international ones.

PC-4 Capable of examining organizational and resulting documents of research of large numerical and textual data for the purpose of social sciences.

PC-5 Capable of carrying out formal oral and written communication in Russian and foreign language

Description of educational modules:

The programme lasts for two years and provides students with the theoretical and methodological skills they need to investigate and analyse the similarities and differences among nations, regions, cultures, and social groups differentiated by gender, generations, educational levels, places of living, social statuses, etc.

It provides an English-speaking international learning space and aims to train students to conduct theoretically and methodically funded rigorous empirical research in comparative perspective.

The programme structure stands on several pillars:

- **Core courses**

Compulsory courses comprise ones on quantitative and qualitative methods. Courses on quantitative methods will not only give a deeper insight into descriptive statistics and the use of the software package R, but also convey knowledge about inferential statistics. Courses on qualitative methods will deepen the knowledge of different techniques of conducting and analysing interviews, focus-groups and bodies of texts.

- **Elective courses**

Elective courses are updated each year and offer various topics in methodology and issue-related social science. Students can choose from a pool containing courses on data analysis, such as big data, social network analysis and life-course analysis, but also courses on social inequalities, gender, and public policy. Students can choose not only the programme's elective courses, but also the courses from the wider pool of other HSE's master's programmes.

- **Research preparation and conduct**

- **RESEARCH SEMINARS**

There are three Research Seminars at the first year of study and two – at the second. Each seminar is aimed to develop universal and professional skills of students getting them familiar with a wide range of applications of comparative social studies. Students aim to gradually learn how to search for, process and analyse data; conduct research for and write academic papers, and present research outcomes. The seminars run throughout the year and provide a platform for students to develop their research questions and project designs. Here we learn and discuss the practical side of academic work from finding suitable research topics to publishing in international peer-reviewed journals.

- **PROJECTS**

During all two years of study students undertake various projects for 12 project credits. These projects can relate to their term papers or master's theses; they can continue the study courses or relate to the future career of a student. Being involved in empirical research projects by the international teaching and research staff, our students collect valuable experience in conducting international research projects.

Projects can be realised in HSE, in other Russian organisations or abroad. An internship can count as a project.

- **Term Paper and Master's Thesis**

Our students prepare two academic texts which can be either interconnected or discover different topics. The idea behind these two texts is to study a social problem which is both interesting to a student and related to our

programme; to demonstrate advanced research skills and high level of academic standards.

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KER-5 Applies modern communication technologies in English for academic and professional interaction, takes into account the diversity of cultures in the process of intercultural interaction

Description of the professional field:

Graduates are well-equipped for international careers in academia or research. Many of students go on to doctoral programmes at partner universities (or at HSE). Others begin their careers as research associates at international organizations such as the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, OECD, UNESCO, and UNICEF. To have mastered the programme, graduates must have gained universal and professional competencies. Graduates of the program will have competitive advantages from acquired competences on the academic market and the practical methodological skills to also apply their knowledge within the non-academic sphere (including the ability to write scientific articles and compose analytical documents for governmental and international organizations, international businesses and NGOs).

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Description of educational modules:

This programme provides students with the theoretical and methodological skills they need to investigate and analyze the similarities and differences among nations, cultures, and other social groups in order to understand how contemporary societies, social issues, and conflicts around the globe evolve. The aim is to provide the theoretical and methodological instruments in order to shed light on the differences between nations, cultures and other social groups. In the seminars and lectures our students investigate social problems and issues in today's world from a perspective of interconnectedness between social actions of individuals at different levels of collectivity, such as, for example, societies and cultures. Our programs provides in-depth insights into how the individuals approaches to social reality, using either quantitative methodology for investigating norms and values, or qualitative methodology for accessing the individuals interpretations of their life-world. We realize this approach by implementing an entirely English-speaking and international learning space.

The programme's study plan is focused on training our students to conduct theory-orientated and methodologically rigorous empirical research in comparative perspective. The programme structure rests on three pillars:

• Core courses

Compulsory courses on quantitative methods will give not only deeper insight into descriptive statistics and the use of the software package R, but also convey knowledge about inferential statistics. But students also need to pass courses about qualitative methods of social inquiry. At the same time, our compulsory courses provide a deeper understanding of the concepts and models of comparison in social science. In addition, each year we organize a course on applied comparative sociology taught by an invited international guest lecture (for example, on social capital in western and post-communist societies or political sociology).

• Elective courses

Elective courses are assembled each year and offer various topics in methodology and issue-related social science. Students can choose from a pool containing courses on data analysis, such as big data, social network analysis and life-course analysis, but also courses on social inequalities, gender, and public policy.

• Research preparation and conduct

— Research Seminar

There are three Research seminars each of which develops some skills of the students and getting them familiar with a wide range of applications of the comparative studies. Students aim to gradually learn how to search for, process and analyze data; conduct research for and write academic papers, and present research outcomes. The seminars run throughout the year and provide a platform for students to develop their research questions and project designs. Here we learn and discuss the practical side of academic work from finding suitable research topics to publishing in international peer-reviewed journals.

— Internship (10 weeks in the 3rd semester)

During their third semester students undertake a research internship with one of our many partner institutions in Russia or abroad to collect and analyze data for their Term Papers and MA theses under the supervision of international experts from the programme's network, including West-European partner institutions and to the International Laboratory of Comparative Social Research at HSE.

— Project "Comparative Social Research"

Starting from the first semester, students get involved in empirical research projects by the international teaching staff of the programme. By assisting at all stages of the process, they collect valuable experience in conducting international research projects.

•**Master Thesis**

Competitive Advantages

The permanent teaching staff has extensive experience in comparative research in the leading international projects. During the classes, they discuss their cutting-edge studies and share their experience as researchers. Students benefit greatly from networking with experts and their advice on term papers and master's thesis. The programme's international and Russian teaching staff brings about a global atmosphere of learning, which is highly demanding as well as participatory.

The programme's students gain international experience by using manifold opportunities, such as:

— conducting international comparative research during their project activities in Russia or abroad

— going abroad for study exchange

— studying with peers from all over the world, especially from developing countries and CIS.

The programme is focused on obtaining a high-quality skill set for academic research through:

— rigorous methods education for a broad range of research topics. This gives the necessary skills and experience for enrollment into PhD schools in the future

— participation of students in the Ronald F. Inglehart Laboratory for Comparative Social Research and other international labs and research centers at HSE

— participation in international collaborative research and networks from the first semester.

The obtained methodological and analytical skill set is in strong demand at the Russian and global labor market in: universities, governmental and commercial research centers, think tanks, consulting, and in analytical units of international organisations.

The programme is welcoming BA graduates in Sociology, Political Science, History, Demography, Ethnography, Psychology, having adequate competences in data analysis methods. The representatives from other scientific fields are also invited as we embrace diversity and synergy.

Professional Activities and Competencies of Programme Graduates

In accordance with the Federal Educational Standard for the 39.04.01 Sociology specialisation, students shall acquire the following competencies:

— to independently master new research methods

— to conduct research in an international environment

— to identify socially significant problems and propose solutions based on relevant scientific theories, concepts, approaches and social technologies and on this basis forecast social phenomena and processes

— to process and interpret social, demographic, economic and other relevant empirical information using the explanatory capabilities of modern sociological theory

— to manage projects in the field of public opinion research, organisation of marketing services, and social

expertise of management decisions in various areas

— to spread sociological knowledge and to advise employees of management bodies, enterprises, institutions and organisations when dealing with social issues.

Graduates of the programme will be prepared for the following professional tasks (defined by the Federal Educational Standard for the 39.04.01 Sociology specialisation):

— Scientific and research-related tasks

— Social-technological tasks

— Analytical tasks

— Expert and consulting tasks.

Programme Modules

The first year of the program focuses on students' acquiring in-depth and applied knowledge for data analysis, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Simultaneously, students are gaining skills in comparative sociology and obtain the opportunity for more in-depth examination of topics for independent study and analysis based on their interests, such as social networks, inequality, migration processes, care and bodily practices, and mass communication. At the end of the first year, students defend their term papers.

The second year involves fewer courses and more emphasis on scientific research and practical work. Our students participate in projects conducted by both Russian and international scientific and research centers. During project preparation, students collect and analyse data for their master's theses under the guidance of specialists, including those from partner departments within HSE, such as the Ronald F. Inglehart Laboratory for Comparative Social Research.

Options for Students with Disabilities

This degree programme of HSE University is adapted for students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. Special assistive technology and teaching aids are used for collective and individual learning of students with SEN and disabilities. The specific adaptive features of the programme are listed in each subject's full syllabus and are available to students through the online Learning Management System.

Programme Documentation

All documents of the degree programme are stored electronically on this website. Curricula, calendar plans, and syllabi are developed and approved electronically in corporate information systems. Their current versions are automatically published on the website of the degree programme. Up-to-date teaching and learning guides, assessment tools, and other relevant documents are stored on the website of the degree programme in accordance with the local regulatory acts of HSE University.

I hereby confirm that the degree programme documents posted on this website are fully up-to-date.

Vice Rector Sergey Yu. Roshchin

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