

## Supporting Information

# Lecturer or Senior Lecturer (up to two positions) Sociology and Policy Group



**Closing date**  
10 August 2014

Ref: R140217

## ► The School of Languages & Social Sciences

The School of Languages and Social Sciences at Aston University is one of only a handful of unified academic units in the UK to span both the Humanities and Social Sciences. In doing so, it draws on a rich and distinguished tradition of teaching, scholarship and research. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Department of Modern Languages (French, German, Linguistics), as it was then known, was one of the UK's pioneers of the study of language in contemporary society. In 1995, reflecting the growing interest in and awareness of Europe, it became the School of Languages and European Studies. In 2004, we adopted our current title.

Since then, the School has grown rapidly in student numbers and in its academic coverage. New single honours undergraduate degrees were introduced in Politics and International Relations (2005), Sociology (2007) and English Language (2008). Today, the School comprises four academic subject groups: English Language, Languages and Translation Studies, Politics and International Relations as well as Sociology and Policy. The School also hosts the Centre for English Language and Communication at Aston (CELCA).

This combination of subjects and the way they relate to each other is almost unique in British Higher Education and leaves the School ideally-placed to investigate how language and society function, both in their own context and in relation to each other. Our subject groups enjoy a strong reputation, both among students and our peers:

In the 2013 National Student Survey (NSS), five out of our seven subjects scored overall satisfaction rates of 90 per cent or higher. Spanish and English scored 100 per cent and 98 per cent respectively

In 2013, the Sociology and Policy Group won the 'Excellence in Teaching Sociology' Award of the British Sociological Association and the Higher Education Academy

In the influential QS World University Rankings by Subject for 2013-14, Aston rated within the top 101-150 Institutions globally for Politics and International Relations

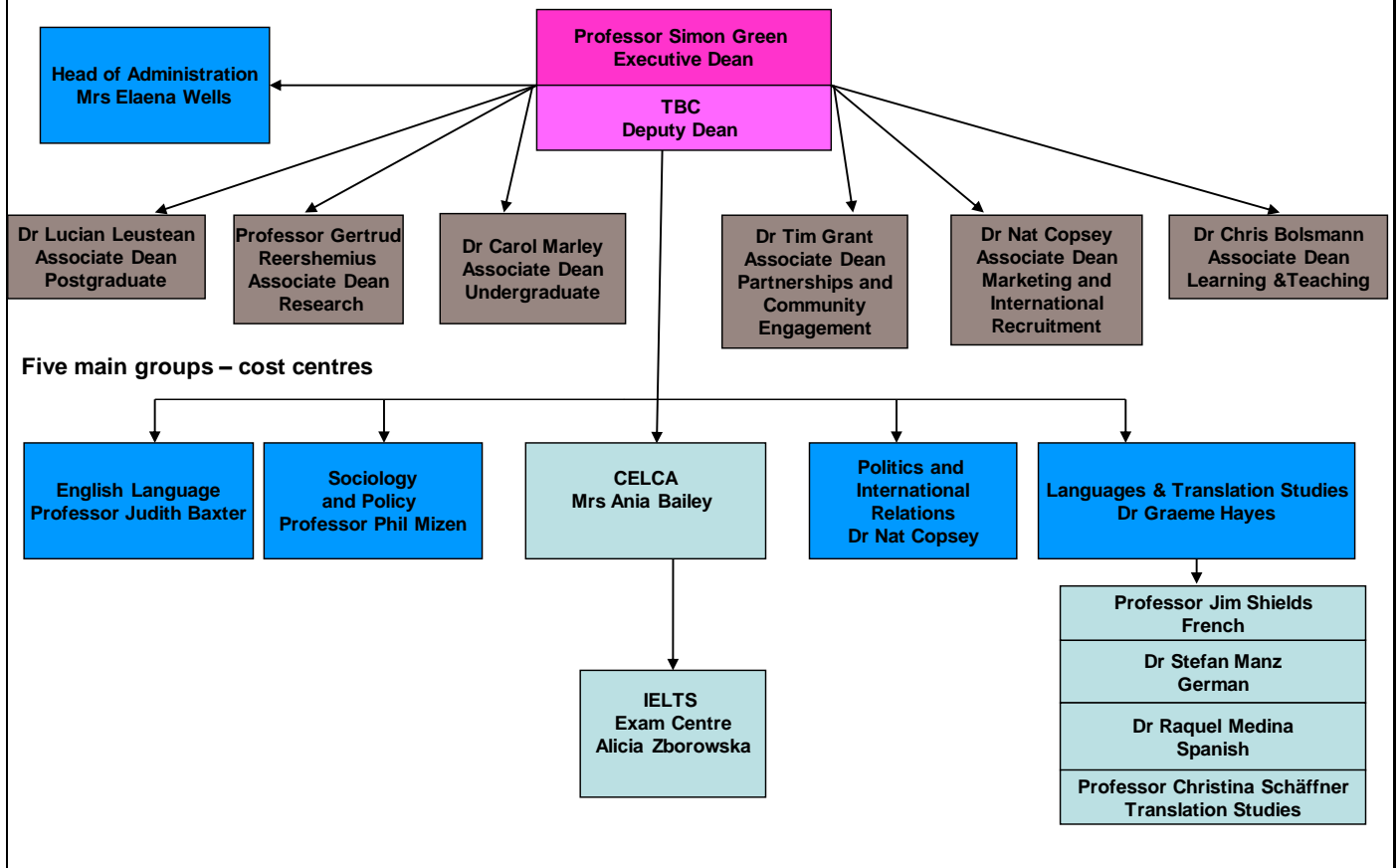
The School is therefore in a strong position, and has an ambitious vision for the future. In particular, over the coming years to 2020, we are aiming to increase our student numbers, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, by one-third; we expect our numbers of academic and support staff to grow too.

Organisationally, the School is led by its Executive Dean, Professor Simon Green, along with a team of Associate Deans and the Heads of Subject Groups. Together, the Deans, Heads of Subject Groups, the Head of CELCA and the Head of Administration constitute the School's Management Committee. The Academic Subject Groups are supported by a central administrative team, which manages a range of aspects of the School's work, including research, admissions, marketing, open days, student support, exams and timetabling. The School is further supported in its work by an Advisory Board, whose membership is drawn from key stakeholders in the city of Birmingham and beyond.

For more information, visit our website <http://www.aston.ac.uk/lss/>.

# Organisational structure

## The School of Languages and Social Sciences, 2013-14



## ► Research

Research in the School ranges across the four core subject areas, with an increasing focus on engagement in multi- and interdisciplinary projects. In the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), the School made a single submission across all its subject groups to the European Studies panel, and was thus the third-largest submitting unit. It came 5th in this panel in terms of research power.

Since 2008, the School has moved forward significantly. In particular, the University has made recent major strategic investments, the total value of which approaches £1 million, to set up three of the School's research centres (see below): ACE, CFL and InterLanD. This has helped to generate considerable new momentum in research, as exemplified by a steep increase in research grants won by the School, including major awards from the Volkswagen Foundation, the EU, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Leverhulme Foundation, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Researchers in the School are internationally-recognised leaders in their respective fields, notably in Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Language Education, Translation Studies, French / German / EU politics and the Sociology of Diversity; they regularly appear in the national and international media, thereby underlining the strong impact of our research. Our doctoral community has grown too, and we now have almost 40 FTE registered PhD students across the four subject areas. We also run an innovative Distance Learning PhD programme in English.

Overall, the School is in a good position for the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF), to which it has submitted to two sub-panels, Modern Languages and Linguistics and Area Studies. Planning has also begun for the next REF, which will potentially be held in 2020, and to which we expect also to be making a submission in Sociology.

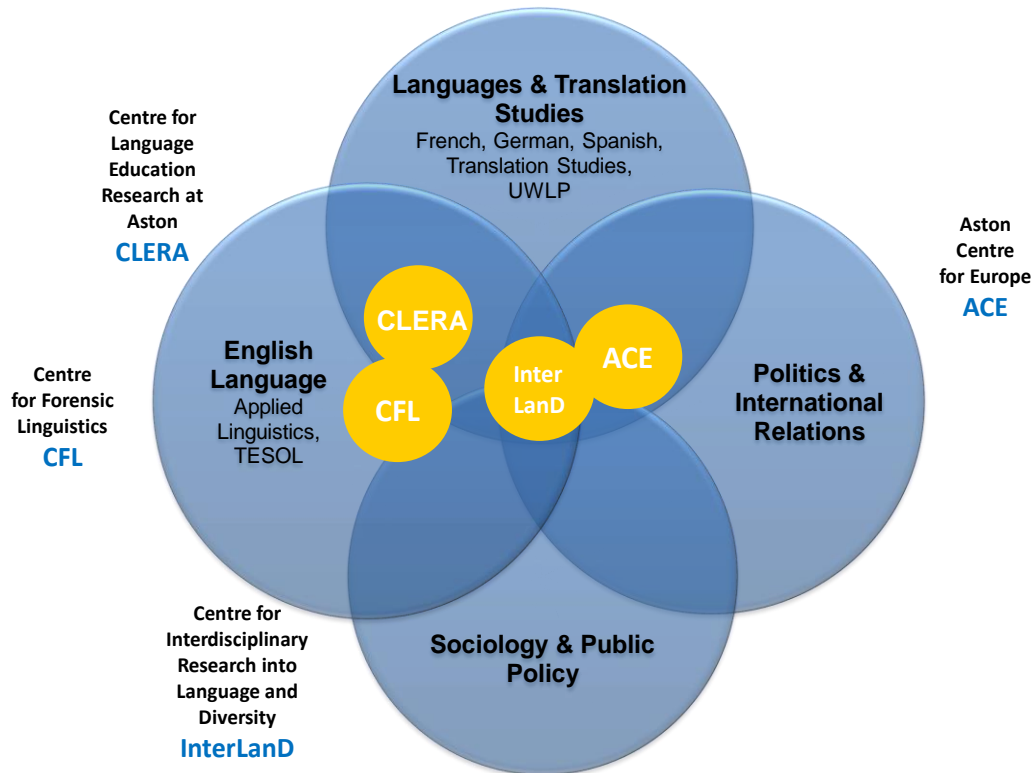
The high status accorded to research in the School is illustrated by the range of structures in place to support this. Thus, each Subject Group has a dedicated research enhancer who provides strategic advice, especially to new entrants to the profession, as well as reading drafts of publications and research applications and acting as the respective REF lead. The School has an active programme of study leave and offers staff access to an annual research allowance of £400 in 2013-14 for conference attendance, as well as a commitment to a timetabled research day per week. Furthermore, the University

makes a £5,000 research start-up fund available to staff taking up their first academic appointment, as well as hosting a Distinguished Visitors scheme to enable research collaborators from abroad to come and visit the University.

For more information, visit our website <http://www.aston.ac.uk/lss/research/> .

# Research Centres in LSS: Interdisciplinary, Applied and Contemporary

4 subject groups 4 research centres



The breadth and depth of the School's research is reflected in the range of research centres which are based in LSS:

Founded in 2009, the **Aston Centre for Europe (ACE)** brings together the University's and School's strengths in European Studies (broadly defined). Based primarily within the School's Politics and International Relations (PIR) subject group, ACE's purpose is to raise the University's profile on Europe at local, national and international level. To this end, it hosts high-profile visiting speakers, offers practitioner training, as well as running innovative MA programmes, and facilitates new research across the University. Its co-directors are Dr Nat Copsey, Professor John Gaffney and Professor Simon Green.

The **Aston Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Language and Diversity (InterLanD)**, established in 2009, builds on the extensive expertise of Aston researchers by bringing together linguistic, social, cultural, economic, environmental and political perspectives. It is a cross-School venture, located within both the School of Languages and Social Sciences and the Aston Business School. InterLanD emphasises interaction, partnership and engagement with policymakers, businesses and local communities as both co-producers and users of knowledge. The Centre is a launch-pad for 'new frontier' research into diversity, and its researchers are engaged in work that will shape future thinking and pioneer practices that will have a significant impact on diverse societies. InterLanD is led by Dr Urszula Clark together with Professor Judith Baxter and Professor Helen Higson (Deputy Vice-Chancellor).

The **Centre for Forensic Linguistics (CFL)** at Aston is the first of its type in the world. It combines leading-edge research and investigative forensic practice with postgraduate teaching and professional courses. Research within the Centre involves all aspects of forensic linguistics, from how the police and the courts can best work with interpreters to the development and refinement of methods for identifying the writer of disputed forensic texts. Members of the Centre have published widely and lectured about their research in some 30 countries. Their high-quality research ensures that both postgraduate and professional courses and their investigative work have a solid academic foundation. CFL is led by Dr Tim Grant.

The **Centre for Language Education Research at Aston (CLERA)** was launched in 2011 and draws on over two decades of research into language education

to investigate communication, discourse and culture and their impact on language education in English and Modern Foreign Languages. It focuses on the following main areas: first and second language learning and teaching, particularly in relation to classroom-based research, immigrant and workplace-related education; Language teacher education; European languages and cultures, including English; English as a global language; Language contact, regionally and internationally; Language education for professional and intercultural communication in organisations, language teaching, and translation and interpreting. CLERA is led by Professor Anne Burns, supported by co-directors Dr Sue Garton and Professor Gertrud Reershemius

## Teaching

The School offers a focused set of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, which are structured around the four Academic Subject Groups. Our aim is to provide intellectually challenging and professionally relevant education, informing, inspiring, and innovating in our responses to social and cultural change.

## Undergraduate programmes

Undergraduate provision remains at the heart of the School's teaching provision and we have grown strongly in this area over recent years: our intake more than doubled between 2009-10 and 2012-13. But this has not come at the expense of quality, and our typical offer ranges from 300-320 UCAS points (BBB-ABB), and this creates a solid foundation from which the School can move forward. In the context of the new fees environment, the School aims to offer a dynamic, responsive and intellectually demanding learning experience, which will help to prepare our students for their future careers, whatever form these might take.

We offer a range of four-year BSc Honours degrees in each of the Academic Subject Groups; we also offer a variety of combinations both within the School and between LSS and other areas of the University, notably Aston Business School. Each programme incorporates an integrated placement year/Year Abroad; this is one of Aston's most distinctive features and a key driver behind the University's high rates of employability.

Full details of the School's provision at undergraduate level are available at:

<http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lss/undergraduate/>

**University-wide Language Programme (UWLP) / Languages for ALL:** Language modules are offered



across the University to non-specialists, whether staff or students, as accredited electives or open learning opportunities. The language may be studied at ab initio or at Intermediate or Post 'A' level standard. Students may take these modules on a self-financing basis in cases where their specific degree programme does not include this opportunity. Languages on offer include: Arabic, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese and Spanish.

In addition, from 2012-13, the University has offered all first year students a free year of language learning as part of the University's goal of creating 'global citizens', under the auspices of the 'Languages for All' programme. This new initiative has been enthusiastically taken up by new students and is rapidly emerging as a key institutional kitemark. The Director of UWLP and Languages for All is Dr Emmanuelle Labeau.

**International Year Abroad (IYA):** On-campus, the School offers a one year certificated course to international students as an IYA for undergraduate students (Cert HE). This programme is delivered by The Centre for English Language and Communication at Aston (CELCA). CELCA also offers English-language tutorials in other Schools of the University.

#### **Postgraduate programmes:**

#### **MA/MSc Taught Programmes**

Following a period of significant growth, the School now offers a total of 17 taught postgraduate programmes, with delivery either on campus or, in some cases, by distance learning. The MA/ MSc programmes are growing in reach and reputation (see <http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lss/postgraduate/> for details):

- English Language runs a range of MA programmes in the area of Applied Linguistics, TESOL and Forensic Linguistics. Its distance learning courses are over 25 years old at Aston, making the Subject Group one of the most experienced providers of off-campus learning programmes in the UK.
- The MA Translation in a European Context is one of 34 programmes across Europe (and one of only five in the UK) to be officially recognised as a member of the European Masters in Translation (EMT) network set up by the European Commission.
- Politics and International Relations has also expanded its portfolio of programmes, to include stand-alone MAs on the EU and on International Relations. The group also runs an innovative Double MA Europe and the World (run jointly with IEP Lille), and has launched

new partnerships with IEP Rennes and the University of Bamberg.

- Sociology and Policy has recently introduced new MA programmes on Social Research and Social Change as well on Public Policy in a European Context

#### **Facilities**

In addition to the main University Library, the School provides local study facilities for students in the form of a study area with reference works, laptop access, space for group work and also extensive multimedia facilities. A learning support team is on hand to support and advise staff and students, to manage specialist equipment as well as our growing archive of learning materials, and provide training for teaching and research software (SPSS, NVIVO). Academic staff are encouraged to use Aston Replay, which allows students to access lectures outside the classroom. The University uses Blackboard as its VLE.

All LSS computer laboratories have been upgraded and refurbished over recent years to provide a technically advanced, supportive learning environment. For language tuition, we use the latest Sanako software to manage face to face learning in the labs, including Interpreting. Our specific translation software includes the translation memory system TRADOS. There is also a separate group viewing room for films and broadcasts.

Colleagues have the opportunity to work with experts in the Aston University Centre for Learning, Innovation and Professional Practice (CLIPP), making use of CLIPP expertise in the use of centrally-managed, technology-enhanced learning resources, curriculum design and pedagogical research.

## ► Sociology and Policy at Aston

Sociology and social/public policy has a long history at Aston University and now makes a major contribution to the teaching and research activities of the School of Languages and Social Sciences. In recent years the Group has grown to become one of the largest Academic Subject Groups in the School, as judged by the number of students following our programmes and the size of the academic staff group. Approximately 350 undergraduate students are registered on one of the Group's 12 single and joint honours degree programmes and the Group also offers opportunities for taught and research postgraduate degrees. The academic staff group has also grown significantly. Included among the 14 current members of staff are two professors, 6 senior lecturers, 4 lecturers and 2 teaching associates.

The Sociology and Policy Group's continuing success is further evident in external indicators of esteem. Prominent examples of the Group's recent achievements includes Sociology's placing in the top 5 departments for student satisfaction in the 2011 National Student Satisfaction Survey; Sociology's 16<sup>th</sup> place ranking (out of 89) in the Guardian newspaper's 2015 University Guide; and the Group was exceptionally proud to have been awarded the 2013 Excellence in Teaching Award by the British Sociological Association and Higher Education Academy.

All permanent members of the Sociology and Policy academic staff are research active and the successful candidates will be expected to make a significant contribution to the further development of a strong and intellectually invigorating research culture. Many members of staff are nationally and internationally recognised leaders in their respective fields, and play leading roles within their disciplinary and subject communities. Areas in which staff currently work includes: sport and popular culture (Bolsmann); health and welfare (Dodds, Lowe, Tritter), states and markets (Fuller, Tritter), policy making (Dodds, Tritter, West), risk and regulation (Dodds), international migration and transnationalism (Jones, Popov), religion (Page), youth and childhood (Mizen, Page, Popov, Rogers), gender and sexuality (Bolsmann, Pilcher, Lowe), care and disability (Rogers), family and parenting (Lowe, Page, Rogers) and ageing (West). Of further significance to this is research that has a strong international orientation (Bolsmann, Dodds, Mizen, Popov, Ryan, Tritter), is concerned with the delivery and experience of public and other services (Lowe, Rogers, Tritter, West) or is looking to develop innovative research methodologies (Mizen, Page, Pilcher, Popov).

Many staff hold research grants or are further involved in funded research projects, and it is anticipated that the successful candidates would be capable of securing external research funding. Recent or current funders of research include the British Academy, the Economic and Social Research Council, the European Community, local government and charitable foundations. Staff are also active members of InterLanD, Aston University's interdisciplinary research centre that brings together researchers interested in linguistic, social, cultural, economic, environmental, political, management and marketing perspectives.

### **Sociology and Policy Group Academic Staff Membership 2013-2014**

Dr Chris Bolsmann, Senior Lecturer in Sociology and Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning

Dr Anneliese Dodds, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy and MEP (currently on parliamentary leave of absence)

Dr Tom Farnhill, Teaching Associate in Public Policy

Dr Crispian Fuller, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy

Dr Demelza Jones, Lecturer in Sociology

Dr Pamela Lowe, Senior Lecturer in Sociology

Professor Phil Mizen, Professor of Sociology and Policy and Head of Group

Dr Sarah-Jane Page, Lecturer in Sociology

Dr Katy Pilcher, Lecturer in Sociology

Dr Anton Popov (Lecturer, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014)

Dr Chrissie Rogers, Senior Lecturer in Sociology

Dr Holly Ryan, Teaching Associate in Sociology

Professor Jonathan Tritter, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy, Deputy Dean

Dr Karen West, Senior Lecturer in Public Policy



## ► The Role

The Sociology and Policy staff group is looking to make two permanent appointments from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015. One post may be made at Senior Lecturer Level; appointment at Lecturer level will be at Grade 8.

This is an exciting opportunity for new and more established academics to join a thriving and expanding Sociology and Policy Group within the School of Languages and Social Sciences, and to help shape its future direction. The Group's current research activities are focused around the themes of 'Inequality, Diversity and Social Justice', and 'Critical Policy Analysis', but as the staff group continues to grow these are open to review and revision. These themes cut across traditional sociological and policy concerns and many members of the group are committed to research that engages with the public sphere and that looks to influence policy and practice. The Group is particularly interested in developing sociological traditions of theorising and research, and tracing the linkages and possibilities of these as they relate to policy, which we understand in its broadest sense as programmes, initiatives or established norms that shape action and practice. We thus welcome applications from candidates working in any related field of Sociology and Policy, and who share the Group's aspiration to engage in research with a clear social benefit, a strong ethical sensibility, a commitment to engaging with diverse audiences and users, and a receptivity to interdisciplinary forms of working. At least one of the appointments will be expected to contribute to the Group's policy teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and to make a significant contribution to the development of the Group's policy research profile.

The successful candidates will benefit from workloads that are commensurate with the aspirations of Aston as a research-led university and will be required to carry out undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, administrative responsibilities and research activities as appropriate to the requirements of the Group and the School. Academic staff are also provided with an annual allowance to support conference attendance and newly appointed academic staff may be eligible for a £5000 start-up fund. Aston University offers generous study leave provision to which all academic members of staff are entitled to apply.

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Aston University  
Birmingham B4 7ET

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