

The short guide to social policy

John Hudson, Stefan Kuhner and Stuart Lowe

Policy Press, 2015, 2nd edition

*Reviewed by David Nelson, Macmillan research fellow,
University of Lincoln*

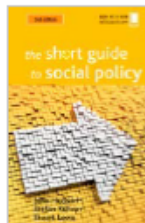
This book provides a concise overview of the key structures and concepts in social policy, focusing on the five pillars of the welfare state (social security; employment; education; health; housing). New to the second edition is a chapter on issues such as social care, criminal justice and family policy. The book is mostly descriptive, and each chapter has a common structure and layout used to systematically analyse the pillars of the welfare state.

The book fulfils its primary aim: to provide a concise, straightforward and clear account of social policy relevant to UK and overseas students. It is well-written and easy to read, making it a welcome addition to the reading list of undergraduate social policy modules.

Those taking postgraduate courses or research in social policy will also find this introductory text useful, albeit lacking the depth and detail that they may require.

Written by senior academics from the University of York with extensive experience in teaching and researching social policy, each chapter draws on UK and international examples and statistics. A unique feature of the second edition is a free app with videos and interactive materials expanding on the key issues in the text.

In summary, this is a good introduction and short guide to social policy. Suitable for undergraduate students new to social policy, or as an initial reference point before, or instead of, navigating more in-depth texts.



Developing effective research proposals

Keith F Punch

Sage, 2016, 3rd edition

*Reviewed by Sarah Kitchen, head of new business,
NatCen Social Research*

Aimed primarily at graduate students developing research proposals for dissertations, this book also has wider application for researchers preparing funding applications. It provides a clear and easy-to-follow guide to putting together a proposal with detailed discussion of the topics that need to be included.

The structure of the book reflects the proposal development process, from developing the general framework to writing different elements of the proposal.

It begins with a helpful discussion of the reviewer, their expectations and the functions that the proposal needs to fulfil, which has relevance across all types of research proposal. The chapters on writing the proposal include discussion of important issues such as using theory and describing methods. The methods section focuses on the different considerations for qualitative and quantitative methods, including useful guidance on selecting the most appropriate approaches for the research questions.

The latter part of the book is given over to best practice examples of research proposals, which have been carefully selected to cover a range of methodological approaches and subject domains. There is also a detailed chapter on research ethics, which is likely to be helpful for those developing research proposals who have limited knowledge of ethical considerations, although this chapter fits less easily within the structure of the book.

Key strengths of the book are its clarity, particularly summaries of main points, and questions posed to encourage readers to think about their own research proposals. Each chapter also concludes with exercises and study questions, which are likely to be valuable to students.

In summary, this book is useful as a practical guide for students writing research proposals for the first time, and also a worthwhile read for more experienced proposal writers to remind them of good practice principles.

**Developing
Effective
Research
Proposals**

3rd Edition

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