

Subject to Lead College confirmation

Programme Specification 2009-2010 MSc and Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health

Title and name of awards

Masters of Science in Public Health (MSc)
Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health

A student registered for the MSc degree in Public Health may also receive the award of the Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health provided they satisfy the requirements for that award.

Individual modules (short courses) can be taken up to a maximum of three.

Title of programmes

There are four streams in the MSc degree. These include a general stream and three subject-specific streams. Students who successfully complete a subject stream will have the selected stream reflected in the title of the award as follows:

- MSc Public Health
- MSc Public Health (Environment and Health)
- MSc Public Health (Health Promotion)
- MSc Public Health (Health Services Management).

Level of the programmes

The awards are placed at the following Levels of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ):

MSc – Masters degree, Level 7 (formerly level 'M')
Postgraduate Diploma - Level 7 (formerly level 'M')

The FHEQ forms part of the academic infrastructure of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in England and Wales.

Relevant QAA subject benchmarks group(s)

Not applicable

See the Quality Assurance Agency website for information.

Awarding body

University of London

Registering body

University of London, through the External System

www.londonexternal.ac.uk

Lead College

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

Accreditation by professional or statutory body

Not applicable

Language of study and assessment

English

See also the Programme Regulations.

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Mode of study

Students registered for the MSc degree or Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health study by distance learning.

Further details about student support are in the student handbook.

However, students registered for the MSc who have completed the Core modules and been allowed to proceed to the Advanced modules may also be permitted to study up to two advanced modules by **blended learning** for an additional fee. Blended learning enables a student to combine study by distance learning with a period of full-time study at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. There may be restrictions on the choice of Advanced Modules available, the period of time in which the study must be completed and the number of students who can register for blended learning.

Programme structures and requirements

There are four streams in the MSc degree. These include a general stream and three subject specific streams.

Full details are in the Programme Regulations.

The **MSc degree** consists of the following elements:

- Five compulsory Core modules
 - One additional Core module selected from a list of options
- and either**
- Dependent on the subject stream chosen:
 - Nine Advanced modules selected from a list of options **or**
 - Eight Advanced modules selected from a list of options and one compulsory advanced module.
- Or**
- Dependent on the subject stream chosen:
 - Seven Advanced modules and a Project report **or**
 - Six Advanced modules and one compulsory advanced module and a Project report.

Students wishing to obtain MSc degree with the subject stream-specific reflected in the title of the award must ensure they have chosen to study the required compulsory modules for that stream.

Some modules contain background information that is useful for the study of other modules and students are therefore advised to study certain modules before attempting other modules.

In order to **progress to the Advanced modules** of the MSc degree, students must normally have passed six Core modules (with at least a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.00) and received a recommendation from the Examiners to proceed. (**Note:** there are rules about how many and which GPA scores may fall below 2.00 and be compensated by higher GPA scores in other modules).

At the discretion of the Examiners, students who have passed three Core modules may be permitted to proceed to the Advanced modules provided they take the assessment for the remaining three Core modules in the following year.

Subject to the payment of an appropriate fee, students registered for an Advanced module, who have not attempted the assessment for that module or have failed the assessment at the first attempt, may change to another option. Up to **two** advanced modules only may be changed in this way.

The Course Director reserves the right to consider the appropriateness of a student's choice of Advanced modules and, with stated justification may restrict the options chosen.

Permission to undertake a **Project Report** is subject to approval by Course Director.

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The **Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health** consists of:

- Four compulsory Core modules.
- Two additional Core modules selected from a list of options

No exemptions from modules will be considered for either the Postgraduate Diploma or the MSc.

Details of credits and exemptions are in the Programme Regulations.

Students who undertake and pass individual modules (as short courses) may have these modules taken into account for credit towards the MSc or Postgraduate Diploma.

In order to transfer registration to the MSc degree from the Postgraduate Diploma, a student will **normally** need to have passed all of the six Core modules (with at least a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 2.00) and received a recommendation from the Examiners to proceed to the Advanced modules of the MSc. (**Note:** there are also rules about how many, and which GPA scores may fall below 2.00 and be compensated by higher GPA scores in other modules). At the discretion of the Examiners, and provided certain rules have been met, students who have passed in three modules may be permitted to transfer.

Full details are in the Programme Regulations.

Students progressing from a short course will be required to satisfy rules of progression for the MSc and/or the Postgraduate Diploma.

The maximum and minimum periods of registration, from a student's effective date of registration, are:

Full details are in the Programme Regulations.

	Minimum	Maximum
Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health	One year	Five years
MSc Public Health	Two years	Five years

Students who have not completed their studies within the five year registration period may apply for an extension. A fee will be payable.

Final results of the MSc degree are calculated as follows:

If a project is submitted:

$$\text{Final GPA} = [(\text{Total GPA of 6 core modules}) + (\text{total GPA of 7 advanced modules}) + (\text{Project report GPA} \times 2)] \div 15$$

See also the Programme Regulations.

If a project is not submitted:

$$\text{Final GPA} = [(\text{Total GPA of 6 core modules}) + (\text{total GPA of 9 advanced modules})] \div 15$$

The MSc is awarded with the following class of award Distinction, Pass or Fail as follows:

Final course GPA	Outcome
0 - 1.99	Fail
2.00 - 4.29	Pass
4.30 - 4.49	Consider distinction

Final results for the Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health are calculated as follows:

$$\text{Final GPA} = [\text{Total GPA of the 6 Core modules}] \div 6$$

The Postgraduate Diploma is awarded with the following class of award Distinction, Pass or Fail (see table above).

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Entrance requirements

An applicant must satisfy the relevant entrance requirements given in this section. In order to be considered for registration as an External Student, they must also submit an application in accordance with the procedures and deadlines given in the appropriate prospectus.

For the **MSc in Public Health**:

A second class honours degree or its equivalent in a subject appropriate to the degree, from a university or other institution acceptable to the University of London and a minimum of one year's relevant work experience.

For the **Postgraduate Diploma in Public Health**:

A first degree or its equivalent, from a university or other institution acceptable to the University of London, in a subject appropriate to the course or in another discipline which has, in the opinion of the University, included suitable preliminary training.

or

Previous education or experience, without a first degree, which the University is satisfied has provided suitable academic training equivalent to a first degree.

For all applicants an advanced level of ability to work in English is required. Applicants may be required to pass or to have passed within the last five years, at the appropriate level, a test of proficiency in English acceptable to the University – for example a TOEFL score of 600 (or 250 in the computerised test) and a minimum of 5 in the TWE or a British Council (IELTS) overall score of 7 or over with a minimum of 7 in the written sub-test.

All students will be required to have regular access to the internet with minimum hardware requirements as set out in the Prospectus and Student Handbook. Students are responsible for ensuring adequate system maintenance. Students will also require a calculator.

Educational aims and learning outcomes of the programmes

The main **educational aims** of the LSHTM distance learning Public Health Programmes are to offer a challenging, flexible scheme of study invigorated by research, which provides students' with the knowledge and skills to improve the health of populations, communities and particular groups within them, through the promotion of health and the prevention of diseases; the provision and evaluation of treatment and care; and the investigation and control of environmental threats to health. Students are encouraged to develop a range of transferable and subject-specific skills to address multi-faceted and current health problems in their local setting, as well as internationally.

These programmes are primarily aimed at professionals who may already be involved in public health at community, hospital or district level, in research, in ministries of health or other health-related organizations. LSHTM's Public Health course is a rigorous educational programme for professionals who wish to use academic study to deepen their understanding and increase their potential for career development in public health. Successful completion of the MSc may allow students to address local health problems and, at the same time, to progress to a higher research degree in public health or medicine.

The Public Health programmes aim to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of the core disciplines in public health;
- enable students to understand key issues of public health;
- encourage independent critical and evaluative skills that can be used to apply well-founded scientific, social and economic judgements;
- teach students a broad understanding of the methodology in public health research.

The prospectus gives details of the application process, alternative qualifications that may be accepted and English Proficiency tests.

Students with special needs should refer to the Programme Regulations.

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The **learning outcomes** of the Public Health Programmes include:

Knowledge, understanding, intellectual and cognitive;

A student will be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the fundamental concepts and methods of epidemiology, and their application in public health;
- understand the use of basic statistical methods and how to interpret research results, including use of statistical computer packages;
- recognize and evaluate the main concepts, principles, and practices of public health;
- display sufficient knowledge to explain the main contribution of health economics;
- demonstrate the critical skills needed in order to be able to read, appraise or commission social research for public health;
- apply knowledge of the core disciplines of public health to real world health problems;
- carry out a Project, evaluate critically their own work and produce a well-structured and well-written report. (Some MSc students only)

Transferable

A student will be able to:

- use problem solving skills in a range of situations;
- use fluent and effective communication and discussion skills in a written context;
- have a capacity to handle ideas and scrutinize information in critical, evaluative and analytical ways;
- manage their own learning, including working effectively to deadlines.

A student who passes the Core modules will have the essential introduction to a variety of methods, approaches and concepts concerning public health. MSc students will study the Advances modules which build on the foundations. These students will choose from a range of options which further knowledge in specific areas. MSc students may also apply the skills they have learnt to a particular problem and produce a Project report.

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies

The programme is primarily taught using text books developed specifically for the Public Health Programme. Students are advised to work through the text, participating in self-learning activities, which are followed by feedback sessions and self-assessment questions.

Students are supported by tutors who provide feedback through the use of the PH web-based conferencing system. Students studying core modules may submit one assignment per module, which will, be marked by module teaching staff who will also provide feedback. Students studying advanced modules are required to submit one assignment per module for assessment.

Advice and practical information such as study techniques, planning, preparation for assessment is available in the student handbook. Students manage their own learning.

Students may also communicate with each other on a free web-based student to student network. The tutors also supervise web-based or email discussion groups. Students will be able to engage in dialogue, and develop and negotiate conclusions with others, which are key components in the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and transferable skills.

Core modules are assessed by unseen written examination, which count for 100% of their grade. Advanced modules are assessed by unseen written examinations and a written assignment. The mark awarded for each advanced module will be weighted 70:30 (examination: assignment).

The examination will consist of questions structured to allow students to demonstrate

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that they have acquired appropriate knowledge and understanding. The way that students manage data, solve problems, evaluate ideas and the organizational skills they use to structure answers allows the standard of intellectual and transferable skills to be assessed.

Advanced modules assessment allows a student to do a more in depth study of the topic. Students demonstrate the skills associated with data collection, analysis, selection, reasoning and producing a well-reasoned essay.

Some MSc students will also submit a Project Report which will not only assess their knowledge but also their ability to plan, gather data, reason and produce a well-structured report.

Assessment criteria for the programme will indicate the level at which these skills have been achieved.

Assessment methods

Each **Core** module (MSc and Postgraduate Diploma) will be assessed by one two-hour unseen written examination.

Each **Advanced** module (MSc only) will be assessed by one two-hour unseen written examination and a written assignment. The mark awarded for each module will be weighted 70:30 (examination: assignment).

The **Project report** (some MSc students only) will be assessed by submission of one written report of between 5000-7000 words. It must be submitted in the final year of the degree.

Written examinations are held at established centres worldwide. They take place on one occasion each year, normally commencing in June.

Student support and guidance

The following summarises the support and guidance available to students:

- Texts books are provided for each module studied.
- Web-based discussion forum supervised by tutors (may be accessed by email also). Students may alternatively email in academic queries for forwarding to tutors if they do not wish to use the discussion forum.
- Student Support Administrators (SSAs) are available to offer help and advice on administrative matters. Course Directors are also available for students to contact for general academic queries relating to the course and their study progress.
- Written tutorial feedback on set assignments.
- Student handbook:
This provides guidance on all aspects of the programme. It includes background information about the programme, advice on getting started, studying as a distance learner and organising study time, a description of the resources and course materials available and how to access them, networking and support issues, procedures for assessment and examinations, including course deadlines.
- Programme Regulations.
- Past examination papers and Examiners' commentary which provide generic feedback from assessment.
- University of London library - registered students may use the resources located within the Senate House library (for a small additional fee).

Full details of the assessment and the scheme of award are in the Programme Regulations.

Further information on support and guidance is in the student handbook.

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Quality evaluation and enhancement

The External System is a partnership between the central University and individual Lead Colleges/ Consortia. Agreed systems are in place to assure the quality of the programme development, delivery, management, systematic monitoring and ongoing review and enhancement of all External programmes. The policies, partnerships and systems are defined within our key documents: The Quality Framework, the Quality Assurance Schedules, Guidelines for Examinations and Programme Regulations.

Quality assurance arrangements are not static and enhancements will be made as necessary to ensure that systems remain effective and rigorous. For details on the current system-wide quality assurance procedures refer to:

http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/quality/acad_inf/index.shtml

Parity of Award Standards

The central University Regulations state that “candidates granted degrees and other awards shall have attained the same academic standard irrespective of mode or place of study or examination”.

- Every programme of study is developed and approved by a Lead College, or Consortia, to the same standards and requirements as would be applied in the Lead College(s);
- Learning materials are written and examinations are set and marked by academic staff employed or chosen by the Lead Colleges, who are required to apply the University’s academic standards.

For further information please refer to: <http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/quality/>

Review and Evaluation Mechanisms

- Annual programme reports are prepared in order to enhance individual programmes and to plan ahead;
- Periodic programme reviews are conducted on a 4-6 year cycle to review how a programme has developed over time and ensure that it remains current and up-to-date;
- Annual External Examiner reports are prepared by Independent External Examiners and confirm that a programme has been assessed properly and meets the appropriate academic standards;
- Thematic reviews report on specific issues to ensure that the External System is up-to-date in the light of developing knowledge and practice in the Higher Education sector;
- Data on student numbers, examination performance, completion rates and other statistics are reviewed annually and feed into all systematic reporting within the External System.

Student Feedback Mechanisms

- Annual Student Experience Surveys collect programme level feedback according to the student lifecycle and the stages reached by students in their learning. In addition some Lead Colleges schedule their own modular or unit level surveys;
- An External programme’s Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) provides the opportunity for informal feedback and discussion;
- External System committees and sub-committees include student membership where appropriate. Some External programmes recruit their own student representatives at the programme level.

For further information on the External System governance structure, including Terms of Reference, Agendas and Papers, please refer to the ‘Committee Zone’ at:

http://www.londonexternal.ac.uk/quality/comte_zone/index.shtml

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This Programme Specification is presented in support of our commitment to the nationally agreed reference points for assuring the quality and standards of higher education, known as the Academic Infrastructure. Further information can be found at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/default.asp>