

# Comparative Public Policy and Welfare Studies

Master of Social Sciences



University of  
Southern Denmark



## The welfare state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Why are some societies more equal than others? How can we explain soaring unemployment and budget deficits? Why do women participate in the labour market as much as men in some countries but less in others? Why do healthcare, childcare and other public services differ in their quality across developed societies – and how do these differences matter? Answers to all these questions relate to the welfare state – more specifically, to public policies and welfare studies.

The development of the modern welfare state profoundly transformed societies in the 20th century. In the Western world, the welfare state laid the foundation for peace and stability and helped to establish fundamental principles such as gender equality and social mobility. More recently, Asian and Latin American countries have embraced the concept and developed ambitious welfare state programmes.

At the same time as welfare states fundamentally shape the functioning of societies all over the world, they are also subject to intense political conflict and to multiple pressures for change. This helps explain why there are different types of welfare states across advanced societies.

Understanding the development and reform of the modern welfare states, as well as their effects and main challenges, is essential for people interested in the future of our societies. This is the knowledge we provide our students with – students who want to have a say in shaping the world of tomorrow as policy advisors, consultants, decision-makers, civil servants or scholars.

➔ Is studied in: **Odense**



## Career opportunities

The two-year MSc in Social Sciences in Comparative Public Policy and Welfare Studies links directly to current global and national challenges, such as ageing populations, changing family models, and economic crises. The programme provides you with a broad, high-level set of skills and competencies enabling you to contribute to the development of sustainable and democratically legitimate solutions to such challenges. You will be an attractive candidate to international and national agencies, as well as to all levels of public administration and policy-making. You will be involved in policy analysis and in devising policy solutions for achieving social and economic goals.



“What can explain trends in longevity, fertility, or the flows of migrants – and what are the effects of such trends for the well-being of individuals and the sustainability of welfare models?”



## Our alumni

- Researchers - PhD
- Development consultant
- Research support officer
- Consultants (municipal administration)
- ESF-BAMF Field Personnel (Germany)
- Fundraising team leader - Save the Children
- Research analyst
- Head of procedure (EU coordination rules) at Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund
- Program leader - Training for Learning (UK)
- Various positions in private sector

## Aim higher!

In the first two semesters, you take 60 ECTS in compulsory courses. First semester courses give a broad overview of the evolution, challenges and perspectives on public policies and welfare studies, addressing classical topics as well as contemporary issues. Second semester courses focus on specific issues related to the formulation and implementation of welfare-related policies.

The courses in the first two semesters are organized in such a way as to offer you two specializations to choose from right from the start of your studies. This allows you to build skills for your future career. One specialization emphasizes the politics side of public policies, and the other emphasizes processes of social change and their consequences for welfare provision.

The two specializations have in common the courses “Quantitative methods”, “Research Design”, “Understanding social policy” and “Comparative public administration” – which provide you with essential tools to understand public policies. You can choose the desired specialization by opting for the following courses:

- Specialization “Public Policies and Politics”: courses “How welfare states evolve” (sem 1) and “The politics of labour market change” (sem 2).
- Specialization “Welfare and Social Change”: courses “Science, technology and society” (sem 1) and “Global issues and development” (sem 2).

In the third semester, you have the opportunity to continue your specialization by choosing between courses (in Denmark or abroad) or internships, while in the fourth semester you write your Master’s thesis on a topic of your choice.

## Programme structure

	Common courses		Possible specializations (choose one course per semester)	
	<i>Crafting analysis</i>	<i>Comparative policy</i>	<i>Public Policies and Politics</i>	<i>Welfare and Social Change</i>
<b>1. Semester</b> Basic courses	Quantitative methods (10 ECTS)	Comparative welfare state policies (10 ECTS)	How welfare states evolve (10 ECTS)	Science, technology and society (10 ECTS)
<b>2. Semester</b> Applied courses	Research design (10 ECTS)	Comparative public administration (10 ECTS)	The politics of labour market change (10 ECTS)	Global issues and development (10 ECTS)
<b>3. Semester</b> Continued specialisation	Elective courses or internship (30 ECTS)  - In Denmark or abroad -			
<b>4. Semester</b> Independent work	 Master’s Thesis (30 ECTS)			

The numbers indicate the work load of each course in ECTS points.



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*I currently work as a PhD researcher at the project “Cities of Refuge” at the University of Utrecht, investigating the role of international human rights as law, praxis and discourse, to how local governments in Europe welcome and integrate refugees. The MSc in Comparative Public Policy & Welfare Studies provided me with a toolbox of analytical skills and theoretical knowledge, which greatly helped me accomplish my career goals. I strongly recommend this study program to everyone interested in career in public affairs or academia.*

*Tihomir Sabchev  
from Bulgaria*

## What are our students researching?

The Master's thesis is the culmination of the Master's degree program and reflects students' ability to conduct independent research. Here are some of the exciting topics that our students have chosen to explore:

- Atypical workers' experiences on the labour market
- The global economic crisis as a critical juncture for the Greek clientelistic system
- Employers' engagement in the successful integration of immigrants
- How a changed narrative on 'the ability to work' affects the perception of 'deservingness'
- Refugees experiences of integration
- Gay couples' experiences with medical system
- Social inclusion as a way to narrow the achievement gap between immigrants and natives
- How our societies face the challenge of technological change
- The impact of the World Wars on wealth taxation in Austria
- Impact of educational attainment on individual preferences for redistribution

### Internship

An internship is your chance to test yourself in the job market during your studies. You can spend a part of the third semester carrying out a company project or other project-oriented work. Here are some of the places where our students have done internships:

- Danish National Centre for Social Research
- European institutions
- Danish Research Office in Brussels
- Local municipalities
- World Health Organisation – Copenhagen Office



## Learning

Teaching, coaching and supervision are provided by an international group of leading researchers in their fields of public policy and administration, political science, history, and sociology.

Most of these researchers come from the Danish Centre for Welfare Studies. There are also guest lectures by leading scholars affiliated with the centre or visiting.

➔ **See more at [www.sdu.dk/welfare](http://www.sdu.dk/welfare)**

Lecturers, coaches and mentors use a variety of teaching methods to optimize learning outcomes for students, e.g. lectures, group work, lab work. Students get hands-on experience with different methods and data.

### Dynamic student environment

The University of Southern Denmark provides a good infrastructure for students working in groups or alone centered at new facilities at the Department of Political Science. In addition to the formal teaching, students can engage in informal reading groups on classic or new texts, visit relevant institutions and much more.

There are social get-togethers with film evenings, cultural visits and other events.

The University of Southern Denmark is a modern institution offering education and research at the highest level. Every day more than 1,400 researchers and 32,000 students build on the University's reputation as a centre of academic excellence. This programme is offered at the largest campus which is located in Odense, the third largest city in Denmark. Lively and youthful, this historic city has a bustling social scene and is little more than an hour away from Copenhagen. Odense is known for being the birthplace of world-renowned storyteller Hans Christian Andersen.

## Entry requirements

In the overview below you can see which bachelor degrees qualify you to the MSc in Social Sciences in Comparative Public Policy and Welfare Studies.

### Degrees with direct admission

- Bachelor in Political Science
- Bachelor in Social work
- Bachelor in History
- Bachelor in Area Studies
- All Social Science bachelors
- Bachelor in International Negotiation  
– economics, language and culture

### Other degrees

Bachelor in Humanities if at least 20 ECTS points were acquired in in social science disciplines.

**Application deadlines: 1 March**

**Study start: 1 September**



*At the moment I work as a team lead for Danish customer service at Circle K. Both my BSc and my MSc are very valuable. From one I have the technical knowledge and from my MSc I have understanding on cultural differences, EU policies as well as statistics. I have been employed for more than 2 years and I am very happy about my work.*

*Kristina Freimane  
from Latvia*

## Engage in the future of the welfare state

➔ [sdu.dk/comparativewelfare](https://sdu.dk/comparativewelfare)



## Contact information

Follow the MSc in Social Sciences in Comparative Public Policy and Welfare Studies - SDU on [facebook.com/WelfareStudies](https://www.facebook.com/WelfareStudies).

Questions concerning the study programme:  
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Please see our homepage for more details on entry requirements.

 [sdu.dk/comparativewelfare](https://sdu.dk/comparativewelfare)